

Recreation Facility Allocation Process

Process Statement

Aligning with the City's Strategic Plan priority of building our future, the Facility Allocation Process informs the scheduling of City of Guelph-owned recreation facilities and parks.

Purpose

The Facility Allocation Process outlines how space is scheduled and distributed in City of Guelph recreation and parks public facilities. We strive to foster equity and be more inclusive in our programs and services. This process helps ensure that allocation is managed in a way that balances the needs of all users in a transparent, efficient, and responsible way.

Principles

While the City of Guelph provides recreation programs and services directly, the City also recognizes the valuable contribution that community organizations and groups play in delivering programs and services that meet community needs and interests. Ensuring that residents have access to welcoming, well-maintained spaces for community use is an essential part of supporting participation, strengthening local connections, and enabling a vibrant mix of activities across the city.

The principles outlined in this process speak to how allocations are determined. Specifically, facility allocation will:

- Use a consistent approach among users to ensure transparent distribution of facility space and time
- Be fiscally responsible
- Not supersede any existing agreements (i.e., GWSA, Guelph Storm, shared use agreements with schools)
- Limit the allocated time for user groups if facility demand (i.e., rental requests) exceeds supply (i.e., facility time and space available)
- Manage the scheduling of facilities to utilize space efficiently
- Ensure resident access to recreation opportunities through municipal programs initiated and operated by the Culture and Recreation Department

- Consider the needs of Guelph residents before residents of other communities
- Recognize the importance of relationships with community organizations to provide services that benefit Guelph residents
- Facilitate scheduling that will support ongoing maintenance and repair of facilities.

Definitions

City of Guelph Recreation Programs and Services

Recreation programs and services offered by the City of Guelph. Programs are open to the public, although in some cases may be targeted at a subset of the public (i.e., seniors, adults, youth). These programs are provided in response to resident demand.

Adult user

Individuals aged eighteen (18) years and older.

Block Booking

Reserving a recurring set of time slots over an extended period—typically a full season. Instead of booking individual dates one at a time, a group secures a consistent schedule (for example, every Tuesday from 6–8 p.m.) to support regular programming, practices, or events.

Commercial user

Groups that use recreation facilities with the intent of generating a positive net income.

Community Use Space

Designated community space is a deliberate policy feature that reserves a portion of facility hours which can be used for a variety of purposes including casual or one-off use.

Decision-Making Framework

The Decision-Making Framework is a structured assessment tool to evaluate groups seeking access to newly available or reallocated recreation spaces.

Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest for Future Use is a year-round mechanism that allows organizations to formally indicate their interest in future access to recreation space.

Non-Resident user

Groups with less than eighty (80) per cent of participants residing in Guelph.

Occasional user

Groups that use the facility on an irregular or non-consistent basis. Distribution of facility time will be completed on a first come, first serve basis.

Recurring annual user

A customer that uses the facility in a one-off or single use manner each year.

Resident user

Groups with more than eighty (80) per cent of participants residing in Guelph.

Seasonal user

Customers that use the facility on a consistent (weekly or bi-weekly) basis for the entire season.

Senior user

Individuals aged fifty-five (55) years and older.

Special events

A broad range of activities planned to mark special occasions or to achieve special social, cultural, or economic objectives. These events vary in scope, purpose, size, cost, and complexity. Special events may include community festivals, trade shows, or exhibitions.

Tournaments

International, national, provincial, and local events which are sanctioned by an appropriate governing body and bring recognition to or increase the public profile of the City of Guelph.

Youth user

Individuals up to and including seventeen (17) years old.

Allocation Procedures

1. The City will block off the time required for City programming, maintenance and Community Use Space.
2. Communication of booking dates will be promoted within the community.
3. All facility requests to be submitted by the published deadline.
4. Facility staff will confirm past use with seasonal customers.
5. Seasonal customers will have a pre-determined timeframe to confirm their use of the block bookings assigned to them.
6. Customers requesting seasonal space will be asked to complete an Expression of Interest.
7. After the deadline, all requests are reviewed. If there is enough space for everyone, time is allocated using the facility allocation scheduling sequence.
8. If demand for space exceeds supply, staff use the Decision- Making Matrix to determine who will get access to the time.
9. Occasional use requests will be booked on a first come, first served basis within the Community Space booking windows or other available time.
10. If allocated time is returned mid-season, staff will use the Expression of Interest database to determine whether the time can be allocated to another user.

Facility Allocation Scheduling Sequence

Prior to any facility space and time being distributed between users, the City is responsible for addressing scheduled or unplanned maintenance needs, City of Guelph recreation programs and services, and community use space.

The City aims to accommodate user needs whenever possible, but rental time is not automatically renewed. Future bookings may differ in location or time based on availability and overall community demand.

The following scheduling sequence is based on process principles and will be used to allocate new or newly available facility space:

1. Maintenance
2. City of Guelph Recreation Programs and Services
3. Community Use Space
4. Youth Resident Users - Seasonal
5. Senior Resident Users - Seasonal
6. Adult Resident Users - Seasonal
7. Commercial Resident Users - Seasonal
8. Recurring Resident Users - Annual

9. New Requests from Resident Users
10. Non-Resident Users

To be considered for the above scheduling sequence, a user must:

- Be in good financial standing with the City of Guelph (i.e., users do not have outstanding debts from previous years).
- Provide proof of their status when requested to do so (i.e., participant roster).
- Utilize or return all allocated time.
- Adhere to all contract conditions.

Occasional users will be scheduled on a first come, first serve basis within the community use space first, and any other remaining available time.

Distribution based on past use

The City will make reasonable efforts to provide users with consistency in their facility schedules from season to season. This may include maintaining total hours allocated but does not guarantee the same location or times. Each season, the City must balance past use with the need to accommodate new or emerging requests.

Users seeking more facility time than previously allocated must identify the desired dates and times in an Expression of Interest. Requests for additional time will be evaluated as new requests and reviewed according to the City's scheduling sequence and prioritization criteria. Users should be aware that some time granted in each season may be seasonal only and may not form part of future allocations.

Facility Optimization

By establishing clear rules for cancellations, amendments, returns, and recurring bookings—and enforcing them consistently—the facilities benefit from higher utilization, less schedule fragmentation, reduced administrative burden, and more responsible user behavior.

Clear Booking Windows

- All reservations must follow standardized time blocks (30-minute or 1-hour increments) to help reduce unusable gaps and improve rebooking potential.
- When possible, bookings must be adjacent to existing reservations.

Block Booking for seasonal use

- Seasonal users receive fixed weekly blocks to maintain consistency. A season long commitment is required for block bookings.
- Unused blocks may be reassigned during the season if underutilized.

Cancellations

- Returned time must be submitted during the designated return window and it will become immediately available to other users.

Unused Allocation

- All users must utilize or return all allocated times. Users should notify their Facility Booking Coordinator that a space will not be used as soon as possible to provide an opportunity for re-allocation.
- If allocated space is not being used, users may be subject to a loss of booking privileges, and automatic release of the time slot.

Seasonal Customers Requesting Additional time

- Requesting additional time for seasonal use will require the submission of an expression of interest form.
- Requesting additional one off or occasional use time will be booked on a first come, first served basis and will not be included in past use distribution for the following season.

Scheduling Tournaments and Special Events

Requests should be submitted according to the published special event application deadlines (before it is awarded). When possible, tournaments and special events are scheduled before regular season or occasional use rentals to avoid conflicts.

Staff will work with users, City programming and other impacted users to reach a mutually agreeable allocation.

Building our Future

A strong monitoring system will create accountability. Staff will review usage patterns to identify chronic late cancellations, underutilized blocks, and periods of high demand, ensuring that valuable space is not wasted. Priority or decision-making criteria and allocations are reviewed and adjusted based on real usage data, so the system evolves with actual community behaviour rather than

assumptions. Past attendance, cancellations, and non-use patterns are reviewed before approving seasonal bookings, reinforcing responsible use. Time allocations may also be adjusted based on reliability to prevent any group from monopolizing prime hours.

Together, these practices build a culture of continuous learning. They help the City understand what is working, where gaps remain, and how to adapt policies to better serve new and emerging needs. Monitoring is not just about oversight — it is about shaping a future where access is fair, transparent, and grounded in evidence.