

## Staff Report 2023-0106

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Meeting Date: June 6, 2023

Subject: Proposed Changes to Walking Track Fees

Submitted By: Jessica Stovin, Manager, Community Development, Community Services

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### RECOMMENDATION

That Option 1 to permit free use of the Walking Track at the Caledon East Community Centre for those aged 65 years and older based on a fixed schedule, as outlined in Staff Report 2023-0106, be approved.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- With the opening of a second town operated walking track this fall, staff have reviewed and are proposing a new access option for adults 65+ years of age.
- Currently there is one three lane track at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness (CCRW) that surrounds the fitness centre and is heavily used during peak times for walking, running and cross training purposes.
- A track will open in September as part of the Caledon East Community Complex (CECC) expansion, the two-lane track will surround the gymnasium with second floor access.
- A Walking Track membership is currently available to those 55+ years of age and older.
- The Town provides in-kind Walking Track Memberships to Caledon Senior Centre members.
- No cost access at the CECC track is far more conducive to maintaining quality services, rather than the CCRW track due to physical location and access.

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to share information on the current Town Walking Track logistics, membership offerings, and review opportunities to offer a no cost walking track membership to those 65+ years and older.

#### Town Walking Tracks

Currently, the Town of Caledon has one walking track at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness (CCRW). It is a ninety-one (91) meter (inside track 83 meters), three lane track that surrounds the fitness centre. This fall, the second Town track will open at the newly expanded Caledon East Community Complex (CECC). This two-lane track will be one hundred (100) meters in length and located above the gymnasium on the second floor.

The CCRW track is open for use during all operating hours for membership holders and drop in participants. The capacity of the track is ten (10) to twelve (12) people dependent on the types of activities taking place. One lane is dedicated to walking, one lane is for running and there is a third lane for passing. The track presents logistical challenges during peak times

(weekdays 6am to 11am and 4 pm to 9pm, weekends 10am to 2pm) due to an increase in demand for uses other than walking (i.e., Interval training, running/jogging, lunges, and various weight exercises). As use of the fitness centre increases, so does the use of the track, resulting in more frequent capacity and conduct issues. Staff are scheduled to ensure safety within the fitness centre and on the track, and additional staff are scheduled during peak times.

### **Current Walking Track Memberships**

#### Caledon Seniors Centre Memberships

The Caledon Seniors Centre (CSC) offers Walking Track memberships as part of the CSC membership package. These memberships are provided at no cost to the CSC as part of the In-Kind Contributions from the Town. Typically, CSC members use the track during non-peak hours of operation, such as weekday afternoons. These times are more suitable to walking due to lower attendance in the fitness centre and decrease in demand for running on the track at that time. The current arrangement with CSC provides opportunities for CSC members to gain free access as a privilege to being a contributing member of the CSC. This membership will be extended to CECC this fall for those 55+ who choose to join the CSC.

#### Recreation Memberships

The Town offers a Recreation Walking Track Membership to those 55 years of age or older. This membership provides access to the track during all hours of operation.

Walking Track 55+ Memberships fees are as follows:

- One (1) month membership - \$5.65
- Three (3) month membership - \$16.16
- Annual memberships - \$44.52
- Walking Track – Caledon Seniors Centre – Free

With the opening of the CECC track, youth and adult walking track memberships will be available as it is anticipated that there will be significant interest from patrons to use the track in the evenings and on weekends (i.e., youth after school, staff, sport training, parents/guardians).

### **Benchmarking**

Staff consulted with neighbouring municipalities, and beyond, to gain an understanding of the standard practice for older adult walking track use.

Most municipalities charge a fee for use of the walking tracks (9 of 13 municipalities charge a fee), have a reduced older adult fee, and those with free use are large tracks that permit a higher capacity and a comfortable combination of running and walking simultaneously. Tracks with free use typically surround an arena, have unrestricted access, and do not impact the access or use of a fitness centre.

### Staff Recommendation

With the upcoming opening of the CECC track, staff have considered the current track logistics, use by patrons and members, memberships, benchmarking, and anticipated use of the new track; as a result, staff are proposing the following options for the CECC track:

#### Option 1 (recommended) - No Cost 65+ Fixed Schedule at CECC

Staff recommend providing free use to individuals over the age of 65 at CECC on a pre-determined (fixed) schedule.

Scheduled free use of the track would include prescribed times during the week and on weekends (e.g., 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday). These times would be determined based on logistics, peak use, and consideration of the desired times for all impacted users.

Considerations for this option:

- Provides increased access to individuals who may be on a fixed income or facing financial barriers and cannot afford the current membership fees
- A fixed schedule for 'Free 65+ Use' will alleviate the congestion and impact to other users of the track.
- Staffing levels can be predetermined based on use and scheduling.
- All users will be aware of when free use is scheduled and can plan accordingly.
- Capacities of the track can be monitored during these times to ensure safety of all, in addition to ensuring everyone is walking, not running. The track is not large enough to permit multiple people running at one time.
- The CCRW track is not included in this option as there are other means to access, including free access through the CSC membership.

Option 1 is preferred as it provides free use for those 65+ years of age, sets a fixed schedule that all users are aware of and can plan around, reducing the resistance from other members, and supports staff scheduling and supervision. Managing the number of users on the track through scheduled, fixed hours will support a safe and quality experience.

#### Option 2 – No Cost 65+ Open Access at CECC

Alternatively, free use could be available during all operating hours for individuals 65+ years of age or older.

Considerations for this option:

- The influx of use at unscheduled times is difficult to manage for staff scheduling, often resulting in staff being present at unwarranted times.
- It is anticipated that the track will be heavily used during the after school and work hours (3pm – 7pm). There is minimal space for multiple walkers at one time.
- The CECC track is only two lanes, there is no option for walking, running, and passing. Influx in walkers at all times will impact the use for running and cross training.

No cost access at CCRW is not presented as an option as there is currently an arrangement with the Caledon Seniors Centre that provides an affordable option during weekday hours. Staff recommend this arrangement remain status quo at CCRW. The physical location of the track at CCRW is not conducive to not cost access, including impact to other uses, access to other amenities and volume of use. The physical location of the CECC is conducive to open access as it is a standalone amenity with single access form the second floor.

Option 3 – Status Quo – Membership and Drop In Access at CECC and CCRW

Offering the same access to the track at CECC and it is currently offered at CCRW, would permit fee based drop in in access, minimal membership fee for those 11+ years of age, and free access to CSC walking track members.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In 2019, pre-pandemic, walking track membership revenue in 2019 was \$2070 in direct sales and \$1800 in-kind to the CSC, for a total of \$3870. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the need to use the track space for distancing fitness equipment, the walking track was closed for the majority of 2020, and the entirety of 2021. 2022 revenue was also impacted by a 6-month closure due to COVID-19 restrictions resulting in total revenue of \$1476.

With the addition of the CECC track in Fall 2023, it is anticipated that there will be a \$4500 annual revenue impact for free walking track access for those 65+ years of age at CECC. This reduction in revenue will be incorporated into future budgets and will increase the recreation subsidy.

**COUNCIL WORK PLAN**

**Improved Service Delivery**

**ATTACHMENTS**

None.