

To: Community Development and Recreation Committee
From: Jutta Mason, Centre for Local Research into Public Space (CELOS)

Re: Staff report: Outdoor Ice Rink Program Standards and Improvements, October 4, 2016, from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, CD15.4

The general manager's report starts off with a bogus number: the assertion that 480,000 residents, or about one-sixth of Toronto's population, skated at an outdoor ice rink in 2016. But no census of individual visitors can be tallied since most outdoor rinks are largely unregistered drop-in. So this number is invented, leading off the report to show that not much needs improvement, the rinks are doing fine.

Beyond that, the general manager's brief and superficial report does not address any of the CELOS rink report's items.

The outdoor rinks report we presented to your committee last April detailed seven problem areas that need attention. We gave specific examples of various workable solutions: how to increase skating access equitably across the city, save energy, generate income, enlarge sociability, and make better use of the staff's capacities. The follow-up report from the general manager ignored the CELOS rink report completely. It's a message to those of us who have worked together for 15 years to improve outdoor rinks citywide: **"go away."**

If your committee accepts the general manager's report in this form, we will indeed go away – what choice do we have?

We realize that the CELOS rink report is not being singled out for special ignoring – our experience with PFR is not uncommon across the city, among groups attempting to improve our public gathering places. We were recently told that our mayor suggested at a meeting that new parks would be better run independently of PFR. We do hope that your committee members will take note of the inadequacy of the general manager's report, and consider possible steps to encourage PFR management to change their stance.

Sincerely,

Jutta Mason

