

DECISION REPORT

Recreation and Culture Business Line Information

ISSUE

As the City of Saskatoon (City) heads into its planning for the 2024 and 2025 Business Plan and Budget Cycle, there continues to be several budgetary pressures the City is facing. This report will provide information and Administrative recommendations on the Recreation and Culture Business Line.

This process has been established so that City Council can provide early direction to the Administration, on what to include in the 2024/2025 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget which will be considered by City Council in November 2023 during the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget deliberation meeting.

BACKGROUND

At its March 15, 2023 meeting when considering the [2023-2025 Budgetary Pressures and Trends](#) Report, Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) resolved in part:

“That Administration report back on a potential special budget meeting process to address some of the budgetary challenges and pressures for the upcoming two-year budget cycle. That this report include recommendations on using the existing Governance and Priorities Committee/Finance Committee meeting schedule vs. having special budget/Finance committee meetings and recommendations for organizing these special budget meetings based on departmental budgets or based on service lines or some combination.”

At its April 12, 2023 meeting when considering the [2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget Process Report](#), GPC resolved:

“That Option 3 be approved, and the City Clerk’s office be directed to schedule Special Budget Meetings for the presentation of Business Line-based reports if the Governance and Priorities Committee Capacity does not exist as outlined in the April 12, 2023 report of the Chief Financial Office.”

CURRENT STATUS

The multi-year business plan and budget process includes the following key steps:

1. Develop the cost to maintain existing services considering city growth, inflation pressures, and updated revenue estimates. This step is also used to present and discuss required corrections of base budgets and phase-in of funding plans.
2. Provide a summary of the information from Step 1 to GPC.
3. Use cross-divisional teams to discuss City Council’s strategic priorities and develop options to achieve these priorities.
4. Present a list of Business Plan Options to City Council for prioritization.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Each business line report presented through the Governance and Priorities or through the Special Budget Meetings will have the same general outline to provide information to City Council. The categories in each report will be:

1. Expenditure Overview
2. Service Level Review
3. Pandemic Challenges
4. 2024/2025 Pressures
5. Potential Options

Additionally, if the business line has Business Plan and Budget Options for operating that will be presented at the August 2023 GPC meeting there will be a summary of these items that are not included within the 2024 and 2025 Budget Status Update report that was presented at the June 14, 2023 GPC.

Appendix 1 includes the information for the Recreation and Culture business line. The Recreation and Culture Business Line includes the following service lines:

- Albert Community Centre;
- Community Partnerships;
- Forestry Farm Park and Zoo;
- Golf Courses;
- Gordon Howe Campground;
- Indoor Rinks;
- Nutrien Playland;
- Marr Residence;
- Outdoor Pools;
- Outdoor Sports Fields;
- Parks Maintenance and Design;
- Playground and Recreation Areas;
- Program Research and Design;
- Leisure Centres-Programs;
- Leisure Centres-Rentals;
- River Landing;
- Spectator Ballfields; and
- Targeted Programming

OPTIONS

Appendix 1 provides the full information regarding the options available to Committee.

Option 1 – Reduce Program Research and Design Funding

Option 2 – Defer New Property Tax Funded Positions for Special Events and Playground Staff Training

Option 3 – Redirect \$250,000 of one-time savings from Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre Closure

Option 4 – Reduce Operating Hours/Days of Indoor Leisure Centres

Option 5 – Reduce Operating Hours/Days at Outdoor Pools

Option 6 – Increase Outdoor Pools Admission Rates

Option 7 – Reduce Summer Playground and Recreation Programs

Option 8 – Reduce Targeted Youth Programming

Option 9 – Reduce Public Skating

Option 10 - Defer New Property Tax Funded Positions at Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo

Option 11 – Implement \$1.00 Service Charge for On-line Registrations

Option 12 – Reduce Parks Maintenance Service Levels

Option 13 – Defer New Property Tax Funded Parks Positions

Option 14 – Further Increase to Rates and Fees

RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance and Priorities Committee direct Administration to include the following options in the 2024/2025 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget:

1. Option 1 – Reduce Program Design and Research Funding by \$50,000;
2. Option 2 – Defer 0.90 FTE for New Property Tax Funded Positions (\$48,800); and
3. Option 3 - Redirect \$250,000 of one-time savings from Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre Closure in 2024 and 2025.

RATIONALE

The provided recommendations aim to strike a balance in addressing the significant cost pressures the City is facing heading into 2024/2025 with a more reasonable property tax increase. While there are implications to the provided recommendations to service levels and increases in user fees, the Administration believes it provides reasonable options to lessen the financial impact included in the 2024/2025 budget.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of this business line will be deliberated at the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations meeting.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Any direction from Committee on this report will be incorporated into the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget process. Decisions for 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget will be made by City Council during the budget deliberation meeting which will be held on November 28-30, 2023 where the budget implications of all business lines will be deliberated.

APPENDICES

1. Recreation and Culture Business Line

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: Kari Smith, Director of Finance
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Clae Hack, Chief Financial Officer
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Recreation and Culture Business Line

The 2023 Budget for the Recreation and Culture Business Line includes \$62.34 million in expenditures and \$25.25 million in operating revenues. The remaining costs of \$37.09 million are funded by general revenues including property taxes.

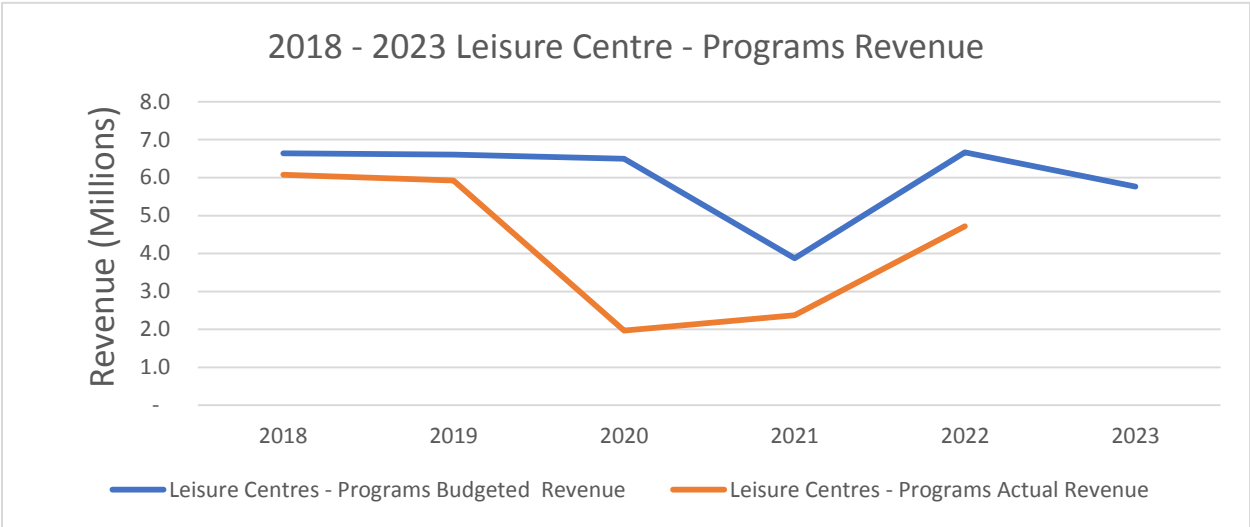
Golf Courses, Gordon Howe Campground and Nutrien Playland Service Lines do not impact the mill rate. All expenditures included under these Service Lines are funded through the generation of revenues. Revenues in excess of expenses are held in the applicable stabilization reserves; these reserves are available to fund situations where program expenditures exceed the revenues. River Landing also does not impact the mill rate as the program is balanced through a transfer from the Reserve for Capital Expenditures, with the total transfers accumulated and anticipated to be repaid from future surpluses in the program.

Revenue Overview

In 2023 the Recreation and Culture Business Line was budgeted to generate \$25.25 million in operating revenue. \$7.74 and \$5.76 million comes from Leisure Centres, Rentals and Programs respectively, which is approximately 53% of all operating revenue in this Business Line. A full breakdown of operating revenue can be seen below.

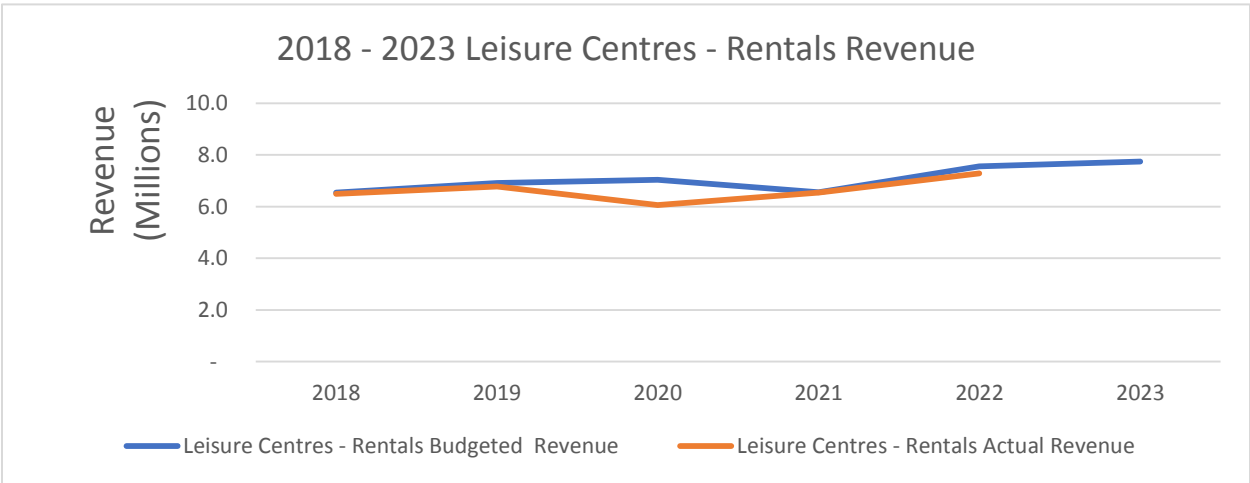
Service Line	2023 Op Rev (in millions)	% of Overall Op Rev.
Albert Community Centre	\$0.22	0.87%
Community Partnerships	\$0.02	0.08%
Forestry Farm Park & Zoo	\$1.37	5.43%
Golf Courses	\$4.07	16.12%
Gordon Howe Campground	\$0.59	2.34%
Indoor Rinks	\$2.44	9.66%
Leisure Centres - Program	\$5.76	22.81%
Leisure Centres Rentals	\$7.74	30.65%
Marketing Services	-	-
Marr Residence	-	-
Nutrien Playland	\$0.69	2.73%
Outdoor Pools	\$0.49	1.94%
Outdoor Sport Fields	\$0.76	3.01%
Parks Maintenance & Design	\$0.14	0.56%
Playground & Recreation Areas	-	-
Program Research & Design	-	-
River Landing	\$0.95	3.76%
Spectator Ballfields	-	-
Targeted Programming	\$0.01	0.04%
Recreation and Culture Business Line	\$25.25	100.00%

As outlined above, both Leisure Centres Service Lines are the largest operating revenue sources in this Business Line. Although 2021 and 2022 saw increases in Leisure Centres – Programs revenue, it is still significantly below pre-pandemic levels as illustrated below:

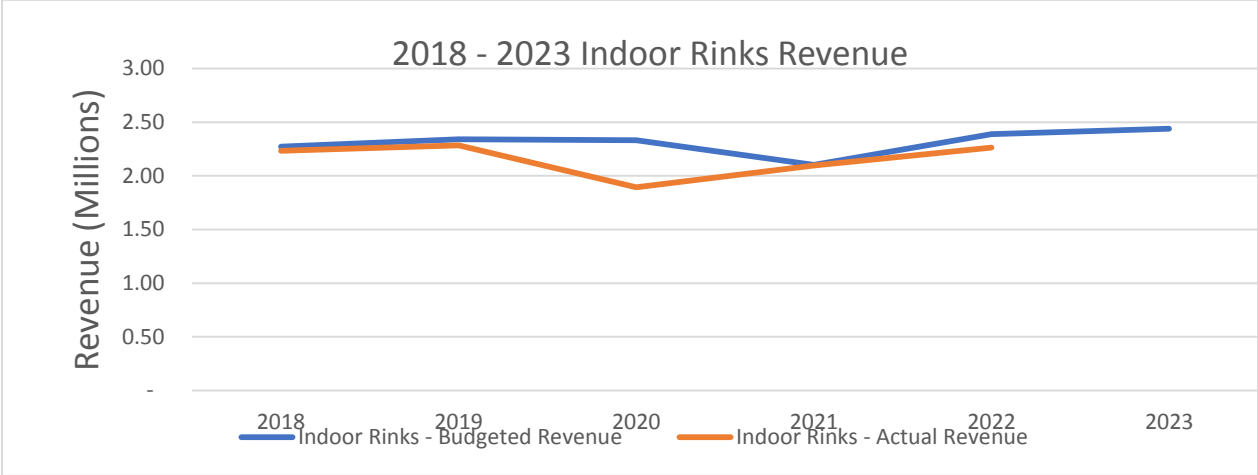


Admissions and registrations at the Indoor Leisure Centres increased by 99% in 2022 compared to 2021. In 2023, Leisure Centre - Programs revenue year to date has increased by 40% over the same period in 2022 and is projected to slightly exceed budget when adjusted for the Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre closure.

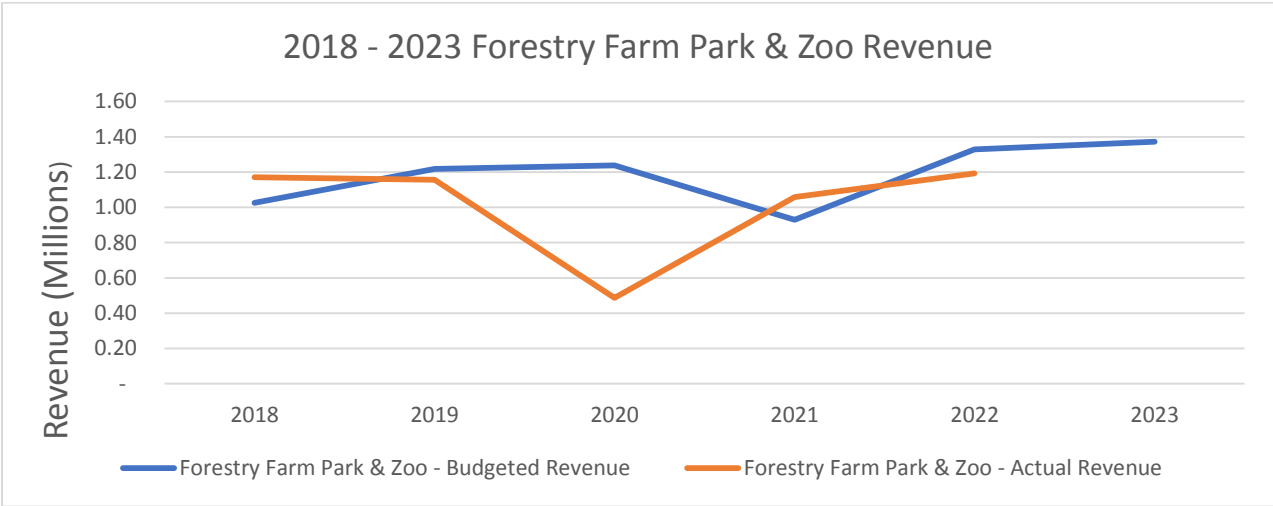
The other significant operating revenue source for this business line is Leisure Centre – Rentals Revenue. Unlike the Programs Service Line, this revenue source has not been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Although Rentals did see a slight decrease in actual revenue compared to budget in 2020 due to the pandemic, it has recovered and is comparable to budget in every other year. A five-year history of this revenue source can be seen below:



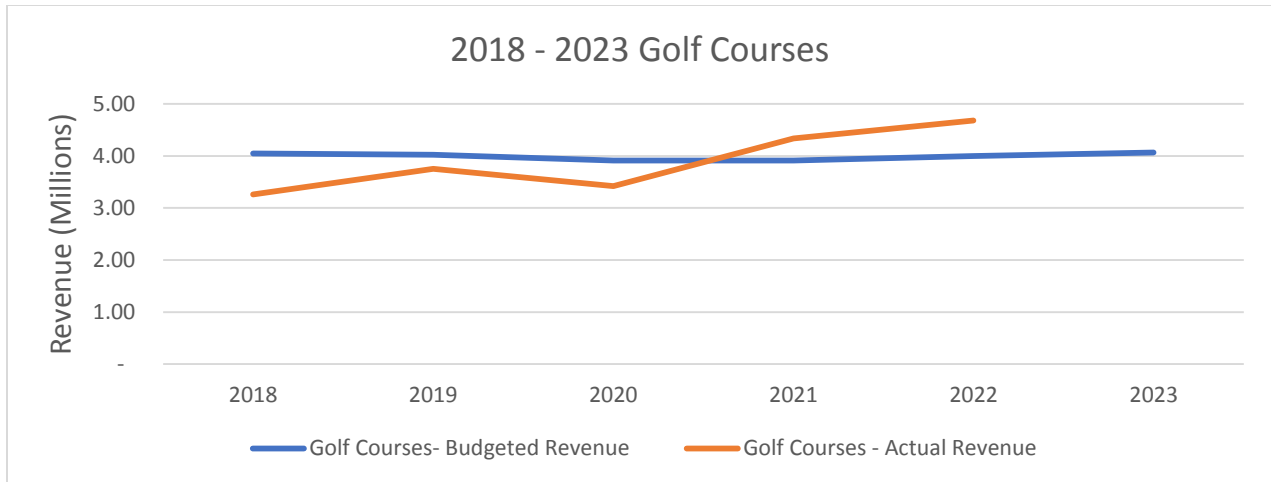
Indoor Rink Revenue makes up 9.66% for the Business Line revenues. Revenues fell below budget in 2020, but have returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022. In 2023, it is projected that budgeted revenue levels be slightly below budget.



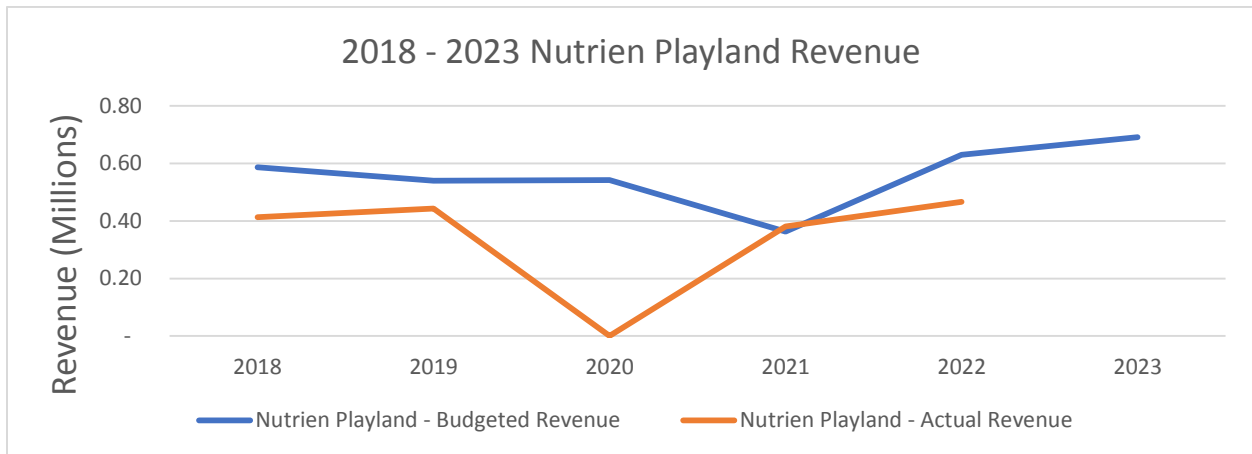
The Forestry Farm Park & Zoo revenue makes up 5.43% of the Business Line revenues. During the pandemic, revenues fell to less than 40% of budget as the facility did not open until July and then resumed operations with COVID restrictions in place. There has been steady revenue growth in 2021 and 2022 and it is anticipated revenues will exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2023. The gift shop will be operational in 2023, further increasing revenue.



The other significant source of revenue is Golf Courses at 16.12% of the Business Line revenues. Golf Course revenue was below budget in 2018, 2019 and 2020, but began exceeding budget in 2021 and 2022 and it is expected that revenue growth will continue in 2023.



Nutrien Playland is budgeted to provide 2.73% of the Business Line revenue. Revenues have not achieved budgeted levels other than in 2021 and there have been no contributions to the stabilization reserve. During the pandemic, in 2020, the facility did not operate. Revenues returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022 and 2023 revenues are expected to increase in part due to higher rates.



Expenditure Overview

The Service Line with the largest expenditure budget is Parks Maintenance & Design at 28.90% (\$18 million) of all expenditures within this Business Line. Leisure Centres Services Lines, both Programs and Rentals, contain the second and third largest expenditures at 20.68% (\$12.89 million) and 18.99% (\$11.84 million) of total expenditures, respectively. An overview of all the service lines 2023 operating expenditures can be seen on the following page:

Service Line	2023 Op. Exp. (in millions)	% of Overall Op. Exp.
Albert Community Centre	\$0.30	0.48%
Community Partnerships	\$1.15	1.84%
Forestry Farm Park & Zoo	\$3.14	5.04%
Golf Courses	\$4.07	6.53%
Gordon Howe Campground	\$0.59	0.94%
Indoor Rinks	\$2.89	4.64%
Leisure Centres - Program	\$12.89	20.68%
Leisure Centres Rentals	\$11.84	18.99%
Marketing Services	\$0.49	0.79%
Marr Residence	\$0.02	0.03%
Nutrien Playland	\$0.69	1.11%
Outdoor Pools	\$1.55	2.48%
Outdoor Sport Fields	\$1.64	2.64%
Parks Maintenance & Design	\$18.01	28.90%
Playground & Recreation Areas	\$1.08	1.72%
Program Research & Design	\$0.25	0.40%
River Landing	\$0.95	1.52%
Spectator Ballfields	\$0.16	0.26%
Targeted Programming	\$0.63	1.01%
Recreation and Culture Business Line	\$62.34	100.00%

Another way to look at this information is by Budget Category. As seen below approximately 81% of total expenditures in the Recreation and Culture Business Line are for the following: Wages and Benefits (40.41%) and Contracted and General Services (40.31%).

Budget Category	2023 Budget (in millions)	% of Overall Expenses
Wages & Benefits	\$25.19	40.41%
Contracted & General Services	\$25.13	40.31%
Utilities	\$8.16	13.09%
Materials Goods & Supplies	\$2.01	3.22%
Donations, Grants & Subsidies	\$0.09	0.14%
Finance Charges	\$0.38	0.61%
Transfers to Reserve/Capital	\$4.27	6.85%
Transfer to other operating	(\$0.78)	(1.25%)
Cost Recoveries	(\$2.11)	(3.38%)
Recreation and Culture Business Line	\$62.34	100.00%

A couple of additional key observations are:

- 40% of the expenditures in this Business Line are for Wages & Benefits (349.03 FTEs). The Service Lines with the largest staffing levels are as follows:

- 37% of all wages and benefits for 135.43 FTEs is for the Parks Maintenance & Design Service Line, which provides maintenance to over 2,150 hectares of horticultural and turf assets including parks, sport fields, and public open spaces, along with overseeing the design and construction of public parks.
- 30% of all wages and benefits for 99.26 FTEs are for the two Leisure Centres Service Lines, which provides program and rental opportunities in recreation, aquatics, fitness and wellness and life skills at six indoor leisure centres and the Terry Fox Track.
- 9% of all wages and benefits for 32.43 FTEs are staffing for the non-mill rate sites, specifically Golf Courses, Gordon Howe Campground, Nutrien Playland and River Landing.
- 56% of all Contracted & General Services are for the Recreation and Culture Business Line are for the two Leisure Centres Service Lines. The major components are:
 - \$6.7 million for the facilities cross charge which includes the CBCM Reserve contribution, maintenance, and custodial services.
 - \$5.5 million is internal rental charges. This is an allocation of costs to the Leisure Centre – Programs Service Line to allow for full costing of program services; this is offset as internal revenue under the Leisure Centre – Rentals Service Line.
 - The other significant expenditure categories include contract instructors, advertising, administrative services charge, insurance, equipment maintenance, banking fees.
 - 14% of Contracted & General Services are for the Parks Maintenance & Design Service Line. These expenditures include such items as contracted maintenance services, equipment maintenance, vehicle rental, an allocation of administrative costs and landfill tipping fees.
- 77% of all Transfers to Reserve/Capital are for investment in capital assets and include transfers to the Parks Infrastructure Reserve, Recreation, Sport, Culture & Parks Partnership Reserve, Park Enhancement Reserve, Forestry Farm Park & Zoo Reserves, and the Golf Course Reserves. 24% of the transfer to Reserve/Capital are provisions for the replacement and maintenance of existing assets.

Overall, since 2018, the expenditures in the Recreation and Culture Business Line have grown by 16.18% over the past five years or an average of 3.24% per year. For context, Saskatoon's population growth ([Per Stats Canada Table 17-10-0142-01](#)) plus Consumer Price Index Inflation ([Per Stats Canada Table 18-10-0005-01](#)) over this same period was 26.69% or 5.34% per year.

The service lines that have seen the largest expenditure growth over the past five years (greater than 25%) include:

- 161% in Community Partnerships from 2018 to 2023 is primarily due to:
 - An Increase in the contributions to the Recreation, Sport, Culture & Parks Partnership Reserve over the last five years. This annual contribution now totals \$500,000 and provides a funding source for partnership opportunities for recreation, sport, culture, and parks projects.
 - An increase of 1.0 FTE for an Open Space Consultant position that was transferred from capital to operating. This position works with organizations that wish to partner with the City in the delivery of recreation and parks facilities and amenities.
- 42% in Outdoor Sports Fields from 2018 to 2023 is primarily due to:
 - Increases in the contribution to the CBCM reserve along with increased operating costs for the extensive upgrades at the Gordie Howe Sports Complex for a total increase of \$355,000.
 - Increased expenditures for both shale maintenance which is needed for improving infield quality and increases in the costs to maintain certain charge fields at above basic service levels for a total increase of \$79,900.
 - Also included was a \$100,000 increase in the transfer to the Park Enhancement Reserve, which was a reallocation of an existing reserve contribution.
- 27% in Parks Maintenance & Design from 2018 to 2023 is primarily due to:
 - Increases to maintain 123.41 hectares of horticultural and turf assets added over the last five years and an approved service level increase for berm mowing for a total increase of \$1,120,300.
 - Increases to the Parks Infrastructure Reserve of \$950,000 in support of the Building Better Parks Asset Management initiative, along with regular CPI increases totaling \$100,500, bringing the annual contribution to \$2,018,800 in 2023.
 - Increases in utility rates, primarily for water, of \$594,600.
- 25% in Playground & Recreation Areas is primarily due to:
 - Increased staffing cost of \$39,900 for playgrounds that began operating in new neighbourhood in 2019.
 - In 2020, both school divisions began charging for use of the schools as part of the Master Joint Use Agreement, requiring a \$50,000 increase.

Service Level Overview

Service levels are a key driver for the City's expenditure requirements. The following section provides an overview of key service levels for each.

Community Partnerships		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Special Events	Event Booking of Public Space	In person or by phone: Monday to Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm. On-line application forms, submission and support materials.
	Event Monitoring	As required, both pre and post event in the field staff support. Post event evaluation.
Forestry Farm Park & Zoo		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Customer Service	Admissions	Open daily from April 1 to October 31.
	Parking	Available daily during operating season for a fee.
Recreation Facilities	Rentals	Lions Events Pavilion available daily for rental from May through September.
	Exhibits	Numerous and variety of animal exhibits.
	Playground	Accessible playground facility.
	Support Services	Food and beverage, washrooms, stroller rentals, and other related services.
Golf Courses		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Maintenance	Fertilizer and Chemical	Applied as needed based on evaluation of turfgrass conditions.
	Aeration	2-3 times per season.
	Mowing and Turfgrass care	Daily throughout season to maintain playing conditions.
	Over seeding	As required to maintain playing conditions.
	Irrigation	Daily throughout operating season to maintain playing conditions.
	Tree Maintenance	Annually and pruning as required for tree health and safety.
Customer Service	Golf support services and food and beverage	Provided daily throughout operating season.
Gordon Howe Campground		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Customer Service	Accessibility	On-line reservation and payment functionality.
	On-site services	Campground Manager available 24 hours/day for the whole season.
		Admin. Office & support staff open 8am-10pm daily during season.
		Laundry available on site. Free washrooms & showers. Site comes with BBQ pits & picnic tables.
	Playground area, green space. Leashed dogs welcome.	

Facility Maintenance	Green maintenance	Tree pruning as required for patron/property safety and maintenance.
	Sewer	On-site DIY sewer dump and trailer (RV) sewer pumping service available for a fee, by request.
Indoor Rinks		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Accessibility	Change Rooms	Multiple rooms, washrooms and shower facilities.
Customer Service	Support Services	Food and beverage services, either vending or concession.
	Allocations	In person or by phone: Monday to Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm.
Facility Maintenance	Ice Maintenance	Weekly ice maintenance including edging, ice planning and building up trouble spots.
		Ice flooded multiple times daily during operating season determined by usage.
	Cleaning	Multiple times daily based on usage.
Leisure Centres - Program		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Programming Opportunities at Leisure Centres	Unstructured Recreation Programs	Programs include: swimming programs, recreation and sport programs, fitness classes for all ages and abilities. Child minding is provided at some of the Leisure Centres to allow parents or guardians to participate in an activity.
	Structured Recreation Programs	Programs include: swimming lessons; preschool, children's, youth and adult recreation programs; specialized wellness/fitness programs; arts and cultural programs; family programs; training and certification. Registration for structured recreation programs is available online, over the phone and in-person on a seasonal basis.
	Facility Hours of Operation	Leisure Centre hours vary in different seasons, but are generally open from 6:00am to 10:00pm weekdays, hours are reduced on weekends and statutory holidays. Facilities are open 363 days per year.
Leisure Centres - Rentals		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Leisure Centres - Rentals	Customer Service	Rental requests can be made via various means such as in-person, over the phone and via email.
	Rental Spaces Available	Spaces include: meeting rooms, multi-purpose rooms, gymnasiums, pools, track, courts, wallyball court, theatre or entire buildings.
	Facility Hours of Operation	Leisure Centre hours vary in different seasons, but are generally open from 6:00am to 10:00pm weekdays, hours are reduced on weekends and statutory holidays. Facilities are open 363 days per year.

Nutrien Playland		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Recreational Facility	Rides: train ride, carousel, ferris wheel.	Rides open daily from Mother's Day (Mid-May) to September long weekend. Hours of operation: Opening day to June 30; 10am to 8pm (Sat, Sun and holidays); 2:30pm to 8pm (M-F) After June 30 hours 2:30pm to 8pm.
	Support Facilities	Washrooms and concession services.
	Play Areas	Free play area including: Water play area, sand play, climbing play including log climber, zip line all in natural play space.
Outdoor Pools		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
George Ward, Lathey, Mayfair and Riversdale Outdoor Pools	Unstructured Programs	Variety of drop in programs are offered at each facility from approximately 12:00pm to 8:00pm and include: public swim, family swim, lane swim, parent and tot swim, and aquafitness.
	Structured Programs	Swimming lessons are offered at each of the outdoor pools and are scheduled from approximately 9:00am to 1:00pm. Evening classes are also available from 6:00 to 8:00pm at George Ward Pool.
		The opening and closing dates for the outdoor pools are staggered and are open daily from approximately mid June to the end of August.
Outdoor Sports Fields		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Customer Service	Allocations	Daily Monday to Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm.
	Engagement	Twice a year meetings with key user groups and stakeholders.
Parks Maintenance & Design		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Grass Maintenance (Mowing and Trimming)	Mowing Season	mid-May until mid-September.
	Irrigated Parks	up to 18 times/season.
	Non-Irrigated Parks	9 times/season.
	Berm Areas	4 times/season.
	Roadway Ditches, center medians and other right-of-ways	4-5 times/season.
	Circle Drive	Fully mowed twice/season.
	Highway Connectors	Once per season.
	Areas not mowed	front boulevards, alleys, back lanes and slopes that exceed a 3:1 gradient.
Circle Drive	Litter Contract	Litter pick begins mid-April and typically takes 3-4 weeks to complete.

Irrigation	Park Systems	Application of 25 MM/week inclusive of precipitation from June 1 to Aug 31.
	Community Gardens	Water activation between May 15th and June 1st.
Shrub Beds	Tier 1 Shrub Beds	Serviced up to 8 times a season including park entrances, streetscapes, sign beds, facilities and riverbank areas.
	Tier 2 Shrub Beds	Serviced 4 times a season and includes park frontages, irrigated parks, boulevards and center medians.
	Tier 3 Shrub Beds	Serviced 1-2 times a season and includes bluffs, flankages, berms, right-of-ways and wetlands.
Litter and Waste Management	Receptacles	Waste collected a minimum of once a week beginning of May to mid October. Waste collected a minimum of once every three weeks mid October to end of April.
	Turf and Shrub Areas	Litter is picked up in conjunction with mowing and line trimming operations.
Snow Clearing	Snow Clearing	Cleared within 48 hours of snowfall ending.
Parks Design	Park Design	Design, review and consult park and open space projects, as well as all internal and external capital projects that impact park and open space.
Playground & Recreation Areas		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Weekday Program	Programs	Drop in water play, sports, crafts games for children ages 2-12 years.
	Number of Sites	48
	Program Period	First week in July to third week in August.
	Hours	Monday to Thursday 10:30am to 6:00pm, Friday 12:00pm to 4:30pm.
Weekend Program	Programs	Free drop in water play, sports, crafts games for children ages 2-12 years.
	Number of Sites	17
	Program Period	First week in July to third week in August.
	Hours	Saturday and Sunday 12:00pm to 5:00pm.
Program Research & Design		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Program Research	Research for Recreation and Community Development Department	Market research, brand ambassador for new programs.
	Program Evaluations	Customer service, programs.
Program Design	Program planning for Leisure Centres	Drop in & Registered programs (public swims, lane swim, weight rooms, track, swimming lessons).
	Program Planning for Outdoor Pools	Drop in & Registered programs (Public swims, lane swims, swimming lessons).

Spectator Ballfields		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
In Season Infield Grooming	Class 1 Fields	Checked and groomed daily.
	Class 2 Fields	5 x per week.
	Class 3 Fields	3 x per week.
Maintenance	Field Lining	Lines are painted twice per year, once in spring and again in late summer/early fall.
	Topdressing/ Overseeding	All charged fields are topdressed and overseeded in fall.
	Aeration/ Fertilization	Irrigated charged sport fields are fertilized 2 times per season and aerified 2 times per season. Re-seeded every four years.
	Mowing	Irrigated sport fields are mowed 18 times/season.
Targeted Programming		
Service	Sub-Service	2023 Service Level
Youth Centres	Number of Sites	8 sites
	Programs	Drop in sports, games for youth ages 12-16 years are provided at no cost to the participant.
	Operating Season	First week in July to mid-August.
	Hours of Operation	Monday to Thursday 11:30am to 7:00pm, Friday 1:30pm to 5:30pm (closed August stat).
Indigenous Programs	Direct Programming	Direct delivery of youth-aged youth centres in neighbourhoods with vulnerable populations from Oct to Dec and Jan to March. Program support to White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL). On average 5 Indigenous youth leadership programs and a summer van that promotes Indigenous culture in city parks in July and August.
Skateboard Program	Hours of Operation	Travelling Program to various sites, 7 weeks (early July to mid August), Monday to Thursday 11:30am to 7:00pm, Friday 1:30pm to 5:30pm (closed August 5).
Youth Programming	Youth Programming	During non-summer months, low cost/no cost programs are offered to youth by the city and community agencies. Approximately 10 programs are offered which provide sports, games and fun activities.

Pandemic Challenges

Supply chain issues and inflationary pressures are continuing, particularly for the supplies required by the Saskatoon Zoo operation along with some chemicals and supplies used by the Parks Department. High utility and fuel cost have added to the expenditure pressures felt by this Business Line.

All revenues experienced a decline in 2020 and have begun to recover. Most revenue sources are expected to achieve pre-pandemic levels by 2023, with the exception of Leisure Centre admissions and registrations. Budgeted revenues were decreased by \$1.067 million in 2023 to adjust the budget to attainable levels. There are moderate revenue increases anticipated for 2024 and 2025.

2024/2025 Pressures

While the Administration is still in the process of quantifying the exact pressures that this Business Line is expected to experience in 2024 and 2025, some of the known pressures today include:

- Revenue increases of \$601,300 in 2024 and \$749,700 in 2025 consists of the following:
 - Budgeted Leisure Centre revenues were decreased by \$1.067 million in 2023 to reflect the on-going impact of the pandemic on admissions and registrations. An increase in revenues of \$58,700 in 2024 and \$97,600 in 2025 is included as we begin to trend to pre-pandemic levels. The increases are primarily in registered programs.
 - Rate increases are proposed for Leisure Centre admissions, registrations, and rentals, Forestry Farm Park & Zoo admissions and rentals, Indoor Rinks, Outdoor Sport Fields and Outdoor Pools. The rate increases are expected to increase revenues by \$501,900 in 2024 and \$603,200 in 2025. The rate increase specifics will be outlined in reports to be considered during the 2024 2025 Business Plan and Budget deliberations.
 - Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo will operate a gift shop in 2024. Anticipated annual revenues are \$100,000 in 2024 with an additional \$25,000 in 2025.
 - The Urban Highway Connector program revenues are budgeted to increase by \$30,200 in 2024.
 - Other revenue changes include adjustments to volumes in the various service lines to reflect trends, with an upward trend established in 2025.
- Growth pressures of \$412,500 included in 2024 and \$317,800 in 2025 and are comprised of the following:
 - The Parks Maintenance and Design Service Line includes increases of \$295,600 in 2024 and \$250,400 in 2025 required to maintain the greenspace within the 18.87 hectares of new greenspace in 2024 and 16.98 new hectares in 2025. This includes the addition of 1.52 FTEs in 2024 and 1.84 FTEs in 2025.
 - Staffing increases:
 - An additional training day is required for new summer staff to fulfil corporate onboarding requirements. The Playground and Youth Centre programs have an additional 0.62 FTE (\$33,500) included in the budget, phased in over 2024 and 2025,
 - The Community Partnership Service Line includes an additional 0.28 FTE (\$15,400) in 2024 to provide support to outdoor special event organizers and address issues immediately, for events taking place Saturday evenings and Sundays between May 1st and September 30th.

The Forestry Farm Park and Zoo has included 0.6 FTE (\$48,000) for a Zookeeper in 2024 and 0.3 FTE (\$22,700) for a Maintenance Person in 2025. The positions are required to meet CAZA expectations with regards to animal care with the increase in the number and complexity of exhibits.

- The Forestry Farm Park and Zoo has additional growth increases of \$70,000 in 2024 and \$10,500 in 2025 for costs associated with operating the new gift shop, increased security, and the lease of two vehicles.
- Cosmo and Shaw Civic Centres have an increase in 2024 of \$54,300 for increased security. Also included is savings of \$50,000 with the reduction of promotional expenditures that are no longer contractually required. Outdoor Sports fields includes a \$40,000 reduction in the contribution to the Asphalt Reserve in 2024 with a \$20,000 increase in 2025. The parking lot project at Gordon Howe Sports Complex was not completed as originally planned with the full reserve contribution not required in 2024 and is being phased back in, in 2025 and 2026.
- The remainder of the increases totaling \$440,100 in 2024 and \$457,900 in 2025 relate to inflationary pressures such as utility and fuel rate changes, materials and feed expenses for the Zoo, fitness instructor rate increases, and the CPI increase to the Parks Infrastructure as stipulated under the Bylaw.
- Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre is expected to be closed to the public all of 2024 and most of 2025 while the facility undergoes a major renovation. The budget is being held at the 2023 levels so there will be no mill rate change during the closure period. In 2026 the budget will be updated to reflect any revenue and expenditure changes based the programming and operating costs of the renovated facility. During the time of closure, savings of \$1.5 million are expected for 2024 and \$1.1 million for 2025; savings are primarily from staffing and utilities, partially offset by reduced revenues. The savings will be subject to a recommendation in the year-end report and may be directed to fund the renovation capital project, major capital funding plan or another priority one-time need.

Additional 2024/2025 Pressures Not Included in the Budget Status Update

The Budget Status Update presented is Administration's estimate on the costs to maintain existing services when considering growth, inflation, and base budget adjustments. The previous section outlined some of the significant pressures included with that estimate, however, it is important to note there are additional pressures required to move towards achieving the City's Strategic Priorities, address growing service level expectations such as asset management funding gaps and respond to everchanging community needs, that were not included. These options will be

quantified and presented in a future report which will give City Council the option to discuss and potentially add these items to the 2024/2025 budget. For the purpose of this report a high-level contextual overview of some of these key pressures not included in the Budget Status Update can be seen below:

- \$250,000 per year increase in the contribution to the Recreation, Sport, Culture & Parks Partnership Reserve to support partnership opportunities for the redevelopment of existing and development of new recreation facilities. Increased contributions in 2024 and 2025 would raise the annual reserve contribution to \$1.0 million annually. Without these increases there may be missed opportunities for impact investing and access to some grants requiring matching funding.
- The Parks Irrigation budget is not sufficient for the hotter and dryer growing conditions that are becoming more typical. The cost to increase the budget for one additional watering day is \$68,000 in 2024 and \$71,400 in 2025. Without these increases there is a risk of potential loss of green assets that rely on irrigation water being provide during hot and dry environmental conditions, and over-spending of the water budget if watering needs become critical.
- The five indoor arenas presently use natural gas and propane powered ice resurfacers. To begin replacing these with electric ice resurfacers as they reach the end of their useful life would require an increase to the Leisure Services Equipment Replacement Reserve of \$8,000 in 2024 and \$7,600 in 2025 to ensure there are sufficient funds for the higher cost electric vehicles at the time of replacement. Without these increases, the conversion of the fleet to electric ice resurfacers would not be feasible without grant or other additional funding, reducing the City’s ability to realize reduced emissions and possible future operational savings once the fleet is fully converted.

Potential Options:

If all of the options presented in this report, along with the options previously presented in the [2024/2025 Budget Inflationary & Phase-in Decisions](#) report, were approved, it would reduce the Utilities Business Line by the following:

Recreation and Culture 2024/2025 Budget Options Impact		
	2024	2025
Options from the 2024/2025 Budget Inflationary & Phase-in Decisions Report	\$	\$
Recommended Options included in this report	\$334,700	\$264,200
Other Options included in this report	\$2,161,200	\$47,700
Total Options*	\$2,495,900	\$ 311,900

*Many of the options presented range in values and/or are dependent on other decisions in the report, therefore the total is a high-level estimate of the options presented with the exception of Option 14 which is not included in the total.

An overview of all recommended options as well as options that could further reduce the funding gap are provided below.

Recommended Options

Option 1 - Reduce Budget for Program Research and Design

This option involves the reduction in the Program Research and Design budget by \$50,000, approximately 20% of the total budget. This option is the elimination of the funding support for research projects, surveys, and emerging markets research. If approved, the team would rely on research data available second hand thru partners, other municipalities, membership organizations, and or freely accessible data through internal research. Specific research projects utilizing external resources with a Saskatoon focus would be eliminated. The negative impact is the loss of the ability to contract subject matter experts to research specific topics related directly to City operations to support evidence-based decision making.

Option 2 -Deferral of New Property Tax Funded Positions

This option would include the deferral of the following two positions included in the preliminary 2024 and 2025 budget forecasts.

2.a – Defer Playground & Youth Centre Training FTE Requirements

Additional training days are required for new summer staff to fulfil corporate onboarding requirements. The Playground and Youth Centre programs have an additional 0.62 FTE (\$33,500) included in the budget, phased in over 2024 and 2025. Deferral of the increase to FTEs would then require training to be conducted inside existing budgeted resources, resulting in a decreased number of operating days for the programs, estimated at 2 less days or 4% of the operating season, to address the time needed to complete corporate onboarding and mandatory training for summer staff.

2.b – Defer Outdoor Special Event Organizer FTE's

The Community Partnership Service Line includes an additional 0.28 FTE (\$15,400) in 2024 to provide support to outdoor special event organizers and address issues immediately, for events taking place Saturday evenings and Sundays between May 1 and September 30. Deferral of this position would mean no resources would be in place to address issues arising at outdoor special events taking place on weekends. Issues would then be addressed, if possible, the next business day. The Administration would explore options to utilize existing summer recreational staff to provide some level of support to outdoor special events that would have a minimal impact on other service delivery.

Option 3 – Redirect \$250,000 of one-time savings from Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre Closure in 2024 and 2025.

An option would be to direct a portion of the savings from Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre closure to offset the mill rate support required for this service line until 2026. Due to the large capital renovation project of the Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre resulting in the facility being closed for all of 2024 and a portion of 2025, the mill rate savings as a result could be directed to offset the funding gap for 2024 and 2025. The projected savings for 2024 is \$1.5M and for the portion of 2025 is \$1.1M. The Administration is recommending \$250,000 in 2024 and \$250,000 in 2025 from the projected savings be directed to offset

the funding gap, which approximates the amount that Leisure Centre revenues are expected to recover by 2026. This represents one time savings and mill rate support would resume when the facility reopens late 2025 and fully in 2026.

Options that Could Further Reduce the Funding Gap

Option 4 - Reduce Operating Hours/Days of Indoor Leisure Centers

An option is to reduce the operating hours and/or operational days of the Indoor Leisure Centers. Potential options to reduce the costs associated with this service line and the projected associated savings net of revenue include:

4.a - Close all Indoor Leisure Centers on Statutory Holidays between April and September.

Estimated staff savings for this option, net of revenue is \$30,000 plus additional savings identified by the Facilities Management Department of \$111,000, totaling \$141,000.

4.b - Close all Indoor Leisure Centers on all Statutory Holidays.

Estimated staff savings for this option, net of revenue is \$65,000 plus additional savings identified by the Facilities Management Department of \$175,000, totaling \$240,000.

4.c - Reduce the Operating Hours of all Indoor Leisure Centres by One hour per day.

Estimated savings for this option, net of revenue is \$296,000. No significant savings identified by the Facilities Management Department for this option.

4.d - Close One or More Leisure Centres for the Months of June, July and August.

The Leisure Centres that have the lowest overall admissions and programs during the summer months, are Cosmo Civic Centre, Lawson Civic Centre and Saskatoon Field House.

- i) Estimated savings for closing Cosmo Civic Centre, net of revenue is \$84,000 plus additional savings identified by the Facilities Department of \$14,000, totaling \$98,000. There would be costs incurred to maintain building access for the library and access to and maintenance of the washrooms.
- ii) Estimated savings for closing Lawson Civic Centre, net of revenue is \$175,000 plus additional savings identified by the Facilities Management Department of \$111,700, totaling \$286,700. There would be costs incurred to maintain building access for the library and access to and maintenance of the washrooms.
- iii) Estimated savings for closing the Saskatoon Field House, net of revenue is \$58,000 plus additional savings identified by the Facilities Management Department of \$45,000, totaling \$103,000. This option assumes the lease spaces would be maintained and access limited to that usage.

The estimated savings include the impact to lost revenue and reduction in costs incurred by the Facilities Management Department in maintaining these facilities. The primary negative consequence associated with the proposed reduction of service levels would include reduced access to recreational opportunities for residents, potential loss

of patronage, and overall community quality of life related to physical and mental well-being.

Option 5 - Reduce Operating Hours and/or Operating Days at Outdoor Pools

The current budget supports an operating season for the four Outdoor Pools from early to mid-June to the end of August, with a cumulative total of 300 operating days. Options to reduce the costs associated with this service line and the projected associated savings net of revenue include:

5.a - Reduce the Total Operating Hours by One Hour per day

This option would result in savings of \$28,000. This is comprised primarily of staff costs as utility costs would remain relatively consistent as total days of operation would be unchanged. No significant savings identified by Facilities Management Department, with this option.

5.b - Reduce the Total Number of Operating Days by Operating Only in July and August. A reduction of approximately 75 total days between the four pools or 25% of the current operating season. Savings would include both wages and utilities and estimated at \$102,600, net of revenue. Additional savings identified by the Facilities Management Department of \$14,000, totaling \$116,600.

5.c – Do Not Operate Two Outdoor Pools in June,

Operating one of Lathey and Mayfair in June equates to a reduction of approximately 40 total days from the current operating season or 13%. Savings would include both wages and utilities. Estimated savings for this option, net of revenue is \$39,200 plus additional savings identified by the Facilities Management Department of \$7,000, totaling \$46,200.

The primary negative consequence associated with the proposed reduction of service levels would include reduced access the outdoor recreational aquatic opportunities for residents, summer cool down options for low cost, and overall community quality of life related to physical and mental well-being.

Option 6 Increase the Daily Admission Rates at Outdoor Pools to the Same Level as Indoor Leisure Centers.

Assuming no reduction in the number of admissions, the 10% rate increase would potentially generate an additional \$27,000 in 2024.

The potential negative consequences associated with a significant additional rate increase could include reduced admission volumes and/or registrations and corresponding reduction in revenues due to the pricing structure being less competitive with other recreational service providers and program options.

Option 7 – Reduce Summer Playground and Recreation Programs

The majority cost associated with the Summer Playground and Recreation Programs is wages for the summer staff delivering the program. The Program includes 30 paddling pools with play programs and 23 spray pads with 17 spray pad locations offering play programs. Options to reduce the costs associated with this service line and the projected associated savings include:

7.a - Do not offer Supervised Play Programs at the 17 Spray Pad Locations.

Supervised play would continue at all paddling pool locations as staff are required to be on site to operate the pool. This option would save an estimated \$282,500 in staff costs, while continuing to maintain access to water play throughout the city. The negative impact is reduced offering for children to engage in no-cost supervised recreational activities. In addition, the washroom facilities at the spray pad locations would not be accessible with staff no longer on site. Facilities Management Department has determined that the transfer of the duties to Facilities Management to ensure the washrooms in these recreation units stay open is not feasible and not safe as these recreational units are not stand-alone washroom facilities. The cost to maintain washroom access would significantly offset any savings.

7.b – Eliminate the Weekend Paddling Pool Operations –

This option would result in the 17 spray pads being the only self-directed water play available on weekends. This option would save an estimated \$101,400 in staff costs while offering a reduced access to water play and supervised play program throughout the city. This reduces the number of no-cost supervised recreational activities. Facilities Management Department has determined that the transfer of the duties to Facilities Management to ensure the washrooms in these recreation units stay open is not feasible and not safe as these recreational units are not stand-alone washroom facilities.

7.c - Continue to Offer the Weekday Paddling Pool and Spray Pad Play Program and Reduce the Weekend Program by 50% to the Sites Based on Historical Attendance, Equity Analysis and Geographic Considerations.

All spray pads would continue to be available for self-directed operations. This option would save an estimated \$44,200 in staff costs while continuing to maintain access to water play and supervised play program throughout the city.

The primary negative consequence associated with the proposed reduction of service levels would include reduced access to no-cost recreational opportunities for children and youth.

Option 8 – Reduce Targeted Youth Programming Options

The primary cost associated with this service line is staff costs and the savings identified is in wages. Options to reduce the costs associated with this service line and the projected associated savings include:

8.a - Reducing Youth Centre Programs

This option would reduce the hours per day or eliminate one day of the week or reduce the number of sites delivering programs. Savings could range from \$28,300 to \$40,700 depending on the options selected.

8.b - Eliminate the Skateboard Program, Travelling Sports Van Program, and Arts Centre Program

This option would result in reduced costs of approximately \$48,700.

The primary negative consequence associated with the proposed options and reduction of service levels is reduced access to no-cost recreational opportunities for indigenous and vulnerable sector children and youth.

Option 9 - Reduce Public Skating

An option is to reduce the total number of hours of public skating offered annually by a combination of reducing the number of times per week and/or the length of the operating season. A 15% reduction in the total number of hours of Public Skating net of revenue is estimated to produce savings of \$15,000. The primary negative consequence associated with the proposed options and reduction of service levels would include reduced access to low-cost recreational opportunities for residents and access to indoor winter recreational activities.

Option 10 – Deferral of New Property Tax Funded Positions at Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo (SFFPZoo)

This option would include the deferral of the recommended positions included in the preliminary budget forecasts. SFFPZoo has included 0.6 FTE (\$48,000) for a Zookeeper in 2024 and 0.3 FTE (\$22,700) for a Maintenance Person in 2025. The positions are required to meet Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) expectations with regards to animal care with the increase in the number and complexity of exhibits. Deferral of these positions would jeopardize the ability of the SFFPZoo to continue to meet CAZA standards for animal care, and future accreditation, and would result in reducing the number of animals at the facility to manage inside existing resources, reducing the attractiveness of the facility to visitors. The maintenance person resource is needed to support the number of and complexity of rentals at the SFFPZoo that drive revenues. Without this resource, the SFFPZoo may not be able to accommodate rental requests and as a result, reduce revenue opportunities.

Option 11 – Implement a \$1.00 Service Charge for on On-line registrations.

The average number of on-line registrations is 11,500 so a \$1.00 service charge would potentially generate an additional \$11,500 in revenue to offset service charges and fees to provide on-line registration services.

Option 12 - Reduction of Parks Maintenance Service Levels

This option involves realizing cost savings by reducing some park maintenance service levels. Service level reductions and corresponding savings are as follows:

12.a - Reducing the Trimming component of grass maintenance service levels by 50%.

This option would be applied to all park areas and would have an aesthetic impact of longer grass length around trimming areas such as light posts, park bollards, fence lines etc. Salary and equipment reductions associated with this service level adjustment would result in a savings of \$200,000.

12.b - Elimination of Cross-Country Skiing Trail Setting Service.

Parks provides trail setting service to 15 km of cross-country ski routes from November 15 to March 15 in Forest Grove, Diefenbaker, Kinsmen and Meewasin Parks and an additional 8 trails for Community Associations in the Hudson Bay, North Park, River Heights, Silverwood, Brevoort Park, Stonebridge, South Nutana Park and Varsity View neighbourhoods. This option would see the elimination of the trail setting service that is applied Monday to Friday as appropriate throughout the ski season. Salary and equipment reductions would result in a savings of \$32,000 per year. This reduction would result in fewer cross country ski options for residents during the winter season. Trails provided by the Saskatoon Optimist Club at Wildwood and Holiday Parks Golf Courses and Gordie Howe Sports Complex would remain and not be impacted by this service level reduction.

12.c - Elimination of Side Flankage/boulevard Mowing Service

Parks Department provide maintenance services including mowing and trimming to side flankages/boulevards twice a season. In a 2017 budget report the City's flankage inventory in residential neighbourhoods was estimated to be approximately 175 hectares, of which Parks is servicing approximately 10% up to two times per growing season primarily in the older neighborhoods, with relatively large flankage areas. The risk associated with a service level reduction to the side flankage mowing service would be a potential increase in the number of unkempt flankage areas. A bylaw similar to sidewalk snow clearing that codifies property owners' responsibility to maintain vegetation in the flankage and boulevard areas could reduce this risk. Salary and equipment reductions would result in an annual savings of \$60,000, however if the wish of City Council was to implement a by-law that would require property owners to maintain the vegetation adjacent to their property then we would have to confirm the jurisdiction to do so and present more fulsome options for the consideration of City Council and it is estimated that the reduction would be offset by costs to implement any such by-law of \$25,000 and a further \$25,000 to properly fund the ongoing monitoring and compliance with any such by-law requirements.

Option 13 – Deferral of New Property Tax Funded Parks Positions

This option would include the deferral of the recommended positions included in the preliminary budget forecasts.

There are 1.52 FTEs in 2024 and 1.84 FTEs in 2025 (total 3.36 FTE) required to support the application of park maintenance services to areas of new park and open space inventory. In 2024, 18.87 hectares of new green spaces located primarily in the core parks in Brighton and Kensington neighbourhoods will be added to inventories and in 2025, 16.98 hectares of new green spaces located primarily in a Secondary Core

Park in Rosewood, several Linear Parks in Aspen Ridge and a District Park in Brighton. Deferral of the recommended 3.36 FTEs would result in salary savings of \$197,100. Incremental service level reductions would result as existing FTEs expand their areas of maintenance service to include the additional 35.85 hectares of green space inventory potentially resulting in an increased:

- number of weeds and deadwood in shrub beds,
- number of irrigation systems not operating while waiting for maintenance,
- occurrence of overfull waste receptacles, and;
- amount of long grass around trees, posts, signs, fence lines, etc.

Option 14 – Further Increase to Rates and Fees

The preliminary 2024-2025 budget includes rates and fee increases to address rising costs and mitigate the mill rate supports required while considering all these factors. This includes an increase to rates and fees for Leisure Centre admissions, registrations, and rentals, Forestry Farm Park & Zoo admissions and rentals, Indoor Rinks, Outdoor Sport Fields, and Outdoor Pools. Rate increases are expected to increase revenues by \$501,900 in 2024 and \$603,200 in 2025. The revenue generated in this business line is designed to help offset the impact to mill rate support required to deliver and maintain existing services when considering growth and inflation.

Committee could direct Administration to explore additional increases to the rates and fees. This would require additional work to determine the potential additional revenues. The potential negative consequences associated with a significant additional rate increase could include reduced volumes and corresponding reduction in revenues due to the pricing structure being less competitive with other recreational service providers and program options.