



# REPORT

2022 Budget Committee

Meeting Date: December 14, 2021

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**FROM:** Economic Development and Corporate Strategy Department  
and the Community Services Commission

**DATE:** November 10, 2021

**SUBJECT:** **COVID-19 Winter Recreation Strategy and Commercial  
Recovery Initiative**

**LOCATION:**

**WARD:** Town-wide

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the report entitled “COVID-19 Winter Recreation Strategy and Commercial Recovery Initiative”, be received;
2. That the Commercial Recovery Initiative be extended to December 31, 2022;
3. That the permit fees for approvals and use of town lands associated with the Commercial Recovery Initiative be waived for 2022 and that the revenue shortfall be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve;
4. That the Winter Recreation Strategy for the 2021/2022 season, be approved;  
and
5. That \$352,900 for the Winter Recreation Strategy be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

**KEY FACTS:**

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Two programs, the Commercial Recovery Initiative, and the Winter Recreation Strategy, were implemented as measures to support Oakville’s business community and the town’s residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Town Council approved the Commercial Recovery Initiative in 2020 to mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on main street businesses and to provide tools to help sustain operations.

- The Commercial Recovery Initiative, which included fee waivers, quick stop parking, and the use of town lands for patios and merchandising, was well received by businesses.
- This report recommends the continuation of the Commercial Recovery Initiative, including the use of town lands and associated fee waivers throughout 2022, and that the revenue shortfall be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve.
- The Winter Recreation Strategy was embraced by Oakville residents in 2020/2021, providing additional outdoor recreation options that helped residents cope with the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.
- This report recommends the continuation of the Winter Recreation Strategy for 2021/2022 and that the \$352,900 for its implementation, be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve.
- As the Winter Recreation Strategy was originally developed to provide residents with safe recreational options during the pandemic, the strategy will be reviewed in 2022 to determine which elements will be incorporated permanently into the long term program.

**BACKGROUND:**

Council received the report entitled “Transitioning to COVID-19 Interim Recovery Action Plan” at its August 9, 2021 meeting. The report outlined the strategic approach being taken to support the residential and business communities throughout the evolving pandemic. Included in the report were three recommendations that require budget approval:

- Deliver a modified Winter Recreation Strategy for the 2021/22 season to reflect current provincial regulations;
- Extend the Commercial Recovery Initiative including permit fee waivers and use of town lands throughout 2022, along with a staff assessment regarding constraints, community input, and any further changes to the AGCO regulations; and
- Continue to support curb-side pick-up spaces in BIAs in 2022.

This report provides the estimated cost for the above-noted recommendations and the rationale for their implementation.

**COMMENT/OPTIONS:****COMMERCIAL RECOVERY INITIATIVE**

The Commercial Recovery Initiative was first approved by Council on May 25, 2020 and included:

- use of town lands for temporary outdoor commercial services;
- physical distancing in commercial areas;
- coordinated marketing to support local businesses;
- expedited processing of permits for existing businesses to adjust to delivery of services;
- temporary exemptions from parking requirements to accommodate outdoor patios or displays on private property;
- compliance with regulations, insurance, and safety measures;
- waiver of fees associated with this initiative; and
- authority to implement initiative delegated to the Commissioner of Community Development and Director of Economic Development.

The Commercial Recovery Initiative was a much needed support for the business community during the pandemic, particularly when the Provincial government restricted restaurants to outdoor dining and takeout. The fee waivers provided some relief from the additional costs of establishing patios and close to 100 patios were approved for operation throughout the town in 2021. Not only did this help the financial operations of the restaurants, the patios added vibrancy to the town's commercial districts.

Now in its fourth wave of the pandemic, businesses continue to struggle through the challenges of changing regulations, staffing shortages, changing consumer demand, an increase in minimum wage, and lower cash flows. Cities such as Toronto and Burlington have recently extended their patio programs into 2022 as continued support for local restaurants.

In Oakville, the decision was made to close the 2021 patio program on November 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to provide for adequate snow clearing and maintenance; complete sensor installation in downtown; and restore parking spaces in the BIAs for the busy Christmas season. Notwithstanding this winter closure, the need to provide on-going support for the main street businesses is evident. It is recommended that the Commercial Recovery Initiative be extended throughout 2022 to provide this support. Staff assessment, changing provincial regulations, and community input will be factored into decisions regarding the program for 2022. Complementing this initiative is the Support Local marketing campaign, led by the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, which has been helping to encourage residents and visitors to shop and dine locally.

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## WINTER RECREATION STRATEGY

In 2020, the Recreation and Culture and Parks and Open Space departments in partnership with the Oakville Public Library and Fire Services developed a winter recreation strategy that expands outdoor opportunities with reimagined fitness offerings, a more extensive virtual program menu and lower capacity indoor programming. All in person programming had been designed to accommodate fluctuating health and safety guidelines and would be delivered in full compliance. Given that the pandemic continues but with lower case counts currently, the town is bringing back the Winter Recreation Strategy for 2021/22 season with modifications that reflect our changing circumstances.

## OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

### **Festive Light Installation at Coronation Park**

The beautiful, festive light installation at Coronation Park will be returning by popular demand as a drive by or walking option for the winter months. In addition, there will be an outdoor skating rink for everyone to enjoy. There will be an official lighting event to celebrate this installation on Friday, December 10, 2021 from 5 – 9 PM with a drive-thru donation event in support of the Oakville Firefighters Association Annual Toy Drive. The event will include the official turning on of lights, Santa on his float welcoming visitors, visual performers, Oakville Fire Safety team, numerous fire truck displays, and will allow for contactless donations. The lit tree installations will remain in place throughout the winter season. Marketing for the event will encourage community members to shop local and visit the various holiday décor installations at various parks and within our three BIAs.

### **Town Operated Skating Rinks**

Nautical Park  
Coronation Park  
Bloomfield Park  
Sixteen Hollow Park  
Trafalgar Park  
Kinoak Arena  
Clearview Park  
Windrush Park  
Langtry Park  
Nottinghill Park  
Millbank Park  
Glenashton Park  
William Rose Park  
George Savage Park

In addition, there are also a large number of rinks at various park locations that are operated by community volunteers. (Examples include Wallace Park, Forster Park, Suffolk Park, Aspen Forest Park, River Glen Park, Lyndhurst Park)

### **Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing**

Parks and Open Space crews will be grooming select trails to enable cross country skiing or snow shoeing options weather permitting at the following locations:

- Bronte Creek Trail,
- Joshua Creek Trail
- East Joshua Creek Trail

### **Winter Pickleball and Tennis**

Parks and Open Space teams will be clearing select tennis/pickleball courts for the enjoyment of our enthusiastic players, weather permitting. Here are the following locations:

- Shell Park- lit until 8 pm
- Old Abbey Lane Park
- Jonathon Park
- Maplegrove Park
- Bloomfield Park
- River Oaks- lit until 8 pm
- Glenashton Park
- William Rose Park- lit until 8 pm

### **Ball Hockey**

Parks and Open Space teams will be clearing select tennis courts for the enjoyment of our ball hockey players. Here are the following locations:

- Sovereign Park
- Glen Oak Park
- Kingsford Park South
- Deer Run Park
- Heritage Way Park
- River Glen Park
- Holton Heights Park- lit until 8 pm
- William Rose

### **Winter Cycling**

Parks and Open Space teams will be clearing select trails for cyclists to enjoy safe biking during the winter months. Here are the following locations:

- Crosstown Trail
- Tannery Park/Waterworks Park
- Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park/Waters Edge Park

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## Access to Public Washrooms

Access to public washrooms was a serious problem that residents faced in the first wave of the pandemic. The winterized public washrooms at Towne Square, Tannery Park and Fisherman's Park will be open. In addition, residents will be able to access washrooms at all of our community centres and public libraries, Sixteen Mile Sports Complex and Joshua Creek Arena during opening hours. Coronation Park will have a temporary washroom trailer installed on the ring road for the winter months.

## Parking Lots

The Westbrook Park parking lot will be cleared. We will continue with our normal clearing at other locations as per previous years.

## Outdoor Seniors Options

Senior Services will be offering drop-in programs such as Nordic Pole Walking and PathFinders Hiking Group. Registration for these programs will be available at [www.active.oakville.ca](http://www.active.oakville.ca)

## Outdoor OPL Options

Oakville Public Library has updated its three StoryWalk locations with new engaging titles for winter. OPL's StoryWalks are located at Tannery and Waterworks Park, Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park and George Savage Park. StoryWalks are where pages from picture books are blown up and placed along the trail so residents can enjoy the tale as they proceed down each trail. QR codes are placed on each page to provide similar reading lists for families to access via OPL.

## VIRTUAL AND INDOOR PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

### OPL

OPL will continue to offer a combination of indoor and virtual programs during Winter 2021/2022 for all ages with emphasis on skill-development and social connection. Programs starting in January 2022 will be listed on OPL.ca on December 1, 2021. Registration opens Saturdays at 10am the week before the program is scheduled to start to provide equitable access as spaces are limited. Popular programs such as Code Club, Babytime, Digital Paint Night, and maker-based programs will continue to be offered along with new programs leveraging community partnerships that build digital literacy, STEAM-based skills and support a community of belonging. For the month of December, OPL will launch its first ever Winter Reading Challenge engaging all ages in reading electronic and physical formats. During the holiday break, OPL will be offering virtual and indoor programs for families, including a Noon Year's Eve Storytime.

**OPL Creation Zone**

OPL will launch their new 3D Ultimaker Printers at all branches in early 2022. Creation appointments will continue to be offered as well as new programs expanding on Creation Zone equipment and working with new community partners.

**Recreation and Culture**

The Recreation and Culture teams will be delivering indoor programming in full compliance with provincial regulations. All programs have been designed for easy modification if there is a change in regional status as per the provincial framework. Participants will be notified whenever this occurs.

**Registered Programs**

Registration for winter indoor programs opens December 1, 2021 with offerings for residents of all ages in a variety of program areas. In addition to regular weekly programs, the Town of Oakville will be offering day camp services throughout the holidays and on school breaks (P.A. Days and March Break), as well as several new workshop series. Programs have been modified to comply with COVID-19 health guidelines to encourage a safe environment for participation.

**Fitness Memberships**

Town of Oakville Fitness Centres are open. Memberships are available on a 3 month, 1 year or 10 visit basis and include access to the weight room, walking tracks and drop-in fitness classes. Fitness classes available to pre-book on [active.oakville.ca](https://www.active.oakville.ca).

**Public Skating and Swimming**

The Recreation and Culture Department continues to offer numerous options for public skates and swims including length and leisure swims, public skating, Adult and Child Stick and Puck and shinny. A number of free youth public skates and swims have also been added as part of our youth engagement strategy. These free, youth only programs are open to participants aged 11-18 and aim to keep them active in the after-school hours. Locations and times for all drop in programs are available for viewing on [active.oakville.ca](https://www.active.oakville.ca) and youth must pre-register. Spaces are limited.

**Drop in Sports**

The Town of Oakville offers drop-in sports. For these drop-in sport programs, there is the option to reserve a spot on [active.oakville.ca](https://www.active.oakville.ca). Current program offerings include Basketball, Badminton, Pickleball, Volleyball, Hockey and Table Tennis.

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## Indoor and Virtual Cultural Programming

### Oakville Museum

The Museum is returning to its previous tour capacity and drop-in tour format for individuals and small groups, larger group tours can still be booked in advance. Starting in December, the Museum will be decorated in grand period style, once again this year the decorations will extend to the exterior and courtyard to lend extra festive flare for tours and for passersby. The tour content will shift to a holiday theme through to the first week of January. Popular in-person holiday-themed programs like Craft and Tour have returned. A new holiday-themed exhibit for the courtyard windows will feature charming doll houses from the museum's collections. In-person and virtual offerings of Oakville's Early Black History program for schools will be offered in the new year in time for February's Black History Month. All activities will be in full compliance with provincial regulations.

### Exhibitions

Starting in January, new temporary art exhibitions will be on display in the QEPCCC and TPCC Corridors as well as monthly exhibits in the QEPCCC Main Gallery.

### Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts

The theatre has moved to full indoor capacity in time for our holiday themed shows that include Home for Christmas and R.H. Thomson A Christmas Carol. Families can take in Chris Funk the Illusionist in the afternoon or evening of New Year's Eve. The OCPA will offer a full season of Big Ticket Concerts, Comedians, Classic and World Artists and Family shows from January to May 2022. Virtual School Program Shows will take place in January, February and May. Rental Client inquiries and show bookings are at an all time high, as community groups are ready to put on shows for live audiences once more.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

### (A) PUBLIC

Community Services staff will coordinate with Strategic Communications to notify the public regarding the Winter Recreation Strategy. Economic Development Staff will disseminate information regarding the Commercial Recovery Initiative through the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, the three BIAs, Visit Oakville and the existing patio permit holders.

### (B) FINANCIAL

The fees associated with the Commercial Recovery Initiative include \$750 for patio permit applications; \$250 for merchandise and bistro permit applications; and \$20 per day per space for the use of parking spaces. During 2021, 93 patio permits were issued and 30 parking spaces utilized for patios and quick stop parking. The revenue shortfall associated with the fee waivers for this



initiative was approximately \$144,000. For 2022, the revenue shortfall associated with fee waivers for the Commercial Recovery Initiative is estimated to be \$150,000. This includes an estimated 100 patios and use of 30 parking spaces for patios and quick stop parking.

The cost of the Winter Recreation Strategy is estimated to be \$352,900 for the support of additional parks recreational opportunities. \$168,200 is estimated for public washroom cleaning from December 15, 2021- March 31, 2022. \$184,700 is required for the additional winter control services on trails and courts for the same duration. It is recommended that the costs of both of these programs in 2022 be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

**(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

The Commercial Recovery Initiative will be implemented through the existing staff complement.

**(D) CORPORATE STRATEGIC GOALS**

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal of Livability by providing innovative approaches to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through continued support for Oakville's residents and its business community.

**(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION**

The subject of this report does not relate to climate change.

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Recommended & Submitted by:

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