

## Aurora eyes drop-in programs for roller skating enthusiasts

The popularity of roller skating has seen a resurgence in recent years and the Town of Aurora could soon offer drop-in sessions as part of its menu of recreation programs.

Aurora has been looking at ways to offer roller skating opportunities following a motion last fall which tasked staff with coming back with a list of options for the 2026 season.

“Roller skating is a popular recreational and athletic activity that combines physical exercise with entertainment,” said Lisa Warth, Aurora's Manager of Recreation, in a report set to come before Council at the Committee level this week. “Roller skating is experiencing a revival throughout Ontario, as it is relatively easy to learn and can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Roller skating venues are popping up around the Greater Toronto Area and include rinks, parks, and urban spaces.”

While a permanent venue isn't among the recommendations that will be up for consideration at the Committee of the Whole meeting, Warth notes staff were only able to find one roller skating program provider. A single one-day five-hour event with this company, however, could cost \$4,950 — funds that are not currently within the Community Services Department's budget.

“The program would have to run as a ‘pay to play’ model similar to many other programs,” says Warth. “In order to generate revenue to cover the fee charged by SUSO, the charge per person per one hour skate would range from \$26.40 - \$29.70. This assumes a maximum of 30 skaters per hour. This does not take into account additional costs the Town would incur such as staff, music, set up and clean up, etc. Staff are not confident that the fees that need to be charged would resonate with the community. A family of four would have to pay over \$100 for one hour of roller skating and many families may find this prohibitive, thus affecting attendance. Some communities have been able to offer the SUSO service at no charge or a lower fee and offset the cost with sponsorships or grants. This is something staff could pursue; however, the Town is always seeking sponsorships and grants for other initiatives.”

Instead, staff are recommending drop-in programs as a more “economical” model moving forward.

“Roller skating could be offered as a drop-in activity very similar to the Town's other drop-in activities, such as leisure ice skating,” says Warth. “However, equipment would not be available for use and participants would have to bring their own roller skates or inline skates and protective equipment. This activity could be done indoors or on one of the arena floors while ice is out or outdoors if a suitable, safe venue could be found.

“Staff would be on site to ensure safety, provide crowd control, music, and set up and clean up. A roller skating drop-in admission fee would be similar to existing fees, which range from \$3.09 - \$4.38 per person, per drop-in time. The model is low risk for the Town, but limits participation to those who have skates and protective equipment to use, similar to ice skating, shinney, and other drop-ins where participants need to bring their own equipment.”

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