

## Community Sports Equipment Sponsorship

**Date:** April 2, 2026

**To:** Infrastructure and Environment Committee

**From:** General Manager, Parks and Recreation

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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This report responds to City Council direction in Item [2025.MM33.18](#) requesting the Deputy City Manager, Community and Emergency Services to work with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities to identify a Canadian vendor to install and operate community sports equipment stations in City parks, with at least one station installed in each of the Community Council areas by the start of summer 2026, and to report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the proposed sponsorship, including consideration of a series of conditions specified by Council.

Jumpstart approached the City with a proposal to introduce community-based sports equipment lending in City parks. Jumpstart identified Equip Club SA (“Equip”) as its delivery partner in participating Canadian municipalities, including Vancouver, Ottawa, Surrey, and Coquitlam to date.

In response to Council direction, staff conducted an interdivisional review of the proposal against Council’s specified conditions to consider, including Canadian vendor participation, at least one station installed in each of the Community Council areas by the start of summer 2026, data privacy, digital access considerations, and alignment with City policy frameworks.

This report summarizes the assessment and provides additional information on a potential one-year pilot sponsorship.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The General Manager, Parks and Recreation recommends that:

1. The Infrastructure and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There are no financial impacts for City of Toronto associated with this potential sponsorship for the duration of the proposed one-year pilot.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities (as the funder), and Equip (as the operator), would be responsible for the funding, installation, operation, maintenance, and removal of the sports equipment stations, at no cost to the City. Equip would provide a mobile app that is free for users, to be able to access the sports equipment stations. The fees for this service that would otherwise be charged by Equip are being paid by Jumpstart rather than the end user. The City would not be required to make any financial contribution or allocate additional staff resources for implementation of the sports equipment stations as part of this sponsorship for the duration of the proposed pilot.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On October 8 and 9, 2025, City Council amended [2025.MM33.18](#) - *Making Sports More Accessible and Free in City of Toronto Parks* requesting staff to work with the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Foundation to work to find a Canadian vendor to install and operate sport equipment stations in various City of Toronto parks, with at least one station installed in each of the Community Council areas by the start of summer 2026, and report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee with regard to the sponsorship and conditions related to this item.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MM33.18>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **1. Overview of the Community Sport Equipment Lending Sponsorship Proposal**

The City of Toronto has an established working relationship with Canadian Tire Jumpstart. As part of a national initiative to expand access to sport and recreation, Jumpstart approached the City with a sponsorship proposal to introduce community-based sports equipment lending in City parks. Jumpstart identified Equip Club SA (“Equip”) as its delivery partner in participating Canadian municipalities, including Vancouver, Ottawa, Surrey, and Coquitlam to date.

The sponsorship model involves the placement of soccer balls, basketballs, volleyballs, bocce balls and table tennis rackets and balls in secure lockers (stations) located near playing courts and fields in select parks. Equipment would be matched to the park amenities. Access to the equipment would be enabled through a smartphone application operated by Equip, which users would download to unlock the lockers and return the equipment after use. The mobile application, developed and operated by Equip and used in other jurisdictions, is available at no cost to users.



*Sport equipment station in Ottawa*

The proposed initial term for the sponsorship would be a one-year pilot program with no financial contribution from the City. As part of the sponsorship arrangement, Equip would be fully responsible for the installation, operation and maintenance of the equipment stations, and management of the security and privacy of user data. Jumpstart would provide funding to Equip to fund the sponsorship in exchange for sponsor recognition for both organizations, a requirement of the proposal.

To be operationally feasible, the Jumpstart and Equip proposal requires the City to allow the installation of a minimum of 50 sport equipment stations in a one-year pilot. The proposal envisions at least one station in each City of Toronto ward (25 stations, fulfilling Council direction to have at least one station in each Community Council area), with the additional 25 stations concentrated primarily in central and downtown Toronto and other high-traffic areas to support program utilization and overall operational viability.

This model is intended to both meet Council's direction for broad geographic access, while maintaining the utilization levels necessary to support a free-to-use, sponsor-funded program and be operationally feasible for Equip to deploy, operate and maintain.

The sponsorship, as proposed, would be implemented as a one-year pilot, with evaluation criteria including usage, operational consideration and community impact of the sports equipment station locations. Subject to the results of the program evaluation and future Council authorization, the sponsor has indicated interest in continuing the sponsorship for up to two additional years and exploring further expansion.

The sponsorship, if implemented, would be in addition to existing City programs that support and promote free access to recreation facilities and equipment. Currently,

through the City's network of 128 recreation facilities, residents can take part in free registered and drop-in programs at 39 designated free community recreation centres located across the city. Many additional community recreation centres also offer free drop-in recreation programming for families, children and youth. In total, Community Recreation delivers more than 460,000 hours of free drop-in programming and 122,800 hours of free registered programming annually. In addition, for eligible families, the City's Welcome Policy recreation subsidy provides financial support for access to the City's paid registered programs. Parks and Recreation also offers the Play Mobile program that visits parks and recreation facilities to provide access to free equipment, sport development and opportunities for participants to try new activities. Annually, Play Mobile delivers over 450 activations at approximately 175 locations, engaging about 14,000 participants. Program schedules are publicly available on the City's website.

## **2. Council Direction and Conditions**

In October 2025, City Council requested staff to work with the Canadian Tire Jumpstart to find a Canadian vendor to install and operate sport equipment stations in various City parks, with at least one station in each of the Community Council areas by the start of summer 2026. Council also requested that staff assess the proposed sponsorship considering the following seven conditions:

- a) Ward Councillors must be consulted on the park selection and location of sport equipment station(s) before installation and operation of a sport equipment station.
- b) The installation and operation of sport equipment stations must be in compliance with all applicable privacy and record keeping legislation applicable to the City of Toronto, including but not limited to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the City of Toronto Act, 2006.
- c) The agreement must comply with the City of Toronto's Sponsorship Policy.
- d) The agreement is on terms and conditions acceptable to the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
- e) Measures to bridge the digital divide and ensure alignment with the Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework and the findings of the Mapping Toronto's Digital Divide report.
- f) Address data privacy issues, particularly as it relates to data collection from minors.
- g) Align with the forthcoming Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

In response to Council's direction, staff convened an interdivisional team to review the proposal. The team included the Strategic Partnerships Office, Corporate Information

Management Services, Technology Services Division, Social Development, Toronto Cyber Security (formerly the Office of the Chief Information Security Officer), Legal Services, and Communications. The following sections summarize staff’s assessment of the proposal for each of the considerations requested by Council.

*Canadian Vendor Participation and Implementation Model*

Equip is a Swiss-based company responsible for installation, operation and maintenance of the equipment stations. Equip has retained Canadian subcontractors to undertake required work in Canada. Two sub-contractors would support the proposed Toronto sponsorship including ContraTech, a Toronto-based firm who would provide on-site installation and maintenance services. In addition, sports equipment would be supplied by SportChek, a Canadian retailer owned by Canadian Tire Corporation.

**a) Location and Ward Councillor Consultation**

The Jumpstart and Equip proposal requires a minimum 50-station implementation in the one-year pilot. Following conversations with Jumpstart and Equip, the proposal envisions at least one station in each City of Toronto ward (25 stations, fulfilling Council direction to have at least one station in each Community Council area). Equip would require the additional 25 stations to be concentrated primarily in central and downtown Toronto and other high-traffic areas to support program utilization and overall operational viability.

The proposed station distribution includes:

Community Council Area	# of Stations	# of Wards in each Community Council Area
Toronto – East York	20	8
Scarborough	10	6
North York	10	6
Etobicoke York	10	5
Total	50	25

Site selection will be informed by the following considerations:

- Proximity to active recreation amenities (e.g., courts, fields, and multi-use spaces)
- Needed infrastructure in the park to secure sport locker(s)
- Accessibility for users, as well as operational access for installation, servicing and maintenance
- A minimum of one station (locker) in each Community Council area as directed by Council

Consistent with Council direction, final site selection would be undertaken in consultation with local Ward Councillors to ensure alignment with community needs and local context.

## **b) Compliance with Privacy and Record Keeping Legislation for Installation and Operations**

Staff reviewed the sponsorship proposal with Corporate Information Management Services, Toronto Cyber Security (formerly CISO) and Legal Services to assess compliance with applicable privacy and record keeping legislation as requested by Council.

Under the proposed arrangement, Equip is not delivering a service on behalf of the City. Equip, as Jumpstart's delivery partner, is the company delivering and operating the sponsorship within City parks. Equip is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) for the management of security and privacy of personal information, including its collection, use and disclosure. PIPEDA, Canada's federal private-sector privacy legislation, governs activities of the type which Equip will be undertaking under this arrangement. Equip has custody and control of the personal information supplied by users.

Any complaints regarding the collection of personal information would be directed to the federal privacy commissioner. In compliance with PIPEDA, Equip has also put in place its own Canadian Privacy Policy that describes the types of information that Equip will collect, and their practices for collecting, using, maintaining, protection, and disclosing information.

Equip has confirmed that personal information collected will be strictly used for service delivery. Personal information includes name, age, email and phone number. Users will have the explicit option to opt out of the use of their personal information beyond this use, for example, third-party advertising or the sharing of personally identifiable information with partners.

Any data shared with sponsor partners is limited to aggregated and anonymized data that does not identify any individual user and is not subject to opt-out. Equip does not sell anonymized or personal information. In addition, Equip has confirmed that data is encrypted end-to-end and user authentication is handled via one-time codes sent to email or phone (no password storage).

Equip proposes to provide the City with aggregated, anonymized data to enable the City to evaluate the sponsorship. The City would only use this information to evaluate usage, operational considerations and community impact of the sports equipment station locations to inform decisions related to the continuation of the program. No personal information would be transferred to or collected by the City.

### **c) Alignment with City Sponsorship Policy**

The proposal was reviewed under the City's Sponsorship Policy in consultation with the City's Strategic Partnerships Office and Legal. Under the Sponsorship Policy, sponsors provide funding or in-kind value that delivers a public benefit in exchange for commercial recognition, without the City purchasing goods or services. The City and the sponsors would be required to enter into a sponsorship agreement to govern the sponsorship.

Based on this review, the proposal meets the definition of a sponsorship, with Equip (as the operator responsible for installation, operations and maintenance) and Jumpstart (as the funder) as co-sponsors, and receive a commercial advantage through sponsor recognition for both organizations, a requirement of the proposal, with no financial contribution from the City. The sponsorship agreement would include provisions related to data privacy, sponsorship recognition, exclusivity, liability, indemnification, and communications.

### **d) Acceptable to General Manager, Parks and Recreation and City Solicitor**

The proposed pilot sponsorship would be for a one-year term. The sponsors have expressed a desire to continue for an additional two years following a first-year implementation, pending Council approval. Under the proposed model, to ensure ongoing City control and protection of public park spaces, the City would retain full discretion over:

- Station locations in consultation with Ward Councillors;
- Signage;
- Oversight of compliance with agreement as it relates to maintenance; and
- Termination of the agreement at any time on 30-days' notice.

Any agreement would be prepared in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

### **e) Staff Review of Sponsorship Proposal and the Digital Divide**

As directed by Council, staff reviewed the sponsorship proposal's approach to addressing the digital divide and its alignment with the City's Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework (DISF) and the Mapping Toronto's Digital Divide report. Staff find that while the sponsorship aligns with certain DISF principles and strategic priorities, it does not address access for residents experiencing the digital divide.

#### *The Digital Divide in Toronto*

The Mapping Toronto's Digital Divide report (2021) defines the digital divide as the gap between individuals who have affordable internet access and the skills to use modern information and communication technologies, and those who do not.

This report indicates that 6 per cent of Toronto households do not have access to a smartphone, with low-income households disproportionately affected. Among households earning less than \$20,000 annually, 15 per cent lack access to a smartphone. In addition, one in twenty households with children under 18 report not having access to enough devices. Considering this data against the proposed model, staff conclude that the sponsorship would not meaningfully mitigate digital access barriers.

### *Alignment with the Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework*

The DISF defines digital infrastructure as technology assets that create, exchange, or use digital data or information, including the data collected or used by those assets. The Framework guides decision-making through six principles: equity and inclusion; a well-run city; society, economy, and the environment; privacy and security; democracy and transparency; and digital autonomy.

Within the context of the sponsorship, digital infrastructure includes the technology-enabled sports equipment stations, associated software (such as mobile applications), and the data collected and stored through their use.

Staff's assessment finds that the sponsorship aligns with Principle 2 (Well-Run City) and Principle 3 (Society, Economy, and the Environment). Installing sports equipment stations in City parks supports the activation of public spaces and contributes to healthy, vibrant communities by providing an additional opportunity for residents to engage in physical activity.

However, the sponsorship does not adequately meet Principle 1 (Equity and Inclusion). The proposed model relies on access to a mobile device and an active data plan and does not include measures to accommodate residents who lack access to digital devices or connectivity. As a result, the sponsorship does not address access for residents experiencing the digital divide.

### **f) Data Privacy and Collection, Specifically Related to Minors**

Safeguards related to the data of minors would be the responsibility of Equip through the requirements of PIPEDA and Equip's Canadian Privacy Policy. Based on the sponsorship model, minors age 15 and under cannot sign up for an account through the app, per Equip policy. Users must be age 16 or older.

### **g) Alignment with Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan**

The proposed sponsorship generally aligns with the intent of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan which emphasizes improving equitable access to recreation opportunities, responding to emerging community needs, and leveraging collaborations to enhance service delivery. By providing free access to sports equipment in City parks through a sponsored, third-party model, the sponsorship generally supports the Plan's objectives related to inclusion, participation, and innovation, particularly as a

complementary approach in locations where residents may face barriers to recreation access.

### **3. Future Considerations – Program Sustainability**

The sponsorship, as proposed, would be implemented as a one-year pilot, with evaluation criteria including usage, operational consideration and community impact of the sports equipment station locations. Subject to the results of the program evaluation and future Council authorization, the sponsor has indicated a desire to run the sponsorship for an additional two years beyond the first year. If Council advances the sponsorship as a one-year pilot, staff would report back to Council in Q2 2027, at which point an additional term(s) could be considered. Continuation beyond a three-year cumulative sponsorship term would require further City Council consideration. Options at that time may include renewal of the sponsorship arrangement or identification of an alternative sponsorship model; discontinuing the program; transitioning to a City-funded service model, subject to Council approval and funding; or transitioning to a pay-to-play model, subject to Council consideration. The latter is offered by Equip in European jurisdictions, but shifting in this direction would introduce access barriers.

### **4. Conclusion and Next Steps**

In response to City Council direction in Item [2025.MM33.18](#), staff conducted a comprehensive, interdivisional review of the proposed sponsorship involving community sports equipment stations in City parks. The proposed sponsorship model meets some, but not all of Council’s considerations.

The proposed sponsorship would introduce a new, sponsor-funded model to support free access to sports equipment in parks across Toronto. The model includes city-wide distribution, with a minimum of one station per ward, combined with clustering in higher-use areas to support operational viability and program utilization, for a total of 50 stations required by Equip for operational viability. The City and the sponsors would be required to enter into a sponsorship agreement to govern the sponsorship for the one-year pilot, and would include provisions related to data privacy, sponsorship recognition, exclusivity, liability, indemnification, and communications.

Staff note that key elements of the proposal including the overall scale of implementation (50 stations), the need for clustering in higher-density areas, and the reliance on a smartphone-based access model are interdependent and necessary to support the delivery of a free-to-use, sponsor-funded program. While the sponsorship proposal provides additional opportunities for residents to engage in healthy physical activity, it does not address access for residents experiencing the digital divide.

To mitigate the digital divide should the sponsorship be approved, Community Recreation in Parks and Recreation proposes to establish an “equipment lending library” initiative, which would focus on eight community centres (two in each Community Council area) co-located with or adjacent to park locations where Equip

lockers are placed, in addition to existing City programs that support and promote free access to recreation facilities and equipment.

### *Next Steps*

Should the Infrastructure and Environment Committee decide to support the sponsorship, the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, would require Council authority to negotiate and execute a sponsorship agreement with Equip Club SA (“Equip”) and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, for the installation, operation and maintenance of 50 community sports equipment stations in select City parks, for a term of one (1) year, on terms and conditions, including provisions related to data privacy, sponsorship recognition, exclusivity, liability, indemnification, and communications, deemed appropriate by the General Manager, Parks and Recreation and in form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor, and in consultation with Ward Councillors to confirm park locations.

If this authority was granted, staff would:

- finalize and execute a one-year sponsorship agreement, provided acceptable terms can be negotiated;
- consult with Ward Councillors to confirm park locations and installation sites;
- coordinate with Equip on installation of equipment stations;
- target initial deployments beginning in summer 2026, subject to site readiness;
- launch equipment lending library” initiative; and
- evaluate the first year of the sponsorship and report back to Council in Q2 2027.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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