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Fitness Centres Update Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2025-13

Department(s): Recreation and Culture Services

Author(s): Meaghan Graham, Manager, Recreation Services

Meeting Date: March 17, 2025

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Fitness Centres Update dated March 17, 2025 be received; and,
2. That conversion of the contract Fitness Programmer position to a permanent full time Fitness Programmer position be approved; and,
- 3.. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

This report presents an evaluation of the newly established fitness centre, at Ray Twinney Recreation Complex, as well as the ongoing fitness centre at the Magna Centre. The report serves to provide Council with an overall indication of the success of operations as well as to seek approval for a staffing model that will ensure long term viability of operations. Key performance indicators (KPIs), including membership growth, usage statistics, community engagement, and financial performance, highlights the positive impact the fitness centre has had on both the community's health and well-being.

Background

The Town of Newmarket opened its first ever fitness centre, at the Magna Centre in 2015. The operation proved to be a success quickly with membership levels and overall use of the facility far exceeding expectations. As with most recreational based services, the COVID pandemic created significant challenges with sharp declines in memberships

experienced across the industry. The Town of Newmarket fitness centre bounced quickly, matching pre COVID membership levels and overall participation within one year post pandemic. Given this success, Council approved the conversion of interior space at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex for the development of a second fitness centre operation in 2023. The new centre at Ray Twinney, opened in the spring of 2024.

Discussion

This report serves to update Council on the overall success of fitness centre operations, while also seeking Council approval on a staffing model to sustain this level of success.

Key Performance Indicators

The following statistics are commonly used in the fitness industry to note success of fitness centre operations:

Total Number of Memberships: 6,250 Members

Prior to the opening of Ray Twinney fitness centre, there were approximately 4,000 members of the single fitness centre located at the Magna Centre. There are currently over 6,250 members of Town of Newmarket fitness centres – the highest level of membership experienced since the Town of Newmarket embarked on fitness centre operations. It should be noted that the memberships are not specified by facility – when you get a Town of Newmarket fitness centre membership, you are able to use either facility. Given that Ray Twinney is a smaller centre, with less offerings for Group Fitness and lacking the walking track, the level of public interest in memberships exceeded overall expectations.

Members per Square Foot: 1.48 Members

The size of a fitness centre has a direct impact on the number of individuals that can be served. Typically, it is considered very high if membership reaches 1 member per square foot. Given Newmarket's approach to an all-inclusive membership experience, (access to additional amenities – detailed under Service Level below) we are able to surpass the industry average having achieved 1.48 members per square foot.

Total Visits to Fitness Centres in 2024: 117,158

Prior to the opening of Ray Twinney, the highest number of visits to the Magna Centre in a single year was approximately 80,000. The 8 months of operation in 2024, enable an over 50% increase in the total number of visits – demonstrating that more opportunities existed for members and residents of Newmarket to remain active and healthy through participation.

Hour of Operations:

The fitness centres are open 7 days per week (with at least one of the facilities open every day with the exception of Christmas Day and New Year's Day). The doors are open from 6 AM to 10 PM.

Service Levels:

A fitness membership includes access to the fitness centres, Magna walking track, unlimited participation in group fitness/aqua fitness classes, admission to all public and lane swims, admission to active drop-in programs (ie. pickleball/badminton) and access to personal training (for an additional fee). Members have expressed satisfaction with the value and variety of services offered. However, offering so many different services creates significant demand on time for staff to address member related concerns and issues.

Financial Performance: + 50% increase in total revenue

With the addition of the Ray Twinney Recreation complex, overall revenues for fitness memberships have increased by just over 50%.

Consultation

Human Resources has been consulted.

Conclusion

Fitness centre operations have been a remarkable success, demonstrating growth in membership, high levels of engagement, positive financial performance, and significant improvements in the health and well-being of community members. The centres have met or exceeded expectations across all key performance indicators, proving to be a valuable asset for the community.

In order to continue to provide the level of service enjoyed by the community, and to meet new and emerging fitness trends, and to achieve the ongoing financial benefits, Council is encouraged to implement the staffing structure as outlined in the Human Resources section.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Customer-First Way of Life

Human Resource Considerations

There is currently one full time permanent Fitness Programmer, and a second contract Fitness Programmer. The Fitness Programmers are responsible for determining and scheduling programming, management of casual staff members, monitoring to provide a safe experience, addressing member and customer needs and concerns, and ensuring that membership administration (ie. processing payments) occurs. The second contract

programmer position was added while overall operations were examined, and staff had an opportunity to evaluate the workload demands and verify that Ray Twinney Fitness Centre was in fact a successful operation.

There is a considerable amount of administration that goes into management of membership accounts. Members are able to pay annually or monthly for memberships. As well members are able to sign up every single day of operation. Managing over 6,250 accounts requires a great deal of time. Additionally, ensuring that members needs are met and programming meets expectations increases with the addition of new members.

The presence of two fitness programmers has also enabled staff to increase the total number of ancillary program options available to members including more group fitness classes and enhanced personal training experiences.

Staff are recommending that the second contract Fitness Programmer be converted to a permanent full-time position given the overall success of operations and the workload demands created.

Budget Impact

To convert the contract position to a full time position represents a change in the benefits calculation – the salary itself is consistent between positions. As such, the total budget impact is approximately \$13,000 annually. This additional expense is easily offset by the additional revenues realized through the operation of the new fitness centre at Ray Twinney.

Attachments

None.

Approval for Submission

Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture

Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

Report Contact

For more information on this report, contact cservice@newmarket.ca.