
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SERVICES FOR FINANCIALLY DISADVANTAGED
RESIDENTS**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council approve funding for the expansion of the Recreation Credit criteria as outlined in the attached report.

REPORT

The Parks Recreation and Culture Commission, at its meeting held on 2010 December 8, received and adopted the attached report , approving in principle an expansion of the Recreation Credit criteria pending funding approval from the Executive Committee and Council.

The Executive Committee, at its meeting held on 2011 January 20, received the report and requested that Council support funding for the expansion of the recreation credit criteria to accommodate single low income adults and people with a prolonged disability approved by Canada Revenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor N.M. Volkow
Chair

Councillor P. Calendino
Vice Chair

Councillor P. McDonell
Member

Copied to: City Manager Dir. Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE COMMISSION

FROM: DIRECTOR
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL
SERVICES

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SERVICES FOR FINANCIALLY DISADVANTAGED
RESIDENTS**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** approval in principle be given to the expansion of the Recreation Credit criteria as outlined in this report pending funding approval from the Executive Committee of Council.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Community Development and Social Issues Committee.
3. **THAT** a thank you letter be sent to Burnaby Community Connections (BCC) for their assistance in verifying income levels.

REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Commission with a review of the services and programs for financially disadvantaged residents of Burnaby. The report will be in three parts with the first part addressing the Recreation Credit Program that provides subsidy to people on low income and will include recommendations to expand Recreation Credit qualifying criteria. Part two highlights free and low cost programs and services, while part three provides an overview of the partnerships that help increase affordable leisure programs in the community.

PART 1. REVIEW OF 2009 RECREATION CREDIT PROGRAM**A. Background**

The Burnaby Recreation Credit Program is a valuable service that assists people with financial barriers to access leisure services and has been available since 1993. Burnaby service providers, who work with people with financial barriers, compliment the Recreation Credit program as it gives choices of activities and funding to access most leisure activities rather than discounts.

Recreation Credit is used to purchase passes to fitness, weight room, swimming, aquafit, indoor cycling or skating or to register in the many programs offered by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department.

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Attachment #1 provides the background and qualifying criteria of the Burnaby Recreation Credit Program.

Recreation Credit Allocated and Used

Year	Credit amount Per person	Total # Approved	Total Credit Distributed	Credit Used
2008	\$150.00	10,163	1.5 million	\$804,911
2009	\$154.00	10,543	1.6 million	\$850,477

2009 Recreation Credit Program Usage

	2008	2009
Total credit used for registered programs	\$432,261	\$445,283
Total credit used for passes	\$372,650	\$405,194

B. Recreation Credit Verification Process

The Recreation Credit Program utilizes the Provincial and Federal Ministries' financial aid workers to verify applications and submit those on behalf of their clients who receive financial assistance.

As low income applicants do not have financial aid workers, Burnaby Community Connections is contracted to verify these applications. The City provides an annual grant through the Executive Committee of Council for this service. Burnaby Community Connections continues to provide professional and efficient administration of this important service.

C. Group Recreation Credit

Since 1997, Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services has offered Group Recreation Credit to Burnaby based organizations that support vulnerable populations. Group Recreation Credit can be used to purchase admissions for swimming, skating, weight training, aerobics, aquafit, and indoor cycling but cannot be used for registered programs.

In 2009 there were 25 community groups that were allocated Recreation Credit.

2009 Disbursement of Group Recreation Credit

Total amount of Group Credit allocated	\$12,985
Total amount of Group Credit used	\$11,196

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D. Proposed expansion of Recreation Credit qualifying criteria

A survey (**Attachment #2**) of the existing leisure subsidy programs offered at other municipalities indicated that, other than Burnaby, only Richmond has restrictions on the qualifying criteria for people on low income. Richmond provides assistance only to children whose families are low income or receive financial assistance from the government.

Two municipalities have qualifying criteria for people with disabilities, Richmond and New Westminster. These municipalities provide a discount for people with prolonged disabilities. All municipalities' subsidy programs, other than Burnaby, are based on a discount model with restrictions on the type of programs eligible for the discounts.

1. Recommendation to add low income single adults to qualifying criteria

It is recommended that the qualifying criteria be expanded to include low income individuals rather than limiting the criteria to only low income families with children.

The 2006 Canada Census statistics indicate the Burnaby population for low income unattached individuals 15 years and over and low income couples with no children totals 21,165 people. Of the 21,165 people on low income, there are 16,085 individuals between the target ages of 20-64 years. The credit usage pattern over the past few years indicates that approximately 20% of the low income population that qualify will apply for Recreation Credit, which will result in approximately 3,200 people or 2,145 additional applications as a single application sometimes covers two people in a family. However, in the first year it is anticipated that there will be 1,000 applications as the change in eligibility will not be widely known and historical patterns support a gradual increase in applications. Consequently, over the subsequent years, staff estimate approximately 2,145 additional applications will be processed

2. Recommendation to increase access to the Recreation Credit Program for people with prolonged disabilities as approved by Canada Revenue

The second recommendation for a revision to the current Recreation Credit Program's qualifying criteria is to increase access for people with prolonged disabilities as determined and approved by Canada Revenue. Under this recommendation, a person with a prolonged disability would be able to use the federal disability non taxable amount indicated on their Canada Revenue Income Tax returns to deduct this amount from their maximum gross income.

In 2009 the maximum non taxable amount was \$7,196. This amount varies from year to year. If the individual is approved by Canada Revenue for the prolonged disability allowable, a letter of approval is sent to the individual by Canada Revenue and will indicate the amount to be used for the qualifying criteria for the Recreation Credit Program. This amount would be deducted from their maximum gross income making it easier to meet the LICO guidelines.

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It is difficult to obtain current statistics on people with prolonged disabilities due to confidentiality concerns. However, according to the Statistic Canada Participation Limitation Survey completed in 2006, staff estimates there are 29,800 Burnaby residents with a prolonged disability that limits their day to day activities. Based on that survey, it is estimated there would be 1,500 persons with a disability in Burnaby that may qualify. Of those people, 25% or 375 people will have low income and result in an additional 250 applications. Staff estimate there will be 100 additional applications in the first year and this will grow to 250 over the coming years.

3. Summary of proposed expansion of Recreation Credit qualifying criteria

The following is the cost estimate if the proposed expansion of the Recreation Credit qualifying criteria is approved for single low income adults and for people with a prolonged disability approved by Canada Revenue:

Burnaby Community Connections:

1100 additional applications	\$4,400
- income verification	

Department's Additional Costs:

1100 additional applications	\$ 6,800
- processing	
Impact to program costs	<u>\$25,000</u>
Subtotal	\$31,800

Total	\$36,200
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Options were explored to offset the Department's increased cost of \$31,800. The option with the least impact to the target population and to facilities' budgets is the recommendation to eliminate recreation credit use for private lessons. People will continue to have the opportunity to participate in semi-private and group lessons.

It is further recommended that the Executive Committee of Council consider increasing the BCC annual grant to address the projected increase in costs required to verify Recreation Credit application forms. The grant to BCC in 2010 was \$28,340. If the grant to BCC is increased by \$4,400 it would bring their total grant to \$32,740 in the coming year.

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E. Time Line for proposed expansion of Recreation Credit qualifying criteria

If the proposed expansion of the Recreation Credit qualifying criteria is approved for single, low income adults and for people with a prolonged disability approved by Canada Revenue, staff recommend that the revisions be implemented in March 2011. This will allow time to promote the changes to clients who use Recreation Credit and to the outside verification agencies.

Staff will continue to closely monitor the cost of BCC and department staff verifying and processing Recreation Credit applications to determine if further efficiencies can be realized. If approved, staff will monitor the changes and report back to Commission with a review of the program in December 2011.

PART 2. FREE & LOW COST PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services offers a number of diverse low and no cost programs and services to reduce barriers to participation in leisure activities.

Low and No Cost Opportunities

Indoor Pools:	Loonie swims & free swims
Arenas:	Loonie skate/rentals
Senior Centres:	Variety of drop in activities and special events
Recreation Centres:	Drop in gym times, Family gym times
Community Services:	Drop in gym times, Family gym times
Cultural Services:	Eye Go to the Arts, Free family art gallery workshops
Special Events:	Healthy Kids Preschool Fair, Multicultural Festival, Wesburn Days Willingdon Community Days, Kensington Fair, Movies at Civic Square, Santa Claus Parade, Discovery Days, Symphony in the Park, Seasonal Celebration
Summer Services:	18 playgrounds offered a range of free activities and events, four outdoor pools offered free and Loonie swims and Friday Night Teen Swims

PART 3. PARTNERSHIPS

Department staff collaborates with many community organizations to help address the need for inclusive and affordable leisure programs.

Other collaborative initiatives are outlined below:

Schools

Increase access to low cost recreation services in the neighbourhoods by reducing barriers such as financial and transportation issues.

Burnaby's Newcomers Centre

The centre has a Burnaby Early Childhood Development initiative that focuses on the settlement program for refugee families. Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services offers financial and in kind support for a preschool program that operates at the same time as the refugee parents are receiving assistance with community resources to assist with their settlement in Burnaby. The preschool program operates from the relocated Eastburn Centre.

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Seniors Societies

Provide a wide variety of subsidized programs, services and events.

Youth Services

Staff liaise with community organizations such as Burnaby School District for gym space and Odyssey for the provision of drug and alcohol counseling and resources. Fraser Health Authority provides youth clinics in our youth centres which includes services and resources on health and wellness for youth. SOGO grants funded the Active Friday program in 2009 so youth could participate in a variety of physical activities such as fitness, yoga, hiking etc.

Staff supports the Kidsport Burnaby nonprofit organization to increase access to organized sport leagues for financially disadvantaged children and youth. In 2009 \$18,220 was allocated to 200 Burnaby youth to help subsidize the sport registration fees up to \$100 per person per season.

In 2009, Burnaby Moresports completed its second year of operation. This successful program is made possible through collaboration with Burnaby School District, South Burnaby Neighbourhood House, Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services and grants from United Way, Vancouver Foundation and Coast Capital. Burnaby Moresports has two program components; a free sport program for children from grades 2-5 (150 participants) and a Youth Leadership program (20 participants). The sustainability of this project is dependent on grants and sponsorships and it is hoped that financial support will continue so this program will be available in future years.

Conclusion

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department has the mandate to provide a range of physical, cultural and social opportunities to support healthy lifestyles of residents in our diverse and vibrant city. With 25% of Burnaby's population living on low income, staff continue to look for new opportunities by collaborating with community organizations, business and other government agencies to provide services and activities that are inclusive and reduce barriers to participation. The proposed expansion of the Recreation Credit criteria will allow more residents to participate in a healthy lifestyle and ultimately contribute to the overall health and well being of the City of Burnaby.



Dave Ellenwood
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

CL:km

Attachments (2)

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BACKGROUND OF BURNABY RECREATION CREDIT PROGRAM

The program was implemented in 1993. In 1997 the Recreation Credit Program was expanded to include low income families with children, low income seniors and those receiving CPP/LTD (Canada Pension Plan / Long Term Disability) whose income is in the range of the guidelines of the national Council of Poverty Rates and Statistics Canada LICO (Low Income Cut Off)* and community groups who support Burnaby's vulnerable populations whose ability to pay for recreation is limited.

Individuals who qualify for the Burnaby Recreation Credit have their financial need verified through the Ministry of Housing & Social Development, (MHSD), Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) (income support for government assisted refugees). If they are qualifying as a low income family with children or a low income senior 65+ or are receiving CPP/LTD, they are verified through Burnaby Community Connections. Their eligibility is based on the most recent year's available income tax and residency. Residency is verified by presentation of a telephone or hydro bill showing their Burnaby address.

To apply for the Recreation Credit Program people pick up a Burnaby Recreation Credit application form from any Burnaby Community Centre, Burnaby Community Schools, Burnaby Ministry of Housing & Social Development or Ministry of Children & Family Development offices or Burnaby Community Connections. The applications can also be downloaded from the city web site.

The annual Recreation Credit amount was changed in 2008 from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

Recreation Credit can be used for either program registrations or admissions at any Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services facilities with some exceptions such as the golf courses and the Burnaby Village Museum. Promotion of the Burnaby Recreation Credit Program is through the Leisure Guide, Community Centre Newsletters, Burnaby Schools, MCFD, MHSD, RAP, community organizations such as Burnaby Family Life Institute and South Burnaby Neighbourhood House, outreach to community groups, ESL classes and at many community events. The brochure that explains the program is available in the 6 non-official dominant languages (based on the 2006 Canada Census data) and English and is also available on the web site.

*The LICO guidelines are developed by The National Council of Welfare (NCW). The NCW is an arm's length advisory body to the Minister of Human Resources. The guidelines provide a measurement of poverty and are used by institutions and agencies to assess low income families.

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Municipal Recreation Subsidy Program

City	Type of subsidy	Discount	\$/Credit	People with Disabilities	Qualifying Criteria	Other
Richmond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines ▪ One program per child every 3 months 	Yes	No	Yes People with permanent disability receive 50% discount on drop-in programs - some restrictions	Residents that are low income families or receive financial assistance Subsidy is only for the children not adults	Family pays a portion, City subsidizes a portion (amount varies, but never 100% free)
Surrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines -Full Facility Access Pass for drop-in swimming & skating (services worth approx. \$600/family) customer pays one Admin fee of \$12.25/family ▪ Registered programs - pay 25% of cost 	Yes	Yes	No	Residents on low income or receive financial assistance	
Port Coquitlam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines ▪ Family is allowed(per person) one program or one membership @ 50% off per quarter 	Yes	No	No	Residents on low income or receive financial assistance	

Burnaby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines Recreation Credit Program ▪ \$154 / person/fiscal year ▪ Used for registered programs and/or passes 	No	Yes	No	Low income families with children, low income seniors 65+, people receiving financial assistance or are government assisted refugees	Loonie swims/skates offered weekly Free swim programs offered in the summer at outdoor pools
Vancouver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines Customer is given a Leisure Access Card which provides free admission to public swimming & skating ▪ Lessons are discounted 50% 	Yes	No	No	Residents on low income or receive financial assistance	
Coquitlam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines ▪ Choice of: ▪ Drop in programs - 50 free drop-ins per year ▪ 50% off regular programs up to 4 ▪ 2 free program registrations ▪ Based on per person 	Yes	No	No	Residence on low income or receive financial assistance	

<p>New Westminster</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines Lessons and drop in programs are subsidized 50% ▪ Access Pass - for persons on a disability pension (allows for drop-in admission to pool/arena) at a cost of \$2.15 (\$5.50 regular) ▪ Mental Health program clients - (allows for drop-in admission to pool/arena) at a cost of \$2.10 (\$5.50 regular admission) 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes for people on permanent disability receive a discount drop-in rate</p>	<p>Residence on low income or receive financial assistance</p>	<p>Loonie swim - Regular season - once a week on Sun with an extra Loonie swim on the weekend in summer Outdoor pool - free public swims on weekends at both pool locations Loonie Youth Swim once a month at CGP and once a week at Outdoor Pools 3 Loonie skates a week (one weekday day time (adults) and two evening public skates</p>
<p>North Vancouver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria based on LICO Guidelines ▪ Different options of subsidy available. Customer may receive one of the following options: 1. Discount-Provide a max of 75% discount on programs per season up to a maximum of \$100 per person per year and up to 50% discount on passes per person per season. Eligibility based on ability to pay at the discretion of staff 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Residents on low income or receiving financial assistance</p>	

North Vancouver (continued)	<p>2. Issue 10 free passes for swim/skate/person. If used up before year end they can receive another 20 passes</p> <p>3. Customer receives \$1.00/drop in to weight room pool or fitness class</p>					
Township of Langley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer provides most recent income tax. ▪ Criteria is based on Canada Low Income Cut Off Guidelines Subsidy & Discount - Receive 75% discount on registered programs and pass to pool/weight room up to \$150/year/person 	Yes	Yes		Residents on low income or who receive financial assistance from the government	