



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Recreation Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 22, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Guiding Principles for Recreation User Fees (CES15029) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Dawn Walton 905-546-2424 Ext.4755
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager, Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Recreation User Fee Guiding Principles of:

- Accountability
- Community Benefit
- Equitable
- Fair
- Affordable and
- Financial Responsibility

as detailed in Appendix A to Report CES15029, be approved as the basis for harmonizing user fees and maintained for establishing new user fees in future within the Recreation Division.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the 2015 Tax Supported User Fee approval process presented to the General Issues Committee on January 23, 2015, Recreation staff committed to providing options towards the development of a completely harmonized fee structure in 2015. A series of guiding principles, attached as Appendix A to Report CES15029, have been established which provide the basis for Recreation management to develop recommended options for harmonizing these remaining fees.

The Recreation Division has worked progressively in recent years to harmonize and consolidate several fee categories. These include admission and participation pass fees, aquatic and aquatic leadership program fees, ice rental fees, and, field and diamond rental fees. Harmonized facility rental fees were introduced in 2014 and resulted in a uniform fee structure for room rentals across the City and a reduction in the

**SUBJECT: Guiding Principles for Recreation User Fee Harmonization (CES15029)
(City Wide) - Page 2 of 4**

number of rental fees from 129 to 25. Additional work has also been done to progressively harmonize some recreation program related fees through the Tax Supported User Fee process.

There are still some Recreation related fees that have yet to be harmonized. These include park and pool rental fees, and fifty-five outstanding facility specific recreation program fees. A set of guiding principles have been established in priority order to guide the development of recommended options for harmonizing these remaining fees. These recommendations are in development and will be presented to the Community and Emergency Services Committee in August 2015. User fees affected by approved recommendations will be identified and included for submission as part of the 2016 Tax Supported User Fee process.

The principles proposed in Appendix A to Report CES15029 were established based on current Recreation Division practice, informed by relevant, approved and accepted recreation studies and existing needs assessment tools.

The outcome of this process is to apply the Recreation User Fee Guiding Principles to further harmonize the outstanding facility specific program fees in addition to all pool and park rental fees with recommendations toward a 100% complete body of harmonized fees for the Recreation Division.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial implications associated with Report CES15029

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES15029

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CES15029

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At amalgamation, the existing recreation user fee structures from the former municipalities were combined into one master user fee listing with little consolidation of individual fees. The majority of the approved fees in the master listing continued to be based on facility location within historic municipal boundaries. This resulted in inconsistent rates being charged across the City for similar services. For example, in 2002 an Aquaquest swim lesson had three separate identified fees \$30.00 (Hamilton), \$35.00 (Stoney Creek) and \$42.50 (Ancaster/Dundas) for the provision of a standard licensed service.

Over the years, Recreation staff have attempted to progressively harmonize some recreation related fees through the Tax Supported User Fee process. Changes were made to consolidate fees or standardize the names of similar programs. For example, in

2010 dance classes for children had the same approved fee amount within a facility but were listed as distinct fees by discipline (i.e. Tap, Jazz, Ballet and Hip Hop). In 2011 these fees were consolidated into one fee as "Child-Dance (45 min. class)". These efforts and others allowed for the reduction of 879 program fees in 2011. Room rental fees in recreation facilities were also harmonized in 2014.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications associated with Report CES15029.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Relevant approved reports and strategies within the Recreation Division were reviewed and ultimately informed the process for developing the guiding principles. Some of the reports and studies accessed include:

- Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities, 2012
- Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sports Field Provision Plan, 2011
- Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy, 2010
- Use Renovation and Replacement Study for Hamilton Recreation and Public-Use Facilities, 2008
- Parks, Culture and Recreation Final Master Plan, 2002
- Culture and Recreation User Fees 2002 (CS02001)

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Recreation User Fee Guiding Principles attached as Appendix A to Report CES15029 establish a focus and clear rationale for Recreation management to develop and recommend user fee options and an implementation strategy towards the goal of complete harmonization of recreation user fees. These fees include some program related fees such as children's dance and cooking, adult fitness and dance as well as pool and park rental fees. Some of the benefits of a completely harmonized fee structure include:

- Financial accountability and transparency
- Enhanced marketing opportunities to attract and retain users
- More manageable fee structure
- User equitability - similar fees for similar service
- A more consistent application of Recreation Fee Assistance Program funds
- Ability to complete valid costing analysis
- More manageable divisional budgeting
- Ability to gather comparable divisional base line statistics

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.
- 1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

- 2.1 Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.
- 2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES15029: Recreation User Fee Guiding Principles