

King updates its Recreation Master Plan

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King council has given its stamp of approval to an update of its Park, Recreation and Community Master Plan. The plan was last updated in 2013 to provide short and long-term perspectives and provision of municipal services. It's a document that's used extensively by staff as a valuable tool to help shape council decisions. Using the federal-provincial Framework for Recreation Canada, staff encouraged input from all stakeholders. Complementing targets and goals in King's Official Plan, the plan incorporates community feedback to establish some key priorities. They include active living, inclusion and access, connecting people and nature, supportive environments and recreation capacity. The main focus is to provide meaningful and accessible recreational opportunities for citizens. The majority of the recommendations in the plan focus on maximizing current resources, leveraging partnerships and accessing available grant funding. Other points in the plan include developing a co-op program, establishing marketing campaigns, and training. Many initiatives will be funded through one-time program requests. All funding requests come as part of King's annual budget process, similar to other department requests, and will be phased in over the next few years. Following council's endorsement, staff will incorporate all feedback received and being to implement some of the identified objects as part of the 2022 work plan. The Recreation & Community Master Plan sets priorities for the Township to provide physical activity, inclusive services, nature connection through recreation and strong community partnerships. In developing the recommendations for this plan, staff has considered existing strategic documents, feedback from citizens, demographic characteristics of our community, trends and best practices when providing recreation and community services, said the staff report. Councillor Debbie Schaefer said she's pleased the plan mentions bolstering a robust volunteer force, noting the vaccination clinic held at Trisan was proof of King's dedicated volunteers. Mayor Steve Pellegrini said the Township needs to communicate such plans and "tell the story." The more hype about King's programs and successes will help motivate residents. Regarding some of the objectives, he wondered why some things are earmarked for 2026 and beyond. "Do we have to wait?" he asked. The plan is responsive, staff noted, and with corporate sponsorships, more can be done sooner.