



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2017152

DATE : Wednesday, August 23, 2017

RE: Amherst No Fee Youth Ice Project Extended For 2017-18

Amherst, Nova Scotia – The Town of Amherst is pleased to continue the NO Fee Youth Ice Rental Pilot Project into the 2017-18 ice season. Believed to be the first initiative of its kind in Nova Scotia, the project aims to increase participation, physical activity and affordability in youth programs such as Figure Skating, Minor Hockey and Public Skating by reducing barriers through reduced registration and user fees.

All organizations who qualify for the No Fee Youth Ice Project must pass the savings of no fee ice directly to participants through lower registration costs. Based on the first year of the pilot project, individual participant savings ranged from \$75-350 depending on the program.

“We’re pleased to extend this pilot project continuing our commitment to the Amherst Recreation Master Plan, the Municipal Activity Strategy and, in particular, helping Amherst in its journey to be the most active, healthy community in Nova Scotia,” said Amherst Mayor David Kogon. “In addition to providing more accessible programming to youth, the pilot has also created economic spin-offs for our community; increasing activity at the Stadium, which in turn leads to increased visits to the town and out-of-town guests looking for lodging, retail and dining outlets.”

Based on the regular programs provided for the model, the projected savings for user groups is estimated to be \$60,000 including savings of \$40,000 for the Cumberland County Minor Hockey (CCMH) Association and \$18,000 for the Amherst Skating Club, which are passed directly to participants through lower fees at the time of registration. Additionally, with no user fees charged for public skating, Stadium staff saw a 35-40% increase in public skating during the first year of the pilot.



The general public also benefited through the organizations who qualify for No Fee Youth Ice as admission cost to all games, competitions and events supported by the project are not permitted.

The evaluation of the project is ongoing. Through extending the No Fee Youth Ice pilot to 2017-18 it allows for continued data collection and a more accurate sample size spread over two seasons. Members of the evaluation committee from across the province representing Nova Scotia Community Culture and Heritage, Sport Nova Scotia, Health and Wellness Nova Scotia and other stakeholders are working with the evaluation project lead, Dalhousie University Applied Research team to determine the pilot's impact and its potential. Evaluation methods will include but are not limited to participant and community surveys, and focus groups.

Amherst Skating Club and Cumberland County Minor Hockey Association have been approved for No Fee Youth Ice for regular programming which will be included in their respective program registration fee. Participant savings will be announced at the time of registrations. More information on the No Fee Youth Ice Pilot is available by calling 902-667-6504 or emailing amherstrecreation@amherst.ca

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