



# Sport Plan White Paper

## Final

### Revised October 21, 2015



**Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, Aurora Barbarians Rugby Football Club, Aurora- King Minor Baseball Association, Aurora Community Tennis Club, Aurora Diggers Girls Softball Association, Aurora Lawn Bowling Club, Aurora Master Ducks Swim Club, Aurora Masters Lacrosse, Aurora Mens Slo-Pitch League, Aurora Nordic Pole Walking Club, Aurora Seniors Association, Aurora Skating Club, Big Brother Big Sisters of York, Central York Girls Hockey Association, Coerver Soccer Academy, Ducks Swimming Club, Evolution Gymnastics, Everest Academies, Global Gymnastics, Just 4 Keepers, Kickit2winit, Newmarket Old Guys Hockey League, Newmarket Redbirds Lacrosse Club, Storm Volleyball, Spectrum North Baton Club, St. Andrew's College, Special Olympics Ontario – Aurora, York North Basketball Association, York Oldtimers Hockey League, York Simcoe Minor Bucs Football Association, York Synchronized Swim Club.**

# Produced by the Sport Aurora Sport Plan Advisory Committee (SASPAC)

## Executive Summary

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 a Motion was approved at Town Council for Town staff to report on the development of a Sport Plan for the Town of Aurora.

The staff then reviewed a number of documents, many of which were provided by Sport Aurora and a Report to Council was made by Mr. Downey on March 24<sup>th</sup> that identified seven different strategic areas that should be included in the Aurora Sport Plan that were also in the Mississauga Sports Plan ([www.mississauga.ca](http://www.mississauga.ca)) (<http://www5.mississauga.ca/rec&parks/websites/sportplan/sportplanfinal.pdf>) as follows:

- **Sport Leadership**
- **Sport for All**
- **Sport for Life**
- **Celebration and Promotion of Sport**
- **Building Capacity of our Sport Systems**
- **Sport Tourism**
- **Sport Infrastructure**

It was the declared intent of Council to have the Aurora Sport Plan approved in time for the budget process and implementation in 2016.

A Sport Aurora Working Group called the Sport Aurora Sport Plan Advisory Committee (SASPAC) was formed after asking all members for participation. SASPAC met four times to prepare a response for the Town. The process we used was to research Sport Plan development elsewhere, and identify strategies that were specific to the sport climate in Aurora and were in the best interest of sport development in this Community. From this the **SASPAC** has prepared this **'White Paper'** and has provided it to the Town Council for their consideration.

Sport Aurora believes that it is vital sport brings their interests to the attention of the Town and that all members of Sport Aurora have both input to the White Paper and support for it. The Aurora Sport Plan will become the Town's official policy on Sport so it is important that sport is consulted and a comprehensive plan is developed and implemented.

*The following are the outcomes of the SASPAC research and consultations, discussions and approval by Sport Aurora. It is respectfully submitted to the Town for consideration.*

**ASASPAC Chair - Stephen Kimmerer (President of Sport Aurora, St. Andrew's College)**

**ASASPAC Committee Members:** *Ron Weese (Past President of Sport Aurora), Laurie Mueller (Program Manager Sport Aurora), Nancy Black ( Project Manager Aurora Sports Hall of Fame), Reg Chappell (Ducks Swimming), Alan Dean (Aurora Lawn Bowling), David Giroux (Aurora King Baseball Association), Katie Williams (Central York Girls Hockey Association), Bruce Stafford (Storm Volleyball), Dave Lovegrove (York Simcoe Bucs Football), Chris Foster (York Synchronized Swim Club), Tricia Denstedt (York Synchronized Swim Club), Rob Fairs (Aurora Men's Slo-Pitch League), Sandy Townsend (Aurora Barbarians Rugby Club), Wallace Pidgeon ( York North Basketball Association), Brent MacKinnon ( Aurora Community Tennis Club), Marilyn Rooney (Sport Aurora), Paul Schnabel (Redbirds Lacrosse)*

## Sport Leadership

*The purpose is to develop a shared leadership model for implementation of the Sport Plan that ensures collaboration, investment and involvement from key stakeholders within the Town of Aurora Sport Delivery System.*

### Recommendations from this area include:

Whereas the Town has almost 40 sport organizations of different sizes, of all ages and all genders,

Whereas the revenue generated through permits alone to these sport organizations is over \$2M annually,

Whereas local sport organizations offer Programs to over 15,000 residents, *(citation required)*

Whereas the majority of sport organizations are non-share (not-for-profit) organizations that are volunteer driven,

Whereas Sport Aurora represents 32 Sport Organizations and is recognized as a local Sport Council,

Whereas the sport organizations operate numerous sport events that bring a significant but unknown number of tourists to the Town and provide a positive economic impact to the Town,

### It is therefore recommended that:

- 1) The Town Council recommend that a local Sport Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as the Sport Council) be formed, similar to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, with appropriate elected and Town staff involvement to advise the Town Council on issues related to the implementation of the Aurora Sport Plan.
- 2) Once the Sport Council is formed it should define additional roles.
- 3) That Sport Aurora, having been in operation for over a decade and that has over 90% of all sport Organizations within their membership presently, be recognized as the local Sport Council for the Town of Aurora.
- 4) That all Local Sport Organizations (LSO's) automatically be considered a "Community Sport Organization" with all rights, privileges and obligations as defined by the Town, and are encouraged to register with the local Sport Council.
- 5) That Sport Aurora change their By-Laws to reflect the inclusive nature of the Organization and create a membership class called "Registered Member" that has no cost to the Registered Member, ensuring that every LSO that wishes to be considered a Community Sport Organization are able to apply for permits, grants and other privileges.
- 6) That Sport Aurora enter into a service agreement or partnership with the Town to ensure that the deliverables outlined in the Aurora Sport Plan and additional roles are professionally managed and implemented in the areas of:
  - a. **Sport Leadership**
  - b. **Sport for Life**
  - c. **Sport for All**
  - d. **Celebration and Promotion of Sport**
  - e. **Building Capacity**
  - f. **Sport Tourism**
  - g. **Sport Infrastructure**

## Summary

Sport has grown dramatically and represents the sport and physical activity interests of the large majority of residents in town. Sport Aurora supports the development of a Sport Plan to address the needs of the community.

Local sport organizations are the best resource for experience and advice in the leadership of sport, and have demonstrated interest and have shown expertise in the development and sustainability of sport.

Sport organizations have a long term strategic view of sport that transcends a single term of Town Council.

Sport Aurora is a multi-sport centred organization that has proved to be focused on the greater benefits of all sport rather than having a single sport focus that is often self-serving and not in the best needs of the community.

## A Sport Plan without financial resources is no Plan at all.

Sport is an economic driver that is now recognized by the business community and provides significant positive economic impact. Sport brings money through Sport Tourism to local business and the region. Aurora must change how it views its sports infrastructure from a Parks & Recreation “lens” to an Economic Development “lens” working to develop sport. This will allow Aurora to develop into a sport destination or “Sports Hub.”

There are a number of funding models that are not tax-payer based, that could be used to fund leadership initiatives such as:

- Sport contributes financially to the Town through permits and user fees. Therefore funding leadership and sport development should come from the reassignment of financial resources that come from sport organizations. *A thorough review of the pricing and other policies must be reviewed in order to ensure fair and equitable assignment of fees and funding of important aspects of the Sport Plan.*
- Municipal Tax Deferment in exchange for community-based sport and athletic facilities being incorporated into development plans.
- Issuing of Municipal Bonds to pay for infrastructure (it's time that the Province pass legislation to guarantee municipal bonds creating a level playing field and empowering municipalities to build community based sport and athletics infrastructure) .
- Alternative Funding Model (Public Private Partnerships) should be encouraged; including a Corporate Bond structure and issuance of other debt models to fund community based sport and athletics infrastructure.

## Sport deserves financial support.

### Sport for All

*Develop inclusive and targeted programs, services, and funding that address barriers to participation in sport.*

**Areas that need attention have been defined as follows:**

- Facilities: Without adequate and proper facilities little can be addressed.
  - Efficiently used
  - Facility fits needs
- Policies to support and assist organizations that want to provide programs.
  - Partnerships developed to enable Organizations to deliver.
- Policies to encourage and support new organizations to form where there is lack of a program.
  - Procedures developed for new programs (including incentives) to be undertaken where gaps in services are recognized.
- Policies to provide support for sport.

- Meeting Room/conference availability.
- Pricing policies that reduce costs to families and eliminate financial barriers.
- Programs to subsidize underfinanced families

## Recommendations from this area include:

1. Policies are needed to ensure appropriate and lower facility rental, and insurance costs.
2. Program gaps must be identified, and then resolved. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - Special Needs- The number and interests of this population must be identified and programs developed.
    - *The Town be responsible for ensuring that 100% of individuals with special needs have access to sport programming by assisting LSOs. In addition to the Town support, every club should have access to materials from the NSOs such as Special Olympics Canada and the Canadian Paralympic Committee so that they can encourage participation (where possible) and foster inclusivity in their clubs.*
  - Adults and seniors require special opportunities for involvement that fit their lifestyles- not every person wants to belong to a League or can commit to one- casual play opportunities and the infrastructure to support it must be considered.
  - Barriers to participation must be identified and then resolved so all ages and stages of development can participate in healthy sport and physical activity.
  - Working parents who cannot get their children to/from activities or participate themselves need assistance with transportation.
  - Sport & Recreation access is needed through methods such as free passes to user-pay facilities, low-cost introductory programs and frequent user incentives.
  - Recommend that the town and the local sport council work together to schedule facility use with each other and town programs such that organizations / programs that can share space are provided with the opportunity to collaborate for the best possible facility use.

## Sport for Life

### *Increase participation in an understanding of the life-long benefits of quality sport and physical activity.*

The Sport for Life movement in Canada was begun in 2005 when the Canadian Sport for Life Society (CS4L) was formed. Immediately CS4L went to work with sport and developed and developed the Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTAD) that, after a number of iterations, has been adopted by all 58 National Sport Organizations (NSO's) through Sport Canada <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1414085745696/1414086180293>. It is now the official Policy of those Organizations. During this period of adoption, each of the NSO's were tasked to develop and deliver the LTAD model through their provincial partners (PSO's) and then local sport organizations (LSO's). The CS4L has facilitated many of these NSO/PSO transformations and has helped develop strategies over the last ten years for the delivery of LTAD at the local level. In many cases this has been funded in Ontario by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). In 2015 all NSO's and most PSO's have implementation strategies. LSO's have not embraced LTAD well as yet and this is an important direction of the CS4L across the Country.

For information about LTAD and the CS4L Society please see the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) web site at [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)

## Activate Aurora

Locally in Aurora Sport Aurora has begun a CS4L Community Pilot Project called “Activate Aurora”. It started in 2014 with a cross-sectorial Organizing Committee meeting twice with facilitation provided by the Ontario Community Sport Councils (CSCO). Two meetings developed the underpinning of the focus of a Working Group that has met many times in 2015 and is still involved with building the implementation plan. This Working Group applied for (but has not yet heard about) an \$22K grant to RBC-Learn to Play to fund a pilot Project that includes a **Multi-Sport PLAY Day, A Fundamental Movement Skills/Physical Literacy Training Program, A Regional Summit** for the preparation of Early Childhood Educators and Elementary School Educators, a **Safe Active Walk-to-School Project**, a cooperative program with the York Region District School Board to help deliver **Quality Daily Physical Activity in Schools** and a **Healthy Eating Strategies** focused on helping parents and children develop healthy eating skills and habits. Another Project that resides outside the grant is a **Seniors Program** that will help seniors identify barriers to participation and then implement intervention strategies when barriers arise so they can adopt active lifestyles. This Seniors Project has been facilitated through the Community Sport Councils Ontario (CSCO). Finally a **Communications Sub-Committee** is working on how to market and promote this project to the Community and build awareness of the need and the importance of finding a solution. Recently our M.P. Lois Brown stood in the House of Commons on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and announced that the “Town of Aurora has drawn a line in the sand” and is prepared to work to make our Community “**Canada’s Most Active Community**”.

<http://www.beactiveaurora.ca/>

Sport provides a multitude of activity opportunities in partnership with municipal recreation, public health, our hospitals and education system. Sport also has the unique ability to provide economic benefit not just social emotional and physical, through sport tourism. All of these must be considered when reviewing how sport through LTAD can not only survive, but thrive in order to build a healthy, physically active and stable Community. Through private and public cross-sectorial partnerships financing sport and physical activity to the levels required can be accomplished.

### Recommendations from this area include:

1. Conduct an analysis of existing sport and recreation programs to identify gaps and opportunities related to the Sport for Life Model.
2. Develop a physical literacy action plan with cross-sectorial stakeholders that ensure consistent progressive, coordinated and streamlined programming at all stages and ages of development.
3. Develop a comprehensive web-site and communications plan to promote the benefits of physical activity and physical literacy, availability of sport and recreation opportunities and sport facilities and sport organizations that provide CS4L programming within Aurora.
4. Develop measures and processes to monitor and report on sport participation and the development of physical literacy in all segments of society in Aurora.
5. Support Community Sport Organizations and the CS4L Community development model by mutually sharing demographic and participation data in order to identify trends and outcomes through which better informed program decisions can be made.
6. Profile the focus on sport and physical activity within the Aurora Recreation Department’s mission, mandate and through its resource allocation.
7. Develop a sustainable financial model that ensures that the needs for sport and physical activity for the Aurora Community are met.

## Celebration and Promotion of Sport

*Actively promote sport and celebrate the achievements of athletes, volunteers and organizations.*

### CELEBRATION

In this context, the strategic focus of “Celebration of Sport” would be to engage a greater number of residents in sport celebration events. Note that celebration can be defined as:

- Big ‘C’ Celebrate - official events that are targeted outward at “celebrating” sport events, people and organizations and the successes therein
- Small ‘c’ Celebrate - ongoing events and programs within the organizations that celebrate sport participation
- PURPOSE: Celebrate the achievements of sport stakeholders.

**SNAPSHOT:** Current *celebration* is individualized (by entity) and not coordinated with the ‘greater good’ of all sports in the community. Sport Aurora offers many; sustainability must be secured. Town of Aurora offers some; must coordinate with Sport on timing and duplication of objectives.

### Recommendations from this area include:

1. Aurora should build on its current celebration and recognition events:
  - **Breakfast of Champions**  
An annual celebration of sport excellence by athletes and coaches where results of Provincial, National and International successes are tracked, acknowledged and recorded (public record)
  - **Aurora Sports Hall of Fame**  
Ensure that resources (human and financial) are allocated to build an inspirational, professional shrine to sports in Aurora
  - **Volunteer Recognition**  
The celebration of individuals within sport organizations that recognizes the involvement and contribution of their volunteers.
  - **Town Community Recognition Awards**  
Though not 100% sport specific, work with all sport organizations to capture, identify and nominate individuals from EVERY organization, each year including tracking and ongoing communication, including youth.
2. Promote sport actively on Town web site or build a sport web site.
3. Promote and support mass media opportunities
4. Develop and support Future Hall of Famers & Athletes of the Year programs
5. Create mechanism to monitor, support and acknowledge the individuals and teams who are ‘on track’ with sport excellence.

## PROMOTION

*In this context, the strategic focus of “Promotion of Sport” would engage and inform a greater number of residents in sport, activity and in the promotion of sport-focused recognition events will ignite community pride and support local athletes and sport successes.*

**PURPOSE:** Actively promote the activities and events of sport stakeholders.

**SNAPSHOT:** Current *promotion* is individualized (by entity) and not coordinated with the ‘greater good’ of all sports in the community. Primary and ancillary activities and successes should be centralized and pushed out through the Town of Aurora.

### Recommendations from this area include:

1. Develop a marketing/communication strategy to increase awareness of and attendance at existing sport promotion and recognition events.
2. Leverage existing venues (i.e. SARC, AFLC, ASHoF) and events (i.e. Olympics and Pan Am Games) to promote and celebrate sports in the community.
3. Develop a series of events such as “PLAY Day” to promote participation, physical activity and the achievements of community sport athletes and volunteers.
4. Leverage technology and social media to attract more people to both existing and new sport celebration events.
5. Support the long-term vision and strategic plan for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.
6. Develop new & use existing campaigns in conjunction with stakeholders:
  - Play Day
  - Winter Carnival (local businesses/restaurants create/promote theme)
  - Activate Aurora
  - York Counties (online giveaways & promotions)
  - National Sports Day
  - RBC Sports Day
  - ParticipACTION

## Building Capacity into our Sports Systems

*Increase capacity and sustainability of community sport providers, programs and services.*

### Key Concepts

- Understanding the needs and interests of children, youth, adults, seniors and organizations.
- Understanding the changing demographic.
- Understanding the financial commitment required to build, maintain and monitor the capacity.

### Recommendations from this area include:

1. Increase awareness of the importance of sports and recreation organizations to the community.
  - a. The existing and potential revenue they generate for the town and local businesses.
  - b. The number of Volunteers and the many hours they commit to helping our community.
2. Provide opportunities for sports organizations to learn and share experiences, knowledge and resources with each other.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities for sports organizations to connect with local businesses in order to share expertise and provide opportunities for sponsorship and volunteerism.

4. Research and share best practice models for LSO governance, financial planning, administration and organizational structures.
5. Review the Town's affiliation policies and ensure that appropriate resources are applied to sport development.
6. Host an annual Sport Summit focused on showcasing sport and assisting sport in developing their organizations.
7. Ensure that regular and timely communication and feedback is undertaken through the Sport Council.
8. Determine training gaps for organizations, coaches and volunteers and host training events to address shortcomings.
9. Develop a volunteer incentive program that includes recruitment, retention, records keeping and recognition.
10. Connect sport organizations to the business community to promote co-operative financial benefits.

## Sport Tourism

*That Aurora be recognized as a sport/event-friendly Town and a sport destination of choice.*

A Sport Tourism strategy will support the Town's broader strategic **Sport Plan** and will provide a planned and coordinated approach to sport tourism in Aurora that is focused on building or attracting sporting events (local, provincial, national) that maximize the potential community and economic benefits of sport tourism.

### Recommendations from this area include:

1. Develop a comprehensive Sport Tourism Strategy and implementation plan that will highlight Aurora as a sport event-friendly Town and a sport tourism destination.
2. Develop a community engagement plan to support the Town's opportunities to host Regional, Provincial and National sporting events/games.
3. Working with existing community organizations, i.e., Neighborhood Network, to expand on database of volunteers and resources to support sport tourism events.
4. Research and collaborate on securing grant funding programs from provincial, national and private sources that engage and attract communities of interest and support the Town to bid and host sport events.
5. Provide incentives to local sport organizations to develop sport tourism events.
6. Partner with the private sector through sponsorship programs to identify potential new funding sources to assist in bid preparation to host sport events.
7. Create a Collaborative Bid Committee with neighbour communities that can pool resources and attract larger events.
8. Work with existing community sport organizations to support current sporting events/tournaments that have a significant impact on local economy.

## Sport Infrastructure

*Ensure sport facilities meet community needs and are allocated in a fair and equitable manner.*

Key Components:

- Understanding the needs and interests of children, youth, adults, seniors and sport organizations.
- Understand the changing demographic.
- Understand the financial commitment required to build, renovate and maintain the Infrastructure in a timely manner.

### Recommendations from this area include:

1. Create a Sport Infrastructure Committee
  - a. Determine the realistic requirements of all organizations
    - i. Immediate and short term needs
    - ii. Future and Long Term Growth projections and requirements based on verifiable registration data.
  - b. Determine proper allocation of existing facilities to align with the activity requirements. (examples)
    - i. Activities that could be done in a cafeteria should not be using a High School Gym
    - ii. 18 year old REP athletes should not be training in an elementary school on a tile floor.
  - c. Ensure adequate, safe and affordable transportation during the required times to all facilities
2. Create joint-user agreements with:
  - a. Public & Catholic School Boards
  - b. Private Schools - St. Andrew's College, Country Day, Pickering College, Villanova and Seneca College.
  - c. Private Clubs or Businesses with facilities, regardless of size.
3. Create a Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Financing Program:
  - a. Partner sport organizations contribute towards facilities they are using.
  - b. Development Charge allocation review.
  - c. Signage and advertising revenue from each venue is retained for infrastructure development and maintenance.
  - d. Private and Corporate partnerships developed

Additional recommendations include:

- Consult key stakeholders on infrastructure development, facility renovation plans and sport amenity standards.
- Undertake a facility and utilization analysis to determine the types and number of facilities required to meet current and future community sport
- Needs including amenities for cricket, field hockey, Para-sports and other non-traditional sports to inform the next Recreation Master Plan (2014).
- Conduct an allocation policy review of sport facilities to ensure balanced and equitable access.
- Explore joint-use agreements with sport infrastructure providers (i.e. private clubs, Boards of Education) to increase access to existing facilities.
- Explore joint funding for sport facility development/redevelopment projects with stakeholders.
- Establish an annual user group exchange to discuss maintenance and repair of existing facilities.