

# City of Mississauga Corporate Report



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| Date: November 14, 2023<br><br>To: Chair and Members of General Committee | Originator's files:               |
| From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services                   | Meeting date:<br>December 6, 2023 |

## Subject

**Update on the Healthy Food & Beverage for Recreation Facilities 08-03-09**

## Recommendation

That the Corporate Report dated November 14, 2023 from the Commissioner of Community Services, entitled "Update of the Healthy Food & Beverage for Recreation Facilities Policy 08-03-09", be received for information.

## Executive Summary

- Over the last decade, customer demand within the food service industry had been shifting, calling for more nutritious food options and public policy to support healthier communities.
- In October of 2010, the Ministry of Education adopted the School Food and Beverage Policy. Given the proximity of Recreation facilities to local schools and rising rates of obesity and Type-2 Diabetes in Mississauga, the Healthy Food & Beverage Policy for Recreation Facilities was developed in accordance with Peel Public Health's draft Nutritional Standards.
- In March of 2020 the policy was approved by Council with a September implementation date for vending and concessions operations within City owned/operated Recreation facilities. Recreation facilities and programs have consistently promoted creating healthy and active lifestyle choices for our community.
- The Policy specifies the product mix that is to be adhered to in terms of Beverages to Promote (75%), Beverages to Limit (25%) and Beverages to Avoid (0%). Prepackaged and prepared food is required to fully meet the nutrition criteria (which excludes highly processed prepackaged food, deep fried foods and processed meats).

- In 2021, the City joined the Cities Changing Diabetes Programme (CCD), which focuses on reducing obesity and increasing disease prevention to limit the rise of Type 2 diabetes in our community. Throughout various communities in Mississauga, relative rates of Type 2 diabetes are anywhere from 49% to 72% higher than the Provincial average.
- Currently, staff are developing a Mississauga Diabetes Prevention Strategy in partnership with communities, including those that carry the burden of type 2 diabetes (Asian, South Asian, Arab, Black and Hispanic groups and Indigenous peoples), experts and research collaborators, CCD and other community agencies.
- Provinces and Cities across Canada have been moving forward with the implementation of Healthy Food & Beverage Policies and/or practices (including British Columbia, Alberta, Burlington and Hamilton).
- Within the Greater Toronto Area, the City of Mississauga has demonstrated leadership through the development and implementation of the Healthy Food and Beverage Policy, where most neighbours do not have a policy in place.
- The Region of Peel will be finalizing revisions to their draft Nutrition Standards by year end. Following these revisions and considering feedback from facility users, staff will review the Healthy Food & Beverage Policy as required. In the meantime, where there is rationale to support exceptions to the policy, the Director of Recreation and Culture can continue to support exceptions, as outlined in the current policy.

## Background

The Recreation and Culture Division offers concessions and vending for the public at a variety of City facilities including community centres, arenas, golf courses, event venues and marina. Late 2019, staff conducted a review of the arena and community centre concessions across the City. Overall, revenue for concessions had been found to be declining annually, noting higher operational expenses, the analysis showed a net lost annually of approximately \$200,000. As a result of the analysis, an operational decision was made to close the concessions at Carmen Corbasson CC, Clarkson CC, Erin Mills Twin Arena, Mississauga Valley CC, and Tomken Arena as of April 2020. The remaining concessions at Iceland, Meadowvale 4 Rinks, Port Credit Arena, Paramount Fine Foods Centre and the Marina have remained open.

Over the last decade, customer demand within the food service industry had been shifting, calling for more nutritious food options and public policy to support healthier communities. In October of 2010, the Ministry of Education adopted the School Food and Beverage Policy. Intending to make the healthier option the easier option, this policy established the nutrition standards for food and beverages sold in publicly funded elementary and secondary schools. The nutrition standards apply to all food and beverages sold in all venues (including cafeterias

and vending machines), through all programs (i.e. catered lunch programs) and all events (i.e. bake sales, sports events). The standard does not apply to items that are offered to students at no cost, brought from home, available for purchase during field trips, during rentals, or for fundraising off school premises. School administrators may designate up to ten days per year as special-event days on which food and beverages would be exempt from the policy. All school board policies related to food and beverages must be in accordance with the Ministry's policy and it is the school board's responsibility to monitor the implementation of the directive at the local school level.

Given the proximity of Recreation facilities to local schools, along with the rising rates of obesity and Type-2 diabetes in Mississauga, Recreation staff worked closely with the Region of Peel Public Health staff to develop a Healthy Food and Beverage Policy (08-03-09) that reflected Peel Public Health's established draft nutritional standards. In March of 2020 the policy was approved by Council with a September implementation date for all vending and concessions within City owned/operated Recreation facilities.

Recreation programs and facilities, parks, cultural programs, active transportation initiatives and other City services are designed to promote active and healthy lifestyle choices in our community and for our residents. Offering unhealthy, high-fat, high-sugar, nutrient poor and fried foods in our facilities provided conflicting messaging to our residents, particularly children and youth.

As event venues predominantly serve the adult population, they are excluded from the scope of the policy (including Paramount Fine Foods Centre, Living Arts Centre, Meadowvale Theatre and Banquet services). Third party food services providers operating in City facilities, including mobile food vendors, and groups renting City facilities are also excluded from the policy. While instructional cooking classes are not required to adhere to the policy (i.e. cake decorating), any meal options for day camp participants are to adhere to the established nutritional standards.

The Policy specifies the product mix that is to be adhered to in terms of Beverages to Promote (75%), Beverages to Limit (25%) and Beverages to Avoid (0%). Prepackaged and prepared food is required to fully meet the nutrition criteria (noting that highlight processed prepackaged food, deep friend foods and processed meats are not permitted).

Within policy, the Director of Recreation & Culture, or designate may make exceptions to the requirement criteria on a case-by-case basis, after careful consideration of the circumstances and in consultation with staff. For example, in the summer of 2023, based on extensive customer feedback and the predominately-adult customer base, an exception has been made to add some additional items to Golf Course concessions. While the menu continues to include healthy options that comply with the nutrition standards, some additions were made to include processed meats and beverages containing some sugar.

## Comments

Type 2 Diabetes is a growing concern in the City of Mississauga where, according to research conducted by the UTM Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations, most neighbourhoods have prevalence rates range from 14.6% - 16.9%, compared to the Ontario age-standardized prevalence among adults of only 9.8%. In general, relative rates of Type 2 diabetes in Mississauga are anywhere from 49% to 72% higher than the Provincial average.

On June 9, 2021, General Committee recommended that the City of Mississauga become a member of the Cities Changing Diabetes Programme (CCD) as the 40<sup>th</sup> City in an international network of cities working to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes. Subsequently, Mayor and members of Council all signed the CCD Urban Diabetes Declaration in November 2021. CCD is a program led by the Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen, University College London and Novo Nordisk to address the growth of Type 2 diabetes and obesity. Membership with CCD confirms a commitment to help bring down rates of type 2 diabetes in Mississauga by focusing on reducing obesity and increasing disease prevention to limit the rise of the disease in our community. CCD includes more than 40 cities with 150 partnership organizations involved. This includes city leaders, health authorities, academia, diabetes associations, health providers, community groups and business corporations.

Currently, the City is developing a Mississauga Diabetes Prevention Strategy with communities, including those that carry the burden of type 2 diabetes (Asian, South Asian, Arab, Black and Hispanic ethnic groups and Indigenous peoples), experts and research collaborators and partners, CCD and agencies. The Healthy F&B Policy supports the goals of CCD and will assist in the implementation of the Mississauga Diabetes Prevention Strategy.

Across Canada, Provincial governments are establishing guidelines and policies for the provision of healthy food options in public spaces. The Province of Alberta has established Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth, issuing a resource manual for childcare, schools and Recreation Centres, encouraging policy development in accordance with their guidelines. As such, the City of Edmonton have adopted operational guidelines in 2010 whereby 50% of the food options be from the “Choose Most Often” and 50% from the “Choose Sometimes” category. Their concessions operations are operated by third-party providers with a focus on sustainable, fresh and healthy menu items.

The Province of British Columbia has an established healthy food and beverage policy for public buildings, in alignment with the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in Schools (2022). This policy indicates that the product mix should reflect 50% for the “Sell Most” category and 50% from the “Sell Sometimes” category. Residential buildings, including long-terms care, correctional facilities and post-secondary institutions are excluded from the policy. The Province encourages local municipalities to align their policy, providing implementation resources, with some municipalities following suit (including Squamish and Nanaimo).

More locally, where there is currently no Provincial guidelines in place, the City of Mississauga has been a leader with the implementation of this policy. The City of Burlington had a policy in place (currently under review), with a goal of 80% of offerings meeting the healthy criteria, noting two outdoor concessions as exclusions. In 2018, the City of Hamilton approved a three year Recreation Healthy Food and Beverage Action Plan to change the food environment at recreation centres and arenas, though no formal policy is in place. The Town of Milton requires 20% of the vending items to be healthy, prohibiting the sale of energy drinks and the City of Toronto have indicated that they will be working with Public Health and vendors through their procurement processes to establish healthy food options.

Within the Region of Peel, the nutritional standards were implemented in two staff cafeterias from October 2014 to March 2020, when they closed due to the pandemic. However, these standards were not implemented in other public-facing facilities. The City of Brampton limits the sale of energy drinks and both Brampton and Caledon continue to sell traditional concession menu items, currently without a policy in place.

In 2019, Peel Public Health Dieticians had begun a review of the current Nutritional Standards based on lessons learned from their cafeteria pilot, the City of Mississauga's implementation experiences, other best practices across Canada and considering alignment to Canada's new Food Guide (2019). With the onset of the pandemic this work had been paused, however Peel Public Health anticipates having updated final nutritional standards by year-end.

Recreation regularly surveys rental and program users of our facilities formally. While a specific survey question had not been asked regarding the Healthy Food and Beverage Policy, no concerns were identified through the review of comments from 2022 through to 2023. With this said, staff have received informal feedback on site indicating a desire for more variety in the menu offerings and there have been resident questions brought forward through some Councillor's offices, presenting the opportunity to educate residents on the policy.

All products purchased from vending machines are monitored by the vendor and reports are provided to the City which contain information including statistics such as top selling products and general volume of sales. There has been no significant drop in vending revenues since the implementation of the policy. Arena concessions all operated at a loss with the exception of Iceland before the closures and the implementation of this new policy, and now with only Iceland, Meadowvale 4 Rinks, and Port Credit operating concessions, the 2023 financial forecast is net neutral.

Following the finalization of the Peel Public Health Nutritional Standards, and considering feedback from facility users (where users may be formally surveyed), staff will review the Healthy Food & Beverage Policy and report back to Council if there are any proposed amendments. In the meantime, where there is rationale to support exceptions to the policy, the Director of Recreation and Culture can continue to support exceptions in special circumstances (i.e. special events, where food is donated, etc.).

## Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from the Recommendations in this report.

## Conclusion

The implementation of the Healthy Food and Beverage Policy demonstrates the City's leadership within the sector and commitment to promoting healthy food choices, especially in environments serving children and youth. In ensuring the healthy choice is the easiest choice, the City of Mississauga aims to support efforts to reduce the prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes in our community and continue to promote active and healthy lifestyle choices for all residents.

## Attachments

Appendix 1: Healthy Food & Beverage Policy for Recreation Facilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodi Robillos", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

Prepared by: Anitra Mathers, Manager, Food Services