

Staff Report

Presented By: Lisa Billing, Manager, Recreation

Meeting Date: June 23, 2025

Subject: Update to AWC Operations and Management Plan and Proposed Fees

Attachment(s): Aquatic and Wellness Centre Operations and Management Plan
Operations and Management Plan Supporting Documentation

Recommendation

That Council approve the Aquatic and Wellness Centre Operations and Management Plan; and

That Council approve By-law 65 – 2025 a by-law to amend By-law 96-2024 to authorize the proposed fees and charges related to the Saugeen Shores Aquatic and Wellness Centre.

Report Summary

The Aquatic and Wellness Centre Operations and Management Plan, along with the proposed fees and charges, will guide the Recreation Division in preparing for opening and ongoing operations at the Aquatic and Wellness Centre. The Plan outlines key areas such as operational objectives, shutdown periods, the participation structure, facility allocation and programming principles, as well as affordable recreation programs. This report highlights changes from the draft Plan previously presented and includes the proposed Amending By-law to implement the fee structure in the By-law section of the agenda.

Background/Analysis

On November 11, 2024, Council received the [draft AWC Operations and Management Plan](#). The intent of the draft Plan was to provide Council with a high-level overview of the approach and principles guiding the operational planning for the Aquatic and Wellness Centre (AWC) and seek Council feedback. Since that time, there has also been community consultation which has been integrated into this Plan.

The report in November 2024 identified that when the Plan returned to Council it would further define:

- AWC program structure;
- participation structure;
- proposed AWC fees, charges and discount programs; and

- criteria and options for accessing affordable recreation programs.

These four areas have now been incorporated into the Plan.

The recommended plan also refines Shutdown Periods, AWC Participation Structure, Programming Principles and Affordable Recreation Programs. New details on facility allocation have been added.

The Operational Objectives remain unchanged from the draft Plan and are organized into five areas of focus. These objectives will contribute to overall operational success and are: Customer Service, Participation, Facility Operations, Programming and Financial Responsibility.

Attached to this report is the Operations and Management Plan Supporting Documentation. This additional document is provided to outline the rationale for the decision making in the recommended Plan and contains details on:

- Community Engagement
- Key Performance Indicators and Levels of Service
- General Operations (including Hours of Operation)
- Marketing and Communications
- External Financial Assistance
- Financial Forecasts
- Risk Analysis

Review of Changes to AWC Operations and Management Plan

For the ease of Council review of the recommended Plan, below is a summary of the updates from the draft received in 2024. The Plan is supported by the proposed Fees and Charges By-law amendment, and the information contained in the Supporting Documentation.

Shutdown Periods (page 5)

Shutdowns or modified periods of operations are considered part of operating a multi-use public recreation facility and hosting large scale special events, such as regional sports competitions. Whether planned or due to an emergency, these interruptions will occur from time to time.

Acknowledging that shutdown periods will occur, the intent will be to limit the impact on regular operations, and offer alternatives, whenever possible. The recommended Plan acknowledges and clarifies that during these types of interruptions there will be no credit or reimbursements for Active Pass membership, 10-visit or indoor track passholders, except for situations where there is a significant impact to facility access for a prolonged period.

AWC Participation Structure (page 6)

Revisions to the AWC Participation Structure are informed by community engagement, proposed fees and charges, and continued program planning. The participation structure now

outlines the details of the AWC Active Pass Program, Rentals and Agreements and Registered Programs.

1. AWC Active Pass Program

The Plan outlines the AWC Active Pass Program (7 access options) and what is included with each pass type. Starting on page 6 of the Plan, information about each pass type, how they are implemented, and program benefits (discounts) is outlined.

The AWC Active Pass Program has been updated to include Sports Access, a more well-rounded pass option for patrons interested in drop-in gymnasium sports only.

2. Rentals and Facility Allocation (addition to Plan)

Community partners and user groups were engaged in April 2025 to develop an understanding of their varying programming and facility needs. Input will be considered as programming and program schedules are further developed. The engagement also identified a need to outline facility allocation guidelines related to the aquatic centre, gymnasium and multi-purpose program rooms.

During the first eighteen (18) months of operation, use of the AWC program spaces will prioritize Town-organized programming with the exception of existing user groups of the Centennial Pool. This approach will help inform knowledge on the demand, timing and types of programs that Active Pass holders, and the community are looking for at the AWC, along with how and where the program schedule could accommodate recurring rentals.

The Plan also includes the approach and criteria for Health Care Providers (HCPs) to access the facility with their clients and specifies how third-party access is managed, such as AWC Trainer-led team training.

Programming Principles (page 12)

Programming principles inform how the Town will consider, develop and implement programming, whether drop-in, registered or passive programs. Passive programs are programs that are not led by an instructor or program leaders, such as lane swimming or attending the fitness centre. The following principles have been included in the Plan to provide direction and guidance related to program planning and development.

- Group Participation
- Program Timing
- Cross Programming
- Creating Program Value for Active Pass Members
- Maximizing the Space
- HIGH FIVE ® Principles
- Aquatic Standards
- Cost-Benefit Analysis

Affordable Recreation Program (page 13)

The Plan details an updated Affordable Recreation Program (ARP) that includes eight (8) program streams and formalizes the Passes for Access Program. The program streams include:

1. Passes for Access Program
2. Affordable Child, Youth/Student Rates
3. Affordable Indoor Track Passes
4. Free Participation Programs
5. Fill the Program Initiatives
6. General Discount Programs
7. Added Value Opportunities
8. Promotional Opportunities for Access

The Plan offers further information on each program stream and defines the intent and criteria for the Passes for Access subsidy program.

Three additional external funding programs offered by partners can be found in the External Financial Assistance section of the Supporting Documentation on page 21. These programs are available to residents of Saugeen Shores and Saugeen First Nation to assist with participation in recreational programming, including the AWC. Although these programs are not managed by the Town, they are available for individuals. Meetings have also taken place with administrators of Bruce County's assistance programs to understand the available resources and explore potential coordination efforts.

Proposed Fees and Charges

Council approved the AWC Operating and Capital financing strategy and it was incorporated into the 2025-2033 operating and capital plans through the 2025 Business Plan. The proposed fees and charges align with the operating forecast and revenue projections as approved.

The recommended AWC Operations and Management Plan outlines considerations that were used in developing the fees and charges (pages 16 and 17). The Plan further details the discounts that could be applied to the base rate.

Through community consultation, the main question received has been around membership rates and options. The chart below is provided to illustrate some examples of the membership options and how the benefits (discounts) could apply to the base rates for the various patron groups. Additionally, areas of interest expressed previously by Council and the public that have been included the fees and charges are:

- Discounts for the “No Commitment Recurring Membership” options which allow people flexibility;
- 10-visit pass to access the aquatic or wellness areas of the facility (saving 12% over the per day rate); and
- Indoor Track Pass fee is set at \$100 for 6 months.

The report recommends approval of By-law 65 – 2025 a by-law to amend By-law 96-2024 to authorize the proposed fees and charges related to the Saugeen Shores Aquatic and Wellness Centre, which includes the full suite of fees associated with the facility.

AWC Active Pass Type	Base Rate	12-Month Fixed Term Membership (25% discount)	6-Month Fixed Term Membership (15% discount)	30-Day Membership	No Commitment Recurring Membership (Bi-Weekly)
AWC All Access					
Active Ager (60+)	\$840	\$630	\$357	\$70	\$32.31
Adult (20-59)	\$900	\$675	\$382.50	\$75	\$34.62
Youth/Student (14-24 and valid for 20-24 with student ID)	\$360	\$270	\$153	\$30	\$13.85
Child (3-13)	\$240	\$180	\$102	\$20	\$9.23
Aquatic Access					
Active Ager (60+)	\$660	\$495	\$280.50	\$55	\$25.38
Adult (20-59)	\$720	\$540	\$306	\$60	\$27.69
Wellness Access					
Active Ager (60+)	\$780	\$585	\$331.50	\$65	\$30
Adult (20-59)	\$840	\$630	\$357	\$70	\$32.31
Sports Access					
Single Fee	\$360	\$270	\$153	\$30	\$13.85

Next Steps and Reporting Out

AWC operational planning is happening with the best-known information at this time, from community engagement, industry best practices and staff expertise. Operational considerations will evolve as the Town learns the AWC's operations in real-time.

Following the approval of the Plan and the Fees and Charges By-law, the chart below outlines next steps for monitoring and reporting back to Council.

Estimated Date	Report Out
2026	Continue to Identify Plan as Major Initiative in 2026 Business Plan
Q2 2026	Update in Q1 quarterly report to Council
Q3 2026	Update in Q2 quarterly report to Council
Q4 2026	Update in Q3 quarterly report to Council

Q1 2027	Update in Q4 quarterly report to Council
Q2 2027	Comprehensive Staff Report on AWC operations versus plan with proposed changes, if needed.

The Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle is an important tool that will support operational decisions and ensure value for the community through the AWC while maintaining financial responsibility. A culture of continuous improvement, actively listening and responding to the community, and taking a cautious approach when balancing programming needs with user group rentals will support the AWC's operational objectives outlined in the Plan.

Project Scheduling

The Plan is based on the current construction schedule; with occupancy of the AWC and second-floor Municipal Office expected in fall 2025. At the time of preparing this report, a soft opening of the AWC in November is anticipated.

Operations will continue at the existing Centennial Pool with a shortened swimming lesson session ahead of moving into the AWC. Confirmation of occupancy, deficiency work, move-in dates and a Centennial Pool closing date will be shared with Council as plans are confirmed. Conversations relating to the decommissioning and future use of Centennial Pool are ongoing with the Bluewater District School Board. It is anticipated that an update to Council will occur in Q3.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 4: Fostering a Vibrant Place to Live and Visit
- Business Plan Alignment: Community Services Major Initiative

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

Cost associated with this program are contained within the existing budget.

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Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer