

CM1.3 Priority Criteria for North Cariboo Recreation & Parks New Services and Funding



Regional Board Policy

Priority Criteria for North Cariboo Recreation & Parks New Services and Funding

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Office of Primary Responsibility: Community Services		
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PURPOSE:

This policy and process has been created to establish Priority Criteria and a reasonable process for including new facilities or services or making major changes in service to the North Cariboo Recreation and Parks function.

POLICY:

PRIORITY CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF NEW SERVICES

The establishment of Priority Criteria and a reasonable process for including new services is an important initial step towards managing future changes to the NCRP function.

Although the definition of eligible activities as 'recreation services' under the NCRP bylaw is encompassing, the intent of the function is not to be 'all things to all people'. The goal is to ensure the continuation of a strong volunteer base and preserve independent sports, arts and agriculture groups, which have their own funding sources to support the broad fabric of community active living.

Staff has developed the following review criteria, which are listed below in priority order:

These characteristics increase the appropriateness of including the proposed new service in the NCRP function.

1. Demonstrated Support and Need

A proposal must demonstrate community support for and the benefits of the service to be provided and the need for funding. Many groups have other funding sources that should be noted and explained. However, because a group has other revenue, does not mean it should be ineligible for NCRP funding. In fact, stable, alternative funding support, such as membership fees or tournament revenues, serves as a solid core budget and NCRP funding may be well placed to elevate the group and proposed activity “to the next level.”

2. Registered Participants or Membership

A confirmed number of registered members is important because it clearly shows how many people are dedicated enough to pay their own way to participate in the activity. It is recognized that some activities may not operate on a ‘registration’ basis; however, for those that do, a confirmed count will allow the calculation of a more accurate value for the NCRP investment.

3. Value for Investment

Compares the funding request to the number of registered participants while also considering the long-term development of a capital asset or facility. Accepted secondary benefits such as event hosting, providing entertainment opportunities and generating spin-off investment are also positive factors. The overall NCRP budget must be considered when dealing with the request in terms of increased taxation or impacts to other NCRP services.

4. Youth and Seniors Participation

Public funding support for activities targeted at youth, seniors, people with a disability or low income is a generally-accepted priority when compared with funding working-adult oriented activities.

5. Partnership with an Organized League or Association

In many cases, encouraging service delivery through an independent organization, which has its own revenue sources and administrative structure, is a cost-effective and efficient way to support community activities.

6. Development of a Recreation Facility

General participation in activities and sports leagues tends to grow and shrink over time as recreation preferences change. To ensure there is long-term value to a public investment, development of a flexible-use capital asset or facility as part of a funding arrangement can be a positive factor.

7. Provide a Multi-use Opportunity

Proposals that allow for and encourage a range of recreation and leisure activities are a priority because they increase general community value and limit conflicts that tend to develop around exclusive use of public property by a particular organization.

8. Participant Contribution (cost recovery as a percentage of overall costs)

It should be determined what portion of the total, ongoing cost of a proposal will continue to be funded directly by participants through user fees, fundraising, memberships, or sponsorships. Generally speaking, the higher the percentage of cost recovery, the better the leveraged value for the public, taxpayer investment.

9. General public use and broad community value

Certain initiatives, such as the development of greenspaces, trails and some outdoor facilities, do not lend themselves well to direct measurement, making it more difficult to evaluate their benefits to the community. Including these types of amenities under the NCRP function is appropriate but can be more subjective. As a result, these types of amenities may be considered a lower priority than initiatives that facilitate more highly organized activities.

In contrast to the values listed above, the following characteristics decrease the appropriateness of including the proposed new service in the NCRP financial plan.

1. For-profit or exclusive activities

By legislation, local government funding support must not be provided to for-profit businesses. Some activities are best left in the private sector domain. Proposals that only benefit the membership of an exclusive club or organization, and limit general public access are not appropriate.

2. Activities of unproven sustainability – limited public support base

Groups should be able to establish and demonstrate a reasonably strong, long-term, historical participant base to justify inclusion in the NCRP function. Proposals in this 'unproven stability' category may include short term 'fad' or fringe sports or activities.

3. Undefined objectives

Initiatives that lack a reasonable amount of clear purpose should not be funded through NCRP. Specific community benefits, such as increasing active youth, training for performance sports, support for organized league play, or demonstrated quality of life improvements should be readily apparent prior to funding consideration.

4. Inadequate financial reporting and accountability

Any group requesting ongoing NCRP funding support must be able to provide enough background information and explain how the public funding will be well managed according to any applicable NCRP policies, procedures and related bylaws.

IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGES AND PRIORITY CRITERIA

Agreement to undertake changes to the NCRP establishment bylaw and develop priority criteria should also be based on the understanding and acceptance of some key starting-point principles.

It is recommended that the following principles guide this process.

1. Core services currently included in NCRP should continue to be funded. Reviewing existing services is not within the scope of the proposed changes or implementation.
2. Urban and rural public recreation assets and activities within the sub-regional recreation area are equally eligible for consideration.
3. Transparency, clarity and purposefully-directed recreation spending are necessary for inclusion in the function - avoiding a 'general revenue' funding strategy that is simply reactive to external requests.
4. The NCRP function is not a grant program. While the function can and should be able to address one-time, capital contributions to special projects that are in the broad community interest (such as the track at Correlieu High School), the intent of increased flexibility and the review procedure for evaluation of service requests against priority criteria is not to create an ongoing grant program for community recreation and arts groups. The NCRP function is not designed or resourced for this purpose.
5. Proposed new services included must be accountable to the strategic direction and the governance authority of the North Cariboo Joint Planning Committee (NCJPC) and Regional District Board.

PROCESS EXAMPLE - REQUEST FOR INCLUSION IN THE NCRP FUNCTION

Any service proposal must include enough detailed information to be evaluated against the accepted priority expansion criteria and to be compared to other submissions that may be received from time-to-time.

1. A new service proponent must initiate the process by a Letter of Interest to the NCJPC.
2. The NCJPC will consider the proposal and if it has a reasonable chance to meet the priority criteria, the proponents will be invited to appear as a delegation to the NCJPC and present further details. The delegation is accepted for information only; no decision is required at the initial meeting.
3. Following the delegation, if the NCJPC decides the proposal has merit, it will invite the proponent to submit a detailed plan in writing, which clearly demonstrates how the proposal meets the priority criteria.
4. Once the full information is received, it will be referred to staff for analysis and confirmation that it substantially meets the priority criteria. Any NCRP budget considerations, including capital contributions, ongoing operational costs or borrowing costs related to the proposal will also be reviewed and included in a report to the NCJPC.

5. The NCJPC will receive the full proposal information and staff report and determine its support prior to making a recommendation to the Regional District Board.

In order to proceed with the request, the NCJPC has agreed that 2/3 of the joint committee must vote in favour of the proposal including a majority of both Regional District Directors and City Councillors. This would require approval from a minimum of eight committee members including four councillors and three Directors at a meeting with no absent members.

6. Once agreed to by the Board, the proposal will be included in the NCRP business plan and budget process provided public assent is not required. Public assent of the proposal is required where borrowing occurs for a capital liability incurred for longer than five years.

Proposals to expand NCRP services initiated by the City of Quesnel or the Cariboo Regional District must also provide enough information to be evaluated against the priority criteria.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Cariboo Regional District will ensure that new services or major changes in existing services for the North Cariboo Recreation and Parks function will meet the Priority Criteria as established in this policy and follow the review and approval process defined herein.

***** END OF POLICY *****

<u>Amended (Y/N)</u>	<u>Date Reissued</u>	<u>Authority (Resolution #)</u>
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