

**THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR
POLICY**

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| Service Area: | Recreation | Policy No.: | |
| Department: | Parks and Recreation | Approval Date: | August 21, 2006 |
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1. POLICY

The City of Windsor Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy is intended as a general mechanism for effectively allocating public funds for recreational services and facilities. It will help provide a consistent approach to setting user fees and to ensure a reasonable and equitable proportion of the costs to deliver recreation programs and services are recovered through user fees.

This document, based on consultation with user focus groups and research, clearly outlines the guiding principles, relates the principles to recreation programs, facilities, and clients and recommends a three level subsidization process. The policy recommends that the Department of Parks and Recreation will aim to recover all its direct costs for each level of services and set reasonable targets for the recovery of indirect costs for specified services through its user fees. It also recommends that these targets be reviewed annually.

2. PURPOSE

The City of Windsor Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing its residents with a range of recreation opportunities to improve health and quality of life. People of all ages and abilities can access a variety of physical and non-physical programs and activities at the City's numerous indoor and outdoor facilities.

An essential purpose of the User Fee and Pricing Policy is to provide a distinction between different types of recreation activity as related to the principles of funding and subsidization. The Guiding Principles outlined in this document and approved by City Council are the foundation for establishing a fair, objective and equitable means to distinguish between activities and clients when setting recreation user fees.

It is the intent that the Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy be adopted as a permanent policy subject to review at a minimum every five years. To allow for better resource planning for both the City of Windsor and users of its recreation services, the Department of Parks and Recreation shall strive to maintain a multi-year fee schedule for all its programs, services and facilities.

3. SCOPE

3.1 The study focuses on developing a fair and equitable pricing structure for Parks and Recreation facilities, programs, and services.

3.2 This policy applies to current Recreation fees defined within the user fee schedules and Activity Guide. New initiatives will be evaluated and priced in accordance with this policy.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The user fee policy of the City of Windsor will be subject to review at a minimum of every five years, based on the operational mandate of the Department of Parks and Recreation, the broader fiscal environment of the City of Windsor, and otherwise at the discretion of the City. This policy stands aside from any other policies, which exist regarding cost recovery of individual services of the City of Windsor. However, recreation user fees represent significant revenue to the City of Windsor and a more formalized approach to setting user fees, any increases over time, and levels of subsidization, should be predicated on this user fee policy.

5. GOVERNING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Statement of Principles

The Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy is based on a number of guiding principles that were developed in consultation with key stakeholders and users of the City's recreation programs, services and facilities. These principles relate to healthy living, quality and diversity, affordability and accessibility and the environment. All future decision-making involving the pricing of recreation services should reflect the following principles:

Healthy Living

- Parks and Recreation will seek to provide a range of recreational facilities, programs and service, for residents of all ages and abilities, to help foster healthy lifestyle habits and active living.
- Parks and Recreation will aim to be the provider of the first resort for recreational facilities and services that are not generally provided at an affordable rate by the private sector or for those services not provided at all by the private sectors e.g. parks, arenas, pools.
- Parks and Recreation will provide programs for youth and adults that teach essential life and safety skills e.g. CPR, First Aid, swimming, babysitting.

Quality and Diversity

- Parks and Recreation will strive to provide a range of integrated, accessible services to the entire community that are responsive to current needs and trends.
- Parks and Recreation will endeavour to provide services that reflect the highest reasonable level of customer service and facility maintenance, including proactive communication on programs and services.
- Parks and Recreation recreational facilities, programs and services will strive to provide a range of services that reflect the diversity of interest and culture in our community.
- Parks and Recreation will continue to encourage cross-cultural participation and seek to expand its programs to include activities of interest to Windsor's diverse, multi-cultural community.

Affordability and Accessibility

- Parks and Recreation will seek to remove physical, financial, gender, social and cultural barriers that may prevent Windsor residents from participating in recreation.
- Parks and Recreation will strive to allocate its limited resources and municipal subsidy to those users most in need e.g. low-income households, children and youth, seniors, and special populations.
- Parks and Recreation will aim to ensure that user fees are set fairly and equitably in all areas of recreation. The process will be open and transparent for all fees and costs associated with the provision of recreation facilities, programs and services.
- Parks and Recreation will encourage and promote the long-term participation of residents by supporting discounts for multiple enrolments.
- Parks and Recreation will strive to ensure programs and services are provided in safe and comfortable environments.
- Parks and Recreation will actively develop flexible programs and services to meet the changing needs, recreational trends and interests in the community.
- Parks and Recreation recognizes the importance of partnerships and the importance of facilitating new product development, particularly in the area of sports and recreational tourism.
- Parks and Recreation will strive to ensure the most effective use of City resources to maximize all opportunities for partnership development, sponsorship and grant development and fiscal responsibility.
- Parks and Recreation will strive to ensure that the pricing of its recreational services does not preclude or diminish participation.

Environment

- Parks and Recreation will continue to protect and expand its green space to provide accessible parkland within neighbourhoods.
- Parks and Recreation will maintain the highest reasonable standards of environmental stewardship.
- Parks and Recreation will strive to provide a healthy urban forest and quality parkland facilities for all interests and ages of people to encourage active living in a sustainable environment.

Categorization of Recreation Services

The City of Windsor currently offers its residents a wide range of recreation services, including:

- Programs/Lessons
- Admissions and Memberships
- Facility and Equipment Rental.

The City of Windsor must prioritize the funding, and subsidy, of recreation services in order to provide the greatest number of people with quality recreation services at an affordable price. The following criteria were used to determine which City services should be given higher levels of subsidy, and which services user fees should cover a higher portion of the actual costs:

- The principles of the Department pertaining to health and wellness, quality and diversity, access and affordability and the environment;
- The needs and priorities of Windsor residents;
- Varying benefits to the public of different recreation pursuits; and
- The total participant cost associated with various recreation activities and the relationship to the level of access provided and participation achieved.

A brief description of the three service levels is provided below. The Department of Parks and Recreation will classify all new and existing recreation services as per the following:

Level 1 Services: Programs, activities or facilities for which higher levels of subsidization should be tolerated (in relation to Level 2 and Level 3 services) given these recreation services:

- Can be accessed by the widest cross section of the population and therefore have the potential for broad base participation (e.g. public swimming, fitness centres and public skating);
- Teach essential life and safety skills to persons of all ages (e.g. Learn to Swim, Women's Self-Defense, CPR);
- Provide an introduction to physical and non-physical activities to children and youth and encourage active living (e.g. rental of sports facilities, introductory level programs and camps);
- Provide an introduction to physical activities and encourage active living for adults and seniors (e.g. Aquafitness, Keep Fit and Badminton);
- Allow for participation of persons or groups with special needs (e.g. persons with disabilities, new or emerging user groups);
- Involve the use of City-owned facilities by persons of all ages that have minimal maintenance costs (e.g. weight rooms/fitness centres, outdoor tennis courts, picnic tables); and
- Involve the use of City-owned facilities by youth/senior sports teams or groups on a seasonal or multi-time slot basis (e.g. Community Rooms, Gymnasiums, Ice Rinks).

Level 2 Services: Progressively, more advanced programs, activities and facilities should not be subsidized to the same degree as Level 1 services. These services should have a higher degree of cost recovery to be established on an individual basis and at the discretion of the City.

- Are accessed by a smaller subset of the population;
- Provide intermediate or advanced level instruction to children and youth (e.g. Advanced Pre-School Ballet, Youth Martial Arts Camp);

- Offer specialized activities or special events to children and youth (e.g. Youth Science Quest, Youth Sleepover Party, Youth Dinner, Swim and a Movie);
- Promote healthy living for adults, but are non-physical (e.g. Cake Decorating, Bridge Lessons);
- Provide advanced or specialized physical instruction to adults (e.g. Advanced Power Yoga, Ballroom Dancing International Style); and
- Involve the use of City-owned facilities by adult sports teams or groups on a seasonal or multi-time slot basis (e.g. Community Rooms, Gymnasiums, Ice Rinks).

Level 3 Services: Advanced level or specialty programs, activities or facilities for which subsidization should be less than that applied to Level 1 or Level 2 services. These services should be subject to greater cost recovery than Level 2 or Level 1.

- By comparison to Level 2 services, are likely to be accessed by a smaller subset of the population;
- Offer advanced or specialized non-physical instruction to adults (e.g. Holiday Hor d'oeuvres, Spring Winery Tour);
- Are offered on a private basis (e.g. 1 on 1 swimming lessons);
- Involve the use of premium City-owned facilities used by adults on a casual basis and therefore have less potential to promote long-term or broad based participation (e.g. Sports Fields, Baseball Stadiums);
- Involve specialty City-owned facilities (e.g. Marina, rental of Mackenzie by adults); and
- Involve the use of City facilities or services for profit-events or private businesses (e.g. rental of Riverfront Festival Plaza, vessel docking for profit chartering).

Figure 1 illustrates the categorization of recreation services by broad activity or user.

Policy Guidelines

It is the policy of the City of Windsor that all user fees for recreation programs, services and facilities be set in accordance with the principles and fee categories described above, as well as the following guidelines:

- The Department of Parks and Recreation shall aim to recover all of its direct operating costs for Level 1, 2 and 3 services through the collection of user fees, except for those activities that City Council deems appropriate to be subsidized at a greater level.
- The Department of Parks and Recreation will set reasonable targets for the recovery of a portion of indirect costs for Level 2 and Level 3 services through the collection of user fees. These targets will be reviewed annually with due consideration to the operating budget impact.
- The pricing of all recreation programs, services and facilities will be reviewed annually and adjusted to accommodate the changes in operating and maintenance costs and the market place.
- It is intended that a range of recreational services be available to all citizens and that no Windsor residents shall be excluded from participating in recreational activities because of an inability to pay. The Department of Parks and Recreation will develop a formalized low-income subsidy policy specifically in regard to access to recreation programs and services.
- The City of Windsor reserves the right to impose a surcharge on persons who do not pay business or property taxes to the City of Windsor (e.g. non-residents). The non-resident fee will be published in the Activity Guide.
- It is the intent of the Department of Parks and Recreation to eliminate subsidization of activities such as for-profit tournaments and special events.
- Persons age 60 and over (seniors) and persons with a disability are entitled to receive a discount on program registration and facility rental. This discount will be determined by City Council and published in its Activity Guides.
- Families registering three (3) or more members of their immediate family are eligible to receive a discount on program fees. This discount will be determined by City Council and published in its Activity Guides.
- Facility and equipment rental rates may be offered at a reduced rate in low priority times (e.g. non-prime time) to encourage greater participation rates and make use of existing City facilities.
- The Council of the City of Windsor has the authority to waive, reduce fees and alter fees for services for promotional purposes and to establish fees for experimental services on an as required basis.
- It is the intent of the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure that fees remain competitive with other recreation and culture service providers in the City of Windsor. However, it is not the intention of the Department to purposely undercut other service providers.
- The Department of Parks and Recreation will continue to investigate potential new sources of revenue (e.g. grants, partnerships and new programs) and support appropriate funding efforts of groups and organizations to help offset the costs to the municipality in providing services and operating facilities.

Conclusion

The user fee policy is designed to promote access to and enjoyment of all of the City's recreation services. This is achieved by recognizing those facilities, services and programs for which the private market is not likely to provide an appropriate level of service at affordable costs and recognizing the role of the City in providing access at reasonable costs. As such, the user fee policy establishes those services that should be subject to higher levels of subsidization, consistent with the mandate of the City of Windsor to provide recreation services with costs borne from the tax base. In meeting the challenge of allocating tax dollars effectively, the intent of the policy is to direct where subsidy should be most appropriately applied. This essential mandate requires that user fees are set according to the principles of this policy.

6. RECORDS, FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- 6.1** To determine the allocation of costs, the financial analysis and support documents will be retained within the Parks and Recreation Department main files, as well as on the Parks "G" Drive.