

## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, June 21, 2022

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE: COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION AND FACILITY  
ALLOCATION POLICY REVISION**

**FROM:**

Gus Michaels, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

In 2021, a project was initiated to review and update the Community Service Organization (CSO) and Facility Allocation (FA) policies. An RFP was awarded to external consultant Optimus SBR to complete the work.

The purpose of this report is to approve changes to the CSO and FA policies as recommended by Optimus SBR through various stakeholder consultations and municipal benchmarks.

**Report Highlights**

- Optimus SBR has conducted an extensive stakeholder consultation process including 9 internal discovery sessions, 21 individual interviews (that also include 6 municipal comparator interviews), 6 focus group sessions, 2 drop-in sessions, 82 respondents to a public survey, and 11 future state participants. A total of 160 individuals have been engaged as part of this review.
- Optimus SBR has identified five opportunities for improvement including: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, permitted non-use, enforcement, process improvements, and CSO eligibility for subsidized rates. These opportunities are to be addressed through 6 recommended changes to the CSO policy and 2 recommended changes to the FA policy.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT staff accept the amendments to the CSO policy as recommended by the external consultant
2. THAT staff accept the updated Registered Ratepayers' Associations policy and incorporate into the CSO policy under section 7
3. THAT staff accept the amendments to the FA policy as recommended by the external consultant

## **Background**

The CSO and FA policies were first drafted and taken into effect in 2012. Both policies are due for updates based on changing demographics and needs of the community. In 2021, Recreation Services issued an RFP for an external consultant to review and update both policies and awarded the contract to Optimus SBR for project completion in 2022.

Optimus SBR supported the City of Vaughan to conduct a comprehensive review of the current Community Service Organization (CSO) and Facility Allocation (FA) policies. The objective of this engagement was to identify recommendations that reflect the changing recreation and facility needs of the municipality in an equitable manner. This process resulted in the development of sustainable recommendations and a direction to position the City to respond to the changing recreation and facility needs of its user or community groups and citizens, as well as the creation of revised policies to promote equity deserving groups. The updated policies will confidently support clear decision-making, were developed based on leading practices, and will improve operations within Vaughan.

Optimus SBR conducted an extensive consultation process involving approximately 160 unique individuals representing various internal City departments, surrounding comparator municipalities, external stakeholder community groups and prospective community groups, through various activities such as discovery sessions, individual interviews, focus groups, drop-in sessions, public survey, and future state meetings.

In 2017 an external consultant led by the Office of the City Clerk had recommended changes to the existing Ratepayers' Association Policy. It was also recommended that these changes be held until the CSO and FA policies were due for an update.

As such, the updated Registered Ratepayers' Association language has been included in the CSO policy under section 7.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[Community Service Organization Policy](#)

[Facility Allocation Policy](#)

[Registered Ratepayer/Community Association Policy](#)

[Committee of the Whole \(WS\) – Registered Ratepayer Association Policy Review Update](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

A total of five opportunities for improvement have been identified by Optimus SBR:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Permitted Non-use
- Enforcement
- Process Improvements
- CSO eligibility for subsidized rates

There are 6 recommended changes to the CSO policy and 2 changes to the FA policy to address these opportunities.

## **Community Service Organization Policy**

### **1. Introduce an emerging group status**

Stakeholders from prospective CSO groups and past unsuccessful applicants have noted that their groups have not been afforded the opportunity to access facilities and services that would allow them to grow their service or membership. By providing these groups with some of the benefits and priority of full CSO status, these groups would be provided an opportunity by which they can seek to grow their operations and prove to the City that they are servicing a unique need in the community, to achieve full CSO status in the future.

### **2. Formally implement bi-annual requalification for established CSO groups**

During stakeholder consultations, existing CSO groups noted that current reporting requirements are administratively burdensome. As most of these groups are run by volunteers, this can be particularly challenging for smaller or less established CSO

groups, which may not possess the same resources and reporting capabilities as larger CSO groups.

### **3. Deploy an online portal for groups to submit their applications and re-qualifications**

Stakeholders expressed a desire to implement an online portal for submitting applications to the City for qualification and requalification. Information could be easier to provide via an online channel. Additionally, promoting the use of an online portal and submission of information in exported spreadsheets could provide the City with a greater or easier ability to manipulate and extract the data received for review and analysis purposes. Through the Jurisdictional Scan, it was also identified that multiple municipalities have recently implemented online portals for receiving applications and reporting information, and have noted that they have achieved the intended effect of reducing administrative burden on community groups and their volunteers.

### **4. Include a DEI statement that aligns to the City's overarching DEI Strategy, which CSOs must agree to align or adhere to**

Through engaging stakeholders, including the City's DEI Task Force and Diversity and Inclusion Officer, it was determined that while many organizations are currently expanding service offerings and programs to marginalized or equity-deserving populations, there should be an additional focus on ensuring that services are equitable and that marginalized groups are provided accessible options. Furthermore, there should be a show of alignment with the City's broader DEI Strategy and its approach to supporting an environment that is Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive. As such, a statement within the CSO and FA Policies that directly refers to and demonstrates expected alignment with DEI requirements is suggested.

### **5. Place additional financial controls on CSO eligibility for rate subsidies**

The review of the current CSO Policy found that certain CSO groups may be taking advantage of their CSO status to receive access to subsidized rates and benefits (including to host large-scale events that are primarily intended to generate revenue). In many circumstances, this revenue is for charitable causes; however, for some organizations, only a minimal amount of funding is directed towards a charitable cause. By collecting additional information both before and after the event, and by providing itself the ability to request documentation, the City can perform the due diligence required to ensure that subsidized rates are only provided to organizations that truly deserve or require the subsidized rate.

### **6. Include a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section in the CSO Policy or online**

The review of the current CSO Policy found that while the current policy is comprehensive in terms of content, certain aspects/responsibilities of CSOs are

located in different sections of the document. This may make the document difficult for stakeholders to read and fully understand the responsibilities and activities they are required to abide by.

## **Facility Allocation Policy**

### **1. Review and refresh the enforcement policies and procedures, including:**

- a. Implementing a mechanism for CSOs and Ratepayer groups to self-report instances of permitted non-use
- b. Implementing seasonal signage at each City facility, outlining when the facilities are permitted, and contact information for reporting instances of permitted non-use
- c. Refreshing the policies to outline increasing penalties for permitted non-use

Stakeholders expressed mixed views on punishing CSO's and Ratepayer groups for instances of permitted non-use. From the City's perspective, it is operationally difficult and infeasible to monitor all of its facilities for instances of permitted non-use. By implementing a system of graduated and clearly defined penalties for permitted non-use, the City is able to achieve a "middle of the road" solution. To satisfy the larger CSO's, their volunteers are not penalized, but rather the organization is punished. To satisfy smaller CSOs, they are given a clear method by which they can report repeat offenders.

### **2. Include a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section in the FA Policy or online**

While the current policy is comprehensive in terms of content, the relevant information for stakeholders is found in different sections of the document. This may make the document difficult for stakeholders to read and gather the information they are looking for.

## **Financial Impact**

As there are components within the recommendation that require the acquisition of online tools, a formal capital budget request will need to come forward after consultation with the Office of the Chief Information Officer on feasible options.

Implementation of these recommendations may exacerbate resource capacity constraints, and to maintain a high level of service and responsiveness, additional resources may also be required to support the implementation of these recommendations.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

None.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the comprehensive review by the external consultant, staff recommend that Committee accept the proposed changes to the CSO and FA policies, and the inclusion of the Registered Ratepayer Association in the CSO policy section 7.

**For more information**, please contact:

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Anna Dara, Director, Recreation Services, extension 8028

Gus Michaels, Deputy City Manager, Community Services, extension 8735

## **Attachments**

1. City of Vaughan Review of CSO/FA Policies – Final Report
2. Community Service Organization Policy - FINAL
3. Facility Allocation Policy - FINAL
4. City of Vaughan Review of CSO and FA Policies – Summary
5. Appendix A – Process and Sample Constitution

## **Prepared by**

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## **Approved by**



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## **Reviewed by**



Nick Spensieri, City Manager