



**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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## STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

**PRESENTED:** December 17, 2024 **REPORT:** 24-112  
**FROM:** Recreation Department **FILE:** 0340-20-101/  
3900-20-2460  
**SUBJECT:** PARKS AND RECREATION FEES AND CHARGES AMENDMENT BYLAW (PLAY CREDITS) NO. 2460, 2024 AND COUNCIL POLICY I-01: RECREATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PLAY (PROGRAM AND LEISURE ASSISTANCE FOR YOU) AMENDMENT

### RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**That** the recommendation of the General Manager of Community Engagement and Cultural Services be endorsed.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

**That** Council consider giving first, second, and third reading to “Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw (PLAY Credits) No. 2460, 2024”; and

**That** Council adopt *Council Policy I-01: Recreation Assistance Program PLAY (Program and Leisure Activities for You)*, as amended and attached as Appendix A to Administrative Report No. 24-112.

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is being presented to Council for two purposes. First, staff are proposing to amend “Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 2420, 2023” (Existing Bylaw) to include the dollar value of the Program and Leisure Assistance for You (PLAY) credits (Credits) that are made available to eligible applicants (further described below). The amendment is presented in “Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw (PLAY Credits) No. 2460, 2024” (Amending Bylaw).

Second, staff are proposing amendments to *Council Policy I-01: Recreation Assistance Program PLAY (Program and Leisure Assistance for You)* (PLAY Policy) to reflect current best practices subsequent to recent review. The PLAY Policy provides lower-income community members to Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) credits for recreation facilities and programs.

Information Report

Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

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## DISCUSSION

### Background

The PLAY Policy was first created in 1989 to provide a financial credit for Whistler residents and their dependants in financial need for recreational programs and services. The program is facilitated by Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS) on behalf of the RMOW. The PLAY Policy has been previously updated in 1994, 1998 and 2013. Local governments are guided by provincial privacy legislation, namely the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA). Recently, the PLAY Policy went through a privacy impact assessment (PIA) with the support of the RMOW's Legislative Services Department. To ensure the PLAY Policy continues to meet legislated requirements, it was determined that several aspects of the application process could be improved to better protect the personal information of applicants and clarify the administrative process between WCSS and RMOW staff. The updates to the PLAY Policy reflect these changes.

Credits can apply towards a pass for Meadow Park Sports Centre (MPSC), children's program, aquatic leadership course or a Lost Lake Nordic Ski Pass. Applicants apply once per year for Credits.

The Existing Bylaw does not specify the dollar value of a Credit. For clarity and transparency, staff recommend including the dollar value of a PLAY Credit in the Existing Bylaw; therefore, staff have prepared the Amending Bylaw.

### Analysis

Upon review, the Existing Bylaw required inclusion of the dollar value of the PLAY credit, which is equal in value to an adult 20-time pass to MPSC.

In addition, the PLAY Policy required several updates:

- Guiding Principles were added to ensure the PLAY Credits align with the Official Community Plan (OCP), the [Recreation and Leisure Master Plan](#) and *Council Policy I-06: Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges*.
- Credits are now valid for one year instead of three. This change ensures the RMOW and WCSS can track the use of the Credits from year to year and eligible participants can reapply annually.
- Process changes were made to ensure recreation assistance credit amounts are issued as a subsidy amount in the recreation software system which limits the use of the credit for its intended uses. Credits are available for an individual and cannot be combined within families.
- The list of eligible programs and services that can be enjoyed with Credits;
- The list of required documentation for eligibility (proof of residency and financial eligibility);
- An audit process was introduced that requires the applicant to present required eligibility documents to RMOW staff;
- Photo ID is required at the time of activation at MPSC;
- Adding the dollar value of the Credits for each qualifying individual;
- Set a total annual dollar value for the Credits; and
- Provide direction to staff to suspend the Credits if the annual dollar value is reached before year-end.

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## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The “Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 2420, 2023”, was adopted by [Council on December 5, 2023](#).

### 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan outlines the high-level direction of the RMOW to help shape community progress during this term of Council. The Strategic Plan contains four priority areas with various associated initiatives that support them. This section identifies how this report links to the Strategic Plan.

### **Strategic Priorities**

Housing

*Expedite the delivery of and longer-term planning for employee housing*

Climate Action

*Mobilize municipal resources toward the implementation of the Big Moves Climate Action Plan*

Community Engagement

*Strive to connect locals to each other and to the RMOW*

Smart Tourism

*Preserve and protect Whistler’s unique culture, natural assets and infrastructure*

Not Applicable

*Aligns with core municipal work that falls outside the strategic priorities but improves, maintains, updates and/or protects existing and essential community infrastructure or programs*

The Credits support those who may not otherwise be able to attend MPSC, Lost Lake Nordic Trails or other programming offered by the RMOW. Ensuring access provides an opportunity for more Whistler residents to make a community connection.

### Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The changes to the PLAY Policy move the RMOW toward the objective of Chapter 8.11.1 of the OCP: *Engage with service providers and the community to maintain and coordinate high quality services with a particular focus on the needs of those who are most vulnerable*. By working cooperatively with WCSS, the RMOW seeks to improve the mental and physical wellness of those who may not be able to afford access to recreation programs. Having access to recreation services, programs and facilities are essential preventative health care and can also provide injury rehabilitation services.

In addition, the PLAY Policy changes move the RMOW toward the objective of Chapter 9.3.2 of the OCP: *Whistler’s recreation and leisure system contributes to the social well-being of residents and visitors*. By granting Credits to those in need, they are given an opportunity to socialize and engage with other community members and can participate in programming offered by the RMOW, like registering for children's programs and aquatic leadership courses.

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## BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The Credits annual budget has increased over the past few years due to rising demand. The budgeted amounts each year represent foregone revenue for MPSC. The budgeted amounts for the program were:

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\$40,000 in 2021  
\$40,013 in 2022  
\$41,018 in 2023  
\$60,830 in 2024

Staff noticed the increasing demand for PLAY Credits in 2023 and raised the budgeted amount significantly for 2024. Included within Budget Guidelines under current consideration by Council and ultimately the 2025-2029 Five Year Financial Plan Bylaw is \$60,830 for the Credits in 2025.

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## LÍLWAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lílwat People, known in their language as L'il'wat7úl and the Squamish People, known in their language as the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

Lílwat Nation and Squamish Nation members residing in Whistler that meet the eligibility criteria are able to access this program.

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform     Consult     Involve     Collaborate     Empower

RMOW staff met with WCSS staff to discuss required changes according to the PIA, the revised Recreation Assistance Program application form, and the need to establish a formal agreement between the RMOW and WCSS for the delivery of the Credits. This was a collaborative process that will strengthen the connections between the two organizations.

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## REFERENCES

"Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw (PLAY Credits) No. 2460, 2024"  
(Included in Council Package)

Appendix A – Updated *Council Policy I-01: Recreation Assistance Program PLAY (Program and Leisure Assistance for You)*

Appendix B – PLAY Credit information and updated application form

Appendix C – Current *Council Policy I-01: Recreation Assistance Program PLAY (Program and Leisure Assistance for You)*

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## SUMMARY

Access to recreation programs and facilities for low-income individuals and families is essential in helping people maintain satisfactory levels of both physical and mental health. The Credits allow more community members to access municipal recreation facilities and programs which enriches the lives of

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people who require access. The Amending Bylaw and PLAY Policy reflect key updates to this important program and ensure the RMOW is complying with legislative privacy requirements.

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### **SIGN-OFFS**

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**Reviewed by:**

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Virginia Cullen,  
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