

EDMONTON SOCCER ASSOCIATION - COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND ACCESS

RECOMMENDATION

That the January 18, 2023, Community Services report CS01468, be received for information.

Requested Council Action	Information only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work as we achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	BELONG		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	N/A	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	N/A
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C187A - Enhancing Community Facility Services Through Partnerships 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCS01195, Edmonton Soccer Association - Edmonton Soccer Centre South Lease Expansion, Executive Committee, August 24, 2022 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the August 24, 2022 Executive Committee meeting, the following motion passed:

That Administration provide a report to Committee outlining engagement with the Edmonton Soccer Association and other soccer groups to identify options to provide additional community benefits, and increased community access.

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Executive Summary

- The Edmonton Soccer Association operates and maintains three indoor boarded soccer facilities as well as the Bill Gilhespy Outdoor Soccer Centre at Henry Singer Park.
- The Edmonton Soccer Association is an integral part of the city's recreation network, providing spaces for children, youth and adults regardless of gender, race or skill level to be active through their participation in soccer and other sport and recreation activities.
- Administration engaged with the Edmonton Soccer Association and two organizations responsible for developing, coordinating and promoting soccer in the city. The allocation process and availability of time at the soccer centres is transparent. Historical league use and block bookings are scheduled and all remaining time is available for casual use for any group wanting to use the facilities.
- In addition to the use of the facilities by soccer groups, other users such as concrete sport groups, Free Play for Kids, Edmonton Sport and Social Club, and schools and academies all book time on the fields. Meeting rooms are also available and booked by sport groups for clinics and by community groups for meetings.
- As community access at the soccer facilities is high and the benefits are realized by the many community sporting groups that book time, additional options to increase community access to the facilities are being utilized. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the number of hours leagues required for bookings, increasing the number of hours available for casual use in the short-term.

REPORT

The Edmonton Soccer Association is a non-profit association formed in 1985 as a partnership between the Edmonton Minor Soccer Association (EMSA) and the Edmonton and District Soccer Association (EDSA). Its mandate is to develop, operate and maintain indoor and outdoor soccer facilities and it has worked in partnership with the City of Edmonton for over three decades to achieve this mandate.

The Edmonton Soccer Association contributed over \$20 million to the capital costs of developing the three City-owned indoor soccer centres (West, East, and South) and the Bill Gilhespy Soccer Complex at Henry Singer Sports Park (14940 142 St NW).

The Edmonton Soccer Association operates and maintains each of these facilities in accordance with long-term lease and operating agreements. The City does not incur any operating costs for these recreation amenities. With the development of the first indoor soccer centre in 1995, City Council passed a motion recognizing Edmonton Soccer Association as its partner in developing, operating, and maintaining future indoor soccer facilities.

Changing Landscape of Soccer

Indoor soccer centres meet the demand for space to play boarded soccer, a game that developed as a popular way for soccer to be played year-round. The three City-owned soccer centres provide 13 indoor boarded turf fields, including the turf recently opened as part of the completed

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expansion to the Edmonton Soccer Centre South. The expanded South Centre also includes one dedicated field for concrete sport users.

With the popularity of indoor space, a number of private facilities were developed. The privately owned and operated Edmonton Soccer Dome (Edmonton Scottish Soccer Club) and Victoria Soccer Club are two examples of full-sized indoor facilities without boards that are used for soccer training and games as well as for rentals as availability allows. Plans are underway for the A1 Athletic Facility in northeast Edmonton, which is expected to increase the inventory of full-sized indoor soccer space and rely on community use as an important part of its sustainability model.

Administration listens to and explores opportunities from community groups wanting to develop additional indoor full-sized soccer and multi-sport facilities.

Indoor Soccer Centres - Community Use

The majority of soccer participants in Edmonton and area register through one of two non-profit organizations: Edmonton Minor Soccer Association (community and club youth programs) and Edmonton and District Soccer Association (adults). Both the Edmonton Minor Soccer Association and Edmonton and District Soccer Association are sanctioned by the Alberta Soccer Association. Until recently, a third non-profit organization, the Edmonton Interdistrict Youth Soccer Association, existed for more elite club teams, but these players and clubs joined the Edmonton Minor Soccer Association.

Edmonton Minor Soccer Association has five zones in Edmonton as well as Spruce Grove, Leduc and Beaumont. Each of these zones comprises community leagues that offer soccer programming. Participants register through the community leagues and registration is open to all participants.

These groups book the indoor soccer centres for games from October to March. In addition to the field use for games, the indoor soccer centres are used for practices as availability permits. Annual large soccer tournaments bring participants from outside of the City.

Other users include: lawn bowling clubs, several schools and academies for training and curriculum needs, adult recreational play (Edmonton Sport and Social Club), 55+ walking soccer and Free Play for Kids.

In the spring/summer season, the turf is removed from most fields to accommodate ball hockey, inline hockey and lacrosse leagues. These groups will be well-served through the south expansion and dedicated concrete field.

Volt Hockey will also use the south expansion field for its program. Volt Hockey is an adaptation of hockey that allows participants with complex needs, particularly those with limited mobility, to play using a battery-operated, joy-stick controlled chair.

Outside of these uses, the indoor soccer centres also have bookable meeting rooms available to any community group or member of the public. Regular bookings include referee meetings and coaching clinics.

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Allocation Process

Edmonton Soccer Association allocates time to the Edmonton Minor Soccer Association (who schedules time for their zones), Edmonton and District Soccer Association and all previous user groups that have booked blocks of time. The deadline for these groups to confirm their requirements is September 30 annually. This allocation process is similar to the City's allocation process in that it is designed to maximize facility use and generate operating revenue.

After league and block bookings, the Edmonton Soccer Association opens up the remaining availability for casual bookings or new block booking requests. The block booking requests can be a one time request or a recurring request (which is then incorporated into annual priority booking).

Approximately 90 per cent of the hours from mid-October to early March are leagues and historical bookers. The general public can check the website and contact the Edmonton Soccer Association to book any available time. This process will be simplified to accommodate online booking and payment. If times remain unbooked, Edmonton Soccer Association sends group emails with promotional rates.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted booking availability due to reduced registrations within the various leagues. With the reduced number of league bookings, an increased number of hours are available for casual or new block booking requests.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Edmonton Soccer Association, Edmonton Minor Soccer Association and Edmonton and District Soccer Association confirmed how communities and adults access the indoor soccer centres for soccer. There may be community soccer programs that are not associated with Edmonton Minor Soccer Association; however, the numbers of such programs are likely small and these programs can book casual use time.

GBA+

The City leases the three indoor Edmonton Soccer Centres to the Edmonton Soccer Association. Facility users are Edmontonians of diverse age, race, religion, gender, ability and socio-economic status. Edmonton Minor Soccer Association registers the largest number of soccer participants through its zones and the city's community leagues. Through relationships with groups like Kidsport and Jumpstart and through other support methods (e.g. payment plans), Edmonton Minor Soccer Association mitigates financial barriers to participation.

Edmonton Soccer Association also supports Free Play for Kids through a sub-lease of space and a special booking agreement for after school programs and a summer camp. Free Play for Kids provides kids from diverse economic circumstances with no cost play opportunities.

The City's Accessibility Advisory Committee reviewed the design for the south soccer centre expansion. The space provides for persons with disabilities to participate in sports and includes access to gender neutral washrooms, ramps for field access for persons using mobility aids, an

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elevator to the spectator area with safe and designated accessible seating with sight lines for viewing the fields.