



Allocation Policy Framework

Updated July 2023



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Abbotsford is developing a new Allocation Policy that will guide how the City allocates parks and facilities to community organizations that book these spaces. To inform the Policy, an engagement process was undertaken with the public, user groups and stakeholders and further supplemented by additional research into trends, leading practices and other community population and growth indicators that may impact future space needs. The findings from the engagement and research are available under separate cover in the Research Summary Background Report.

As a starting point and foundation for the Policy, this Allocation Policy Framework document was developed to outline and suggest a new process for allocating parks and facilities. The Framework includes the following Draft Policy Statement and Draft Guiding Principles.

DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Abbotsford will allocate parks and facilities to align the right activities with the right spaces in order to maximize user experience and make the most effective use of parks, recreation and culture infrastructure. The City values equitable access by all residents and having fair and transparent processes that promote the greatest public good. Abbotsford parks and facilities are first and foremost for the benefit of Abbotsford residents.

DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Activity Alignment
- Equity
- Accessibility
- Space Efficiency
- Clarity
- Collaboration
- Adaptability

The new process outlined by the Framework is based around five steps that will ensure allocation occurs in a manner that is aligned with the Draft Policy Statement and Draft Guiding Principles. The graphic below summarizes the suggested new allocation process which is further explained and detailed in this Framework document.

Development and implementation of the new Policy will require a number of next steps which include consideration and validation of the approach outlined in this Framework document, practically testing the impacts of implementing the new allocations approach, developing the supporting tools and administrative processes, and public and stakeholder review.

THE SPACE ALLOCATION PROCESS

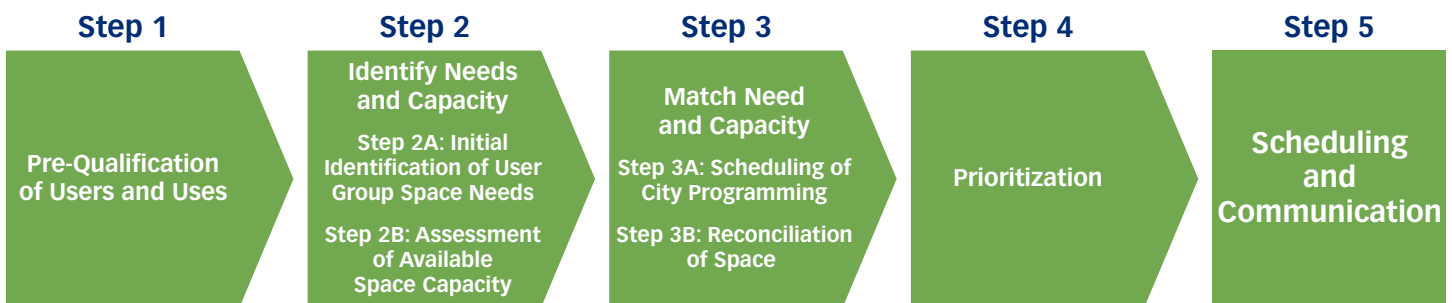


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

1. Objective of the Policy Framework	1
2. Draft Policy Statement and Guiding Principles	1
3. A Draft Framework for Space Allocation	3
4. Next Steps	9





1. OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

This Policy Framework document provides a foundation for the development of the Allocation Policy and is intended to outline a recommended approach for the allocation of City parks and facilities. Achieving agreement on the overarching approach to space allocation will enable further refinement of logistics, supporting tools, and other finer procedures and details.

2. DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A draft Policy Statement and draft Guiding Principles have been developed to reflect key philosophical values that will guide how the City allocates space. The draft Policy Statement and Guiding Principles have been developed to align with, and reflect the spirit of, the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) "Abbotsforward" and the 2018 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (which includes its own set of Guiding Principles for the overall delivery of parks, recreation and culture opportunities). Given the interconnection between space allocation and rates and fees, the Allocation Policy has also been developed to align with the 2021 Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy Framework.

Draft Policy Statement

The City of Abbotsford will allocate parks and facilities to align the right activities with the right spaces in order to maximize user experience and make the most effective use of parks, recreation and culture infrastructure. The City values equitable access by all residents and having fair and transparent processes that promote the greatest public good. Abbotsford parks and facilities are first and foremost for the benefit of Abbotsford residents.



Draft Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle	Description & Rationale
Activity Alignment	<p>Different user groups have different space needs. When applicable, the Allocation Policy will utilize activity standards (also referred to as Standards of Play) based on leading practices to best ensure groups are provided with the appropriate amount of time in spaces that best fit activity needs.</p> <p>The Allocation Policy will aim to equitably align groups with space based on activity needs.</p>
Equity	<p>Public parks, recreation and culture services are meant to be accessible to all people regardless of income level, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age. Public parks, recreation and culture services and programs including the maintenance, safety, and accessibility of parks and facilities, need to be provided on an equitable basis to all community members.</p>
Accessibility	<p>City programs value inclusion and strive to welcome and support all people to participate.</p>
Space Efficiency	<p>Recognizing that significant resources are required to develop and operate facilities, the City will ensure that existing space capacity is effectively utilized. The Allocation Policy will also help ensure future facility planning is based on a true understanding of supply and capacity.</p>
Clarity	<p>The creation of an Allocation Policy provides the opportunity to maximize clarity and transparency in how space is allocated.</p>
Collaboration	<p>The City of Abbotsford provides parks, recreation and culture facilities because they provide a public benefit. As such, optimizing how these spaces are used will need to be a shared responsibility between the City and user groups.</p>
Adaptability	<p>Recognizing that trends and space needs are continuously evolving, the Allocation Policy needs to be adaptable and able to react to the fluidity of parks, recreation and culture programs and activities.</p>



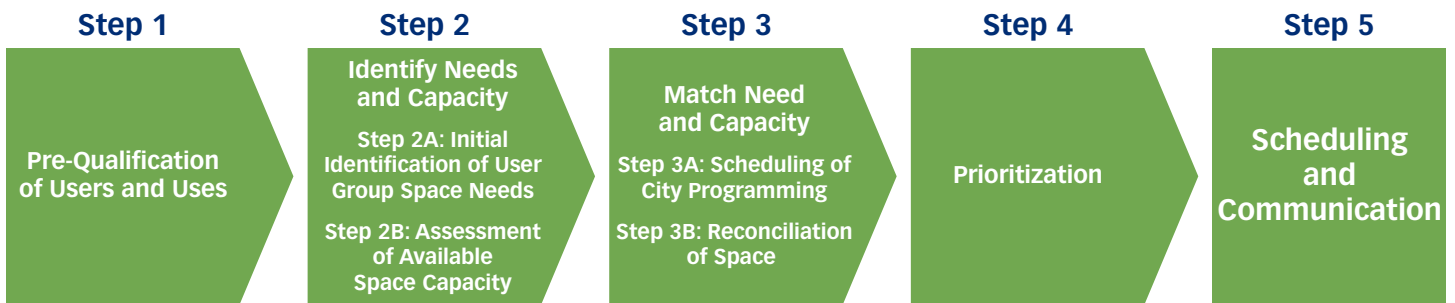
3. A DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR SPACE ALLOCATION

The draft Framework for Space Allocation is based around five steps as illustrated by the following graphic. At a fundamental level, these steps will ensure that space assignment to community organizations is based on clear standards and prioritized based on making the most optimal and beneficial use of City parks and facilities in delivering public good.

Public Good:

The indirect benefit that accrues to all citizens from which they cannot escape. It is independent of how much direct benefit one receives from using a public service.

THE SPACE ALLOCATION PROCESS



An overview of each step is outlined below. As previously noted, the key elements, logistics, and supporting tools associated with each step will require further development as the Policy is developed.

STEP 1: PRE-QUALIFICATION

The City will develop a user-friendly verification program for user groups that ensures groups that proceed through the allocation process meet a set of minimum requirements, including:

- Alignment with the Allocation Policy Guiding Principles (e.g. programming is provided in a manner that is socially, physically, and financial inclusive in alignment with the principles of accessibility and equity);
- Alignment with the Benefit Based Approach as outlined in the Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy Framework;
- Alignment with Abbotsford proposed residency requirements (Priority for space will be given to groups where 75% of participants / members are city residents (with some flexibility to ensure accessibility and inclusion for new and emerging groups));
- Alignment with best practices in participant safety and risk mitigation (e.g. coach / instructor certification standards, criminal record checks for groups delivering programs to minors and/or vulnerable populations, etc.); and
- For groups that have booked space in the past; demonstrated alignment with the spirit of the bookings and allocation process (e.g. user group has paid fees on-time in the past, made appropriate and efficient use of assigned space, and demonstrated respect to other user groups and City staff).

Determination of the types of activity use (e.g. public event, commercial use, etc.) should also occur as part of this step in alignment with the Benefits Based Approach and categories used in the Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy (see call-out at right). It will also be important for the City to ensure that this step occurs in a manner that is easy and convenient for user groups.

Types of Uses Outlined in the Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy

1. *Drop-In*
2. *Program*
3. *Rental*

Types of Activity Use Outlined in the Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy

1. *Public Event*
2. *Regular Activity*
3. *Tournament*
4. *Fundraising Event*
5. *Commercial Use*
6. *Private Event*

Types of Participating Groups Outlined in the Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy

1. *Non-profit organizations (minor/senior and adult)*
2. *Private/Commercial*

STEP 2: IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND CAPACITY

Step 2 identifies user group need (2A) and the capacity of the facility inventory (2B). Activities requiring specific facilities for an activity-based reason will be given priority booking if there are no other facilities which can accommodate the activity. These steps are described in more detail as follows.

Step 2A. The intent of this sub-step is to identify the quantity (total hours needed) and characteristics of facility time (class / size of facility, prime vs non-prime hours, etc.) that user groups require to deliver quality programming in alignment with their mandate. This will be undertaken by developing (and regularly updating) **Activity Standards** that reflect these needs based on:

- Where applicable, guidelines provided by a provincial or national governing body (e.g. a National Sport Organizations Long Term Athlete Development Plan);
- Regional benchmarks and best practices for space allocation; and
- Demonstrated program benefit and alignment with the Draft Guiding Principles (e.g. alignment with the Equity principle).

The development of the Activity Standards will be led by the City in collaboration with user groups. Activity Standards should be developed for all types of parks, recreation and culture user groups, recognizing that some of these activity types will have defined points of reference (e.g. sport groups with Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) guidelines from a national sport) while others will require collaborative dialogue and consideration of other inputs (e.g. regional precedents and benchmarks, past use of space, etc.).

Example Activity Standards:

**For example purpose only – not based on actual information*

Activity Category: Volleyball					
Level	Hours of Practice Time Required per Week	Games per Week	Total Hours Required per Week	Space Timing Requirements	Class of Gymnasium Required
Learn-to programming (younger children and youth)	1	0	1	Non-Prime: Daytime	C
U14 Recreational	1.5	1 (1 hour)	3	Early Prime	B
U14 Competitive	2.5	2 (2.5 hours)	5	Early Prime	B
U18 Recreational	2	2 (2.5 hours)	4.5 hours	Prime	B
U18 Competitive	5	2 (2.5 hours)	7.5 hours	Prime	A
Adult Recreational	0	1	1.5 hours	Late-Prime or Non-Prime: Late Evening	Any



Step 2B. Along with identifying the space needs of user groups (Step 2A), it is equally important for the City to assess its supply of bookable parks, recreation and culture infrastructure on an ongoing basis. As part of this step in the allocation process, the City will develop and regularly update a **Facility Capacity and Suitability Assessment** for every bookable space (or grouping / category of space) within its inventory. The Assessment will identify:

- The types of activities that are suitable for the space (example: classes of sport fields that are suitable for introductory, recreational, and advanced play).
- Seasonality considerations (appropriate or desired uses for a facility may fluctuate based on the season; when applicable, the Facility Capacity and Suitability Assessment will identify which types of uses should or shouldn't be prioritized based on a season or other timeframe).
- Definition of prime vs non-prime time specific to the space type.
- Support amenity relationships that may impact the suitability of a space for a type of activity.
- The overall capacity of time available at each space.

STEP 3: MATCHING OF NEED AND CAPACITY

The objective of this step is to reconcile the analysis conducted during Steps 2A and 2B. User group facility preference will be noted during the Space Allocation Process but will not be used as the determining factor when matching need and capacity. This will occur as follows:

Step 3A. Recognizing that the City's space needs for its programming and activities takes priority, this estimated quantity and type of space will be subtracted from the overall supply of inventory.

Step 3B. The space needs of user groups (as per the Activity Standards) will be cross-referenced with the applicable Facility Capacity and Suitability Assessment (less the City's space needs as per above) to determine where alignment can easily occur and where potential conflicting needs exist (requiring further prioritization in Step 4).

STEP 4: PRIORITIZATION

Where alignment between supply (Step 2) and need (Step 3) cannot be achieved, prioritization of user groups will be required. To provide an initial starting point for that prioritization (more will be done in the next step), the following hierarchy will be used:

1. Local not for profit child, youth and seniors' organizations;
2. Local not for profit adult organizations;
3. Local commercial and for profit organizations; and then
4. Non local organizations.

The above hierarchy has been established in the Benefits Based Approach and in alignment with the PRC Fees and Charges Bylaw and Policy Framework. According to that approach, uses of public spaces that deliver more public benefit are higher priority than uses that deliver less public benefit. According to that policy, local not for profit groups serving children and youth are a higher priority than groups serving adults as the public investment (e.g. public subsidy) in younger people has a longer term payback in terms of positive life skills and behaviours than for adults. And, uses by commercial and for profit organizations deliver little or no, and certainly less public good to all Abbotsford citizens.

As previously noted in Step 1 (Pre-Qualification), priority access to City of Abbotsford facilities will be given to user groups who demonstrate that more of their members / participants reside in the city (proposed 75% residency for local definition). However, to mitigate this requirement becoming a barrier and to foster accessibility and inclusion for new and emerging groups, the City will consider exceptions on a case by case basis for groups that cannot generate enough local participants but are evaluated as providing a significant benefit.

As previously noted in Step 2 (Identifying Space Needs and Capacity), the Space Allocation Process seeks to align the allocation of activities and facilities. It is noted that some activities have limited purpose-built facilities available. In circumstances where an activity provided by a local not for profit organization may have limited purpose-built facilities available for the activity, the Space Allocation Process may result in allocation of a local not for profit adult organization as a first priority if no other alternatives are available.

STEP 5: SCHEDULING AND COMMUNICATION

The four allocation steps outlined previously in this document will identify the approximate quantity of time that is needed and the types of space that should be assigned to each user group (therefore providing a basis for aligning the right groups with the right spaces at the right times). This process has also been aligned with the Benefits Based Approach which will ensure consistency between the related functions of space allocation and rates and fees.

The final scheduling and assignment of space requires some practical considerations to be integrated and considered based on factors such as scheduling lead time required by some activities and sequencing of users. The following chart outlines the order in which space will be scheduled. While there is general alignment with the space prioritization outlined in Step 4, some operational and timing considerations require the sequence by which space is scheduled to be adapted (e.g. notably tournament and special event scheduling and planning requirements). The process should be followed once each year or once each season depending on the type of space. It assumes that a Department staff person starts with a clean slate for each type of space and follows the process laid out to attempt to accommodate as much local demand need as practically possible using the step by step approach outlined.

Order of Scheduling	Space Use and Activity Category	Description and Rationale
1	City special tournaments and events	The City hosts special events that provide broad based social, economic, and community benefits to residents and businesses. These events include "one off" events that the City pursues as well as those that occur on a regular basis.
2	Local not for profit tournaments, competitions and special events (that demonstrate sufficient rationale for advanced date booking)	Local non profit user groups may have needs for tournaments and competitions that are outside of their normal program space allocation. This time will be scheduled before all subsequent space use and activity categories (even those of higher priority) in recognition of the lead time required for planning and organization. The City reserves the right to cap tournament, competition, and special event time and may request that groups requesting this time demonstrate sufficient rationale for the advanced booking request.
3	School use (and other contractual obligations)	School use that occurs as part of the regular curriculum is among the most inclusive of all activities as all students participate regardless of level of ability, equipment owned, and ability to pay fees. The majority of this use also occurs during the weekday daytime and therefore helps maximize the use of many facilities during non-prime hours. The City provides this time as per Joint Use Agreements. It is important to note that this space use and activity category does not include academies which are identified in #6.
4	Local not for profit groups which target children, youth, and seniors' participation	Space for regular activity will be accommodated based on identified space needs as per the Activity Standards and a reconciliation of those needs with facility supply (Steps 2 and 3). Tournament, competition, and special event time that requires less than one year's notice will also be considered and, whenever possible, scheduled from within the groups program based allocation as per the Activity Standards.

Order of Scheduling	Space Use and Activity Category	Description and Rationale
5	Local not for profit adult groups	Space for regular activity will be accommodated based on their identified space needs as per the Activity Standards and a reconciliation of those needs with facility supply (Steps 2 and 3). Tournament, competition, and special event time that requires less than one year's notice will also be considered and, whenever possible, scheduled from within the group's program based allocation as per the Activity Standards.
6	Local, private, commercial and sports academies	Rentals for commercial, private, groups and sports academies will be considered after the previous (#1 - 5) space use and activity category needs have been met.
7	Non-local groups	Non-local space requests will be considered after local space needs and subsequent scheduling has occurred.

ADDITIONAL SPACE SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS

The Policy will need to provide guidance on how to address other issues, circumstances, and scenarios that may arise through the scheduling of space.

Short Notice Special Event Opportunities. From time to time, Abbotsford has the opportunity to host a high value special event on short notice that may require some displacement of user groups. In these circumstances, the City will collaborate with the involved parties to find a mutually agreeable solution. Should this solution not be found, the matter will be brought before Council for resolution.

Community Emergencies. Public facilities serve a crucial and critical function during times of emergency. The required needs of City parks, recreation and culture facilities will supersede all existing space bookings and allocation commitments during times of emergency.





4. NEXT STEPS

The following steps are required to move the Policy development process forward from a draft Framework to a draft Policy.

1. Consideration of the overarching approach as outlined by this draft Framework.
2. Addition of detail to the draft Framework, including further refinement and development of the tools, guidelines, and other logistical elements that will be required to undertake each step of the allocation process as outlined by the draft Framework. Aspects of the allocations approach that will require development and refinement include:
 - » Definitions (e.g. “local” vs “non-local”);
 - » Pre-qualification evaluation checklist and assessment tools (Step 1);
 - » Activity Standards template (Step 2A);
 - » Facility Capacity and Suitability Assessment template (Step 2B); and
 - » Appeal / dispute resolution evaluation.
3. Testing of the draft Framework based on the current supply of parks, recreation and culture infrastructure (to determine if the new allocation process is realistic and implementable).
4. Development of a draft Allocation Policy for Council’s review.
5. Public and stakeholder review.
6. Finalization of the Allocation Policy Framework.
7. Adoption of the updated PRC Allocation Policy.



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