



Sports in Our Community Initiative

Report on Regional Summits

November 2007

Overview of the Sports in Our Community Initiative

In October 2007, the Toronto Sports Council (TSC) held four Sports in Our Community Summits to engage sports organizations in a discussion about ways to build a strong voice for community sport in Toronto. The Summits were held in the North, South, East and West regions to attract local sports groups from across the City to the events. They were designed to identify the key activities that TSC should undertake, ways to build a membership base and seek advice on how TSC can improve its governance model.

As part of the Sports in Our Community initiative, an electronic survey was developed and distributed to sports organizations across Toronto. The early finding informed the TSC of the key challenges and benefits to community sports organizations and helped set the agenda for the Summits.

The Summits followed a similar format, beginning with an overview presentation by Karen Pitre (Chair, TSC) that introduced the TSC and provided an update on its activities. Summit participants also heard from a keynote speaker at each Summit. Keynotes highlighted the importance of sport in healthy living, youth development, social cohesion and community development.

Dr. Julia Alleyne, Sport Medicine Physician and Physiotherapist and the Medical director of Sport C.A.R.E at Sunnybrook & Women's College Healthy Sciences Centre, presented at the North-end Summit. *Tammy Roth*, Coordinator, Markham Sports Council, shared Markham's experience in setting up a Sports Council at the South-End Summit. *Rahul Bhardwaj*, President & CEO of the Toronto Community Foundation, highlighted the success of the Toronto Sport Leadership Program for Youth and shared the lesson learned from that establishing the program, at the West-End Summit. *Anna Alexandrova*, Senior Adviser, Policy and Inter-Governmental Relations, Right To Play/SDP IWG Secretariat, presented at the East-End Summit.

Following the keynote presentations, Karen presented the early findings of the survey to help set the stage for the group discussions.

Summit participants then worked through three focus questions to inform the TSC on the key activities it should undertake, explore different governance models for the TSC and share advice on how TSC's membership should be structured.

The Sports in Our Community Initiative was made possible by the support of the City of Toronto and Ministry of Health Promotion.

Getting the Word Out

Outreach to sport organizations in Toronto was designed to reach as many people as possible in the period between September and October 2007.

Over 1300 sports organizations and individuals were directly sent notice of the Summits through the TSC's network. Summit information was posted to the TSC website at www.torontosportscouncil.com.

The following key networks were asked to broadcast notice of the Summits through their contact databases; the City of Toronto, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, COSTI, Parc Downsview Park Inc., OPHEA, YMCA of Greater Toronto, Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada, Sport Alliance, Sport Matters, SPACE and others.

Over 2800 City of Toronto permit holders were sent the notice by mail. Community Centres, through the General Manager's of Parks, Forestry and Recreation office, were sent a notice electronically and were asked post the notice in facilities across the city. City libraries were also sent a notice by mail to post on their community events boards. A link to the TSC website was posted to the City of Toronto links page at <http://www.toronto.ca/links.htm>.

Councillor Bill Saundercook's office circulated the notice to community sport organizations and Councillor Adrian Heaps posted event information to his website.

On October 5, 2007 an article by Alison Korn, including Summit dates and locations, appeared in the Toronto Sun.

Who Participated

Over 150 people registered for the Summits and over 150 people completed the online Sports in Our Community survey. The majority of Summit participants were representatives of community sport organizations. Ministry of Health Promotion and City of Toronto staff also attended the Summits. Councillor Paul Ainslie and Councillor Chin Lee attended the East-End Summit on October 29, 2007.

Jeff Evenson and Tamara Balan, of the Centre for the Development of Community Assets at the Canadian Urban Institute facilitated the Summits. Under Jeff Carmichael's management, staff from City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division oversaw the logistical arrangements, helped set-up the equipment and register participants at the Summits.

Summary of Feedback Received

Summit participants were organized into small groups and were asked to discuss the following focus questions:

1. **Activities:** Do you agree that we should undertake the activities below?
 - Provide a voice for sport
 - Advocate for better and more facilities
 - Improve customer services (e.g. permits)
 - Raise the profile of health and social benefits of sport.

Are there any activities that we should undertake that are not here?

2. **Governance:** It has been suggested that your TSC Board of Directors would be more accountable and representative if:
 - It were elected annually at a Annual General Meeting

- If it included more representatives of community sport organizations

Do you agree?

Do you have any other advice to make the TSC more accountable and representative?

What would be an effective way for the TSC to connect with you and its other members?

3. **Membership:** The survey results indicate that the following services and programs would help community sports organizations to deliver sport activities and programs in Toronto:
 - Facilities Development
 - An interactive Website
 - Community Sports Award Program
 - Support for Local Sport Events
 - Scholarship Program

55% of survey respondents were willing to pay a membership fee.

Do you think that these kinds of services/programs should be paid for by a membership fee?

Do you have any advice about how the TSC should charge a membership fee? And how much should the TSC charge?

Following is a summary of the key outcomes of the discussion:

Activities

1. In general, summit participants agree with the key activities set-out by the TSC. Participants felt that a number of activities should be added to the list including, more outreach to sport organizations, partnership development, enhancing access to resources (e.g. grants, group insurance, etc.), providing support for club development, becoming a central repository of information, developing a culture of sport in Toronto, developing a long-term plan for event hosting in Toronto, fundraising, among others.
2. Need to define what sport the TSC gives a voice to. Participants wanted more clarity around what sport the TSC is focused on – adult vs. youth, not-for profit vs. for profit, competitive vs. recreational, marginalized members of the community etc.
3. Some groups felt that there is a need for TSC to focus on providing everyone with fair and equal access to sport activities.
4. Participants emphasized the importance of establishing TSC as the one stop shop for sport in Toronto.

Governance

1. Most participants felt that electing a Board of Directors and including more representatives of community sport organization on the Board would make it more accountable and representative.
2. Some participants felt that before the Board is elected, a succession plan has to be created. Not everyone on the Board should be replaced at once.
3. Some participants felt that the current make-up of the Board should not be drastically changed. They felt it is important to have the agencies and organizations represented on the Board. It was suggested that a City Councillor also serve as a Director on the Board.
4. TSC should develop a fair electoral process. Participants made the following suggestions about ways to design this process:
 - Limit the number of terms on the Board;
 - Stagger the terms of Directors;
 - Create terms of reference for Directors on the Board;
 - Create criteria for Director (e.g. experience, funding information, age-groups, faith-based representation)
 - Consider allocating voting rights by sport activity, organization, and/or representation based on number of members.
5. Engage more private sector representatives to serve on the Board.
6. A number of participants felt that the City should be divided by regions. Representatives from each region should be elected to the Board or Regional Boards should be set-up in the four Regions that report to a central Executive Board.
7. Set-up Committees and Working Groups that represent different sport activities, interests and needs.
8. Consider setting up an Advisory Board to help advise the Board of Directors but does not vote on the issues.
9. Participants suggested a number of effective ways for the TSC Board to connect with its members, including: partnering with media to raise the profile of TSC and its activities, sending newsletters, hosting an interactive website, posting information in different languages.
10. Be open and transparent. Participants suggested posting Board Meeting minutes to the TSC website.

Membership

1. Participants suggested a number of different ways to develop the TSC membership structure and had a range of ideas on fees.

2. Some felt that TSC should establish different membership rates for membership categories. Participants suggested considering the following categories: not-for-profit organization, for profit organization, corporate, institution, individual, club, team, event organizer, retailer, affiliates, etc.
3. Many participants supported charging membership fees and proposed different ways to charge the fees. Many felt that fees should be charged on a sliding scale. Others suggested charging a set fee for an organization. A set fee could be charged for:
 - each member of a member organization (e.g. \$2 per member)
 - a set amount for an organization
 - a percentage of an organization's annual budget.
4. Some argued that TSC should not charge membership fees. It was suggested that TSC fundraise and seek corporate sponsorship and apply for government grants, such as Trillium Foundation. Some felt that TSC should get a tax credit or bursary for organizations that deliver sports activities in the community, like the fitness tax credit parents receive for enrolling their children in a sport or recreational activity.
5. Others felt that the City should pay for the operating costs.
6. A percentage of the permit fees that are charged by facility owners, including the City, should be given to the TSC. Facility users would, in turn, become TSC members.
7. It was discussed that the funding that was generated by membership fees could be matched by another organization, such as the United Way.
8. Clearly identify the benefits and show the value that members will get for the membership fee. It was suggested that TSC develop a business plan with a budget that provides details on its activities and shows how membership fees will pay for them.
9. A group of participants felt that TSC should establish a good track record before it charges a membership fee.

Other Comments

1. Include access and opportunity as cornerstones of TSC's mandate and vision statements.
2. Look at other Sports Council to learn best practices, review membership structures, etc.
3. Build partnerships with key stakeholders to raise awareness of the TSC in Toronto. Suggested organizations included Tourism Toronto, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Media, etc.

Next Steps – Save the Date

A city-wide *Sports in Our Community* Summit will be held in the new year, a tentative date being the morning of Saturday March 1, 2008. The TSC will report on the feedback heard at the regional Summits in October and present recommendations on the governance and membership models for TSC. Please mark your calendars for the city-wide summit on March 1, 2008.

Appendices

- A. Speaker Biographies
- B. Report on Survey findings
- C. Sport Matters Facts
- D. Media Coverage -Toronto Sun Article October 5, 2007

Appendix A: Speaker Biographies

Dr. Julia Alleyne

Dr. Julia Alleyne is a Sport Medicine Physician and Physiotherapist who is the current Medical director of Sport C.A.R.E at Sunnybrook & Women's College Healthy Sciences Centre. Dr. Alleyne has worked with varsity level athletes since 1989 and was the Chief Medical Officer for the Canadian team at the 2005 World University Fames in Innsbruck, Austria. She is the past President of the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine, Chief Medical Officer for Skate Canada and Physician consultant to the National Ballet of Canada.

Rahul Bhardwaj

Rahul Bhardwaj is a man of the community, in the most honest sense of the words. He is a member of many charitable organizations including serving as a board member on the Stratford Festival of Canada, Wellspring Cancer Support Foundation, the Art Gallery of Ontario Foundation and United Way of Greater Toronto. Mr. Bhardwaj is currently the CEO and president of the Toronto Community Foundation.

Mr. Bhardwaj has been a voice for Toronto sport in the past when he served as vice-president for the 2008 Olympic bid.

Tammy Roth

Tammy Roth, Coordinator of the Markham Sports Council, will share some of the wisdom she has gained from her position with the MSC. The Markham Sports Council is a successful voice for the sports community in Markham working as the advocates for sport-related planning and strategic initiatives.

Some of the programs the Markham Sports Council has created include the Markham's Character Community Initiative, the Tony Roman Hockey Tournament for house league teams and the Living School program.

Right to Play

"When children play, the world wins." Working in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East bring specially-designed sports programs to children in war torn communities where disease and poverty are common place. Right to Play focuses on four basic strategies in their work: Basic Education and Child Development, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peace Education and Community Development and Participation.

Appendix B: Report on Survey Findings



***Sports in Our Community Initiative* Report on Survey**

November 2007

Overview of the Sports in Our Community Initiative

As part of the Toronto Sports Council's (TSC) Sports in Our Community Initiative, community sports organizations were engaged in a discussion about ways to build a strong voice for sport in Toronto. The TSC designed and distributed a survey that asked community sports organizations to identify the greatest challenges they face, and what services and programs would be most helpful to them in delivering community sports activities in Toronto. The TSC also asked questions about whether groups are interested in joining a network of sports organizations and how to structure the Toronto Sports Council.

The early findings of the survey helped set the agenda for the Summits and preliminary results of the survey were presented at the events.

Getting the Word Out

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Who Participated

- 190 people started the online survey
- 159 surveys were completed
- 135 different community groups and 69 different sports activities were represented. **Note: Over 15 people representing the North York Grizzlies and 36 members of the Balmy Beach Canoe Club completed the survey,*
- Duplicates were averaged to produce 131 “unique” results. The unique results are used to report results for survey questions, to avoid a bias towards a particular sporting group or groups.
- Between 71,942 and 171,250 members are represented
- Most sport organizations representing over 10,000+ members were provincial sport organizations (e.g. Ontario Curling, Ontario Lacrosse, etc.)
- The majority of those who completed the survey represented a sport organization with fewer than 250 members

Summary of Feedback Received – Key Findings

Following is a summary of responses provided to the questions in the survey. The percentages indicate the percentage of total responses of the specific question, not of the total surveys completed. Some respondents chose to skip some questions. If more than one sport organization representative completed the survey, responses were averaged and removed from the analysis to eliminate duplication.

Community Sport Organization Profile

Please select the age(s) of members or participants (all that apply):

- 95% of respondents represent organizations that offer programs and activities to youth (13-18 years)
- The age groups that make-up the lowest membership/participants in sport organizations’ are preschool (0-5 years), accounting for 29% and ‘Seniors’ (60+ years), accounting for 36% of respondents.

Please indicate where your members/participants live (all that apply):

- 98% of survey respondents indicated that their participants/members live within the City of Toronto.
- 41% of respondents indicated that some of their members/participants are non-residents of the city of Toronto.
- 60% identified that they offer programming to members/participants from a particular district/neighborhood in Toronto

What facilities does your organization use (select all that apply):

- 73% of respondents use the City of Toronto’s facilities
- 38% of responses use Toronto District School Board’s facilities
- 20% use the Toronto Catholic School Board facilities
- 32% rely on private facilities for their activities

Do the facilities you use meet your organization’s needs?

- 53% **do not** think their facilities meet their organization’s needs.
- 47% **do** think their facility meets the needs of their sport.

Do you offer adapted programs and integrated services for people with disabilities?

- 33% of the respondent organizations offer programs at their facilities for people with disabilities.

Does your organization have volunteers?

- 92% of respondents answered 'Yes': they do have volunteers in their sport organization.

Approximately how many coaches do you have in your organization?

- 18% of respondents had 100 or more coaches in their organizations
- 7% had one coach
- 27% had two to five coaches
- 41% had six to thirty coaches
- 6% had 31 to 100 coaches

Challenges and Barriers to Participation in Sports in Our Community

Please select up to 5 challenges that are most significant for your organization:

- 65% of respondents identified limited availability of facilities as a key challenge.
- 58% of respondents identified cost of using facilities (permit fees) as a challenge.
- 47% identified lack of political support
- 35% identified increasing numbers of participants/members
- 31% listed a lack of volunteers
- 28% listed the cost of registration fees
- 25% listed limited resources for administrative tasks
- 23% listed proximity of sporting activities to participants as a challenge to their sport
- Several responses (particularly respondents from the Balmy Beach Canoe Club) identified water pollution or water quality issues as a major concern.

Strengthening Sports in Our Community

Please choose which 5 services would be most beneficial to you in delivering sport activities and programs in Toronto:

- 43% responded that research on facilities development would be beneficial
- 41% responded that an Interactive Website would be beneficial.
- 35% identified membership discounts at retailers, sporting events, etc.
- 32% identified networking at events such as sport summits, while 21% identified seminars/workshops with keynote speakers
- 29% identified research on sport participation
- 28% identified volunteer recruitment, and 25% noted volunteer training
- Also identified were:
 - Community Sports Awards Programs (38%),
 - Support for Local Sport events (33%); and a
 - Scholarship Program (34%).

Would you join the Toronto Sports Council network of sport organizations to build a strong voice for sport in Toronto and improve the delivery of community sport activities?

- 87% of respondents indicated a desire to join the TSC.

- 54% of respondents said they would “consider contributing some sort of membership fee to help fund the Toronto Sports Council”.
- 72% of respondents expressed an interest in volunteering for the TSC

Role for the City of Toronto

What can the City of Toronto do to help you? (open ended question)

When given the opportunity to indicate two things that the City of Toronto could do to help one’s organization deliver better sports activities to its members, the results could be roughly divided as follows:

- 26% of respondents expressed a need for assistance with affordability, funding or reduction of fees
- 26% expressed a need for more facilities
- 19% mentioned maintenance issues as a concern
- 15% indicated accessibility of facilities, such as hours, seasonal closures, location
- 11% sought assistance with marketing or promotion, either of their specific sports activities or of a general healthy lifestyle
- 11% called for a streamlining or simplification of the permitting process
- 7% indicated access to information, including an online application system, better communication tools, etc.
- 6% expressed a desire for a better consultation process with the sporting groups

Appendix C: Sport Matters Facts

Provided by www.sportmatters.ca 2005 study

Benefits of Strong Sport and Physical and Activity Sectors:

Sport/physical activity is vital to the health of Canadians

The Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada recommended that prevention-helping Canadians stay healthy-become the central focus of our primary health care system. The Commission estimated that a 10% reduction in physical inactivity would save \$150 million/year in direct health care costs.

Encouraging physical activity is arguably the most important promotion strategy. Physically active people are healthier, more productive, have fewer mental health issues, report higher levels of satisfaction and happiness, and age better. Even moderate daily activity can significantly improve health.

Physical activity shortens the morbidity curve, reducing the period of illness and dependency and the need for institutionalization in the latter stages of life.

Regular physical activity has multi-faceted benefits for children, including healthier growth and development; better academic performance; higher self-esteem, less stress and anxiety, and the development of skills that foster participation in sport/physical activity later in life.

The viability of tens of thousands of sport and recreation organizations and miles-upon-miles of physical infrastructure from pools to bike paths to soccer pitches are maintained by millions of Canadian volunteers.

-Sport Matters Group

Despite the well known fact that regular participation in sport/physical activity, 64% of Canadians are not sufficiently active to achieve personal health benefits. Physical active people report overall health status, are more productive, have better mental health issues, report higher levels of satisfaction and happiness and age better.

-Sport Matters Group

Participation in sport/physical activity is a fundamental form of citizen and community participation

Sport touches virtually every community, every citizen in Canada. Accompanying regular news broadcasts on radio and television, we get updates on weather and sports, testifying to the integral importance of sport to our daily lives.

In July 2004, Toronto City Council adopted recommendations of the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan entitled, "Our Common Grounds". The strategic plan called upon the Parks and Recreation Division to "prepare a Sports Strategy Framework in partnership with the **Toronto Sports Council** which identifies the critical role that sport can play in the city."

- A Sport Frame Work for the City of Toronto.

Sport and physical activity encompass a broad spectrum of activities-from the pick-up ball game in the schoolyard to walking, to organized sport in the community, to international competitions at the world championship level.

There are many forms of participation in sport/physical activity that benefits us as participants and our communities in distinct ways- we may watch, play on a team, volunteer with a sports club, enter competitions, coach, manage activities, or enable our children to participate.

There are many different reasons to participate in sport/physical activity as there are forms of participation- for exercise/health, recreation, transportation, rehabilitation, competition, to help improve the quality of life/health of others, or for the service to our community.

“The provincial election offers a chance for each party to assert what it thinks about sport. For the most part, we're still waiting.” Toronto Sun 5 October, 2007.

October 5, 2007

The provincial election offers a chance for each party to assert what it thinks about sport. For the most part, we're still waiting

By ALISON KORN

With five days to go until the provincial election Oct. 10, the Liberals have taken a lead in outlining their Game Plan for sport.

It's easy to overlook sport as second string, with so many worthy issues clamoring for attention in the lead up to next week's election -- education, environment, taxes, safety, poverty -- not to mention that pesky referendum question that requires serious research to understand.

But sport should not be left on the sidelines as an election issue.

According to a 2002 report by Statistics Canada, over half of Canadian youth aged 12 to 19 are not active enough for optimal growth and development.

Improving health through sport and physical activity would reduce health care costs significantly. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute concluded that 14 to 17 million adult Canadians could prevent early death if they did at least small amounts of physical activity every day.

So which party is the best choice for the sport vote?

"The jury's still out on that respect," said Ian Bird, senior leader of the Sport Matters lobby group, who has been prodding the provincial political parties, publicly but gently, to articulate their Game Plans for sport.

So far only the ruling Liberals have responded, pledging to convert an existing annual investment of \$10 million in athlete, coach, and Games assistance into permanent funding under the Quest for Gold lottery initiative.

The Quest for Gold reaches nearly 1,000 of Ontario's top athletes each year, supporting them as they represent Ontario and Canada at both national and international competitions. Top athletes receive up to \$8,000 a year, and there also is money for coach education and salaries, along with a fitness tax credit and unspecified infrastructure.

"The fact that the premier took the occasion to have a specific day in which his announcement was focused on his Game Plan for sport was unprecedented," Bird said. "It shows sport is now on the radar."

But alas, not for everyone.

The NDP didn't return my calls on the topic.

And both the Progressive Conservatives and the Greens had little to offer beyond the sensible idea of opening up schools for after-hours use -- rather oddly, both parties offered almost the exact same line.

PC leader John Tory's office referred me to Page 16 of the PC Party Plan for Ontario's Future, which pledges to "open up more schools to the community for evening and weekend activities.

"Under John Tory's Open Schools program, we will work to resolve the union and liability issues that stop Ontario from making better use of these public resources," states the document. Tory also pledges to expand the aging Leaside Memorial Arena in his riding of Don Valley West.

Meanwhile, the deputy leader of the Ontario Green Party, Victoria Serda, said "the main [sport] thing that we have in our platform is to try to make sure that at a community level, schools are able to allow their facilities to be used by groups after hours.

"More than supporting elite athletes, we're trying to support community participation at a local level," Serda said. "One of our planks is to provide \$45 million in additional funding per year to increase access to schools for community groups in times other than regular school hours," adding, "as a Green party it's more realistic to talk about things we would support or introduce as a bill."

The most meaningful sport comment so far in this campaign is from Premier Dalton McGuinty.

"Ontario Liberals understand the challenges athletes face as they make their dreams a reality," said McGuinty. "Ontario's top athletes inspire our youth to get involved and follow their dreams -- in sport and beyond."

Sounds good, but I haven't made up my mind yet -- unless the other parties really have nothing more to offer.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

The Toronto Sports Council is convening a Summit Series consisting of four regional summits throughout October and a final city-wide summit early in 2008, to provide

leadership for community sport, promote development of facilities, and increase participation opportunities for all residents.

Toronto community sport organizations will hear from keynote speakers on why community sport is important to the future of Toronto. Participants will discuss emerging challenges, barriers and solutions to participation in sport and physical activity, and suggest how to build a strong voice for sport in Toronto. The Sports in Our Community Summit Series runs from Oct. 16 to 29. Register at www.torontosportscouncil.com.