

**To:** COUNCIL  
**Meeting Date:** 9/23/2025  
**Subject:** Resident Recreation Program Registration Window  
**Submitted By:** Alix Aitken, Acting Director of Recreation and Culture  
**Prepared By:** Don Crowder, Supervisor of Sport and Facility Bookings  
**Report No.:** 25-084-CD  
**File No.:** C11  
**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT Report 25-084-CD Resident Program Registration Window be received;

AND THAT Staff in Recreation and Culture Division be directed to implement a priority resident registration window of seven (7) days for registered recreation programs.

AND THAT future consideration be given to include the boundaries of North Dumfries Township in the registration window for residents.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

#### **Purpose**

Registration into recreation programs can sometimes be difficult due to the popularity of the program or limited spaces available. In addition, individuals who reside outside of Cambridge are registering for the same programs at the same time. This results in a reduction in available spaces for Cambridge residents.

The software (ACTIVENet) we use to register participants in recreation programs can set up different registration windows (date and time) for residents versus non-residents. By implementing an earlier registration window for residents this will increase the probability of residents being able to register for recreation programs before non-residents.

#### **Key Findings**

- More municipalities across southern Ontario have been implementing different registration windows for residents versus non-residents. This has been in

response to the needs and demands of residents looking to participate in recreation programs in their own community but unable to successfully register.

- Registration data from November 2023-October 2024, shows non-residents occupied an average of 10% of available spaces in city of Cambridge registered recreation programs.
- The most common practice found in other municipalities is to open the registration window for residents seven (7) days prior to allowing non-residents access.
- Non-residents will still be able to access registration but will have to wait for the seven (7) day window to pass.
- Allowing residents an opportunity to register before non-residents supports the Community Services Department's commitment to the following objectives:
  - Fair and equitable access to recreation programs.
  - Structured administrative guidelines.

### **Financial Implications**

Non-residents are currently able to register at the same time as a resident. For some activities they pay an additional non-resident surcharge. The expectation is more residents will now occupy the spaces that were previously held by non-residents who were paying the surcharge.

It is understood that a percentage of non-resident revenue will still be realized but it will be less. The precise percentage cannot be predicted at this time.

### **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:**

Strategic Action

**Objective(s):** Not Applicable

**Strategic Action:** Not Applicable

**OR**

Core Service

**Program:** Recreation Programming

**Core Service:** Recreation, Fitness & Leisure

Implementing a separate registration window for residents aligns with the City's objective of developing a strategic approach to programs and services that tie resources

to community outcomes. More residents will have the opportunity to participate in city of Cambridge recreation programs.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Waitlists**

Staff have seen an increase in the number of people being placed on a waitlist due to the inability to register into their preferred program. Where possible, staff add additional activities to support getting people off the waitlist and into their desired programs. However, this is not always an option based on space requirements, staff availability or not enough people on a waitlist to warrant the cost of offering another program.

### **Community Feedback**

Recreation staff have received feedback from the community expressing their frustration with their inability to successfully register into programs despite their attempts to register as soon as the registration window is open.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Municipal Comparisons**

Upon investigation, other local municipalities (Kitchener) and non-local but similar sized municipalities (Richmond Hill, Newmarket, Milton, Barrie) provide registration priority for residents. Each of these municipalities open the registration window to residents 7 days in advance of non-residents. Waterloo and Brantford do not offer priority registration.

### **Applicable Programs**

The advanced registration window applies specifically to City run activities that have a Barcode and require registration in ACTIVENet.

The following are programs or services available or promoted using ACTIVENet but are exempt from the advanced registration window:

- Programs, events and workshops that do not require registration.
- Single visit, pay as you go programs.
- Facility rentals

### **Waitlists**

Registration windows are only tied to the original enrollment and not waitlists. Openings for a program will continue to be offered based on the order in which the individuals are placed on the waitlist, regardless of residency.

## **Implementation**

The seven-day registration window will take effect for the Spring/Summer 2026 activities. This aligns the change in process with the start of a new registration period.

### **EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):**

There is no existing policy/by-law.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

It is unknown at this time what percentage of non-resident registrations will now become resident registrations. Based on the analysis of resident versus non-resident registrations for November 2023 to October 2024 the non-resident surcharge for that period of time would have been \$7000. If all registrations were now filled by residents this would be the anticipated revenue loss per year.

### **PUBLIC VALUE:**

#### **Transparency:**

To ensure transparency, the Spring and Summer 2026 activities guide registration page will be updated to reflect the change. Regular advertising avenues for upcoming program registrations will include language to reflect this change. Additional communication tools such as social media, email and signage will be utilized to share this message with the public in advance of the registration date.

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:**

#### **Advisory Committees Consulted:**

Not Applicable.

### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

### **INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

Staff in Community Services - Recreation & Culture, and Corporate Services – Financial Services have contributed to the content of this report.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Staff looked at possible solutions in response to the increased number of participants on waitlists and expressed frustration with not being able to get into the desired program.

Adding additional programs where possible to remove people off the waitlist continues to be best practice for the division.

Staff completed an analysis of similar sized municipalities to better understand how they are addressing the same concern in their community. Municipalities have moved in the direction of an advanced registration window for residents to allow them priority. The average window of advanced time that other municipalities use is seven days.

By implementing an advanced registration window for residents this promotes a greater opportunity for tax paying residents to participate in community recreation programs. Staff will report back to Council with an update regarding the opportunity to include residents in the boundary areas of North Dumfries Township in the resident registration window.

**REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

**APPROVALS:**

**This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:**

**Director**

**Deputy City Manager**

**Chief Financial Officer**

**City Solicitor**

**City Manager**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**None.**