



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: May 20, 2016

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**SUBJECT:** Markham in Motion – A Pathway to Physical Literacy  
**PREPARED BY:** Mary Creighton, Director, Recreation Services

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the report “Markham in Motion – A Pathway to Physical Literacy be received: and
- 2) That council endorse the following statement:  
Now therefore be it resolved that the City of Markham:
  - Recognizes the importance of physical literacy for all residents of the City of Markham;
  - Believes all children and youth should have the opportunity to master fundamental movement skills and develop physical literacy through quality active programming in the City of Markham;
  - Supports opportunities for all residents to develop physical literacy and maintain healthy active lifestyles: and
- 3) That Clerks Department forward this statement of endorsement to the York District School Board, York District Catholic School Board and the Region of York for their consideration as support for Physical Literacy in our community: and
- 4) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on the Markham in Motion – A Pathway to Physical Literacy project and to seek endorsement from Council of the project.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2015 the City of Markham received funding through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund in the amount of \$98K to support the development of a Physical Literacy Plan in Markham. The Ontario government implemented this funding stream to address issues related to increased in childhood obesity rates which have more than tripled since 1980 and the dramatic increase in overweight and obesity among Canadians over the past 35 years which is now epidemic.

These two factors lead to increased risk of stroke, cancer, diabetes and depression. Research now shows that **“this generation of children is the first in history that is projected NOT to outlive their parents.”**

Physical Literacy research shows that children need to be taught movement skills with the theory that if a child is taught to be “competent to move” they develop “confidence to

move” which will support “motivation to move” which will become a lifelong skill. Physical literate children are more physically active and may experience benefits such as improved academic performance, cognitive skills, mental health, psychological wellness, social skills and healthy lifestyle habits.

The City of Markham also received a grant of \$25K from the “RBC Learn to Play” project which provides funding to train leaders of children and youth programs to learn and understand how to incorporate physical literacy skills into their programs. “Learn to Play” directly supports the Markham in Motion Project by ensuring that we train as many “community leaders” in the Sport of Life PL 101 & 301 training programs.

Sport for Life has also contributed \$7,500K to the City of Markham to support the implementation of the project and development of materials.

### **OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

#### **Markham in Motion Project**

The Markham In Motion project, designed to support the development of Physical Literacy (P/L), will require two years in order to become fully integrated into our community. The project is designed to provide a foundation of fundamental movement skills to develop and maintain a physically active lifestyle.

Inspired by best practices from across Canada, the City of Markham will integrate physical literacy concepts and increase opportunities for participation in play, physical activity and sport, as a foundation for lifelong participation.

We will strengthen the community and build a capacity in all sectors related to physical activity. Using P/L as a foundation for quality sport and recreation programs, the City of Markham will offer the best opportunities possible to foster the development of all children and youth. Additionally, Markham in Motion will move the City of Markham towards becoming a Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) community by linking recreation, sport, education, healthy and other stakeholders with the spirit of the CS4L movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity of all residents.

This 2 year project will have 3 main components:

**A. Education** –Markham in Motion will provide appropriate level educational tools to all stakeholders. CS4L Workshops, Physical Literacy 101 and Physical Literacy 301 will be provided free of charge to recreation leaders, community sport organizations and educators.

Educational literature will be made available through the Markham Life Program Guide and Markham Sports Day. All sport and recreational programming offered will be identified with a specific symbol so that parents and caregivers can choose programming to ensure their child(ren) receive exposure to all elements of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) (locomotive, stability and manipulative)

A dedicated webpage will be created on the City of Markham website with various links to resources on Physical Literacy and CS4L to further educate residents.

“Lunch and Learn” initiatives will be offered to gain concept acceptance and increase knowledge and application. This will be offered to all recreational staff on an ongoing basis.

**B. After-school P/L Pilot Project** – This pilot project will focus on providing a variety of FMS activities essential for physical literacy to identified low income and under-served communities within the City of Markham. Using the principles of P/L, the participants will be challenged appropriately to gain a foundation of physical literacy that can be built on creating both capacity and increasing opportunities for participation in a quality sport and recreation program.

Working in partnership with the York Region School Boards, 4 schools in low income and under-served areas will offer after school programs designed specifically to provide opportunities for fun through development of FMS, the backbone of physical literacy. This will be offered twice/week to children for the Fundamental and Learn to Train stages in CS4L.

**C. Implementation** – By developing key community partnerships, Markham will progress towards creating a CS4L community.

The project team will conduct a “where are we now” assessment to map assets and identify gaps in city wide programs and initiatives. An increased level of knowledge regarding physical literacy and the results from the assessment will be applied towards programming realignment.

The outcomes of the implementation plan include:

- 1) Recommended actions to implement P/L principles with a focus on recommendations for program length, purpose, skill development and staff qualifications.
- 2) A staff working group to develop goals and skill objectives for physical activity and sports programs for Active Start, Fundamental and Learn to Train stages has been formed.
- 3) Realignment of program standards to integrate P/L principles, including standards for program length based on CS4L stages.
- 4) Develop leadership and training for all program coordinators in new goals and provide resources and tools to share with front line program staff.
- 5) Develop a performance evaluation framework to evaluate levels of P/L knowledge to assess key performance indicators.

The project team consists of representatives from the following agencies and groups:

- York Region District School Board
- York Region Catholic District School Board
- York Region Public Health
- Community Sport Groups – Markham Aquatic Club, Pickleball Association
- Representative from Sport for Life Society

The project team is requesting that City of Markham Council to support the Physical Literacy principles which they have developed. Markham Council would be one of the first municipalities to proclaim official support of the importance of physical literacy in our community.

Now therefore be it resolved that the City of Markham:

- Recognizes the importance of physical literacy for all residents of the City of Markham;
- Believes all children and youth should have the opportunity to master fundamental movement skills and develop physical literacy through quality active programming in the City of Markham;
- Supports opportunities for all residents to develop physical literacy and maintain healthy active lifestyles:

The official launch of Markham in Motion will be held August 2016. Staff will continue to implement the plan and will report back to Council in Q2 of 2017.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Funding has been provided for this project by the following partners:

- Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund - \$98K
- RBC Learn to Play Program - \$25K
- Sport of Life - \$7,500

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable.

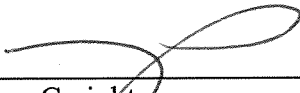
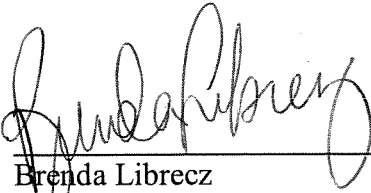
#### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

The project aligns with the Integrated Leisure Master Plan which identified the need to create health and active communities.

#### **BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Not applicable.

#### **RECOMMENDED BY:**

  
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Mary Creighton  
Director, Recreation Services  
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Brenda Librecz  
Commissioner, Community and Fire  
Services

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Markham In Motion Presentation