

# **Summary Report: Eastglen Leisure Centre Community Consultation**

**Open House – October 28, 2015**

**On-Line Survey – October 28, 2015-November 16, 2015**

# Background

On October 28, 2015 a public open house was held as part of the City of Edmonton's engagement effort regarding the future of the Eastglen Leisure Centre as the City explores ways to increase the use of the facility. This open house built on a public engagement meeting and online survey in July/August 2015, through which community stakeholders and members of the public were consulted to:

- Understand the role the Eastglen facility plays in local quality of life
- Understand the needs of the Eastglen community, facility customers, and stakeholders
- Find collaborative solutions to optimize the use of Eastglen Leisure Centre.

During these initial consultations, the community, facility customers, and stakeholders articulated three key ideas to improve attendance and optimize the use of the facility: increased promotion, enhanced programming, and improvements to the physical state of the facility.

The open house presented lists of key actions under each of these areas that members of the public believed will be most effective at improving facility attendance. These lists were developed from suggestions received during the July consultations. Participants were then asked two questions:

- Do you agree/disagree with the ideas being proposed by the City of Edmonton with regards to these opportunities?
- Do you have any suggestions that you would put like to forward?

Following the open house, a survey asking the same questions was conducted. It was open for responses between October 28, 2015 and November 16, 2015. Sixty-one responses were received.

## Increased Promotion

Based on the feedback received in the July consultations, the City of Edmonton put forward the following promotional activities for comment by the public:

- Improved directional signage
- Place road signs on major arteries that promote Eastglen Pool
- Investigate sponsorship opportunities
- Promote special events
- Promote unique programming offered at Eastglen
- Target advertising
- Promote leisure access program for lower income individuals and families.

The majority of responses at the open house agreed with these tactics, as well as approximately 86 per cent (53) of the survey responses. In particular, participants emphasized:

- Promoting the saltwater filtration system – Eastglen’s saltwater treatment system is fairly unique among city pools and preferred by many patrons. Participants felt promotional materials should highlight this feature.

*“Promote the salt water versus chlorine. This is a huge benefit with only Confederation being the only other salt water pool on the southside”*

- Hold additional events – in addition to promoting existing special events, several comments were received suggesting the City host additional events aimed at improving attendance.

*“Hold more special events at Eastglen”*

- Ensure the website is up-to-date – several comments were received asking the City to ensure an up-to-date schedule be made available so that patrons can plan their visits appropriately.

*“An accurate schedule on the website is needed”*

## Facility Improvement

During the open house, the City put forward the following recommendations regarding facility improvements for comment:

- Ensure general maintenance issues are addressed in a timely manner
- Ensure facility shutdowns are minimized and scheduled to occur during low demand times
- Enhance outdoor patio with deck chairs and umbrellas
- Provide temporary food services on the patio during peak summer days and group rentals
- Explore key improving ideas for Eastglen Leisure Centre through a program and feasibility study. Consider the following:
  - Increased change room accessibility
  - Create new and expanded hot tub and sauna
  - Dedicate space for fitness equipment

Overall, a majority of participants agreed with these actions, including 86 per cent (53) of survey respondents. Their comments emphasized:

- **The importance of general maintenance** – many commenters made reference to the importance of timely maintenance to the customer experience, especially ensuring showers are functioning.

*“Need showers that don’t scald you”*

- **A desire for on-deck fitness equipment** – many respondents felt the addition of on-deck fitness equipment would be particularly effective at attracting new users.

*“I feel that the physical addition to the Centre-offering a fitness area with stationary bikes, elliptical etc. would make an attractive component”*

- **A desire for various capital improvements** – several capital improvements were frequently requested, including an expanded hot tub, additional change room space, and improved use of the patio/sundeck area.

*“Please have a better hot tub facility with proper jets”*

## Enhanced Programming

During the open house, the City put forward the following recommendations regarding enhanced programming for comment:

- Keep pool temperature as it currently is (29.5C)
- Develop year-round scheduling to maintain consistency and encourage participation
- Offer lane swimming throughout the day and evening
- Expand Aquafit to include specialty programs and morning, evening, and weekend classes
- Enhance partnerships with schools to offer Eastglen High School Swim Academy Programs before and after school, community learning skills classes, school rec swims, swimming lessons, and water safety outreach programs.
- Develop specialized lessons and training including, preschool swim lessons, adult and senior swim lessons, and evening swim training for adults
- Move Red Cross Learn-to-Swim lessons to Saturday mornings
- Develop women's only programs to include weekend rec swims and an additional Aquafit class
- Continue to offer public and community league swims
- Make available new Advanced Aquatic Leadership/Lifesaving training courses between 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. on Friday evenings.

Overall, a majority of participants agreed with these actions, including 82 per cent (35) of survey respondents. Their comments emphasized:

- **The need for a regular schedule** – in order to ensure that users are able to access the swimming programs they want and build routine.  
*"Year round scheduling builds loyalty"*
- **A desire for community partnership** – including with local schools, community leagues, and senior's centres.  
*"Engage in an agreement with Central Lions Seniors Association to offer swim lessons, or swim socials, to members of Central Lions (and possibly other seniors associations) on a regular basis."*
- **The importance of program timing** – for example, ensuring that programs aimed at young children are held at appropriate times of the day.  
*"Children swim lessons at appropriate times-not Saturday evenings"*
- **Expand on current, popular programs** – including offering more timeslots for aquafit, women's only swim and lane swimming.  
*"Appreciate regular deep water Aquafit. Enhance by adding more times"*
- **Maintain the pool temperature** – at its current temperature of 29.5C  
*"Please do not increase water temperature. Temp can an even be lowered by 0.5 to 1 degree"*

## Community Engagement Committee

As part of its commitment to the revitalization of the Eastglen Leisure Centre, the City of Edmonton is establishing a Community Engagement Committee. The Committee's role will be to:

- Attend regularly scheduled meetings
- Review information and provide input regarding the development of programs and services at Eastglen Leisure Centre
- Review information and provide input regarding the operation of Eastglen Leisure Centre
- Solicit and share input from their organizations membership with the committee
- Share information with their organization's membership and citizens at large with regards to the Eastglen Leisure Centre

The City of Edmonton's Supervisor of Eastglen Leisure Centre will chair the Committee. Its membership will consist of:

- Two customers of Eastglen Leisure Centre
- Community Recreation Coordinator, City of Edmonton
- Eastglen Facility Programmer
- Eastglen Facility Foreman
- One representative each from:
  - Bellevue Community League
  - Highlands Community League
  - Newton Community League
  - Montrose Community League
  - Edmonton Public School Board

Committee representatives will be selected from the list of people who put their names forward during the nomination period. Once the Committee membership is finalized, members will be contacted and an inaugural meeting will be scheduled.

## Next Steps

Using the feedback generated during the open house and survey, the City of Edmonton will develop action plans for programming, promotions, and facility enhancement. These plans will outline the specific tactics to be used in each area to revitalize the facility. These plans, as well as the ongoing work of the Community Engagement Committee, will be shared with the community in order to ensure that all interested members of the public can keep up-to-date on the progress being made.