

Public asked for help in designing Aurora's sport plan

By Jake Courtepatte

A number of Aurora residents both curious to listen, and ready to be heard, stopped by the Aurora Family Leisure Complex last Tuesday to discuss the future of sports and leisure in Town.

Todd Brown of Monteith Brown, the project planning consultant overseeing the Town's new Sports Plan, was all ears and eager to hear from the public what needs to be done.

?We need to start looking at what we're doing, and if we're doing it properly,? he said. ?We need to start looking at the provision of facilities, service levels, matters at all levels.?

In the gathering on the second floor of the complex, attendees were asked to fill out a survey, write down their ideas on sticky notes, and were invited to have informal conversations with staff and organizers about changes they would like to see in local sports.

?Public input is always the number-one priority,? said Brown. ?It's crucial in understanding what a community needs and wants.?

Representatives from around the organizations in Aurora created a diverse crowd, but a few similar ideas were tossed around. The concern mostly seemed to lie among the need for upgraded facilities, providing more time and area for the numerous programs across the town.

Paul Dunbar of the Aurora Soccer Club said there is much public interest in this area.

?The sporting community in Aurora is growing and growing, and the facilities available have to keep up,? he said.

Three questions were laid out to the participants, involving what they already like about the town's parks and recreation department, how it can be improved, and what needs to be done for the future.

Al Downey, Director of Parks and Recreation, was adamant about receiving as much feedback from the community as possible.

?We want to involve the community, obviously,? said Downey. ?We work for the community, not for us.?

The plan is intended to lay out a vision for leisure facilities in Aurora until the year 2021, with the documents going ahead for approval in January 2016.

While Council, Town staff, and sport organization representatives will be heading to the chambers over the next few months to discuss how to move ahead, the next opportunity for the public to get their say will come November 24, when all are invited to Council to discuss plans of the first draft. An official open house is slated for November 26, also in town chambers.

More information can be found at www.aurora.ca/masterplan or www.aurora.ca/sportplan.

Residents are also being asked to fill out a survey to help better planning at www.surveymonkey.com/r/auroraprs.