



Memorandum

TO: Krista Power, City Clerk **FILE:**

FROM: Councillor Greg Johnsen

DATE: 05/21/2024 (mm/dd/yyyy)

SUBJECT: Request for Report – Outdoor Rink Options

MEETING & DATE: Committee of the Whole – 06/03/2024 (mm/dd/yyyy)

Over the past few years the city of Thunder Bay has been dealing with the unfortunate realities of climate change. In particular, our winter weather has changed to the point that providing outdoor rinks (ODR) services in the future may not be a viable financial option. This should be avoided at all costs.

Residents view the ODR as a success and there may also be significant staffing impacts given that ODR's are maintained by Parks staff.

In response to these difficulties, I am requesting more information on additional options from administration. This will ensure that City Council will be given information on potential solutions for the future. Furthermore, Parks administration should be aware of these potential solutions so that, if given the opportunity, they can advise Council on any costs associated and which strategy is best for the city.

Therefore, I would like the Parks & Open Spaces Division to provide a report in December of 2024 (or sooner) on the feasibility costs, potential benefits, and improvements gained to service levels for the following ideas:

1. Synthetic Rinks:

Synthetic Rink technology has evolved over the past few years and some municipalities have begun to install the material. While not ideal compared to ice, the material may offer some resistance to the warmer winter weather recently experienced.

2.Refridgeration system:

Currently Thunder Bay has one refrigeration system unit that is in place at the Port Arthur's Landing rink. Certainly, there is a high cost in providing more systems, but perhaps this may be a viable option for rink hubs.

3.Covered Rink:

The Parks department has looked into a covered structure for the North End rink but being that it was a number of years ago, Council should be aware of updated costs associated with this.

4.Concrete pads:

While concrete pads are currently being installed at some rink locations (for year-round usage),

Parks & Open Spaces is still putting ice on the concrete pads in the winter. However, there may be a savings associated with not putting ice in at these sites and instead designating the concrete ODR's for roller blades instead of skates.

5.Outdoor Rink Hubs:

A hub system for rinks may be an option going forward, but Parks will first need to articulate where these will be, and the costs associated with.

As outlined in this memorandum, I provide the following motion for Council's consideration,

WITH RESPECT to the Memorandum from Councillor Greg Johnsen dated May 21, 2024, we recommend that Administration investigate the various options outlined in this memorandum relative to Outdoor Rinks;

AND THAT this report include on a broad scale the financial impacts of taking on this work in the 2024 budget and future city budgets;

AND THAT Administration report back on or before December 16, 2024;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to Council for ratification.

C.C. Norm Gale, City Manager
Kerri Marshall, GM Infrastructure & Operations
Kayla Dixon, Director of Engineering & Operations