



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 12.1.1
Community Planning & Economic Development Committee
November 18, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Planning Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Denise Schofield, Executive Director, Parks & Recreation

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 29, 2021

SUBJECT: Youth Live Program Job Experience Update

ORIGIN

This report originated from a staff review of the current Youth Live program as well a staff review of food service offerings at the Sackville Sports Stadium.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, subsection 79A (1) provides:

Section 79A (1)

Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

(a) The expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

Section 58 (5)

The Council may make and carry out a contract, perform an act, do anything, or provide a service for which the Municipality or the Council is authorized by an Act of the Legislature to spend or borrow money.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning & Economic Standing Committee (CPED) recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve a new Youth Live job experience opportunity for a small-scale food service operation located at the Sackville Sports Stadium;

RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to give notice to terminate the Youth Live Enviro Depot lease at 947 Mitchell Street; and
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to give notice to terminate the Enviro Depot operator's agreement with Divert Nova Scotia.

BACKGROUND

The Youth Live Program is a supportive work experience program that offers up to 24 weeks of workplace mentoring and development. Youth Live focuses on life, leadership, and job skill development for youth between 16 and 24 who are not in school and, are facing employment barriers. Employment barriers include, but are not limited to, lack of job experience, non-completion of high school, learning disabilities, personal management challenges, criminal history, mental health concerns, and a history of addiction. Youth participants in the program receive a stipend for their time, energy, and commitment.

Youth Live has two main streams: 1) business operations and 2) mentoring. Business operations currently include on-the-job training at both the Youth Live Enviro Depot at 947 Mitchell Street and the Youth Live Warehouse at 1300 St Margaret's Bay Road. The three service operations are: bottle recycling services, paper recycling services, and green cart delivery/repair services. The bottle recycling service is provided at 947 Mitchell Street with the paper recycling and green cart services provided at the Youth Live Warehouse at 1300 St. Margarets Bay Road. Mentoring occurs at both locations and includes guidance and coaching from staff, as well as skill-building modules which are designed to prepare the participants for future employment.

Youth Live's primary goal is to improve a participant's employability skills with a focus on the following nine employability skills: attitude, motivation, presentation, teamwork, time management, adaptability, stress management, accountability, and confidence. These nine skills build on one another during the participant's time in the program to prepare them for employment. Mentoring, coaching, and continuous support is provided by staff to assist in the growth and development of these employability skills. The low participant-to-staff ratio (three or four youth to one staff) provides staff with the opportunity to identify emerging customer service issues and to provide coaching to ensure the youth completes all required tasks.

Depending on the opportunities within the municipality and the participant's progress within the program, a co-op placement may be offered. These co-op placements aim to give a four-week work placement outside of the normal Youth Live operations and occur within the municipality's internal business units. The placements are usually administrative in nature and provide the participant with an opportunity to have an office environment experience. These special projects give participants exposure to unique situations which allows them to develop additional skills, other than those gained in the program.

DISCUSSION

The Youth Live program has operated its business operations without undergoing any major updates or reviews since its inception in 1995. A review of the program was undertaken in 2019 to assess whether the existing business operations were meeting the necessary experiences required for youth to obtain future employment. The review also looked at how to best prepare youth to meet the employment readiness and expectations of potential employers. Past program graduates, current participants and other youth service providers were engaged as part of the review.

The review concluded that the existing business operations do not offer enough experience in employment fields of interest to the youth, such as food services, administration, and retail. These areas of employment were identified as being essential for securing future employment, rated higher than labour intensive experiences and still relevant post COVID-19 impacts. The review also found an overlap among existing

operational experiences: for example, both the green cart and the Enviro Depot operations focus on warehouse labour. The list of skills attained in the program by service area can be found in Attachment 1.

By updating the work experience that is currently offered, the program will evolve to provide participants with the skills they need that are relevant for both youth and employers; while diminishing the risk of the program plateauing or becoming irrelevant. Expanding into the food service and the administrative sectors will assist with recruitment and will reach youth who are not interested in a labor-intensive experience. Over the past two years, Youth Live has faced recruitment challenges specifically in attracting a diversity of participants. Offering a broader range of work experience opportunities will assist with overcoming these challenges. Aligning with the municipality's core values of diversity and inclusion, the proposed changes to the program would make it more accessible to all potential participants. Current operations require a fair amount of physical movement with loading and offloading fleet vehicles whereas the job experiences offered through a food service operation can provide greater opportunities for inclusion for individuals who have physical disabilities or limitations.

Following this review, staff had internal discussions about potential Youth Live food service locations and synergies within the Parks and Recreation business unit. Sackville Sports Stadium (SSS) was discussed as a possible future location, due to on-going food service provider issues. Until 2019, SSS provided food service to the local community since the facility opened in 1990. Various independent providers and franchises have taken on the service, however, over the course of the past 12 years, SSS has struggled to secure a reliable, long term food service provider. These vacancies have left the facility and clients without a formal food service provider.

Opportunity: Small Scale Food Service at Sackville Sports Stadium

It is proposed that Youth Live change its operations from the Enviro Depot bottle exchange to operating a small-scale food service at the SSS. This shift would meet the current employment readiness expectations of employers and participants while supporting Halifax Regional Council's strategic priority outcomes of:

- Economic Growth
- Safe, Involved and, Inclusive Communities
- Engaged & Skilled People and,
- Diverse, Inclusive & Equitable Environment

The SSS is an ideal food service location for Youth Live for the following reasons:

- The space has been outfitted for canteen style food services, which minimizes staffing and resources.
- Provides accessible workspace for participants and patrons.
- Would provide consistent food services for students, SSS participants and the community.
- SSS is on a major Halifax Transit route making it accessible for participants who primarily rely on public transportation.
- SSS is within proximity of the "The Den" multi-service youth centre which will provide participants with easier access to youth supports

Youth Live staff and participants would operate the food services Monday to Friday, during daytime hours. The evening and weekend hours of operation would be staffed by casual employees. The food service would offer pre-made and/or ready-to-serve products which would support non-complex food operation and minimize food preparation.

As part of the proposed change of operations to food service, staff conducted a review of similar social enterprises across Canada to determine how they are resourced and supported. A summary of these findings can be found in Attachment 2.

Updating the Youth Live Program

The SSS food service would offer an entry level experience to the youth to prepare participants for employment in the food service and retail industries. In addition, participants who successfully graduate from the Youth Live program can be considered for future employment opportunities as casual staff at the SSS's food service area. As a result, this approach would also help provide a feeder system for potential casual staff.

Operating in the food service sector will necessitate the development of new training modules. Participants will receive Food Safety certification as well as increased customer service training due to the direct interaction with the public. Both training opportunities will assist participants in obtaining future employment.

Overall, the proposed change would increase the type of work experience provided to the youth. Warehouse labour experience will continue at the Youth Live Warehouse and the new program will provide food service and retail experience.

Enviro Depot

As noted, the Youth Live Program currently includes leased space at 947 Mitchell Street where the bottle recycling service is provided. A change to the business operations to include the proposed food service component would result in the elimination of that service at the Mitchell Street Enviro Depot. The depot at 947 Mitchell Street would remain operational until the completion of both the lease and operator agreements. Currently, both the lease agreement for 947 Mitchell Street and the Enviro Depot operator's agreement with Divert Nova Scotia require 6 month notice to terminate. With the change to the business operations, HRM would need to provide notice to cease the operation at the Mitchell Street location.

Timeline

If the Youth Live service delivery change is approved, the goal would be to have the new food service program running fulltime by May 2022. This successful start date for the new program would allow for the close out of operations at the Enviro Depot, as well as the procurement set up of food service and participant training. The estimated hiring of the four SSS casual staff to operate the food services would align with the opening date of the new Youth Live program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The table below outlines the net budget of replacing the Enviro Depot operation with a food service model at Sackville Sports Stadium. The change would result in the loss of both revenue and costs of operations of the Enviro Depot which would overall have a small net cost reduction associated with that service.

A proposed 3-year budget for Food Services outlines that SSS Food Services would achieve an estimated gross revenue of \$234,333 annually. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SSS had an average of 20,000 patrons visit the facility on a weekly basis to attend various activities. To achieve the proposed revenue, 5% of the patrons attending the facility would need to make an average transaction of \$5.00 weekly.

Revenue	Enviro Depot	SSS Year 1	SSS Year 2	SSS Year 3
Food Sales		175,750	181,022	186,453
Beverage Sales		58,583	60,341	62,151
Total Revenues	191,600	234,333	241,363	248,604
Expenditures				
Compensation and Benefits		74,480	76,714	79,016
External Services		500	500	500
Supplies		2,500	2,500	2,500

Equipment & Building	99,536*	12,000	5,000	5,000
Cost of Sale & Other Goods	105,400	121,667	125,182	128,802
Total Expenditures	204,936	211,147	209,896	215,818
Net Surplus/Deficit	(13,336)	23,186	31,467	32,786

*Enviro Depot is a leased building and not owned by HRM

RISK CONSIDERATION

The Youth Live program has procedures and policies that staff adhere to in order to mitigate the risk associated with youth behaviours, cash management, and to ensure food safety. The risk of behavioural matters from participants when engaging with the public is low due to the low participant-to-staff ratios and training modules offered to the youth. No participant will be deployed to a customer service area without first being properly trained. Facility signage will also aid in the awareness of the program to inform customers that it is a learning environment; encouraging customers to show patience and support, as participants gain experience.

There is risk during the initial startup of food service that planned revenue may be lower than anticipated until awareness of the service. This associated risk is mitigated through monitoring of sales, inventory management and delivery of a communication plan

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Information provided in this report was obtained through a program engagement survey that was completed by past and current participants. Additionally, eight local employers were consulted on what skills they look for in a potential candidate.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no negative environmental implications to the report recommendations. Staff will be environmentally responsible when sourcing packaging for the canteen items to ensure they adhere to the Municipality's Corporate Guidelines for Greening Meetings and Catering Requirements, where applicable.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning & Economic Standing Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the CAO to maintain the current model of job experience for the Youth Live program by continuing the Youth Live Enviro Depot lease at 947 Mitchell Street; and Enviro Depot operator's agreement with Divert Nova Scotia.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Youth Live's Transferable Skills
Attachment 2: Food Service Program Scan

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Paul Forrest, Manager, Youth Live Program. 902-430-7402

Youth Live's Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are a core set of skills and abilities which can be applied to a wide range of jobs and industries. They are usually learned over time, and can be gained from previous employment, volunteer work, hobbies, or even while at home. Youth Live's operations promote the following set of transferable skills:

Transferable Skills by Operation						
Operation:	Green Cart Delivery & Repair	Paper Recycling	Enviro Depot	Small- scale Food Service	Admin Co-op Opportunities	Special Projects
Teamwork Skills	X	X	X	X		X
Safety Awareness Skills	X	X	X	X		X
Time Management Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leadership skills	X	X	X	X	X	X
Organizing Skills	X	X	X	X		X
Customer Service Skills	X	X	X	X		X
Data Entry/Collection Skills	X	X	X	X	X	
Material Moving Device Experience	X	X	X		X	
Critical Thinking	X	X	X	X		X
Resilience	X	X	X	X	X	
Sorting Product Experience			X	X		
Scheduling Skills	X	X			X	
Repair Skills	X					
Tool Handling Skills	X					X
Navigation Skills	X					X
Cash Management Skills			X	X		
Advanced Cash Experience				X		
Mathematic Skills				X		
Warehouse Experience	X		X			
Safe Food Handling				X		
Hospitality Training				X		
Supply Ordering				X		
Problem Solving Skills				X	X	X
Organization Skills				X	X	
Technology Systems Skills				X	X	
Literacy Skills				X	X	
Phone Etiquette					X	
Sorting & Filing					X	
Social Media Engagement				X		

Food Service Program Scan

Staff connected with the below food service programs that were operating as a training program and/or social enterprise for youth:

1. Building Futures – Futures Café, Lower Sackville, NS
<https://buildfutures.ca/futures-cafe/>
2. Stone Hearth Bakery, Halifax, NS
<http://www.stonehearth.ca/>
3. Ray of Hope – Morning Glory Café and Catering, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
<https://morningglorycatering.net/>
4. The Town Kitchen, Oakland, California, USA
<https://www.thetownkitchen.com/>
5. I-SEED – Youth Food Project, Oakland, California, USA
<http://youthfoodproject.org/>
6. Baristas Training Program, British Columbia & Ontario
<https://www.supramatic.com/barista.htm>