KPMG

Town of Carleton Place

Recreation and Culture Department Service Delivery and Fee Review

Presentation to Council

—

August 27, 2024

Project overview

Project Objectives – *How will we define success?*

The Corporation of the Town of Carleton Place engaged KPMG to provide consulting services to perform a service delivery and fee review of its Recreation and Culture Department. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Evaluate the current Service Delivery Model, staffing levels, and fee structure of the department.
2. Review and recommend opportunities for creating efficiencies through digitalization and revised administrative or operational processes to create efficiencies and maximize facility rental opportunities.
3. Identify any funding opportunities.
4. Review the current governance structure.

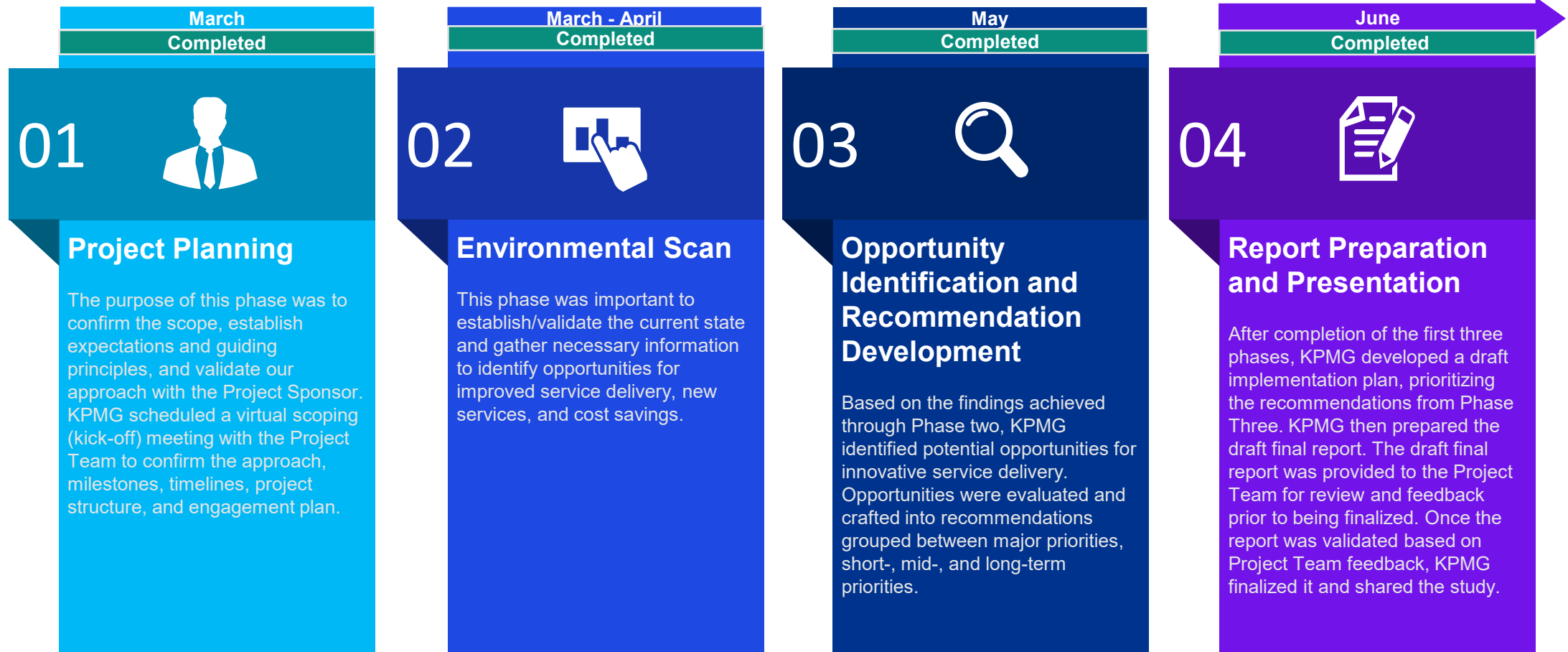## Project Drivers – *What problem are we trying to solve?*

We understand that over the years, any changes to systems, processes, and procedures have occurred in an ad hoc fashion. With a new Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, changes to the cost sharing agreement, and recent population growth, the Town wanted a structured approach to service delivery to meet current and future community needs. Based on Council sentiment, the Town underwent a comprehensive service delivery and fee review to ensure its Recreation and Culture Department was operating efficiently and effectively, and address any gaps in service delivery. Through this review, the Town looked to confirm its financial sustainability, optimal use of facilities, and the achievement of its objectives outlined in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

Project phases

Our approach to the project was divided into four phases. Each phase was focused on the achievement of specific, tangible objectives and activities.

March	March - April	May	June
Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed

01

Project Planning

The purpose of this phase was to confirm the scope, establish expectations and guiding principles, and validate our approach with the Project Sponsor. KPMG scheduled a virtual scoping (kick-off) meeting with the Project Team to confirm the approach, milestones, timelines, project structure, and engagement plan.

02

Environmental Scan

This phase was important to establish/validate the current state and gather necessary information to identify opportunities for improved service delivery, new services, and cost savings.

03

Opportunity Identification and Recommendation Development

Based on the findings achieved through Phase two, KPMG identified potential opportunities for innovative service delivery. Opportunities were evaluated and crafted into recommendations grouped between major priorities, short-, mid-, and long-term priorities.

04

Report Preparation and Presentation

After completion of the first three phases, KPMG developed a draft implementation plan, prioritizing the recommendations from Phase Three. KPMG then prepared the draft final report. The draft final report was provided to the Project Team for review and feedback prior to being finalized. Once the report was validated based on Project Team feedback, KPMG finalized it and shared the study.
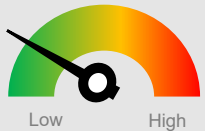
Summary of opportunities

Through a collaborative exercise, KPMG and the Town's Project Team identified, ranked, and prioritized opportunities for improvement. This section summarizes the top ten opportunities, followed by a summary of additional and underway opportunities.
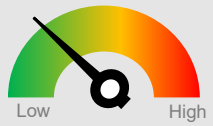
The top ten opportunities are:

1 Operationalize the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

2 Establish a formal performance management framework

3 Update the current organizational structure

4 Centralize or outsource service delivery of shared tasks

5 Explore digitalization options

6 Develop a user fee framework

7 Improve overall external communication

8 Implement a structured approach to manage client feedback

9 Consider timesheet best practices

10 Develop a strategy for professional development and training
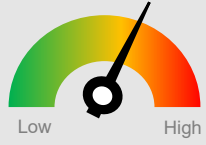
1. Operationalize the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP), implemented in March 2023, serves as the guiding document for the Department. While the PRCMP includes 102 recommendations for improvement, the Town is yet to socialize the document and develop action plans for implementation. Limited staff time and resources and conflicting priorities have attributed to the PRCMP being largely unaddressed.

See Appendix 6.2 for a full list of recommendations outlined in the PRCMP.

Disruption Gauge

Low   High

Operationalize the recommendations outlined in the PRCMP (Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan).

Description and rationale

The Department should review recommendations outlined in the PRCMP and conduct a working session with Council to prioritize recommendations and develop an implementation plan to ensure timely and effective achievement of the objectives. Based on the outcome of the working session with Council, business plans should be prepared for each project with specific assignments, timelines, accountabilities, and other components of a comprehensive business plan.

Developing a business plan will assist the Department in guiding operational activities, organizing tasks, and managing stakeholders. The plan should be developed based on findings from both this report and the PRCMP detailing what activities should be delivered, desired outcomes, staffing and resource requirements, implementation timelines, and a process for monitoring progress. Recommendations outlined in the PRCMP are organized into short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (4-7 years) and long-term (7-10+ years) recommendations to gauge implementation sequence and timeline. This information, accompanied by resource planning internally will help determine which recommendation should be pursued, with what resources, and to what deadline.

Note – PRMP Priorities table summarizes the number of recommendations as per the PRCMP organized by priority category and estimate timeline

PRCMP Priorities*	Short term	Medium term	Long Term
Legislation and policy	9	4	-
Parks and open space	13	13	11
Indoor facilities and service	4	6	1
Culture	4	1	3
Program and service delivery	8	2	-
Management of projects, staff and financing	8	8	1
Monitoring	1	3	2
TOTAL	**47**	**37**	**18**

- Clarify the strategic direction to guide decision-making, aligning both internal and external stakeholders towards common goals.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations by assigning accountability for achieving Department objectives.
- Monitor, reflect, and improve on departmental performance relative to goals.

Key considerations

- Resource allocation will be vital in ensuring the success of any recommendations implemented. The Department should identify its internal capacity and capabilities to embark on the recommendations before recruiting talent from other departments or external service providers. Regardless, each project should aim to be adequately resourced before implementation.
- Implementation scorecards are a leading practice among strategic project managers to objectively monitor progress. Information captured in scorecards also supports reporting to leadership/Council/steering committee(s) as the project unfolds.

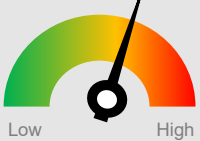# 2. Establish a formal performance management framework

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices
The Recreation and Culture Department does not have defined and formalized key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics to measure success and progress towards goals and assist in decision-making. Additionally, it was noted that without KPIs, it is difficult to track where additional resources may be required for increased efficiency. A report card to Council is prepared and reported annually however the information is provided at a high-level.	Low High	Each of the comparators interviewed shared a different approach to tracking KPIs. While most comparators do not formally track or report out on metrics, one comparator noted that formal KPIs are tracked and reported within their Department and they are also in the process of developing a dashboard specifically for council reporting. While not all comparators report KPIs to senior leadership, all comparators acknowledged that monitoring performance metrics will lead to efficiencies and improved decision-making.

Establish a formal performance management framework to monitor progress on recreation and culture activities.

Description and rationale	Benefits
The data derived from implementing a formal performance management framework can work to support Council decisions, set policy, evaluate programs, support budget recommendations, identify trends, and develop data dashboards. If implemented, the framework can reinforce big-picture strategic planning by encouraging goal-setting in multiple areas, such as financial performance, customer service, operational efficiencies, and promote innovation and learning.	• Ensures organizational/departmental objectives align with strategic priorities. • Enables informed decision-making based on real-time accurate data. • Establishes clear accountability for performance outcomes. • Facilitates ongoing evaluation and adaption of improvements. • Benchmarks against past performance and industry standards.

To enhance the administration and assessment of recreation and culture services, the framework should monitor a set of KPIs that are reported to management on a periodic basis. Overall, the performance management framework should:

- Ensure KPIs are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound)
- Outline data collection procedures
- Outline reporting procedures (i.e., cadence for reporting to management)
- Contain a process to review the effectiveness of KPIs on a periodic basis.

A performance management framework allows the Department to quantify and assess areas for improvements against key strategic priorities and curate solutions to enhance performance and continuous improvement. The Department should consider how a corporate performance management framework would integrate with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP).

Key considerations

- Involve key stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process; and develop comprehensive communication plans to explain the purpose and intention of the project.
- Ensure monitoring and reporting on KPIs does not retract from staff ability to carry out core service delivery activities (i.e., avoid manual tracking and reporting processes which contribute to administrative tasks).
- Ensure the accuracy, integrity and reliability of data sources by considering the necessary controls are in place.
- Consider how current technology (such as online booking tools) can be utilized before looking to onboard new solutions.

3. Update the current organizational structure

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices

Given the growth of the Town and evolving service standards of the Department, many internal stakeholders suggested reviewing the span of control of the Manager of Recreation and Culture. Opportunities for delegation from the Manager of Recreation and Culture to Team Leads and other staff were suggested to enable a greater focus on strategic initiatives at the management level. Staff capacity was widely acknowledged as a barrier within the Department. Challenges such as managing front desk duties and staffing the arena during summer months were examples of areas that require additional support.

Disruption Gauge — Low / High

All comparators selected for service delivery benchmarking have comparable Departments led by a director. Despite the relatively large size of the comparators, this is generally indicative of the strategic priority assigned to recreation services.

Update the current organizational structure to align leadership and staffing levels with the long-term vision for the Department. The Manager of Recreation and Culture delegates operational tasks to the respective Team Leads.

Benefits

- Alignment between staff capacity and service levels will ensure service quality is maintained.
- An appropriate span of control for the Department's leadership enables greater focus on strategic priorities, goal setting, and bigger-picture objectives.
- Appropriate leadership and capacity support positive morale and reduce risk of burnout among staff.

Description and rationale

3.a. Update the organizational structure: To position the Department for long-term success, the organizational structure should enable a balance of strategic oversight and operational focus. Based on the current state assessment, the Department appears to have a wide span of control that has contributed to a focus leaning towards operational matters. The Department should update its organizational structure to ensure the span of control allows management to provide strategic oversight and staff to manage daily operations. KPMG has proposed short-term and long-term organizational models on the following slide.

3.b. Conduct a staffing resource assessment to align staff capacity with service level expectations:

Staffing levels may need to be adjusted based on the following:

- Almost all stakeholders noted that the Department requires additional resources to meet service level expectations. Additionally, it was noted that the arena ice pads were kept open in the summer months without a corresponding adjustment to staffing levels.
- Front desk at Carambeck Community Centre and Carleton Place Aquatic Centre: Both facilities do not have assigned front desk staff to manage customer inquiries, payments, and other front desk responsibilities. Given that the facilities are co-located, there is an opportunity to assess assigning a staff member dedicated to providing shared front desk services.
- Developing and implementing PRCMP recommendations (opportunity #1) will require dedicated staff time and resources on a project-by-project basis.

Management will have to balance additional staffing requirements with other opportunities in this report. For example, centralization (opportunity #4) may free up overlapping resources, resulting in increased capacity. Similarly, digitization (opportunity #5) and time sheet management (opportunity #9) may result in moving away from manual/redundant processes also potentially resulting in increased staff capacity.

Key considerations

- Any high-level organizational restructuring should be completed before engaging in detailed workforce planning.
- Consider opportunities for delegation by assigning the appropriate levels of authority to each role and empower staff to make decisions where appropriate.
- Consider reviewing job titles and descriptions to ensure alignment between actual duties performed and objectives of the position. See slide 18 for a sample position management framework.
- A well-designed organizational structure should have clear succession planning channels with opportunities for leadership development.
- Cross-training employees across service areas can reduce the risks of bottlenecks and delays in the event of absences and turnover.

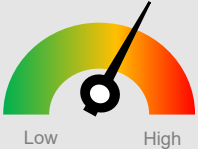# 4. Centralize/outsource service delivery of shared tasks

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices
During stakeholder consultation, it was noted that different departments providing similar services causes confusion around roles and responsibilities. Services discussed include facility maintenance, grass cutting, fleet management and snow plowing, to name a few. It was also noted the maintenance of recreation facilities and equipment could be improved and better managed.	Low High	Coordinating recreation events/programs and maintenance of recreation facilities and equipment is a common challenge faced by municipalities. While some comparators have centralized all maintenance within the same department as recreation services (e.g., City of Brockville Operations Department), others rely on the coordination between departments to manage recreation facilities (e.g., City of Clarence-Rockland Community Development Department and Operations Department). Regardless of the organizational structure, clear accountabilities and effective collaboration play a pivotal role in meeting service standards.

Centralize (or outsource) service delivery of shared tasks to improve process efficiency and enable specialized support.

Description and rationale

Based on the size and growth of the Town, there is an opportunity to consolidate some shared services into a centralized model. Some areas to consider centralizing include:

- **Facility maintenance**: Recreation facilities are maintained by the Recreation and Culture Department whereas all other facilities are maintained by the Property Maintenance Department. However, depending on the nature of the maintenance required, the Property Maintenance Department also provides maintenance services for recreation facilities (e.g. HVAC). While coordination has improved in recent months, the opportunity to effectively centralize all responsibility and accountability for all facility maintenance within Property Maintenance Department remains.
- **Fleet and equipment management**: Currently, both the Recreation and Culture Department and Public Works Department manage their own fleet and equipment. Efforts and some progress has been made to have the Recreation fleet being maintained by the Public Works Department however process flows and procedures could be streamlined. Centralizing fleet and equipment under one umbrella under Public Works will likely result in:
  - Increased efficiency: instead of each department managing its own vehicles, a centralized department can oversee all vehicles, ensuring they are used and maintained optimally.
  - Improved maintenance: A centralized department can better manage vehicle maintenance, ensuring that all vehicles are in good working order and reducing the risk of breakdowns.
- **Grass cutting and snow removal**: Currently grass cutting and snow removal are decentralized between Recreation and Culture, Public Works, and Property Maintenance Departments. There is an opportunity to centralize these activities under either Public Works and/or Property Maintenance Department based on resource capacity. The Town should also consider options to outsource grass cutting service delivery if it results in cost savings while maintaining the Town's service standards.

Benefits

- Improves efficiency by consolidating and streamlining services resulting in reduced duplication of efforts.
- Increases specialized support by allowing experts to provide higher quality service and allows other staff to focus on their core duties.
- Saves costs by consolidating services and achieving economies of scale.

Key considerations

- Use tools such as RACI matrices (responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed) to clearly define the role of each stakeholder in key processes.
- Consider any changes to the Town's organizational structure when centralizing services. The Department(s) responsible for these services should be evaluated for capacity and governance to effectively complete their assignments.
- Align skill levels appropriately. Areas requiring specialized support may not currently have sufficient capacity to centralize services given the current staffing complement. Where appropriate, consider outsourcing.
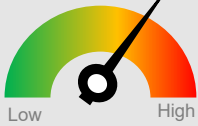- In any areas where processes and roles are changed, policies/procedures/by-laws should be updated.

5. Explore digitization options

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading Practices
The Department has a high reliance on manual processes and procedures. The Town does have a recreation system (ACTIVENet), however many stakeholders believe that not all functionalities have been explored and ACTIVENet also does not integrate with the Finance ERP (enterprise resource planning) system. Based on the Town's plans to seek a RFP for an updated recreation software, there is an opportunity to redefine the Department's modernization objectives.	Low High	Municipalities utilizing ACTIVENet provided positive feedback, highlighting its useful capabilities for reporting, data tracking, booking, and communication. However, many comparators indicated that ACTIVENet does drive some inefficiencies (e.g., it does not integrate with the financial systems). All comparator municipalities have online booking tools for their programs. Most comparators noted the necessity of adopting additional technology to enhance efficiency and effectiveness within their Departments.

Explore digitization options to enhance service delivery, support administrative tasks, and enhance customer experience.

Description and rationale

As the Town looks to replace/upgrade its recreation software, the Department should first develop a list of functional and non-functional requirements which will serve as criteria when evaluating software options.
Based on internal stakeholder feedback, and comparator best practices, some of the requirements that should be considered include:

- User registration: Users should be able to view schedules, availability and make reservations for both programs and facilities online.
- Payment processing: Issue invoice/refunds and receive payments online.
- Reporting: the software should be able to generate reports based on the needs in the performance management framework (opportunity #2)
- Integration: The software should integrate with the Finance ERP, perform monthly journal entries (map GL entries), and address the issue where payments are received online without knowledge of Recreation staff.

Other digitization initiatives:

- A project is currently underway with PSD CityWide to enhance asset management and work order management processes. This project should incorporate aspects of recreation maintenance and asset management. The Town's ideal future state is to have a citizen-facing portal to report damages/incidents with mobile technology available for field staff to manage tasks and reduce paper-driven activities (e.g., actioning work orders, photographing, logging inspections). This initiative will also inform asset management efforts and provide data for KPIs.
- A best practice identified through comparator interviews is using geocaching solutions to measure event attendance.

Benefits

- Comprehensive online booking for both programs and facilities reduce reliance on manual processes and improve customer experience.
- Improved integration between Recreation and Culture and Finance.
- Improved reporting and analytics to support informed decision-making.

Key Considerations

- Align stakeholder expectations and objectives internally, with clear evaluation criteria to select the optimal software solution.
- In accordance with the Town's IT/digital strategy, the Town is continuing to implement IT solutions that are cloud-based. Based on the Town's IT principles, the Town should identify if a SaaS (software as a service) model is ideal for the Department.
- Allocate sufficient resources up front during this project to ensure the optimal solution is selected, trialed, and integrated, leveraging all available capabilities/modules wherever possible. Time should be spend with the vendor and SI (system integrator, if applicable) to phase-in the software and train staff accordingly.
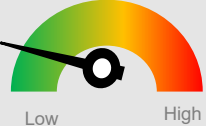
6. Develop a user fee framework

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices

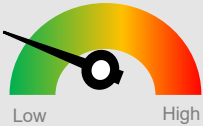**Current State Observation**

The Department continually increases its recreation user fees at an average rate of 3% per year across all services. This figure is based on an estimation of general inflation and its impacts on the cost of service delivery. While the Department's fees are generally on par with its comparators, there is an opportunity to strategically set fees based on a selection of inputs including cost recovery objectives, affordability targets, competitiveness, and other priorities.

Disruption Gauge

Low   High

Develop a user fee framework to inform annual fee adjustments.

Leading practices

While all comparators intentionally operate some services at or below complete cost recovery levels based on Council and community priorities concerning affordability of services, some comparators use two main criteria to inform annual fee adjustments: cost of service delivery and comparator benchmarks.

The City of Ottawa deliberately excludes facility expenses when calculating recreation program user fees. The rationale is to achieve cost recovery of operating costs to avoid double charging tax payers (i.e., property taxes were used to finance the capital cost of the facility and hence should not be recovered through user fees).

Description and rationale

As part of the annual budgeting process, the Department should follow a standard, quantitative procedure to set user fees. Developing a robust methodology can be a pivotal tool to ensure that fees align with cost of service delivery, market comparators, and community/Council objectives. Community-based services are traditionally offered by municipalities at prices below the cost of service delivery based on objectives related to activity, health and general well-being of community as well as tourism and economic development objectives.

A user fee framework procedure should be developed to reflect how the Department will be reviewing its fees, considering how the process aligns with the annual budget cycle and all steps to be performed.

Elements that could be considered in the user fee framework include:

1. Cost projections based on the proposed annual budget.
2. Target cost recovery and planned subsidization levels.
3. Comparator benchmarking.
4. Inflationary adjustments.
5. Loss leader services i.e., services deliberately offered below the cost of service delivery or free to attract users to other, more profitable services.
6. Public input
7. Performance monitoring i.e., services with low user satisfaction or low utilization should not increase in price.
8. Price ceilings or upper limits for annual increases e.g., no fee shall be increased by more than 15%

See Appendix 6.3 for a sample user fee framework.

Benefits

- Align user fees with the Town and departmental strategic priorities.
- Benchmark fees and service delivery to ensure competitiveness.
- Reduce subjectivity when setting fees, supporting a culture of effective and rationale decision-making.
- Reflect consumption of municipal resources.

Key considerations

- The methodology can be highly customized based on the Town's desires. For instance, changing the weights when calculating averages based on Council priorities, changing the pool of comparators, considering public input, including/excluding fixed costs when calculating cost recovery, etc.
- Collecting data as part of this process should be standardized as much as possible to limit time spent. Methodology should hence be prepared in advance. This opportunity should be assessed in alignment with opportunity #9 (timesheet best practices) because the data collected through timesheets will be vital in calculating the labour cost component for services.
- The user fee framework should be continually reviewed to ensure it reflects the Town's financial, community, and competitive objectives.
- Support and input from the Finance Department may be required to develop and implement the user fee framework.
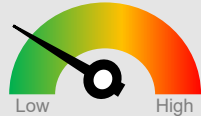
7. Improve overall external communication

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices

Multiple stakeholders noted that the Department's communication with the community, particularly in promoting awareness of its recreation and culture services, could be substantially improved. This could be achieved through more effective utilization of the Town's various communication channels, such as social media platforms, e-newsletters, and digital boards.

Low   High

The comparators use a variety of methods to enhance their communication with the community. These methods include both internal and external communication strategies. Some comparators outsource their communication tasks where possible, while others are experimenting with new technologies, such as digital screens in arenas. Public outreach can also take the form of client surveys, master plans, open houses for major events and changes, and the use of social media. Some comparators also use platforms like Bcity or bangthetable*, to provide information to the community.

*bangthetable is an online engagement platform used by a number of Ontario municipalities (such as Town of Collingwood, Municipality of Chatham-Kent and City of Sarnia). The online space provides the opportunity to give vastly more people access to information and enable them to have their say. It drives inclusive, transparent, and measurable community engagement processes that empower collaborative learning, discussion, and debate.

Improve overall communication provided by the Department (external) to grow community awareness of recreation and culture services.

Description and rationale	Benefits

The Department can enhance its external communication to increase community awareness of recreation and culture services by considering the following:

- Develop an annual communication plan, utilizing various communication resources. This plan will provide a structured approach to disseminate information about the Department's offerings, ensuring consistent and effective communication throughout the year.
- Explore centralizing social media management, such as the Department's Facebook page. This will allow for a unified voice and message, enhancing the Department's online presence and reach and potentially reaching a wider audience.
- Increase visibility in the Town e-newsletter by including more information about its initiatives, such as programming and recreation facility promotions, making it easier for community members to find and access the services of interest.
- The Town's website can be updated to provide more comprehensive information about recreation offerings, including those offered by community groups.
- The Department can explore additional methods of delivering information on cultural events and offerings through social media, the website, local radio, and email. This could include interesting facts, such as how streets were named.
- Explore opportunities for structured citizen outreach to foster direct engagement with the community, further promoting awareness of the Department's diverse offerings.

Benefits

- Increase awareness of events, ultimately leading to higher attendance rates
- Citizens will be well-informed and sense of community will be enhanced
- Opportunity to promote events and programs
- Improved accessibility and diversified outreach

Key considerations

- Determine appropriate communication channels that are accessible to all citizens.
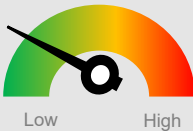- Ensure that communication is clear and consistent.

8. Implement a structured approach to manage customer feedback

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices
The Department does not formally gather feedback from internal customers or the community. Any feedback that is obtained is collected anecdotally and is not tracked or reported. Stakeholders shared that formal feedback could be used as a tool to influence additional programs, monitor attendance more effectively, and to seek sponsorships and grants.	Low High	While the comparators interviewed did not note of any formal methods for collecting feedback, all stakeholders agreed formalized feedback can be useful to inform facility and program improvements.

Implement a structured approach to collecting, analyzing, and responding to customer feedback to continually address community needs.

Description and rationale

When feedback is not formally gathered, analyzed and reported, it can be difficult to identify specific areas that require attention and create a culture of continuous improvement. As such, the Department should consider an approach to solicit feedback from recreation service customers.

Strategies for collecting feedback can include:

- Displaying QR codes in municipal facilities and properties to solicit pulse-style feedback from users present (this is an existing functionality in PSD CityWide).
- Periodic surveys from past and active users and user groups.
- Ad-hoc surveys post events

Questions can be directed towards specific KPI measures such as timeliness and quality of customer service but also gather forward-looking information such as what changes/improvements customers would desire. Analyzing survey data can help the Department identify and prioritize improvement initiatives. For example, if the feedback indicates that customers are not satisfied with the timeliness of the services provided, the Department can take steps to improve staff productivity and set service standards to ensure faster turnaround.

Similarly, any requests from internal customers (e.g., staff, management, Council) should be tracked and reported out on a timely basis.

Benefits

- Improve customer satisfaction.
- Resolve conflicts and complaints by identifying issues quickly.
- Prioritize resources for improvement.
- Improve staff performance.

Key considerations

- Implement multiple channels for collecting feedback, ensuring that all citizens are able to provide comments (e.g., different social platforms, website) and it is accessible for all segments of the community.
- Establish clear objectives by defining the aim of the feedback (e.g., improving service quality, increasing attendance).
- Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that the feedback is being tracked and managed accurately and efficiently.
- Develop a process to analyze feedback to ensure that it is being used effectively and in relation to the goals of the Department.

9. Consider timesheet best practices

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices

The formality around timesheets was discussed frequently during stakeholder consultation. Many noted the level of detail expected from timesheets does not currently support any decision-making in the Department. Altogether, there appears to be a misalignment between data collection and analysis, leading to inefficiency.

Low   High

Like the Town of Carleton Place, all municipalities capture time sheet data electronically. Unlike the Town, where staff are expected to capture time at 15 minute intervals, other municipalities require staff time to enter time at a high level at hourly intervals.
- The City of Clarence-Rockland uses a standalone time entry system, Mpex, for time management. Time codes are generally kept at a high level e.g., routes addressed, number of fields serviced.
- The Municipality of North-Grenville and Town of Cobourg both use their financial systems to record time entry. Cobourg has developed a customized tool which allows time entry to feed directly into their financial system (Great Plains), similarly to Carleton Place.

Consider timesheet best practices to balance the effort to manage time entry and the data analytics objectives.

Description and rationale

Recreation-based services is an inherently time-driven service area across municipalities. Timesheets are used not only for measuring employee productivity, but they are also a valuable input when developing the Department's budget given that personnel costs are the main source of expenses for the Department. However, the effort to prepare, submit, approve, and analyze timesheet data should not exceed its value in decision-making.

As a first step to organizing timesheets, the Department should clearly identify its data analysis objectives. Once the Department has developed its performance management framework (opportunity #2) and determined its list of KPIs, it will be clear what level of detail will be required of timesheets. The elements of timesheets to consider are:

- Time intervals: staff are currently expected to report time spent in 15-minute intervals, representing a relatively high level of precision. Standard industry practice is one-hour intervals.
- Time codes: time could be allocated by task (e.g., cleaning, grass cutting, scheduling), by facility (e.g., Carambeck Community Centre, tennis court), or other means. Currently, timesheets are entered by facility.
- Regularity and exception-based tracking: for employees who have standardized schedules, some organizations use exception-based timesheets i.e., timesheets are automatically pre-populated and employees only manually intervene if there is an exception e.g., vacation.
- Time entry frequency: timesheets can be required daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, in alignment with payroll cycles, or another frequency.

Benefits

- Improve efficiency by aligning data collection with analysis objectives, avoiding wasting time on unnecessary details.
- Inform better decision-making through valuable data-driven insights.
- Reduce burden on staff leading to increased job satisfaction and reduced stress levels.
- Enhance data analytics and performance management capabilities to inform strategic planning and resource allocation.

Key considerations

- Precision and reliability can often be inversely correlated. If employees are expected to submit highly detailed timesheets but perform many tasks throughout each period, human error becomes a risk and time entries may not be accurate.
- Consider how digital tools can enable effective time management practices. For instance, automation of timesheet alerts, ability to create timesheet templates (for regular work patterns), integration of work order management and timesheet systems to avoid duplicative entries in both systems, etc. Existing solutions at the Town should be explored to leverage current capabilities (link to opportunity #5).

10. Develop a strategy for professional development and training

Current State Observation	Disruption Gauge	Leading practices

During stakeholder consultation, many staff acknowledged the need for reviewing training opportunities. Challenges to effective professional development and training include financial support/budget limitations, scheduling due to staff shortages, unclear role of peer-to-peer training, and limited opportunities for continuous development.	Low High	The Town of Cobourg has a training budget dedicated to each division in addition to the typical mandatory HR and first aid training. The Municipality of North Grenville does provide training to its staff and there has been a push internally to expand training options. On the other hand, the City of Brockville only offer mandatory training to its recreation staff.

Provide a structured approach for professional training and development opportunities for staff.

Description and rationale	Benefits

To ensure the Department is equipped with the training and qualifications to perform their duties most effectively, the Department should provide a structured approach to professional training and development. This includes:

- Develop an inventory of mandatory and (approved) optional courses with an associated Council-approved budget. Each service area and staff member should have a clear learning path and the ability to request pre-approved learning opportunities.

- Ensure all mandatory and job specific health and safety trainings are identified, completed and properly documented.

- Schedule training in advance to provide ample time to either notify the community of service closures or schedule other staff as backups. Best practice is to develop annual schedules to ensure mandatory training is completed regularly and on-time.

- Ensure structured onboarding/implementation training for new technologies is coordination with the vendor/SI (system implementer) to equip staff with the know-how to operate systems as intended.

- Develop an onboarding and initial training program to quickly integrate new employees to the organization and provide them with the skills/resources they need to effectively perform their duties.

As a sub-opportunity, the Town should evaluate costs/benefits of financially supporting recertification courses to aquatic staff. Lifeguards are expected to undergo specialized training at their own expense. This investment in the Town's employees should be considered as part of a broader recruitment and retention strategy.

Benefits

- Improve productivity, efficiency and service delivery.
- Leverage industry best practices and encourage innovation.
- Improve customer service.
- Improve competitiveness as an employer, with positive impacts on recruitment and retention.
- Save recruitment costs by reducing turnover.

Key considerations

- Consider exploring joint training initiatives with neighbouring municipalities to reduce costs and leverage specialized courses.
- Formalize where on-the-job (i.e., peer-to-peer) training will be used as an alternative to off-the-job training. Provide mentors with the appropriate guidance on training new employees.
- Seek opportunities to provide internal staff with the qualifications to provide training and certification themselves to other internal staff members.
- Consider how a HRIS (human resources information system) can be leveraged to record completed training and certifications. A robust HRIS has integrated alerts and reports to inform managers/supervisors/HR of outstanding mandatory training. Training and development plans should be linked to the performance appraisal/development process.

Summary and Next Steps

The top opportunities

The Town of Carleton Place sought to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the services provided by the Recreation and Culture Department, how those programs and services are delivered, and the level by which they are delivered.

As part of this work, KPMG performed stakeholder engagement, benchmarking, employee and user surveys, benchmarked user fees and developed service profiles. In collaboration with municipal employees and community partners, KPMG identified the Department's top 10 opportunities that would meet the project objectives. The opportunities include the following:

1. Operationalize Master Plan
2. Establish a formal performance management framework
3. Update the current organizational structure
4. Centralize or outsource service delivery of shared tasks
5. Explore digitalization options

6. Develop user fee framework
7. Improve overall external communication
8. Implement a structured approach to manage customer feedback
9. Consider timesheet best practices
10. Develop a strategy for professional development and training

Each opportunity is supported by an assessment rationale and a recommended priority level. Key considerations for implementation include:

Is the Town ready?
Overall, the Department is going to need to begin to initiate steps to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services through digitization, process improvement, and refinement of workforce management practices. The work completed as part of this review will serve as a foundation to guide the Town towards a culture of continuous improvement.

Who will lead implementation of recommendations?
The adoption of new ways to doing things will require governance and oversight. The steering group will have to determine the key personnel and stakeholders to be involved in the process and leading the change.

Is the implementation of recommendations appropriately funded and resourced?
From our work and engagement with stakeholders, it is apparent that the Department has an ambitious and forward thinking agenda. We found that the Department is committed to excellence in service delivery and improving customer service. Nonetheless, the Department will need to review its budget and resourcing model to achieve its ambitious agenda.

KPMG

home.kpmg/ca