

# **Gender Equity in the Allocation of Public Recreational Spaces Policy**

City of Burlington

Parks & Recreation Department

April 10, 2007

## **1.0 Policy Statement**

"The City of Burlington (City) is committed to achieving access and equity in its governance, services, and administration. The Parks & Recreation Department (Department) is aligned with the City of Burlington's Corporate Access and Equity Policy by developing Gender Equity in the Allocation of Public Recreational Spaces (Gender Equity Policy). Actions will be guided with respect to gender by the principles and practices set out in this policy. The planning and provision of public recreational spaces by the Department will be measured against the values of gender equity and fairness without discrimination"

### ***1.1 Authority:***

The authority for the Gender Equity Policy is gained through Burlington City Council, and the Department (Report PR 05/07) The Ontario Human Rights Code, (Section 1) and the Canadian Rights and Freedoms Charter (Section 15 -1), both require that services be provided fairly and without discrimination with respect to gender.

## 2.0 Contextual Definitions

The Gender Equity Policy applies to the Department and Users. The following contextual definitions will provide respective clarification in the application of the policy.

**Equity** - The principle and practice of fair and balanced allocation of resources and opportunities to both females and males using public - recreational spaces

**Gender Equity** To be equitable means to be fair and balanced and to appear to be fair; and in this context, providing opportunities to community members with some reasonable gender accommodations or special measures to help bridge any programs and services which prevent full participation due to gender. It includes working to redress identified inequities and imbalances in opportunities to participate in active living.

**Barrier** - Barriers can be described as any policy or practice, which prevent full participation due to gender.

**Public Recreational Spaces** - Includes any facility or green space that is owned, operated, held by joint venture or offered for lease by the City. These spaces may include but not be limited to parks, sports fields, ice surfaces, pools, gymnasias and community meeting rooms.

**Rights** - Rights can be described as one's ability through legislation or policy to access services and or programs regardless of gender.

**Users** - Any permitholder of public recreational spaces, organizations entering into a Joint Venture Agreement with the City, leaseholders of public recreational spaces and directly-delivered Departmental programs.

Exceptions to this definition include renters of facilities for private use (e.g. birthday parties, meetings etc.) and Reciprocal Agreements.

**Users with Inequitable Allocations** - Refers to Users (female or male) who are not receiving their equitable share of public recreational spaces and/or times according to section 5.3 of this Policy.

### **3.0 Guiding Principles**

Guiding principles speak to "the rules of play" or the basic values that the Department and Users will embrace in adhering to the Gender Equity Policy.

#### ***Civic Leadership***

- There is a long-term commitment and a collective interest in furthering gender equity principles in sport and recreation.
- The Gender Equity Policy will be reasonable, practical and achievable.
- It is recognized that gender equity means that residents have choices and that different approaches will be taken to include different Users.

#### ***Accountable, Accessible and Equitable Governance***

- The Gender Equity Policy will remain consistent with Federal and Provincial legislation and Council's by-laws.
- Respect for people is present in all public recreational spaces regardless of one's gender.
- The Department and Users will embrace a climate of gender equity in both competitive and non-competitive sport and recreational activities.
- The Department will take a planned approach to the provision of public recreational spaces based on current trends, demographics and gender-specific participation rates.

- Equity will ensure that the allocation of resources will allow participants of both genders to reach their full potential \*.

### ***Citizen Expectations***

- Every Burlington resident has the right to access public recreational spaces. \*
- Every Burlington resident has the right to participate to the level of his/her ability and interest.\*
- Residents embrace the values of respect, fairness, and trust.
- The barriers to full participation of both genders will be addressed over time.

*\*To the extent that public recreational spaces are available*

## **4.0 Scope**

The Gender Equity Policy applies to the Department and Users.

## **5.0 Policy Deliverables**

The Department will continue to plan its service delivery and capital infrastructure program in accordance with Council-approved policies, guidelines, practices and procedures. The Gender Equity Policy requires the Department to include the following in its planning and operational processes:

### ***5.1 Pro-active Planning:***

The Department will review at a minimum its demographic profile, growth projections, quantify trends and unmet demands as well as identify any inequities with respect to gender in the allocation of public recreational spaces. This information will be shared with Users to assist in their own planning and program development to ensure service gaps continue to be addressed.

## **5.2 Understanding Barriers:**

The Department will seek to understand the barriers to participation of both females and males in sport and recreation activities. This information will assist the Department and Users in planning outreach strategies and related initiatives as they relate to impediments in achieving gender equity.

## **5.3 Community Leisure Facility Planning:**

The Department will continue to prepare its long-term planning document for the provision and renewal of public recreational spaces. The Community Leisure Facilities Plan and its updates will continue to recommend public recreational spaces, which provide residents with choice, and is informed by current trends, best practices and considers the municipal capital budget processes. Users will continue to be consulted in the development of community leisure facility plans. The needs of Users and non-Users will be criteria for any such future planning documents.

## **5.4 Allocation of Public Recreational Spaces:**

The Department through its Public Recreational Spaces Allocation Policy (Allocation Policy) and Allocation Procedures will establish criteria for the allocation of public recreational spaces to Users.

The Gender Equity Policy requires that addressing inequities experienced by Users are prioritized and given special consideration. Using gender as a criterion for allocation of public recreational spaces will reduce a significant barrier to participation.

Allocation procedures related to public recreational spaces permitted through the Department will require Users to adhere to the following criteria subject to the availability of public recreational spaces:

- All groups who are permit holders must adhere to residency requirements as stated in the Allocation Policy;
- Permitted space must be maximized and appropriate for the activity age and gender of participants;
- Allocations will respect growth of new and emerging and high growth programs;
- Equitable distribution of prime and non-prime hours will be respected, based on program need;
- Equitable distribution of facilities and facility types will be honoured;
- A commitment by the Department and Users to take remedial and proactive approaches to address inequities with respect to gender equity.

The Department and Users will establish their own procedures and approaches, which align with the Gender Equity Policy and demonstrate a commitment to its principles and requirements. The Department will ensure that directly-delivered programs and services comply with the principles and deliverables of the Gender Equity Policy. Further, the Department will support Users to develop strategies related to the Gender Equity Policy. Allocation of public recreational spaces will require evidence of compliance to the statements contained herein.

### **5.5 Program Development:**

The Department and Users will plan, promote and implement sport and recreational activities, which provide choice and encourage the participation of Burlington residents, especially those Users who are not receiving an equitable allocation of space. At a minimum, activities will include:

- Understanding the demographic makeup of the community and current trends;
- Gender balance in offering programs;

- Introduction to sport and recreation programs;
- Supporting training and quality assurance approaches.

### **5.6 Welcoming Environments:**

The Department and Users will ensure that all participants are provided safe and welcoming environments regardless of one's gender.

Welcoming environments are those that consider the safety and security of participants, employ helpful and encouraging staff and volunteers as well as take into consideration the unique needs of female and male participants.

### **5.7 Committee Representation:**

The Department and Users will work toward having equitable gender representation on all Department-sponsored and Council-supported volunteer Boards and Committees, which utilize public recreational spaces.

### **5.8 Promotion and Communications:**

The Department and Users will utilize gender neutral language in its publications, incorporate a balance of genders/representative backgrounds in visual and promotional materials and seek to promote equity in speakers and presenters. Activities may include but not be limited to:

- Social marketing regarding the benefits of participation;
- Promoting family and peer support;
- A listing of Users in the Recreation and Leisure Guide.

## **5.9 Role Models and Mentors:**

The Department and Users will value the importance that role modelling plays in the future gender composition of sport and recreation. The Department will facilitate the following related activities:

- Striving for equitable gender composition of coaches, managers and executive members;
- Shadowing opportunities;
- Tools and training;
- Staffing and volunteer ratios;
- Staff and volunteers in non-traditional roles;
- Consideration of naming of parks, facilities and rooms in keeping with the City's policy (*Naming of City of Burlington Corporate Assets*).

## **5.10 Awareness of Legislation and Pro-active Approaches:**

The Department and Users will be aware of all legislative responsibilities with respect to providing equitable services and activities embracing the principle of gender equity. Activities will include but not be limited to:

- Training and support to community and sport groups;
- Communicating legislative requirements and supporting practices;
- Sharing Anti-Harassment and other related information;
- Sharing of information, policies and proactive approaches amongst Users.

## **6.0 Implementation and Compliance**

The Department will work with Users to develop implementation plans to support the Gender Equity policy, monitor compliance and report on its outcomes on an annual basis.

## **6.1 Implementation:**

Implementation of this policy will be phased in and completed through the collective efforts of the Department and the Users. Meetings will be held each year with respect to the allocation of public recreational spaces whereby the Gender Equity Policy and implementation strategies/outcomes will become a standing agenda item; The first meeting will seek to capture the plans of the Department and Users in supporting the Gender Equity Policy within the upcoming season and another to report on the progress made by end of season.

## **6.2 Compliance:**

This policy and subsequent updates will be communicated to Users through the Department. Efforts will be made to ensure that all Users who utilize public recreational spaces have a full understanding of the importance of complying with the Gender Equity Policy and subsequent implementation plans. Non-compliance will be dealt with promptly, and efforts will be made to work with the User(s) to rectify the situation. Continued non-compliance respecting the Gender Equity Policy may result in a revocation of allocated public recreational spaces.

## **6.3 Annual Monitoring and Reporting:**

The Department will issue an annual report, which outlines the initiatives, which support the Gender Equity Policy and the progress made on each of the stated initiatives. The report will include agreed-to performance measures, which will compare progress from year to year. A summary report will be provided to Council, the Users, and to the general public.

### ***Approval Reference:***