

Phased Approach to Guide Format and Distribution Changes

Based on the research findings and to mitigate the risk of negative impacts on program participation and revenues, the Administration has identified a phased approach to reducing the size and distribution of the printed Leisure Guide (Guide) as outlined below.

1. Condense Pages and Increase Online Promotions (Winter 2018 to Fall 2019)

Overall, there was strong support (74%) to reduce the number of pages of the Guide and provide more details online. The City's drop-in schedules are more conducive to viewing online as they are updated in real-time and are searchable by facility, program name, instructor, week, day, and/or time. As a result, the Administration will be enhancing promotions of Drop-in Online and removing drop-in schedules from the printed Guide, starting in Winter 2018. This change will reduce each Guide by approximately 10 pages.

2. Engage Community Associations (Fall 2018 to Summer 2019)

Most residents find information about their own Community Association programs through Community Association newsletters (53%), social media (25%), and word of mouth (24%); however, those that register for other Community Association programs (33%) find the information using both the Guide (46%) and through word of mouth (45%). When presented conceptual layout options, most focus group respondents were not interested in the detailed Community Association listings and preferred the simplicity and efficiency of the shorted, modified version of the pages. It is important to note that 53% of Community Associations surveyed oppose a condensed printed version with more details available online. While the research suggests a condensed version of the Community Association section is preferred by residents, the Administration recognizes the need to engage the Community Associations before changes to the printed Guide occur. Engagement will begin in the Fall to explore options for reducing detailed program listings down to basic listing information in the Guide while continuing to support detailed program listing online. Discussions will include content layout, transition plans, and preparations to enhance digital content.

3. Online Enhancements and Increase Promotions (Fall 2018 to Winter 2019)

Although the printed Guide is the main source of information about recreational activities for residents (57%), they also reference saskatoon.ca (38%) and the online Guide (33%). Usage of the online Guide is more prevalent among millennials. Gen-Xers and families with children younger than 18 mentioned they would use the online Guide more often if they were made aware of it or if the online interface was more user-friendly. Based on these findings, the Administration will work to enhance the online experience for Guide information by Winter 2019. The intent is to develop a central, one-stop-shop access to the existing suite of online services and program information available.

User-experience testing will be incorporated to ensure digital information meets residents' needs. Once the online experience has been improved, the Administration will increase promotions throughout 2020 in an effort to generate awareness and convert more residents to the online Guide.

4. Condense Community Association Pages (Fall and Winter 2019)

Based on the input from Community Association stakeholders, the Administration anticipates condensing the Community Association content to basic listing information (i.e. name, contact information, registration dates/times, and program highlights) in the Guide by Fall 2019. This change will reduce the Fall and Winter Guides by approximately 10 to 15 pages. This will also allow the City to better meet the needs of Community Associations by extending the timeline to submit program information for online promotion, allowing the volunteer-based staff more time for planning.

5. Awareness Campaign (Spring 2020 to Spring 2021)

To reduce the risk of a negative impact on program participation and revenues, it is important to develop an effective awareness campaign to educate all those impacted in the community of changes and necessary correlating behaviour shifts, such as transition from print to online information and pick-up only distribution. The awareness campaign will be implemented throughout 2020 and 2021, and included in each edition to reach people who read the Guide in different seasons.

A key finding of the focus group research is that the printed Guide acts as a trigger for registration, especially for households with children under the age of 18. It is essential that replacement triggers are developed, such as strategic and timely seasonal promotions, a dedicated Leisure Guide Service Alert currently in development, and an enewsletter which will be launched to 6,100 consenting customers later this year.

6. Eliminate Home Delivery (Spring 2021)

With the phased approach completed and awareness campaign and triggers in place, the Administration is confident that residents and community stakeholders will be able to successfully transition to pick-up and digital information sources. As a result, the distribution of the printed Guide will be reduced to pick-up only locations, such as Leisure Centres, libraries, and newcomer centres, by Spring/Summer 2021.