



***Building Capacity to Engage Women and Girls
in Physical Activity and Sport***

**Town of Aurora
Gender Equity Workshop**

March 1, 2020

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Gender Equity Workshop – Town of Aurora – March 1, 2020
Background and Overview***

The Town of Aurora Community Services Department hosted a one-day workshop March 1, 2020 in the Town of Aurora with 13 Community Partners and Town of Aurora Community Services Department staff. This workshop was facilitated by Canadian Women & Sport. The purpose of this workshop was to develop a plan focused on engaging more women and girls in physical activity and sport within the Town of Aurora.

The main objectives of the consultation were to:

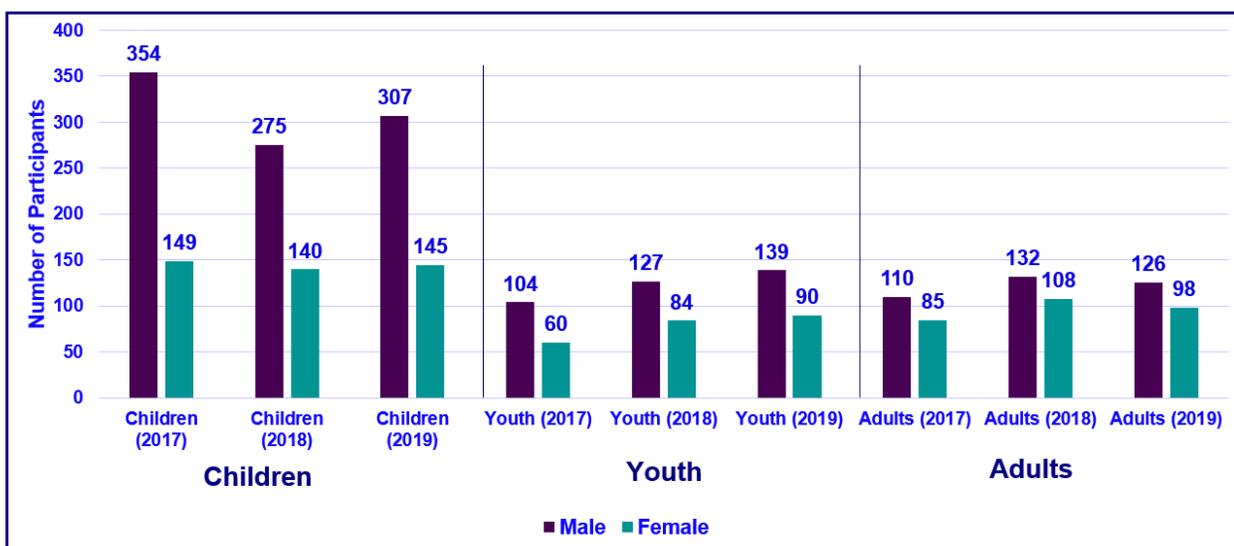
1. Bring together leaders to discuss the results of the gender surveys and prioritize gaps
2. Identify specific strategies to address the gaps
3. Draft a Plan to engage women and girls in physical activity and sport that is aligned with the Town of Aurora Sport Plan

Shelley Callaghan from Canadian Women & Sport facilitated this session and prepared the report. Below is a summary of what was discussed.

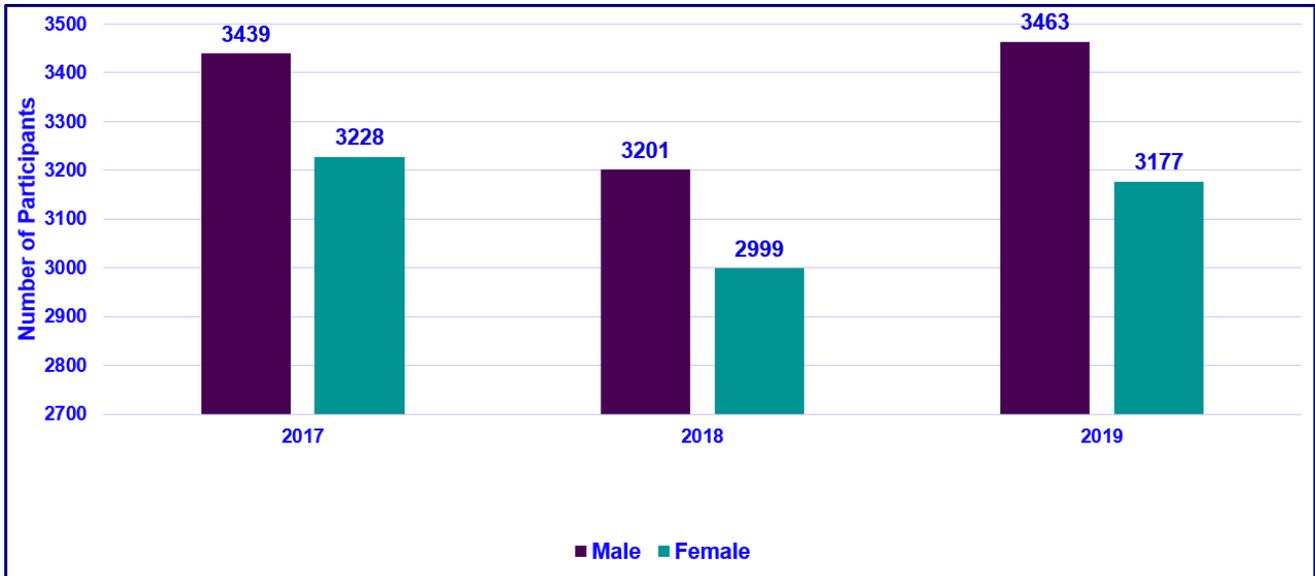
Gender Breakdown of Town of Aurora Program Registrants

The following two charts provide a gender breakdown of individuals, by age, that participated in Town of Aurora run sport and aquatics programs in 2017-2019. In sport programs, more males registered in all categories- children, youth and adults. When further analyzing the types of sports, in the children’s category (age 6-12) the difference was even more significant for co-ed programs like ball hockey where very few girls participated. There was less of a difference in aquatics programs, although these also attracted more male participants.

Town of Aurora Sport Program Registration by Gender (2017-2019)



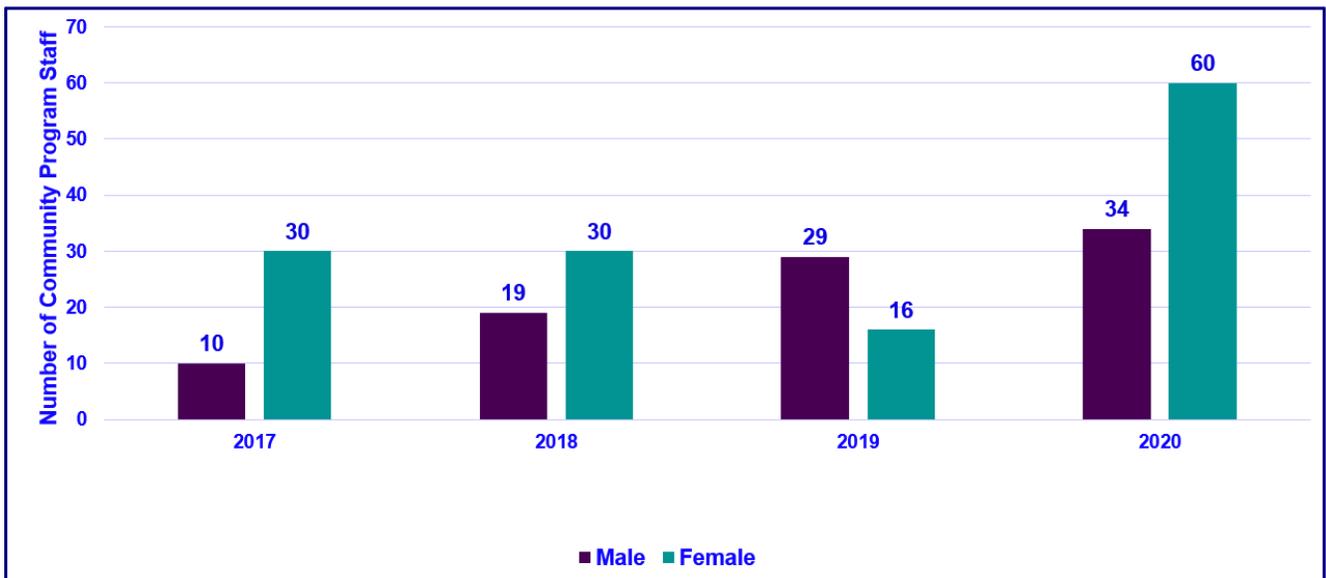
Town of Aurora Aquatics Participants by Gender (2017-2019)



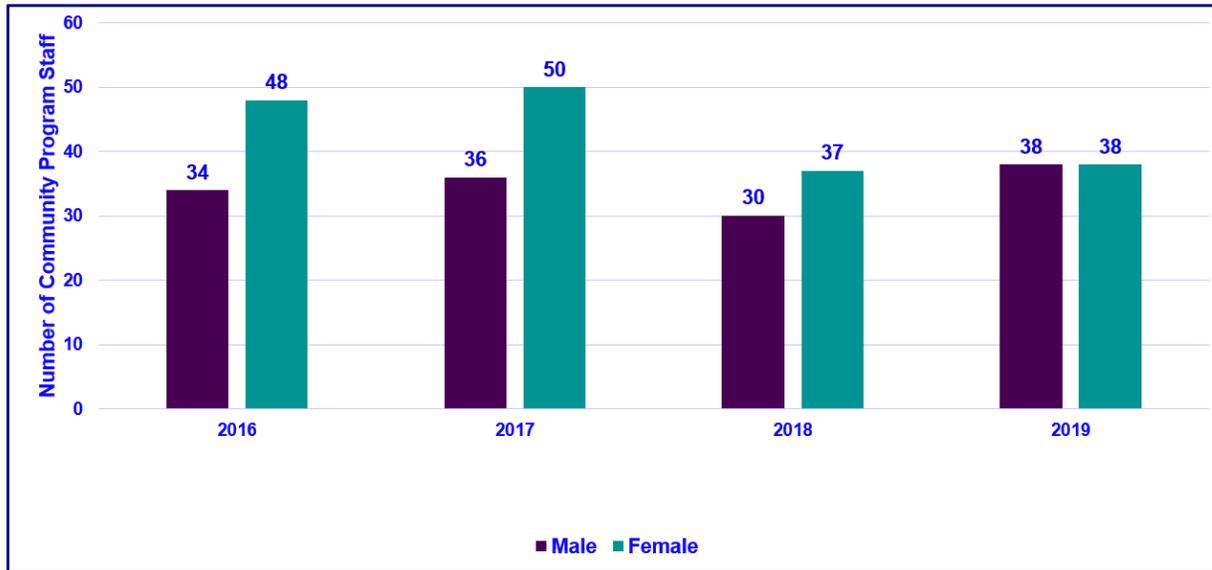
Gender Breakdown of Town of Aurora Program Staff

The following two charts provide a gender breakdown of Town of Aurora Program staff for 2017-2019. For this it is important to note that staff numbers were not broken down specifically to sport as program coordinators are responsible for all recreation programming, including art, fitness, etc. but this does show the breakdown of paid staff. There is a fluctuation from year to year with gender percentages being pretty equal overall with slightly more females on staff in 2019.

Town of Aurora Program Staff by Gender (2017-2020)



Town of Aurora Program Aquatics Leaders by Gender (2016-2019 Fall Program)

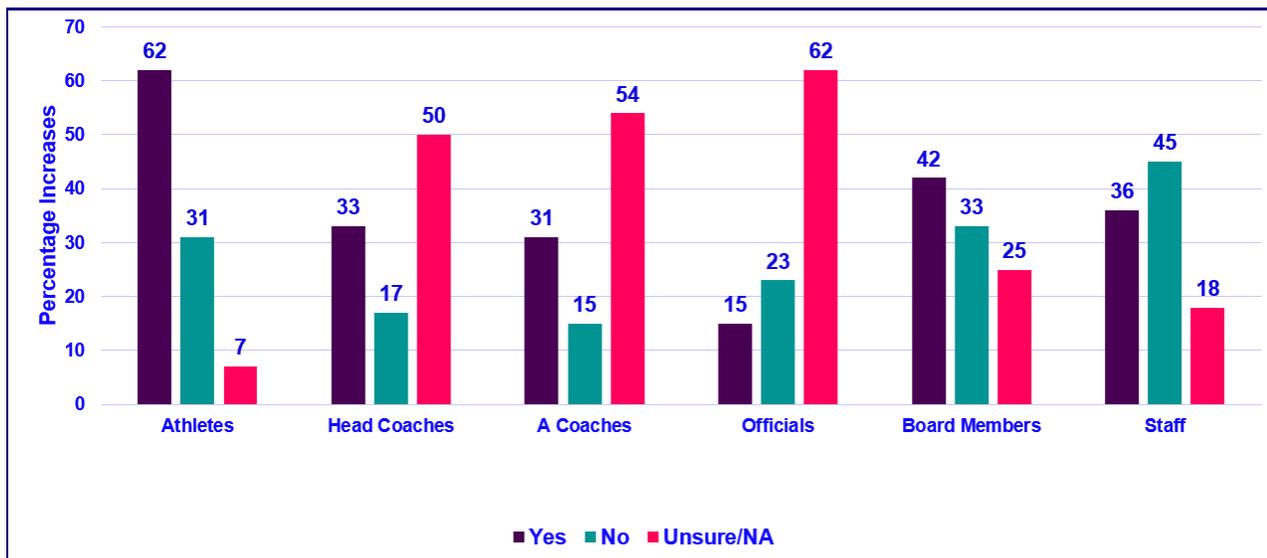


Town of Aurora Community Sport and Physical Activity Partner Data

A survey was sent to Town of Aurora community sport and physical activity partners with fourteen (14) Community Partners responding. One of the questions asked was whether they had seen increases in the number of female athletes, coaches, officials, board members and staff over the last 5 years. From the responses below, many have seen an increase in the number of female athletes and there seems to be some increases in coaching and board members, however the majority were unsure which could point to the fact that data is not being collected or is not available. By collecting and making data available a more accurate response could be presented in the future, however this does show increases in female engagement.

Town of Aurora Community Partner Survey

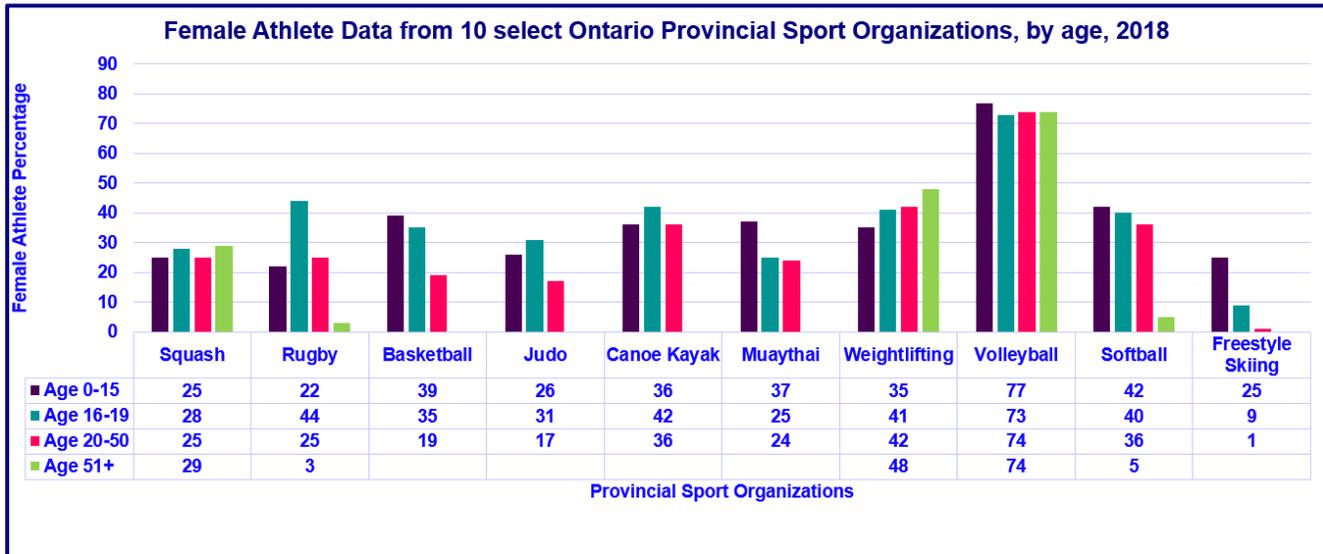
Increases in the number of female athletes, coaches, officials, staff, board members within our organization over the last 5 years



Unfortunately, not all respondents provided actual numbers of female vs male athletes, coaches, officials, board members or staff to provide information on specific data gaps. Therefore, to give participants a sense of these gender ratios, the following data was presented from 10 difference Provincial Sport Organizations.

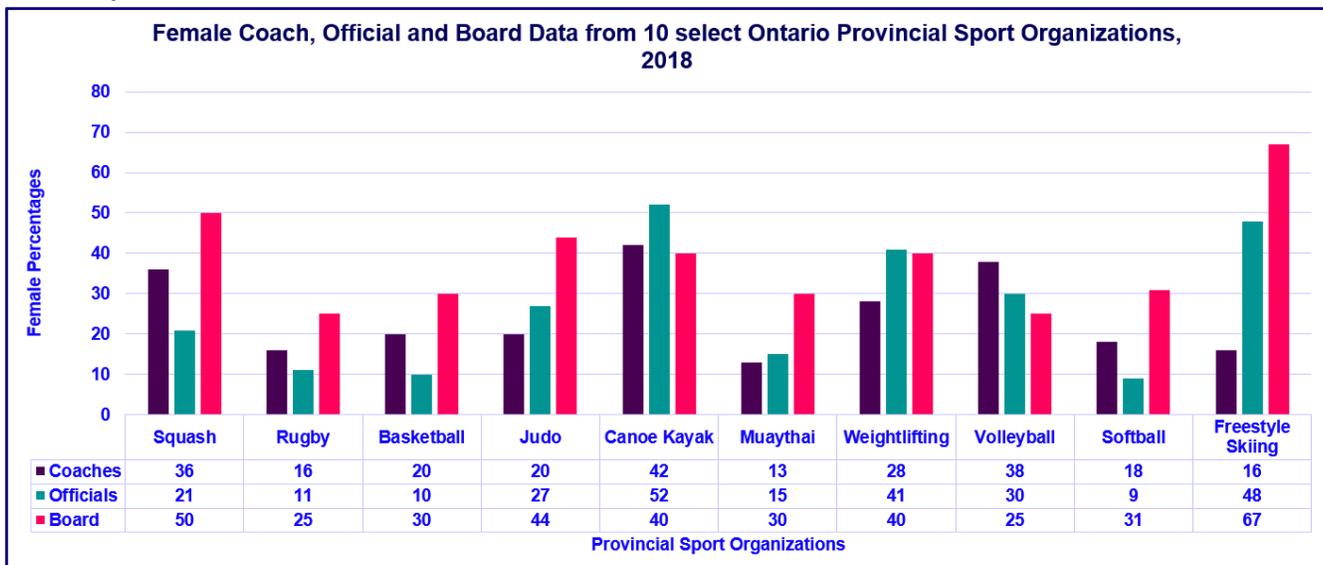
PSO Athlete Data Comparison

Nationally: 41% of girls aged 3 to 17 and 84% of women do not participate in sport



PSO Coach, Official, Board Data Comparison

Nationally: 29% of board members are women; 35% of certified coaches are women; 30% of officials are women



Town of Aurora Community Partner Survey Highlights

In January/February 2020 a survey was sent to Town of Aurora Community Sport and Physical Activity Partners. A total of fourteen (14) surveys were received. Below please find a summary of what came forward from respondents.

Organizational Commitment to Gender Equity

Organizational Commitment	Yes	No	No, but plan to
Gender Equity and/or Inclusion Policy	36%	64%	0%
Gender Equity included in organizational planning	33%	50%	17%
Consult with females to hear concerns, get feedback, etc.	58%	17%	25%
Diversity and inclusion are part of organizational culture	82%	10%	0%
Offer Female-only training, certifications and/or mentoring opportunities	50%	33%	17%
Profile females as role models	83%	0%	17%
Have programs/strategies focused on recruiting and retaining female participants	18%	55%	27%
Create transition opportunities for female participants into other roles (i.e. coaching, board members, etc.)	55%	27%	18%
Regularly review data broken down by gender	30%	40%	30%

Additional Gender Equity considerations that came forward in the Community Partner Survey

- We run a fabulous coach mentoring program for our under 19 coaches and officials to engage our teens in the hope that they will return.
- Over the last 5 years, we have gone from 20% to 60% of our assistant coaches being female. This also while our female head coaches have increased as well.
- We do not control our officials but will be working with our RIC to build the diversity and equity. We have only had 1 female official over the past few years.
- We continually work with our female registrants to ensure we are providing an environment they feel comfortable in. We also hold season kick off, and season close meetings to address any issues or concerns that may come up.
- Provide soft intros - a chance for females to see that any perceived stigma within our sport can be dissolved quite easily, and we are very gender friendly, and provide equity in all areas possible.
- We need to make it easier for working moms to volunteer. Maybe the town could offer a child fun camp where they could drop their children off and then go to their volunteer position without having to worry.
- More availability to play. With more facilities and availability, we would be able to grow exponentially and encourage increased participation at all levels of involvement.
- Indoor field time is cost prohibitive to run try-it or free sessions prior to the season starting so it is difficult to engage new players.

Town of Aurora Organizational Assessment Highlights

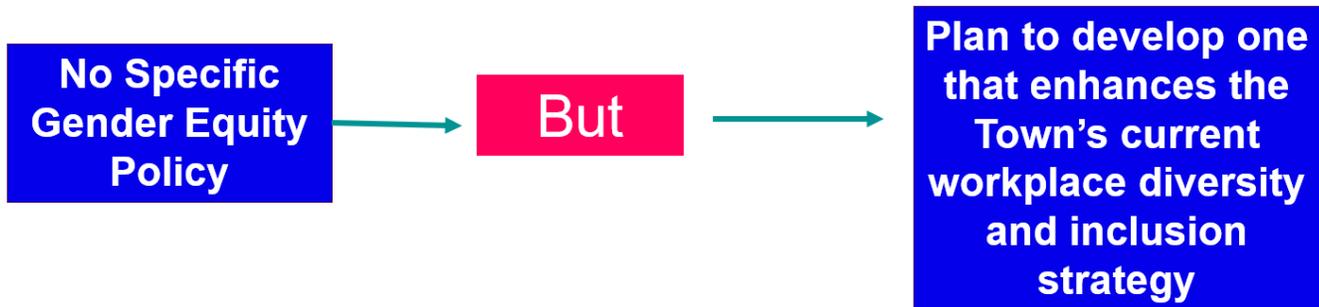
In addition to the Town of Aurora Community Partners survey, the Town of Aurora also completed a gender equity organizational assessment. This survey asked questions about commitment to gender equity through policies and initiatives as well as a review of what gender equity commitments are already in place or could be built upon within the current Town of Aurora Sport Plan.

Below please find highlights of what came forward from the Town of Aurora Gender Equity assessment.

Gender Equity Policy

Currently the Town of Aurora does not have a specific gender equity policy but they do have a workplace diversity and inclusion strategy that gender equity is part of.

Town of Aurora Gender Equity Policy



Town of Aurora Commitments to Gender Equity

- Conducting an inventory of existing participation by gender to determine if there are gaps.
- Partnering with Canadian Women & Sport to gain a full understanding of the landscape, conduct a consultation with Community Partners and develop an implementation strategy aligned with the Sport Plan.
- Recipient of funding through the Canadian Women & Sport WISE Fund to support 20 Female Leaders in 2020 pursue and further their training as coaches, officials and board members.
- Focus groups are being conducted by the Town of Aurora with newcomers and culturally diverse groups to the community to address female participation / wants / needs in the community.
- Town is hosting a Female Leaders in Sport Summit in September to bring together coaches, administrators and youth to provide training, professional development and keynote speakers.

Town of Aurora Commitments to Safe Sport

- Town of Aurora has a 2-deep policy in Town programs so that no leader is alone with children/ youth participating in programs.
- Programs that require changeroom use for swimming – a commitment to always have one male and one female leader.
- Concussion policy is in draft form – Rowan’s Law is a legal requirement.

The Town of Aurora Sport Plan

The Town of Aurora has an existing Sport Plan that outlines themes and recommendations which support gender equity and could be built on to increase gender equity in sport.

Themes	Recommendations
Shared Leadership & Sport System Sustainability	Goal: Demonstrate effective shared leadership in sustaining a strong sport delivery system in Aurora <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Aurora Sport Policy • Provide opportunities (i.e. an annual sport summit, webinars, etc.) for sport organizations to share information, best practices in governance, finance etc. and share resources. • Develop a sustainability model for sport in Aurora
The Sport Participant	Goal: Increase sport participation in Aurora by focusing on the needs of the participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a broader ability to participate in sport through Physical Literacy training • Be more inclusive with respect to persons from low income backgrounds, persons with disabilities, culturally diverse residents and ensure that females have equitable access to sport
Sport Promotion & Celebration	Goal: Promote the benefits of sport participation and recognize and celebrate sport excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a broad-based Sport Marketing and Communications Strategy to increase participation and communicate the value of sport to individuals and the community • Develop a long-range plan for the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame • Host an annual Sport Excellence Summit to continually improve sport delivery in Aurora • Build on current sport celebration and recognition events •
Sport Tourism	Goal: Strengthen Aurora’s ability to attract sport events to the Town and reap the economic impacts of sport tourism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Aurora Sport Tourism Strategy with the resources and supports provided by the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance • Provide incentives and assistance to local sport groups regarding sport tourism • Better support each sport organization’s events and tournaments

Gender Equity Areas of Focus and Considerations

As part of the Town of Aurora Gender Equity Assessment, questions were asked to determine what was currently in place and what could be improved. Based on this, the following gender equity areas of focus were presented as potential gaps and considerations for discussion during the workshop.

Gender Equity Areas of Focus

Developing a female focused recruitment and retention strategy for athletes, coaches, officials, board members, etc.	Incorporating gender equity targets/goals into strategic and operational plans as well as policy
Consistently collecting, monitoring and communicating organizational data to measure gender equity targets and goals	Developing strategies to recruit and retain underserved female populations- disability, Indigenous, newcomers, etc.
Develop partnerships between the Town of Aurora and community sport organizations to increase female engagement as athletes, coaches, officials, etc. (i.e. facility time for try-it opportunities)	Developing female-only training, coaching and development opportunities for females that require gender segregated options
Showcasing female athletes, coaches, officials, staff, board members and staff (i.e. through the website, social media, awards, etc.)	Developing expertise within the Town of Aurora and community organizations to develop gender equity initiatives

Game

Gender Equity Considerations

Marketing and Promotion – how do we elevate female sport? Female athletes, coaches, officials?

Partnerships – how could we work together to advance gender equity?

Training, Education and Professional Development – how can we support female/male staff, coaches, officials, board members, athletes?

Data Collection – how can we consistently collect data to set and measure gender equity targets

Networking and Support– how can we increase networking and better support female coaches, administrators, athletes, etc.? Mentorship Program? Workshop? Facebook? Engaging men as allies?

Funding – how can we engage sponsors? donors? Events? to bring more \$ and profile to female sport

Best Practices – how can we capture these and share them to learn from each other?

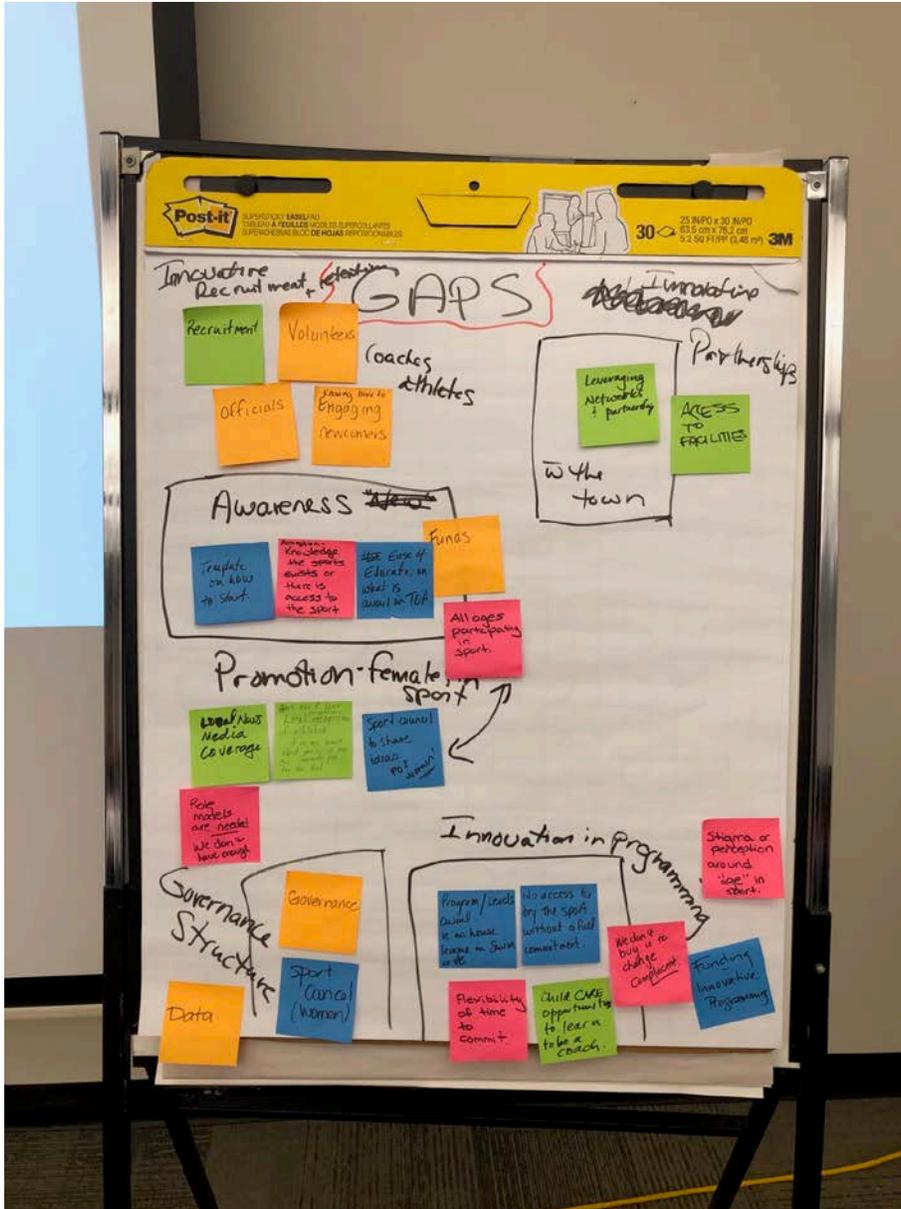
Governance – what policies? regulations? standards? committees? Are needed to advance gender equity?

Selecting Priority Gaps and Setting Targets for 2020, 2021 and Beyond

Based on the information presented, workshop participants were divided into small groups and asked to identify the top 5-7 gender equity gaps. To help develop these gaps they were asked to consider the information shared from the Community Partners survey, data gaps presented, the Town of Aurora organizational assessment and their own personal experiences. These gaps were then grouped to form 6 main gaps. Based on the discussion the following gender equity gaps were identified (in no particular order):

1. Governance Structure
2. Awareness
3. Promote Females in Sport
4. Innovation in Female Programming
5. Innovative Partnerships
6. Innovative Female Recruitment and Retention

Below please find the specific gaps that were condensed to create the 6 main gaps.



For each gap identified, participants were then asked as a group to plot the gap on an “Impact/Effort” grid. The following sample was used by way of illustration:



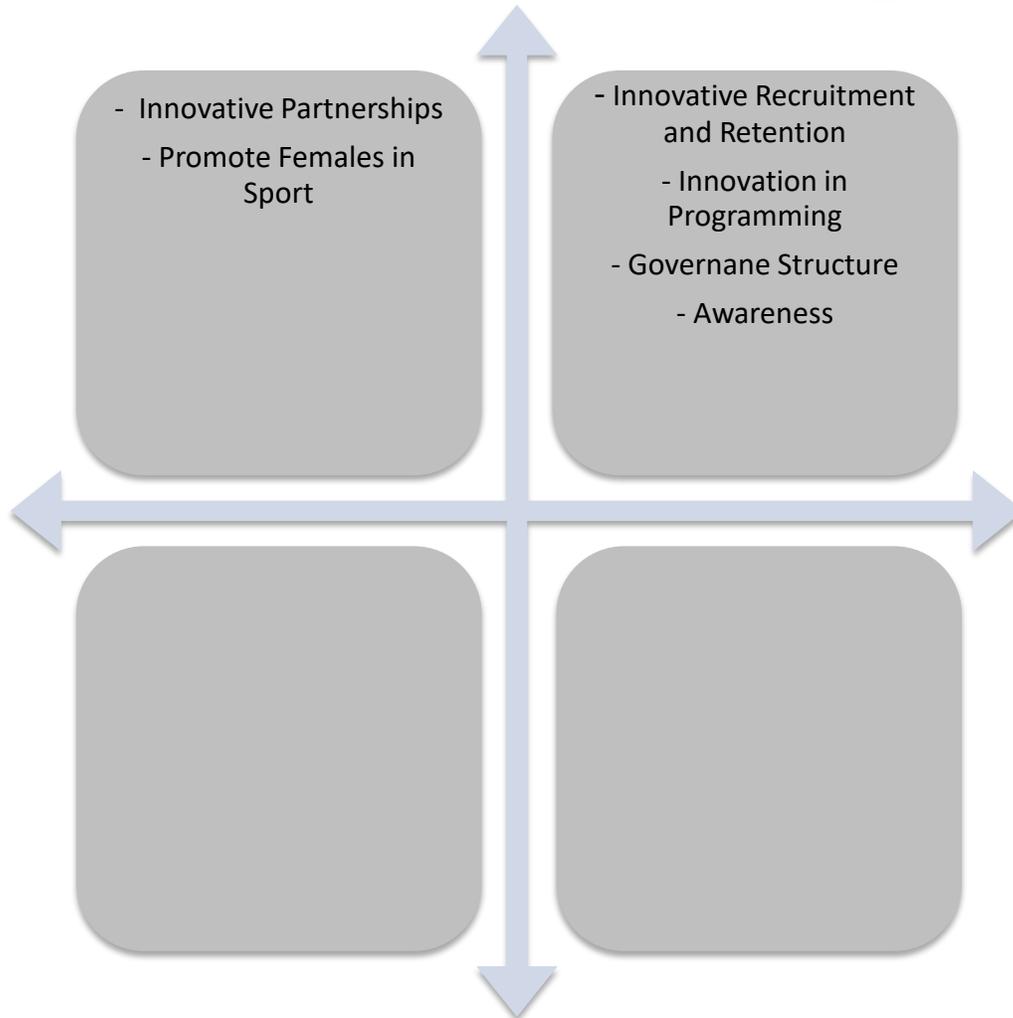
After each of the gaps were plotted on the “Impact/Effort” grid, participants were asked to work as a group to prioritize which gaps would be addressed in which year – specifically, 2020, 2021 and beyond, considering the effort to fill the gaps and the impact of filling the gap.

Once the group had considered their gaps, they then identified gender equity strategies to address the gaps.

The following summary includes:

- Plotting of gaps on the impact and effort grid
- Identification of which year the solution to fill the gap will be addressed
- A Plan to Engage Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport in the Town of Aurora with targets and/or goals, timelines and critical steps for each gap
- Alignment of the Engaging Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport in the Town of Aurora Plan with the Town of Aurora Sport Plan

Engaging Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport Impact/Effort Grid



Years gaps will be addressed

2020	2021	2022+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Structure • Promote Females in Sport • Awareness • Innovative Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative Recruitment and Retention • Innovation in Programming 	All On-going

Plan to Engage Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport in the Town of Aurora

Gender Equity Gap	Gender Equity Target / Goal	Start & End Date	Lead / Who	Critical steps
1. Governance Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create an Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council b. Local Sport Organizations (LSOs) endorse gender equity within their mission and vision and constitution at their AGMs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Start: Formed and introduced at the September 13th Sport Summit End: On-going b. Start: At LSOs 2020 AGMs End: 2025 (5- commitment to start) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Town of Aurora led (Erin and Lisa) with one representative from each organization b. LSO Boards of Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Town develops Critical factors/Terms of Reference for an Equity and Inclusion Committee/Council a. Committee/Council in place and announced at September 13, 2020 Sport Summit a. Committee/Council composed of representatives from LSOs and for profit sport companies a. One area the Council/Committee will be responsible for is researching participant numbers (all metrics) and data collection processes to develop a baseline in 2020 that will be measured on an on-going basis b. Endorsement of gender equity at LSO AGMs by the membership including identification and assignment of people, funding and resources b. LSOs work with the Equity and Inclusion Committee/Council to determine measurable objectives and success criteria which all will adopt b. LSOs work with the Equity and Inclusion Committee/Council to review best practices (i.e. standard templates) and establish standardized ways to collect data that can be broken down by gender, age, etc. – athletes, coaches, officials, board members, staff, etc. b. Implementation Guide developed and shared with LSOs so everyone has information on how to embed gender equity, collect and report data, etc. b. Workshops developed and run by the Equity and Inclusion Committee on implementation to get everyone on the same page over time b. Evaluate and adjust as necessary

<p>2. Awareness</p>	<p>a. Research and promote funding opportunities for women and girls in sport b. Create awareness of sport opportunities for women and girls in the Town of Aurora (through a variety of ways – online, social media, summit, etc.)</p>	<p>a. Start: 2020 End: On-going b. Start: 2020 End: On-going</p>	<p>a. Town of Aurora staff and Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council b. Town of Aurora staff and Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council</p>	<p>a. Assign 1-2 members of the Equity and Inclusion Committee/Council to take on this task a. Research funding opportunity-grants, trust funds, etc. a. Promote opportunities for funding to the 40 LSOs through social media/online a. Equity and Inclusion Committee/Town support LSOs in applying/writing grant proposals b. Develop a strategy for awareness and engagement b. Start with the development of an online presence through websites and social media b. Find and engage female champions to be showcased, give presentations, appear in ads, etc. – not just athletes, highlight coaches, board members, officials, etc.</p>
<p>3. Promote Females in Sport</p>	<p>a. Increase news media coverage b. Increase Local Recognition c. Showcase and develop role models d. Share ideas and best practices</p>	<p>a. Start: Immediately End: Ongoing b. Start: Immediately End: Ongoing c. Start: Immediately End: Ongoing d. Start: Summer/Winter End: Ongoing</p>	<p>a. Local Sport Organizations – communication leads, Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council b. ASHoF, LSOs, Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council c. LSOs- communication leads, Town of Aurora d. Coordinated by Town of Aurora staff and Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council</p>	<p>a. Develop a list of media contacts (names, emails, phone numbers) a. Profile female sport and female success in sport a. Develop relationships with news media, submit info, invite to events b. Increase female inductees/female engagement in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame (ASHoF) b. ASHoF to meet one on one with LSOs to educate them, raise awareness and encourage female nominations c. Set a target to profile a % of females c. Collect and share stories c. Research opportunities to promote and then develop a promotion plan d. Host a collaborative meeting with LSOs 2 x a year to share ideas and best practices</p>

<p>4. Innovative Partnerships</p>	<p>a. Leverage partnerships with existing businesses and/or organizations with shared interests that can support Town of Aurora goals and objectives (local and non-local)</p> <p>b. Increase access to facilities for all participating athletes (of all ages and abilities)</p>	<p>a. Start: Spring/summer 2020 End: On-going</p> <p>b. Start: Spring 2020 End: On-going</p>	<p>a. Town of Aurora staff, Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council and LSOs</p> <p>b. Town of Aurora staff, LSOs</p>	<p>a. Identify and Initiate meetings with stakeholders to develop and initiate partnerships</p> <p>b. Engage subject matter experts (by sport/40) to identify where facility gaps exist and contribute to collaborating on solutions with Town of Aurora</p>
<p>5. Innovative Programming- engaging those new to the sport or newcomers to the Town of Aurora- focus on access to programs</p>	<p>a. Increase participation in various levels of programming (novice-elite; young to not so young)</p>	<p>a. Start: 2021 End: Ongoing</p>	<p>a. Town of Aurora recreation staff, Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council, LSOs, coaches</p>	<p>a. Create/advertise a variety of programs including: try-it; mother/daughter/sibling/ parent programs; intro programs</p> <p>a. Ensure environmental needs are met such as providing equipment, childcare, curtains, ramps, adaptations, accessible locations, etc.</p> <p>a. Create a follow-up mechanism for personal next steps such as focus groups- ask what they like, what more they want/need</p> <p>a. Create a training program for coaches on equitable program facilitation</p>
<p>6. Innovative Female Recruitment and Retention</p>	<p>a. Recruit and retain female athletes, coaches and officials (ACO)</p>	<p>a. Start: 2021 End: On-going</p>	<p>a. LSOs, Town of Aurora staff, Equity and Inclusion Committee/ Council</p>	<p>a. Identify target audience for recruitment and retention- high performance? house league? for athletes, coaches and officials</p> <p>a. Identify barriers to participation for athletes, coaches and officials (consider having focus groups)</p> <p>a. Identify, communicate and promote the benefits of being involved for</p>

				<p>athletes, coaches and officials – in the sport and in your club/town</p> <p>a. Promote and showcase success stories of athletes, coaches and officials</p> <p>a. Develop your methodology – what is your target, how will you reach it- be systematic and specific on what you will do (i.e. a campaign, networking, etc.)</p> <p>a. KISS- keep it simple</p> <p>a. Do not recruit until you are ready to retain and have a retention strategy in place- otherwise you will spend all your time recruiting and losing the ones you already have</p>
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Aligning the Town of Aurora’s Sport Plan Themes with the Plan to Engage Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport in the Town of Aurora

Sport Plan Themes	<i>Shared leadership and Sport System Accountability</i>	<i>The Sport Participant</i>	<i>Sport Promotion & Celebration</i>	<i>Sport Tourism</i>
Engaging Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport Plan Priorities	Governance Structure	Awareness	Awareness	Innovative Partnerships
	Awareness	Innovative Partnerships	Innovative Partnerships	
	Innovative Partnerships	Innovative Programming	Promoting Females in Sport	
	Innovative Programming	Innovative Recruitment and Retention	Innovative Recruitment and Retention	
	Innovative Recruitment and Retention			

Creating Buy-In

After focusing on the gaps and targets, participants discussed push-back they might receive for the strategies discussed. They then brainstormed on how to build “buy-in” to help address push-back they might encounter. Below please find a summary of this discussion.

1. Why just a female focus?

Specific pushback we might get: If you develop something just for women and girls people often feel there needs to be something for boys and men.

Ideas to create buy-in:

- Provide the data that shows how there are less females participating as athletes, coaches, officials, board members, etc. to justify the focus

- Explain that simply offering a co-ed program or the opportunity to take an officials course (equality) does not always work as women do not feel comfortable in these environments so we need to adjust and do something that meets their needs to truly engage them (equity)
- Use it as a conversation starter, let them be heard but then use it as an opportunity to educate on why a female-specific approach will be more successful in engaging women and girls in the long run

2. Potential Push-Back: Why do things need to change?

Specific pushback we might get: why do we need to change or do this? This is the way it has always been done so what is the problem?

Ideas to create buy-in:

- Show the data gaps to help justify the focus
- Explain that change can be good and use data/examples to show that what we are currently doing is not working
- Present something new as an opportunity and educate that using different approaches can attract more females which benefits everyone and does not decrease the participation of males
- Important to get the Boards, champions and male allies involved so they can explain approaches in a positive way to anyone who is pushing back- everyone needs to be on the same page
- Provide best practices/examples of other sports that have implemented female specific strategies and been successful
- Invite anyone who is skeptical to join the discussion and be part of the solution- invite them in and be welcoming even when they are not supportive

3. Potential Push-Back: How is this different?

Specific pushback we might get: We have tried things in the past and they didn't work – how is this any different?

Ideas to create buy-in:

- Explain how the Town of Aurora and LSOs are working together in collaboration so everyone will be working on similar goals/strategies
- Explain how engaging more women and girls is a win-win for everyone and that each organization will benefit from the proposed engagement strategies
- Talk about incentives such as funding opportunities, participation in the Sport Summit, opportunities for sport tourism, etc. that are new opportunities based on their involvement as active participants in the engagement strategy

Next Steps

This report will be shared with participants, with any additional information added based on their feedback. The Town of Aurora Community Services Department will then review the report and with the Community Partners move forward on the strategies outlined in the Engaging More Women and Girls in Physical Activity and Sport in the Town of Aurora Plan.

Closing

Erin Hamilton thanked participants for their time and work on this important initiative. She also encouraged participants to go back to their associations to share what was discussed to create excitement and momentum for initiatives that will be rolled out in 2020 and beyond.