

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 18, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Acting Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Results of Joint Use Agreement Internal Review and Details of the Joint Use Agreement External Tri-Party Review

ORIGINATOR: C. McCabe, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Meredith Colgan, Michael Ediger, Cindy Skolski

INFORMATION

Background

The Joint Use Agreement (JUA) is a legal agreement among the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools that describes how the partners work together to plan, develop, and share school and City facilities. It outlines how schools and sports fields are made available to community groups during after-school hours, and how arenas, pools, sports fields and other City facilities are made available to school children during school hours. The agreement timeframe expires early in 2006 and the current Joint Use Agreement remains in effect until a new one is in place.

On January 17th, 2006 the board received a report on the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) review consultation process. The review consists of two phases with the first phase consisting of each partner completing an internal consultation with their stakeholders, and the second phase being consultations conducted jointly by Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools and the City of Edmonton.

Phase I - Internal Consultation Process

The process for the internal consultation involved focus groups in quadrants of the city involving non-sport and major sport group representatives, key communicators, principals, school staff, and community members in the area. The district engaged Downey Norris & Associates to facilitate the Internal JUA consultation process. Consultation meetings took place on March 6th, 2006 at W.P. Wagner School, March 7th, 2006 at Harry Ainlay School, March 13th, 2006 at Queen Elizabeth School, and March 20th, 2006 at Jasper Place School. The district's objectives for the internal consultation were to:

- better understand users' expectations for access to facilities and fields
- identify issues and challenges users and schools face in trying to meet the needs of their respective communities
- explore directions Edmonton Public Schools should consider pursuing on behalf of users and schools through the JUA Review

In total there were 53 focus group participants with 55 per cent representing community users groups, nine per cent representing parents, and 36 per cent representing staff members which included representatives from C.U.P.E. Local 474 at each of the meetings.

The March 2006 internal consultation process built on the results from the November consultation sessions which emphasized community access to schools, and expanded to consult on use of sports fields adjacent to schools, and student/school use of City facilities.

The report from Downey Norris & Associates which outlines areas of agreements, areas of concern, and the direction stakeholders would like Edmonton Public Schools to consider pursuing during the JUA negotiations is attached as an Appendix I.

The following compares the March 2006 community use of schools issue theme rankings with the November 2005 rankings.

March, 2006	November, 2005
1. Funding adequacy	1. Funding adequacy
2. Space & time booking	2. Space & time booking
3. Access to local schools	3. Access to local schools
4. Facility use limitations	4. Space/time appropriateness & usability
5. Transparency & accountability by EPSB	5. Implementation of Joint Use Policies
6. Space/time appropriateness & usability	6. Facility design suitability
7. Behaviours of some users	7. Communications concerns
8. Implementation of Joint Use Policies	8. Behaviours of some users
9. Communications concerns	9. Historic rights
10. Historic rights	10. Transparency and accountability by EPSB
11. Facility design suitability	11. Facility use limitations

Downey Norris & Associates facilitated a meeting with ten members of the District Services Principal Committee. Principals were provided a background on the district's internal review and the tri-party review underway. The draft key findings from the district's internal review were presented and principals confirmed the themes presented were the correct issues of significance.

The top three themes on community use of schools identified in March and November were the same:

1. Funding Adequacy
2. Space and Time Booking
3. Access to Local Schools.

Directions EPS Will Consider Pursuing In the Upcoming Negotiations

The primary directions identified in the consultation process for Edmonton Public Schools to pursue in the upcoming negotiations have been divided into three of the areas covered in the joint use agreement, community use of school facilities, community use of sports fields, and student use of City facilities.

The following is a summary of the directions the district will pursue concerning Community Use of School Facilities:

1. Funding commitment from province and a greater financial commitment from users
2. Finding more affordable solutions to facilitate the opening of more schools for community use
3. Emphasize schools as community facilities
4. Single online, real-time booking system
5. Clarify insurance, safety, OH&S and security requirements and limitations
6. All partners to fairly share in costs and benefits of partnership
7. Broaden involvement in JUA

The following is a summary of the issues for which the district will pursue solutions regarding Community Use of Sports Fields:

1. Field maintenance – lines, mowing, pooling of water, pot holes, surface maintenance
2. Garbage - particularly following events
3. Overuse of fields causing damage
4. Safety – positioning of fields, trees, poles
5. Parking – access, event conflicts, lot clearing
6. Land designated for fields not being developed
7. Lack of clear data and information regarding access and booking processes
8. ‘Unlicensed’ use of fields – teams & residents

The following is a summary of issues for which the district will pursue solutions regarding Student Use of City Facilities:

1. Increasing cost of use – life guards, ice cleaning, transportation
2. City’s need to recover costs conflicts with EPSB need for no or nominal cost access
3. Increasing demands – # of sports schools, # of teams, population growth, active aging population with time, daily physical activity requirements
4. Access to times that meet the needs of schools
5. Proximity to City facilities – time, cost limits
6. Negotiating access to community league facilities
7. Student safety – insurance, lack of safety equipment, e.g., helmets
8. Curricular demands

Phase Two External Tri-party Review Details

In January 2006, a Request for Proposal was issued to engage an external consultant to facilitate the tri-party external consultation process so that the revised JUA agreement better reflects present realities, current needs, and enables the partners to successfully resolve tomorrow’s challenges. The successful vendor was Convergence Consulting Group.

Phase II will be broad-based consultation with external stakeholders and the general public. There will be three methods to gather information from stakeholders:

1. **Personal Interviews** – Convergence Consulting Group has conducted personal interviews with a sample of key stakeholders to gather their impressions first hand on the current Joint Use Agreement. Preliminary findings from the personal interviews are included in Appendix II.
2. **Public Meetings** – There will be three public meetings planned, organized, conducted, and facilitated by Convergence Consulting Group. Tentative dates for the meetings are April 26, 27, and May 1, 2006. Each of the joint use partners will provide a facility for one of the meetings. Key Stakeholders will receive personal invitations to participate and the meetings will be advertised in the Examiner to reach additional citizens who may wish to participate. The agenda for the meetings will include a presentation and an opportunity to provide feedback using a discussion guide.
3. **Web-based Survey** – A web-based survey will be designed and conducted to give a broad audience an opportunity to respond to specific questions and gauge the level of support for specific suggestions. The survey will be hosted on the Joint Use Agreement website at www.edmonton.ca/jointuse

Information gathered during the joint public consultation process will be reviewed and analyzed along with input from internal organizational reviews, joint use best practices, and other research. All of this information will be synthesized by Convergence Consulting Group and forward to the Review Team Partners to develop collective recommendations for Shared Use of Facilities in the new Joint Use Agreement. All information provided to the Review Team Partners will be forwarded to the board.

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Appendix I Downey Norris & Associates Report on Findings from Phase I Consultation

Appendix II Convergence Consulting Group Preliminary Findings from Personal Interviews

Downey Norris & Associates Report on Findings from Phase I Consultation

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**Edmonton Public Schools
Joint Use Agreement
Consultation Meetings' Report**

April 3, 2006

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Introduction

In February 2006, Edmonton Public Schools retained *Downey Norris & Associates Inc.* to design and facilitate a consultation process to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities both users and schools face in trying to meet the needs of their respective constituents in securing access to space for sports, recreation, leisure and school activities.

This endeavor is the second step in Edmonton Public Schools' efforts to prepare for and provide meaningful input that reflects the needs of its schools and community users of those schools, into the Joint Use Agreement Review process being undertaken with its partners, the Edmonton Catholic School Board and the City of Edmonton.

This second phase of consultation built on the results of consultation sessions in November of 2005 with a representative group of community users of Edmonton Public Schools facilities, parent representatives and Edmonton Public Schools staff. The focus of the March 2006 consultations was to seek input on the issues and challenges of users and schools, and the directions Edmonton Public might consider advancing during the JUA Review. What is currently working well was not addressed.

Background

Access to recreation and leisure activities and facilities is the mandate and responsibility of the City of Edmonton. The City is strongly supported by Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools through a Joint Use Agreement (JUA) designed to address community use of school facilities, school use of City facilities, and matters pertaining to joint land use.

Under the JUA, Edmonton Public Schools offers approximately 75,000 hours of school facility time at no or nominal cost to accommodate community needs each year. In 2003-2004 community users booked 55,000 hours of gym time, of which about 36,000 hours were used by sports teams and the remainder by casual users. In addition, community users accessed 12,000 hours in classrooms and ancillary spaces, and 112,000 hours on sports fields adjacent to Edmonton Public schools. (*Sports fields are managed and maintained by the City of Edmonton*). That same year Edmonton Public and Edmonton Catholic students accessed about 15,000 hours of time in City of Edmonton arenas, pools, tennis courts and picnic sites.

In 2006 the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools are undertaking a comprehensive consultation process as part of an examination of the JUA to determine how it might be modified to better meet the needs of a growing and changing community.

In preparation for this exercise, Edmonton Public Schools sought input directly from schools and community organizations that use school facilities, such as sports associations and other recreational and leisure users. The intent was to help Edmonton Public Schools better understand the issues, challenges and opportunities facing all parties related to community use of schools, use of sports fields adjacent to schools, and student/school use of City facilities. The objective is to assist Edmonton Public Schools to appropriately represent the needs and priorities of community user groups and schools during the upcoming JUA Review.

Approach/Methodology

A series of four facilitated consultation meetings were held on March 6, 7, 13 and 20, one in each of the four quadrants of the city. Community user groups of Edmonton Public Schools' facilitates, community leagues, School Council members and School Key Communicators, as well as school principals, program coordinators and custodial staff were invited to participate by Edmonton Public Schools. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection was undertaken.

A total of 53 individuals participated in the four meetings, including:

- 29 community users/leagues
- 5 School Council members and Key Communicators
- 19 Edmonton Public Schools' staff

Edmonton Public Schools Trustees attended each consultation meeting as observers to hear directly the participants' views and perspectives.

Using the findings of the November 2005 consultation as the basis for initial discussions, meeting participants worked to achieve the following objectives:

- Better understand users' expectations for access to facilities and fields
- Identify issues and challenges users and schools face in trying to meet the needs of their respective communities
- Explore directions Edmonton Public Schools should consider pursuing on behalf of users and schools through the JUA Review

The themes flowing from the four March 2006 consultation meetings were then shared with a group of ten Edmonton Public Schools principals on March 22, 2006, to solicit their input on

consultation findings and the directions Edmonton Public Schools should pursue during the JUA Review.

This report's findings reflect the views of March 2006 consultation meeting participants and the views of November 2005 consultation group participants on the matter of community use of school facilities.

Key Findings

The findings of this consultation are based on the perspectives and opinions held by the individuals and organizations that attended consultation meetings, as interpreted by the consultant, *Downey Norris & Associates Inc.* It is important to note the following key findings do not vary greatly from the November 2006 Consultation Group findings.

- There was clear recognition of, and support for, the value of sports, recreation and leisure activities in improving the health and quality of life for Edmontonians of all ages and in strengthening Edmonton as a community.
- There was a clear recognition by all participants that there is an increasing need for prime time and local access to recreation facilities to meet the demands of a growing population and increasing number of sports and recreation organizations.
- There was clear recognition by participants of the essential role that Edmonton Public Schools facilities play in helping to meet the recreation facility needs of the community and a recognition that pressure to expand that role will increase in the future as the need for recreation facilities increases.
- Participants strongly supported the concept of Edmonton Public Schools facilities being “community facilities” with maximum possible access for community groups, but most did so in the context that community access must not result in a negative impact on the quality of education for students or be at the expense of resources allocated for education.
- Gaps in information, knowledge and understanding by community users and schools of processes, systems and challenges related to access to school facilities, access to sports fields, and student access to City facilities; safety, insurance, security and collective agreement requirements related to the use of schools by community groups; the details of the Joint Use Agreement and how it works; background data on the demand for and use of school and City facilities; and the actual costs and revenues associated with community use of schools are considered as a significant impediment to clear and consistent communication and cooperation between and among parties. Therefore additional data gathering and improved communication and education about these processes are strongly supported.
- Participants recognized there is a financial cost to Edmonton Public Schools and to individual schools in providing community access to its facilities, though it was felt that there was inadequate data available as to the “real costs” involved.
- There is a view that incremental costs associated with student/school use of City facilities have become an obstacle to access, e.g., life guards, ice cleaning, transportation, etc.

- Consultation participants felt that funding to the Edmonton Public School District and to individual schools to cover the costs associated with community use of schools was inadequate, and the most significant barrier to increased access to schools by community users. Participants felt that this was a priority area for consideration in the JUA Review and that the provincial government should provide additional funding to facilitate the use of schools as community facilities.
- The system currently in place for identifying useable space and time in local schools, and allocating and scheduling that space, has worked relatively well. However, there are a number of shortcomings to the current system from the perspective of both users and schools that need to be further examined and addressed during the Joint Use Agreement Review process. *These are further detailed under the Issues & Challenges section on page seven.*
- Wherever feasible and possible community users want more access to the schools in their local areas, and want to the extent possible, access to school facilities and time slots that are appropriate to the age of the participants and the nature/season of the activity being undertaken. This is another priority area consultation participants feel Edmonton Public Schools should work with its partners to address during the Joint Use Agreement Review process.
- Community users desire more comprehensive, timely and easier-to-access information from Edmonton Public Schools on the availability of school space/time and information on why some schools/space are not accessible to community use.
- There was considerable support for broadening the Joint Use Agreement to include access for students to a wider range of City owned, operated or partnered facilities, such as golf courses, indoor soccer fields, arts facilities, Shaw Conference Centre, velodrome, etc.
- Participants felt that it would be beneficial if the formal Joint Use Agreement Review process also brought to the table other key partners in providing access to recreation and sports opportunities, including the Alberta Government, Edmonton Community Leagues and perhaps organizations such as the YMCA/YWCA and indoor soccer facilities.
- Consultation participants strongly supported a move to greater use of computer technology for information, booking and management of facility time and space through the development and use of a web-based booking system for school facilities (both Public & Catholic), sports fields and student use of City facilities, e.g., arenas, pools, etc.
- There was strong consensus among participants that City maintenance of sports fields was inadequate.
- Overall participants supported the need for flexibility, creativity and increased cooperation among all Joint Use Agreement partners, including community user groups, in developing affordable approaches and solutions that would enable maximized use of school facilities and adjacent fields by community users and use of City facilities by students.

Community Use of School Facilities

Issues and Challenges

A summary of the issues and challenges pertaining to community use of school facilities identified by the November 2005 Consultation Group was presented to consultation meeting participants. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions of clarity, to share their perspectives and to identify additional issues and challenges faced by users, schools and EPSB. Participants then rated how significant a challenge or barrier each issue theme is for schools and community users in achieving improved access to school facilities by community groups.

No new issue themes were identified during the March 2006 consultation meetings. While themes were clarified and there were minor differences in how each group rated the significance of each theme as a challenge, both November 2005 and March 2006 consultation participants identified the same set of issues.

The following are the issue themes and a summary of related challenges developed by consultation group participants in both November and March. There were a number of specific examples offered by participants that are not directly quoted in the report. Based on March 2006 consultation group participants' rankings, they are in descending order of significance as a challenge to be addressed. A comparison to the order determined by November consultation group participants follows.

Issue Theme	Specific Issues & Challenges
<i>Funding Adequacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No specific funding allocated by the provincial government to cover the cost of community access to schools for recreation and leisure in support of healthy communities ▪ The operation and maintenance budgets of the District and its schools are inadequate to cover custodial, security, rising utility rates and other costs related to community access, in particular for smaller schools that have limited budget flexibility ▪ District allocation to local schools in support of community use of school facilities is not enough to cover actual school costs ▪ Education funding cannot be used to subsidize community use of schools ▪ School district funding shortages limit funds for the retro-fitting and construction of schools to make them suitable for a variety of community uses, and more cost efficient to run, e.g., green technologies
<i>Space and Time Booking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bookings for community users are confirmed too late into the year ▪ Cancellations to accommodate school, City of Edmonton or unpredicted events such as elections, cause rescheduling and financial problems for users ▪ Lack of advance detailed information about school use of facilities, e.g., for practices, games, tournaments, etc., unnecessarily reduces availability

	<p>of space for community users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lack of a single and centralized booking system to facilitate booking▪ Edmonton Public Schools and user group data is not always current and accurate, and errors are also a problem
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Issue Theme	Specific Issues & Challenges
<i>Access to Local Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some schools provide limited or no access to the community ▪ Some schools are in extremely high demand because of the amenities they offer, limiting access by local users, while other schools are considered less desirable because of the facilities offered and/or their locations ▪ Local access is impeded by city-wide distribution of space without consideration for the City's quadrants ▪ Closed schools limit local access and increase demand on nearby schools
<i>Facility Use Limitations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities are not always ready for users, e.g., dirty gym floor, door to school or gym not open for use at prescribed time, groups run over time, etc. ▪ Access denied due to a lack of custodial staff ▪ The provision of appropriate supervision to ensure the safety and security of school staff and facilities is limited by a collective agreement, cost, insurance and safety codes ▪ High costs/fees for user groups accessing schools on weekends ▪ A very busy school challenges custodians to find time to clean facilities efficiently and effectively, particularly between users ▪ There is no mechanism for adult users, who are willing to pay more to secure access to school facilities to do so ▪ It can be hard to find custodial staff to work overtime, especially long weekends ▪ Edmonton Catholic Schools allows access to its facilities later in the evening than does Edmonton Public, resulting in the perception of less access and less flexible access to Edmonton Public Schools ▪ Community access to some schools shut down for up to six weeks when physical education modules such as gymnastics are being taught ▪ Heavier use by schools to meet provincial physical education requirements and longer hours of use by school teams, impacts on availability for community users ▪ Public transportation does not always facilitate use of school facilities in off hours ▪ Access to parking for community users is a challenge, especially when school and community events coincide, and can be aggravated by poor signage ▪ Inadequate snow removal sometimes limits access to "secondary" school doors, which are sometimes the primary access for community users
<i>Transparency & Accountability by EPSB</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of broad and specific data relating to: availability of time in public schools; use of time by community groups; use of schools by students and teachers after hours and on weekends; true cost of community access to schools; revenue received EPSB from the rental of school facilities and how that revenue is expended/allocated; actual needs of community users; etc. ▪ Users want public accounting of how user group fees are used by EPSB ▪ When and where space is available is not now always transparent, nor is information about why access to some schools is limited or not offered at all
<i>Space/Time</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some times and spaces made available by Edmonton Public are not considered useable/desirable by some user groups, e.g., not during prime

<i>Appropriateness and Usability</i>	time or days, not in peak season, inadequate space <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Time and space allocated is not always appropriate for the users' ages and/or the activity being undertaken▪ Limited hours/days for some groups, e.g., dance and gymnastics, is viewed as unnecessarily rigid and leading to unused desirable times▪ There is a perception changes to the amount of time a community group can use is sometimes arbitrary, e.g., youth group hours cut back without understood reasoning
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Issue Theme	Specific Issues & Challenges
<i>Behaviours of Some Users</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Property damage and excessive wear and tear ▪ Non-adherence to local school policies and/or JUA requirements, e.g., self-supervision, parking restrictions, in/out times, inconsistency attendance, etc. ▪ Lack of care/respect for school equipment and facilities ▪ Concern about EPSB staff who work alone ▪ Inadequate supervision of minors accompanying users increases the risk of injuries, damage to schools, law suits, etc. ▪ Some users indicate that sometimes school staff do not demonstrate respect of users' needs, e.g., doors to school not unlocked on time, inappropriate communication by school staff with users
<i>Implementation of Joint Use Policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decisions by Edmonton Public Schools and school principals sometimes seem arbitrary and without supporting rationale ▪ The spirit of the District's policy to accommodate community use of school facilities does not always seem to be adhered to by principals, with some principals allowing use of facilities that does not go through the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) allocation process and others not making their schools available for community use ▪ Not all City facilities are covered by the Joint Use Agreement, e.g., golf courses and facilities where the City is a partner, such as indoor soccer facilities, outdoor baseball diamonds, Kinsmen Field House ▪ In some instances it appears access is determined by last minute decisions by custodial staff, e.g., deciding the classroom booked is not available and the user group is left to hold its meeting in the hall ▪ Some users expressed a concern that they are treated as an inconvenience by EPSB rather than a partner
<i>Communications Concerns</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor understanding of roles and responsibilities by a considerable number of users and schools, as well as the practical implementation of the agreement day to day, e.g., points of contact, processes, protocols, decision making responsibilities, etc. ▪ Centralized booking at EPSB means limited communication between schools and users, but principals are expected to communicate and/or mediate when issues arise between users and residents, e.g., parking, noise and vandalism ▪ Inadequate communication between schools and Edmonton Public Schools central booking system regarding changes to school availability
<i>Historic Rights</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Historic rights are recognized as a very important element of the JUA, however protection of historic uses is not seen to reflect/consider increases or decreases in population, participation in specific activities and new activities ▪ Historic uses can be lost without a suitable replacement time and space ▪ Casual users do not always feel they receive adequate consideration in terms of the allocation of space and time
<i>Facility Design Suitability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School facilities are not designed for some of the activities being undertaken by users, and the growing demand for space that can accommodate activities such as soccer ▪ School designs often to do not consider community use and security

	requirements to facilitate community use, e.g., separation of classrooms and offices from gymnasiums and other public spaces
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Comparison of March 2006 and November 2005 Issue Theme Rankings

As noted previously, the issue themes identified during the March 2006 consultations were the same as those that emerged during the November 2005 consultations, but there were some modest variations in the ranking of the issues and challenges.

The top three issues deemed of most significance by participants in March and November were identical – funding adequacy, space and time booking and access to local schools. The most significant variance was that March 2006 participants rated transparency and accountability as more highly significant than did the participants in the November 2005 sessions, and placed less importance on the issue of facility design suitability.

The following compares the March 2006 issue theme rankings with the November 2005 rankings.

March, 2006	November, 2005
1. Funding adequacy	1. Funding adequacy
2. Space & time booking	2. Space & time booking
3. Access to local schools	3. Access to local schools
4. Facility use limitations	4. Space/time appropriateness & usability
5. Transparency & accountability by EPSB	5. Implementation of Joint Use Policies
6. Space/time appropriateness & usability	6. Facility design suitability
7. Behaviours of some users	7. Communications concerns
8. Implementation of Joint Use Policies	8. Behaviours of some users
9. Communications concerns	9. Historic rights
10. Historic rights	10. Transparency and accountability by EPSB
11. Facility design suitability	11. Facility use limitations

Comparison of Detailed Rankings of Issue Themes in Terms of Significance

Issue Themes	November, 2005		March, 2005	
	High Sig	Mod Sig	High Sig	Mod Sig
Funding Adequacy	95%	5%	65%	17%
Space & Time Booking	60%	35%	50%	33%
Access to Local Schools	45%	50%	50%	29%
Space/Time Usability and Appropriateness	45%	40%	42%	35%
Adherence to JUA Policies	45%	35%	37%	29%
Facility Use Limitations	50%	25%	40%	38%
Facility Design Suitability	25%	55%	19%	37%
Communications Concerns	16%	63%	33%	33%
Behaviours of Some Users	20%	50%	37%	31%

Historic Rights	26%	42%	25%	42%
Transparent/Accountable	26%	37%	44%	31%

Comparison of Issue Theme Rankings among March 2006 Consultation Participants

When looking at the rankings of significance of the issue themes identified in the March 2006 consultations, there was general consistency among the three categories of participants - community users, Edmonton Public staff and parents - in terms of the relative significance of most of the issue themes. The following are the few areas where there were variations in rankings of significance:

1. Overall community users tended to rate all issues as more significant than did EPSB staff or parents
2. EPSB staff and parents felt that the issue theme *behaviour of some user groups* was more significant than did community users
3. Community users felt that *implementation of Joint Use policies by EPSB* was more significant than did EPSB staff

The issue themes that emerged from the four March 2006 consultation sessions were presented to a group of ten school principals for consideration. There was consensus that the themes presented were the correct issues of significance from the perspective of school principals, particularly issue themes one to four - funding adequacy, space & time booking, access to local schools and facility use limitations.

Directions Edmonton Public Schools Should Consider Pursuing

The directions Edmonton Public Schools should consider pursuing as identified by the November 2005 Consultation Group were presented to March 2006 consultation meeting participants. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions of clarity, to share their perspectives and to identify any additional directions they would like Edmonton Public to pursue. Participants then indicated the top six directions they felt Edmonton Public Schools should pursue during the JUA Review.

Six of the eight primary areas of direction that emerged in November 2005, emerged again in March 2006, with the addition of the need to clarify insurance, safety, occupational health and safety and security requirements and limitations, and to pursue equity in the contributions made by JUA partners and in the benefits received.

Agreement of these as the primary directions to be pursued was consistent among all sectors involved in the consultation - EPSB staff, community users and parents - including EPSB principals. However, Edmonton Public Schools staff felt it was much more important to clarify insurance, safety, occupational health and safety and security requirements and limitations than did any other group.

The primary areas of direction that emerged in 2006 compared to those identified in 2005 were:

March 2006	November 2005
1. Pursue additional sources of funding to cover costs associated with the use of school facilities by community groups. Seeking funding from the Alberta government was highlighted by a number of participants.	1. Pursue additional sources of funding to cover costs associated with the use of school facilities by community groups. Seeking funding from the Alberta government was highlighted by a number of participants. (Ontario apparently provides a special allocation to schools to facilitate community use.)
2. Find more affordable solutions to facilitate the opening of schools as much as possible, particularly during peak times such as evenings and weekends.	2. Advocate for an easy to access, real-time, online space/time booking system.
3. Support and facilitate all district schools serving as community facilities with increased access to prime time and space, but not at the expense of education.	3. Support broadening the range of organizations and facilities as partners in the JUA, e.g., Alberta Government, community leagues, YWCAs/YMCAs and indoor soccer facilities. Consider expansion of the Joint Use Steering Committee membership to include organizations such as the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues or a large "city-wide" recreation user group.
4. Advocate for a single online, real-time, time/space booking system.	4. Find more affordable solutions to facilitate the opening of schools as much as possible, particularly during peak times such as evenings and weekends
5. Clarify insurance, safety, occupational health and safety and security requirements and limitations to ensure they are appropriately considered in the JUA Review.	5. Support and facilitate all district schools serving as community facilities, with increased access to prime time and space.
6. Pursue equity in the contributions made by JUA partners and in the benefits received.	6. Increase awareness and understanding of all partners, including schools and community users of the processes, issues and challenges associated with community use of school facilities.
7. Support broadening involvement in the JUA, e.g., community leagues, provincial government, City-partnered facilities such as soccer and baseball facilities, Kinsmen, golf courses, etc.	7. Support city parks master plan acknowledging and considering the requirements of the JUA, and support consideration of how recent partnership between the City and third parties in the development and running of recreation facilities impacts access to facilities under the

	JUA.
8. Increase awareness and understanding of all partners, including schools and community users of the processes, issues and challenges associated with community use of school facilities.	8. Reaffirm principles that support active lifestyles

Community Use of Sports Fields

Issues and Challenges

March 2006 Consultation Group participants were asked to identify the issues and challenges faced by community user groups and local schools in meeting needs and expectations in terms of access to sports fields adjacent to Edmonton Public schools. Participants also rated how significant a challenge or barrier each issue is in facilitating access to sports fields.

The following is a summary of the primary issues and challenges identified by meeting participants. Issues/challenges are presented in descending order of significance.

Issues and Challenges Summary

1. Inadequate field maintenance – lines, mowing, land leveling, pot hole fills, surface maintenance, redevelopment as is appropriate and necessary
2. Overuse of fields which causes short and longer term damage – limited number of fields and short sport seasons put pressure on fields over a brief time period, and unlicensed use by formal and informal groups adds to the damage
3. Lack of timely clean up by the City following events and activities – garbage in and around fields leaves a bad impression of schools
4. Positioning of fields, trees and poles can present safety issues for players – men batting toward a children’s soccer game
5. Lack of adequate parking, particularly when multiple events underway – lots not always cleared of snow in a timely manner in winter, parking signage not always clear, school and community event conflicts create parking pressures
6. Lack of understanding of booking system for fields and related processes, data regarding field usage, decision making criteria, responsibilities and “go to” contacts
7. City slow to develop new sports fields, in particular lands designated for sports fields

Student Use of City Facilities

Issues and Challenges

March 2006 Consultation Group participants were asked to identify the issues and challenges faced by schools in their efforts to secure appropriate access by students to City facilities. Participants also rated how significant a challenge or barrier each issue is in facilitating student access to City facilities.

The following is a summary of the primary issues and challenges identified by meeting participants. Issues/challenges are presented in descending order of significance.

Issues and Challenges Summary

1. Increasing incremental costs for schools associated with using City facilities – life guards, ice cleaning, etc.
2. Transportation ease and costs – particularly expensive for schools located in the outer reaches of the District; the priority is to transport children to and from schools, restricting the times buses are available and where students can go
3. JUA does not cover all City-funded/partnered facilities, facilities other than those designed for sports, recreation or leisure, or community league facilities – local rinks and tennis courts, indoor soccer facilities, multipurpose recreation facilities, velodrome, golf courses, skate board parks, Shaw Conference Centre, Jubilee Auditorium, etc.
4. Increasing demands - # of sports schools, # of teams, population growth, active aging population with time, daily physical activity requirements to be met by schools
5. City's obligations to schools under the JUA are unclear – specific allocations of times and spaces for schools' use are not determined in consultation with schools; City facilities not always ready for student use, e.g., maintenance; City staff not always clear about their obligations
6. Inadequate school funding to take full advantage of available City facilities
7. Curricular demands make it difficult to always find time to take advantage of available facilities
8. Lack of an easy-to-use, centralized, online booking system for City facilities

Decision Making Principles

Participants were asked to brainstorm the principles they felt should underpin decisions made to determine appropriate access by students to City of Edmonton facilities. The following is a summary of the principles identified:

Decision Making Principles Summary

1. Support and facilitate “active living” by students – plan and manage for it; make meeting daily physical activity mandate possible; partner and cooperate to support access to facilities
2. Maximize use of City facilities by students - Broaden access to include City-partnered and/or partially funded facilities, and a broader range of City facilities beyond those designed for sports and recreation
3. Recognition that students are today important and paying users (fees and taxes) as well as potential long term future users
4. Education and curricula requirements take priority
5. Easy to access information, and booking and management systems
6. Student safety is a priority – risk management policies and procedures in place and qualified supervision on all field trips

7. No or minimal cost for students to use City facilities

Review of Consultation Meeting Findings by School Principals

On March 22, 2006 a group of 10 Edmonton Public Schools principals were provided background on Edmonton Public Schools internal JUA consultation process and the upcoming JUA tripartite consultation process and review. Participants were advised of the draft key findings flowing from Edmonton Public Schools internal JUA consultation. This presentation was followed by input from principals on the consultation findings and the directions Edmonton Public Schools to consider pursuing during the JUA Review.

Areas of Agreement

- There was consensus that the issue themes presented were the correct issues of significance from the perspective of school principals, with particular agreement with issue themes one to four - funding adequacy, space & time booking, access to local schools and facility use limitations.
- Resourcing was identified as the number one issue for schools
- Overall schools have been moving away from working as closely with their communities, particularly since the introduction of centralized booking of facilities

Some Concerns and Considerations

- The mandate to provide recreation and leisure facilities belongs to the City, but much of the dissatisfaction with access is directed at Edmonton Public Schools
- School councils, which raise funds for amenities, e.g., computers and gym equipment, may feel they too should have a say in how their investments are used
- Security and safety of staff, students and users must be a serious consideration and it must be clear who is responsible at what points in time
- Facilitating one-off special events should be easier to do under the JUA and more creative approaches to space and time management need to be sought by the partners
- Partners must be realistic about the likelihood of the Provincial Government supporting community use of school facilities and school use of City facilities, particularly in the near term.
- Views that Edmonton Public is not as cooperative, forthright and accommodating as it may be is disconcerting

- Schools must also consider long-term costs resulting from wear and tear on facilities, particularly in light of increased space and time demands for activities that are harder on facilities
- Some facilities are under considerable stress because they offer particular amenities or are located in newer residential areas where facilities in general are limited
- Local users should be given priority and times should consider age appropriateness
- Users should be responsible to manage and supervise their participants and family and friends who join them and to advise adjacent neighbours about events and activities that might result in tight parking, noise, etc.

Directions Edmonton Public Schools Should Consider Pursuing

- Full recovery of costs associated with facilitating community access to school facilities – utilities, maintenance, repairs, custodial
- Support community use of schools facilities, but maintain education as the highest priority for schools
- Preferred pricing for schools/student access to City facilities
- Broaden access under the JUA to a wider range of City, City-partnered, user and community league facilities, even the opening of gyms and spaces in closed schools is possible if the City/users or others are willing to cover the costs
- Access to local schools by local community groups should be a priority consideration
- Institute a safety/security protocol that adheres to OH&S requirements and makes responsibilities clear
- Institute a booking protocol that considers the needs of all users – casual, major sports organizations, children, adults, etc.
- Edmonton Public Schools might want to consider how it needs to benefit from the JUA for involvement to be “value-added”
- All partners and users should adhere to the tenets of transparency

Convergence Consulting Group Preliminary Findings from Personal Interviews

Interview Process

Cross section of stakeholders (9)

- Edmonton Public Schools
- Edmonton Catholic Schools
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Sport Council
- Football
- Adult Indoor Sports

The Interviews of Stakeholders Think is Working

The partnership

- Joint Use Agreement principles, guidelines and philosophy
- Mechanism for the best use of public facilities

Sub-committees give people a voice

City acting as booking agent for Catholic Schools

The Interviews of Stakeholders Think is Not Working

Booking system

- Two processes
- No central booking process
- EPSB not part of centralized booking

Access

- Availability on evenings and weekends
- Inconsistencies in access (EPSB/ECS)
- Difficult to access school facilities outside of normal joint use hours
- Frequency of being bumped

Increasing demand

- Heavy demand for prime times
- There are more users than ever before

Inefficiencies

- Too much time spent on rules and administration of fees
- Inconsistency in application of fee exemptions
- The time it takes to get a decision or make changes is excessive

Education

- Need for continual education of staff and users
- There is a lack of understanding of the Joint Use Agreement

Field Maintenance

- Lack of resources for field lining

Other

- Accounting information from City
- Splintering of the three partners over some issues
- Statistical analysis (of usage patterns) is poor
- Joint Use Agreement not receiving the recognition at the provincial, municipal or district levels
- Lack of customer focus (Tenants of the agreement are being driven more by what is good for the three partners)

The Interviews Stakeholders One Wish

- Everyone gets the access they need
- Joint Use Agreement be taken more seriously by city council
- Recognition that the Joint Use Agreement takes dollars to make it work and that the Joint Use Agreement is contributing to the health and wellness of Edmontonians
- Build more facilities
- More provincial funding

The Interviews Stakeholders Other Comments

- Schools are being taken off-line putting increased pressure on the remaining facilities
- Budget pressures on the schools result in choices that affect access
- Need for the partners to share their vision of the future with each other
- Sports that were once seasonal are being played the whole year
- Arenas are only being used 51 per cent of the time
- We may have to pay more for increased access
- Take a look at Calgary's Joint Use Agreement and see how that is being operated
- Need to determine what it is costing each partner and share that information

Joint Use Agreement Summary

Prepared by: Convergence Consulting Group Inc.

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