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2017 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Welcome Policy Subsidy Usage

Issue/Background:

- This briefing note responds to Budget Committee motion 28.1 #7 (a), adopted on December 20, 2016, requesting the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R) to provide a briefing note on the Welcome Policy rate of use by percentage and dollar amount by facility and how the program has been promoted locally and in collaboration with other divisions, if possible.
- The Welcome Policy ("WP") is a fee subsidy program that provides access to recreation programs at all City-owned and operated facilities for Toronto residents with a before tax family income of less than Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). The Welcome Policy reduces financial barriers to participation faced by low-income individuals and families across the city.
- The annual Welcome Policy budget is allocated seasonally to ensure that subsidy is available in each registration period.

Key Points:

- The 2016 Approved Budget for Welcome Policy was \$8.794 million that funded annual individual credits of \$514 for children and youth and \$239 for adults and seniors respectively. Please refer to table 1 for historical budget, actuals and registration figures for Welcome Policy.
- Welcome Policy is one of 4 ways PF&R subsidizes services, in an effort to provide free or low cost programs to residents detailed as follows:
 1. Welcome Policy program
 2. 38 WPAF (Where Programs Are Free) Centres,
 3. PF&R offers over 300,000 hours of free drop-in programming opportunities across the city, to meet the demand for free or low cost programs.
 4. User Fees are set to recover approximately 1/3 of program costs
- In 2015, there were over 94,900 Welcome Policy registrations, of which 14,100 or 15% were related to adult programming, primarily used toward memberships and passes for drop-in fitness, swim and sports programs. Approximately 80,800 or 85%, were for children and youth programs mainly related to registrations in swimming, camps, arts and general interest programming.
- Total Welcome Policy registrations represents approximately 19% of the City's total registrations for recreational programs.

- Based on current trends, Welcome Policy registrations and actual subsidies utilized have remained fairly consistent to the previous year. Therefore, PF&R is projecting to be underspent by \$0.4 million by the end of 2016.
- The Welcome Policy Budget has been historically underspent which is primarily attributed to moving from a program credit to dollar subsidy in 2012 and the expansion of the Centres Where Programs are Free ("CWPAF") in 2014/2015 with a value of approximately \$10 million related to the removal of revenues at these locations.
- In instances where individuals are not able to access desired service at CWPAF, Welcome Policy may be used to access services at other locations. Based on 2015 data, approximately 15% of CWPAF users also used the Welcome Policy to register at paid locations.

Table 1: Welcome Policy Historical Data

Year	Annual Budget (\$ 000's)	Annual Actual Expenditure (\$ 000's)	Variance (\$ 000's)	Child/Youth Annual Credit*	Adult/Senior Annual Credit*	# of WP Registrations (users)**
2013	\$10,269	\$9,223	\$1,047	\$455	\$212	115,700
2014	\$10,009	\$8,838	\$1,172	\$483	\$225	107,757
2015	\$8,794	\$8,396	\$398	\$494	\$230	94,948
2016 Projection	\$8,794	\$8,394	\$400	\$514	\$239	95,000
2017 Preliminary Budget	\$8,997	N/A	-	\$526	\$244	-

* The annual credit amount is indexed annually to align with future increases in user fees. ** Registrations include memberships and passes

- In 2017, consistent with the annual inflationary increase for user fees, the Welcome Policy individual benefit rates will increase by 2.3%
- The proposed 2017 Welcome Policy budget is \$8.997 million net, increasing at the rate of inflation. The subsidy for individual eligible residents will increase to \$526 for children and youth and \$244 for adults and seniors in 2017. Welcome Policy registrations in 2017 are anticipated to be consistent to 2016 levels. At its current rate of use, staff believe increases in 2017 beyond inflation can be managed within the submitted budget.
- The Welcome Policy utilization differs by District and location based on numerous factors including availability of free programs, types of programs and user fees. Please refer to Table 2 for Welcome Policy usage by percentage and dollars based on 2015 data, broken down by District.

Table 2: Welcome Policy Usage by District (2015 Actuals)

Facility District	Welcome Policy Registrations*	\$ Amount Used*	% of Total Actuals
Scarborough	31,017	\$ 2,445,046	29.1%
Etobicoke York	24,990	\$ 2,376,868	28.3%
North York	23,568	\$ 2,101,766	25.0%
Toronto East York	14,876	\$ 1,444,213	17.2%
City-Wide Programs	497	\$ 28,555	0.3%
Total	94,948	\$ 8,396,447	100%

* Registrations include memberships and passes.

- Clients are using Welcome Policy for lower priced programs to leverage their subsidy better, leading to lower dollar amount used per registration and higher number of registrations overall.

- Appendix A provides a list of locations with the highest welcome policy registrations (\$50,000 or more), based on the 2015 data.
- PF&R continues to promote Welcome Policy by leveraging different communication channels, in an effort to increase awareness and accessibility of the program. Some examples include:
 - City of Toronto PF&R website – links on eligibility, how to apply to the program, frequently asked questions and the website information is available in multiple languages.
 - In partnership with other Divisions and Agencies such as Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) through outreach to Ontario Works clients, Toronto Public Health (TPH), Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA), and other community centres and agencies – Toronto Libraries, Association of Community Centers (AOCCs), Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) to reach out to newcomers.
 - Welcome Policy brochure – highlights program details, ways to register (online, by phone, in person, etc.) and a useful reference section to track client numbers and near-by community centres.
 - Social media through twitter (@TorontoPFR) and Facebook- provides direct link to the City of Toronto Welcome Policy website for program details, etc.
- PF&R will continue to evaluate the Welcome Policy utilization levels to ensure budget is aligned to funding requirements as part of the annual budget process.

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Appendix A – Locations with Highest Amount (\$50K+) of Welcome Policy Registrations (2015)

Location	Welcome Policy Registrations	Percentage of Total WP Registrations	Amount (\$)
Agincourt Recreation Centre	5,251	6.0%	409,056
Cummer Park Community Centre	2,296	2.6%	194,350
Birchmount Community Centre	2,127	2.4%	178,153
Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre	2,068	2.4%	137,048
Main Square Community Centre	1,930	2.2%	161,813
Ellesmere Community Centre	1,880	2.1%	109,125
Albert Campbell Collegiate Institute	1,859	2.1%	150,859
Joseph J. Piccininni Community Centre	1,836	2.1%	211,859
Milliken Park Community Recreation	1,793	2.0%	132,870
Centennial Recreation Centre - Etobicoke	1,652	1.9%	141,295
Douglas Snow Aquatic Centre	1,628	1.9%	142,542
Smithfield Community School	1,542	1.8%	102,259
Albion Pool And Health Club	1,526	1.7%	111,894
Matty Eckler Recreation Centre	1,491	1.7%	131,832
Lester B. Pearson Collegiate Institute	1,489	1.7%	112,976
L'Amoreaux Collegiate Institute	1,429	1.6%	123,349
Edithvale Community Centre	1,365	1.6%	97,366
Burrows Hall Community Centre	1,330	1.5%	94,772
East York Community Centre	1,274	1.4%	112,182
McGregor Park Community Centre	1,266	1.4%	86,858
Amesbury Community Centre	1,206	1.4%	109,694
Warden Hilltop Community Centre	1,159	1.3%	78,319
Georges Vanier Secondary School	1,130	1.3%	86,619
Mitchell Field Community Centre	1,025	1.2%	89,226
West Hill Collegiate Institute	1,017	1.2%	75,843
Parkdale Community Recreation Centre	993	1.1%	72,064
Parkway Forest Community Centre	984	1.1%	54,576
Trinity Community Recreation Centre	981	1.1%	82,601
CW Jefferys Collegiate Institute	975	1.1%	72,194
North Toronto Memorial Community Centre	965	1.1%	80,358
Thistletown Community Centre	918	1.0%	67,707
Mary McCormick Recreation Centre	872	1.0%	77,995
Humberwood Community Centre	843	1.0%	56,532
Northview Heights Secondary School	837	1.0%	55,173
Northwood Community Centre	797	0.9%	63,078
St. Lawrence Community Recreation Centre	772	0.9%	59,147
Goulding Community Centre	753	0.9%	61,505
Wexford Collegiate Institute	727	0.8%	56,643
Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute	706	0.8%	53,744
Weston Collegiate Institute	691	0.8%	51,881
Fairbank Memorial Community Centre	641	0.7%	52,414
Memorial Pool And Health Club	638	0.7%	58,405
Earl Bales Ski and Snowboard Centre	610	0.7%	166,801
St. Marcellus Community School	559	0.6%	53,201
Leaside Memorial Gardens Pool	559	0.6%	50,268
Etobicoke Olympium	525	0.6%	56,109
Keele Community Centre	466	0.5%	50,420