

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – OCTOBER 19, 2009**

### **PILOT PROJECT FOR CITY DESIGNATED TOBOGGAN HILLS**

#### **Recommendation**

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri and Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco, Co-Chairs of the Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee recommends:

1. That Council approve the pilot project for the City designated toboggan hill at Uplands Golf and Ski Club;
2. That staff report back with an evaluation of the pilot project following the winter season in Spring of 2010; and
3. That Corporate Communications do a media release upon Council approval of this pilot project.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

N/A

#### **Economic Impact**

There will be costs associated with the installation of signage at the City designated safe hills and the general advertising costs to promote the program. An estimated cost can be accommodated in the Parks Operation Budget to pay for signage and promotional information for the program.

#### **Communications Plan**

The program will be promoted on the City's website and through signage at the City designated toboggan hill. Corporate Communications will do a media release to promote the pilot project initiative.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the pilot project for a City designated toboggan hill at Uplands Golf and Ski Club through a policy that will enforce safe practices and injury prevention measures, in particular through the use of mandatory helmet use, as developed by the Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The Recreational Sports Safety Task Force (RSSTF) was created in March, 2007 by Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri. Its mandate is to develop and execute an education program aimed at safety and injury prevention in recreational sports and activities such as tobogganing, skateboarding, skiing, snowboarding, etc. The committee is comprised of a coalition of concerned residents, York Region Public Health, the York Region District School Board, the York Catholic District School Board, York Region Police, City of Vaughan Fire and Rescue, Safe Kids Canada and health professionals, including Dr. Charles Tator, a Neurosurgeon at Toronto Western Hospital and Founder of ThinkFirst Canada. Please see Attachment #2 for a complete member list of the Recreational Sport Safety Task Force. The RSSTF also has the support of the City of Vaughan's Safe City Committee.

A public awareness campaign launched in the City of Vaughan in January 2009 called *Helmets Save Lives* aims at reducing unsafe sports practices. The program's principle premise is that our children are our future and while we can't protect them from everything, we can take steps to

protect them from preventable accidents. This initiative also reflects the City's corporate objective of enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness. In 2009, the Recreational Sports Safety Task Force sent a pamphlet promoting recreational sport safety to every household and school in Vaughan. A website has also been developed at <http://www.helmetssavelives.org/> promoting helmet use. Sponsorship for the program was recently provided by Wal-Mart and SmartCentres.

In Canada, an estimated 2,000 children a year suffer head injuries in tobogganing accidents alone. Research shows that tobogganing has been ranked fourth in Ontario as a high-risk sport, behind diving, snowmobiling, and parachuting; it outranks hockey, skiing and bicycling. Head, spinal, abdominal and facial injuries were the major types of injuries that occurred.

In researching injuries and fatalities from recreational sports, the task force has been engaged with:

- ThinkFirst Canada: founded by Dr. Tator. This organization offers a comprehensive elementary school-based program for students focused on preventing injuries; and
- Safe Kids Canada: Focused on municipal issues in child injury prevention. This is a public policy body and advocates helmet safety. Safe Kids Canada recommends helmet use for such activities as skateboarding, as well as skating, tobogganing, skiing and snowboarding.

#### Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee

On June 15, 2009 Council approved the establishment of the Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee, made of up members from the RSSTF and City staff. The Advisory Committee was mandated with the goal of ensuring that citizens enjoying outdoor recreational sports at City parks, recreational spaces and facilities can do so in safe conditions. The Advisory Committee has met on several occasions throughout the summer and fall to put into effect this mandate and to create a pilot project for the launch of the City's first designated toboggan hill.

The Advisory Committee has been working on identifying safe tobogganing/snowboarding hills that are located at a safe distance from dangerous areas such as roads, rocks, rivers, lakes and parking lots; free of obstacles such as trees, rocks, fences, benches, metal poles; have a sufficiently long, clean run-out at the bottom of the hill, free of obstacles; and have dedicated areas for climbing up the hill. The Advisory Committee has also been developing standards and procedures for signage, inspection and maintenance for outdoor recreational spaces identified as a City designated toboggan hill.

The Advisory Committee has identified a specific hill at Uplands Golf and Ski Club which meets all criteria of a City designated toboggan hill. The Advisory Committee is ready to launch this hill as the City's first designated toboggan hill, in that it will be subject to the Toboggan Hill Maintenance Policy for City Designated Hills (Attachment 1) and appropriate signage (Attachment 2). Following the launch of this pilot project, staff will maintain records and inspection reports of the site in order to bring back an evaluation report of the project. The evaluation report will be used for consideration as the Advisory Committee moves forward with its mandate.

Ongoing inspections of City's designated toboggan hill site will be conducted by Parks Department staff to ensure the site meets safety standards. Ongoing monitoring of the site to ensure they are being used according to Safe Use Practices will be implemented through patrol by our Public Works Roads staff, Bylaw Enforcement Staff and Volunteers such as the City's Parks Ambassadors.

#### Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:  
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health & Wellness.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, however, necessary resources to implement this program have not have been allocated and approved.

### **Regional Implications**

N/A

### **Conclusion**

The Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee was developed to ensure that citizens enjoying outdoor recreational sports at City parks, recreational spaces and facilities can do so in safe conditions. The Advisory Committee is now seeking approval to launch a pilot project on one City designated toboggan hill. The pilot project will incorporate a maintenance policy, appropriate signage, inspection, maintenance and monitoring of the City designated toboggan hill at Uplands Golf and Ski Club.

### **Attachments**

1. Draft Toboggan Hill Maintenance Policy for City Designated Toboggan Hills
2. Draft Signage for City Designated Toboggan Hills
3. Draft Toboggan Hill Inspection Form
4. Committee List, Recreational Sports Injury Prevention Advisory Committee

### **Report prepared by:**

Respectfully submitted,

Regional Councillor Mario Ferri  
Co-Chair, Recreational Sports Injury  
Prevention Advisory Committee

Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco  
Co-Chair, Recreational Sports Injury  
Prevention Advisory Committee

## **TOBOGGAN HILL MAINTENANCE POLICY FOR CITY DESIGNATED HILLS**

1. PREPARATION FOR THE SEASON (Beginning November 15)
  - Inspect toboggan hill and remove all hazardous debris and garbage
  - Install safety measures such as safety fences, signage, and straw bales to secure against those obstacles that are immovable (trees, metal poles, etc...)
  - Records of inspections to be documented and retained in a permanent file
  
2. WEEKLY MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION
  - Inspect toboggan hill and remove all hazardous debris and garbage
  - Inspect toboggan hill and remove all moguls and jumps
  - Inspect toboggan hill to ensure safety measures are not damaged
  - Inspect toboggan hill to determine whether hill should remain open. Factors to consider include:
    - a. Major portions of the hill are ice covered
    - b. Ice and Snow conditions exist resulting in accelerating toboggan speeds
    - c. Tobogganers are losing control of their sleds
    - d. Tobogganers are having difficulty standing or walking while climbing the hill
    - e. Portions of the hill are bare with exposed turf or obstacles
  
  - When defect is observed, it shall be immediately reported and repairs are to be effected immediately if possible. If repairs cannot be made at the time of inspection, the hill will be posted as "Closed" until such a time as repairs are completed.
  - Records of inspections to be documented and retained in a permanent file
  
3. POST SEASON MAINTENANCE (April 1)
  - Remove all safety measures
  - Remove all debris and garbage
  - Records of inspections to be documented and retained in a permanent file
  - Close toboggan hill to the public for the season
  
4. STAFF TRAINING
  - All staff responsible for toboggan hills must be trained with respect to the matters covered in this policy

# **TOBOGGAN HILL RULES**

**This is an Unsupervised Toboggan Hill  
Use at your own Risk!**

**The Use of Safety Helmets is Mandatory**



**Hours of Operation: 8:00am to Dusk**

- Tuck in scarves, drawstrings and long toques
- Wait until path is clear before starting down the hill
- Always sit or kneel facing forward. Do not slide head first!
- Quickly get out of the way when you reach the bottom
- Keep to the side of the hill away from the slide paths when climbing back up the hill
- Alcohol is strictly forbidden on this property
- Unsafe or hazardous activities can result in ejection from the park

**For more info call: 905-832-8577**

**City of  
Vaughan**  
*The City Above Toronto*

# Sample Toboggan Inspection Form

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Trail Location: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Sliding surface in good repair                       | Y | N |
| 2. Signs in good repair and visible?                    | Y | N |
| 3. Is the area clean and free of debris?                | Y | N |
| 4. Litter containers present and in good condition?     | Y | N |
| 5. Slope free of obstructions and overhanging branches? | Y | N |
| 6. Evidence of prohibited use?                          | Y | N |
| 7. Are you aware of any recent complaints?              | Y | N |

## Action Required

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Inspector Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**RECREATIONAL SPORT INJURY PREVENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE/ORGANIZATION</b>
Mario Ferri	Regional Councillor, City of Vaughan
Sandra Yeung Racco	Ward 4 Councillor, City of Vaughan
Brian Anthony	Director of Public Works
Jason Inwood	Manager of Parks Operations
Tony Thompson	Director of Enforcement Services
Dr. Charles Tator	Neurosurgeon, Toronto Western Hospital and Founder, ThinkFirst Canada
Erik Cuzzolino	Manager, Government Relations & Public Policy, Safe Kids Canada, Sick Kids Hospital
Cindy Furfaro-Benning	Council EA, City of Vaughan
Angela Bortoluzzi	Council EA, City of Vaughan
Chris Bendick	Solicitor (Advisory Capacity Only)

***As of: October 8, 2009***