

**The Corporation of the City of Windsor
Parks & Recreation User Fee and Pricing
Policy**

Service Area:	Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities	Policy No.:	
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1. POLICY BACKGROUND

The City of Windsor has a strong and lengthy history of providing quality recreation programs and services to residents. The City recognizes that participation in recreation programs builds and sustains strong individuals and families as well as supporting community health and social cohesion. The benefits of participating in recreation are evidence-based and well documented including higher rates of completion of secondary and post-secondary education, lower rates of youth pregnancy, lower use of drugs and alcohol, higher income potential and healthier outcomes for all residents. While most of the costs to provide recreation services are funded through the tax base (including administrative and infrastructure costs), there is a philosophy to sustain the provision of programs and services by levying a *User Fee*.

User fees allow the City of Windsor to provide additional programs and services as required, since *Direct Costs* are captured through the collection of user fees. The City must plan to ensure that programs and services are sustainable in the future whereby all or a portion of the cost to provide the program/service is recovered through fees or other revenue sources. This refinement of the City of Windsor’s Parks & Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy also recognizes that the socio-economic background of some residents is a barrier to participation when user fees are levied. In summary, the main objectives of the User Fee and Pricing Policy are to ensure that recreation services are affordable and accessible to all residents while contributing to the financial sustainability of these services.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

2.1.1 The purpose of the Parks & Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy is to ensure that:

- a) Users of services contribute to the sustainability of recreation;
- b) The costs to provide the various recreation programs and services are identified;
- c) User fees are developed in a fair, defensible and equitable fashion;
- d) User fees generally capture a minimum of 100% of the *Direct Cost* to provide the program/service;
- e) User fees are not a barrier to participation in recreation programs and services;
- f) There is a balance between no fee/low fee and fee-based programs and services;
- g) Programs offered that contribute to the public good and are accessible to all will be subsidized to a greater extent than programs offered that benefit an individual or a smaller group of residents; and
- h) The local market is considered to ensure that fees are comparable to providers of similar services.

3. SCOPE

3.1.1 The scope of the User Fee and Pricing Policy addresses the cost of provision and the respective fees associated with all recreation programs and services. The Policy considers:

- a) Costs and fees for **Directly Offered Programs and Services** including but not limited to aquatics, general interest programs, fitness classes and memberships, camps, sports programs, March Break and Holiday Break programs, the Marina and any other services offered and organized through the Recreation and Culture Department;
- b) Facility costs and fees for services offered through **Community Organizations** including hourly costs for ice, pools, gymnasiums, community halls, meeting rooms, fields, and exclusive use of municipally owned property and facilities for events; and
- c) The use of City facilities for **Commercial and Private** functions.

4. **RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 4.1.1 The City will identify the costs to provide recreation programs and services, and identify a rate and fee schedule based on the true costs, the Guiding Principles of this Policy, fee determination, and other relevant considerations (market conditions, low-income residents etc.)
- 4.1.2 The Executive Director of Recreation & Culture will provide an annual Rate and Fee Schedule to Council for approval and will have the ability to approve any fees based on the introduction of new programs and services in the interim.
- 4.1.3 Upon Council approval of the Rate and Fee Schedule, the Schedule will be posted as per provincial legislation and communicated to Windsor residents and community organizations. This will allow community organizations to plan for a continued budget cycle.
- 4.1.4 The City will report to Council regarding the general program utilization and the uptake of the Access Policy for Affordable Recreation – Pathways to Potential - on an annual basis to ensure that rates and fees are not a barrier to participation for all Windsor residents.

5. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 5.1.1 The Guiding Principles for the City of Windsor Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy are aligned with the values and principles of the Framework for Recreation in Canada and other foundational documents. Mutual goals of the Policy and the National Framework are to engage everyone in meaningful, quality driven and accessible recreation experiences.
 - a) **Individual and Community Good** – Recreation is provided to ensure the greatest health and wellness outcomes for individuals, families and the community.
 - b) **Inclusion and Equity** – All residents will have access to recreation programs and services regardless of their background.
 - c) **Sustainability** – The provision of recreation services and the respective fee structure will consider social, environmental, cultural and fiscal sustainability.
 - d) **Lifelong Participation** – The Policy will encourage lifelong participation in recreation and will address barriers to participation throughout the life course. Percentage discounts may be offered to certain age groups pending their general ability to access services (youth and older adults).
 - e) **Outcome Driven** – The provision of affordable programs and services will consider the health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents in

Windsor.

- f) **Quality and Relevance** – Services will be provided according to community needs and societal trends; quality assurance will be emphasized to enable safe and enjoyable experiences.
- g) **Evidence-Based** – Recreation Services will utilize evidence and knowledge to guide its fee structure and access policies and practises.
- h) **Partnerships and Collaboration** – The support to community-based recreation and sport organizations and the setting of fees will recognize the volunteerism that strengthens the capacity of the community.
- i) **Innovation** – All recreation partners are innovative in providing the highest quality recreation experiences and exploring alternate revenue sources.

6. **CATEGORIZATION OF RECREATION SERVICES**

6.1.1 The categorization of Programs and Services will assist staff in ensuring that there is a full range of programs and services to meet all interests and community needs. Table 1 defines the four categories of recreation programs and services and provides selected examples of the current programs and services provided by the City of Windsor. The setting of rates and fees will generally capture 100% or more of the *Direct Costs* (staff and equipment/program supplies) and include a contribution to a Capital Reserve which will serve to sustain the recreation infrastructure.

7. **POLICY GUIDELINES AND STATEMENTS**

7.1.1 The City of Windsor will:

- a) Support the goal of the Parks & Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy to recover a minimum of 100% of the *Direct Costs* to provide all Programs and Services;
- b) Offer reduced rates during non-prime hours to encourage the full utilization of facilities;
- c) Reduce and/or strive to eliminate the *Subsidy* for commercial and for-profit rentals when utilizing public amenities;
- d) As appropriate, apply a *Subsidy* for citizens with general age and ability restrictions; a 10% reduction for youth and older adults;
- e) Reserve the right to apply discounts for family registering three or more members of their immediate family;

- f) As appropriate, waive or reduce fees for No Fee / Low Fee Programs and Services as well as for promotional opportunities;
- g) Ensure that fees and rates are competitive with other providers of similar services within and surrounding Windsor;
- h) Reduce the costs to provide services through efficiencies and through the use alternate revenue streams (e.g. sponsorships, partnerships etc.) where possible;
- i) Introduce a contribution to a Capital Reserve for Recreation and Culture equipment consisting of an annual contribution of 2% of all associated revenues;
- j) Introduce a blended rate for lit and unlit sports fields; and

Note: The City of Windsor Access Policy – Pathways to Potential - will address the principle that no residents will go unserved because of the user fees.

Table 1: Recreation Program and Service Categories for the User Fee and Pricing Policy

Programs and Service Categories	Definition of Service Categories	Current Programs and Services
No Fee/Low Fee Programs and Services	No Fee / Low Fee Programs and Services set out to include the widest range of residents participating in recreation. Participation is universal and all residents are welcomed to enjoy these opportunities. User Fees are generally not applied or are minimal.	Public skating, public swimming, shinny hockey, use of trails and pathways, use of parks, playgrounds, splash pads, public tennis courts, sports courts, outdoor leisure skating, casual use of soccer pitches & ball fields, drop in use of gymnasiums, , etc.
Basic Programs and Services	Basic Programs and Services include an introduction to a recreational opportunity, a learning or developmental continuum in either of active, creative, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or general interest programs and services. These opportunities are generally geared toward children and youth.	Learn-to-swim programs, active living and fitness courses, aquatic fitness classes, camps, March and Christmas Break programs, etc.

Programs and Service Categories	Definition of Service Categories	Current Programs and Services
Value Added Programs and Services	Value Added Programs and Services offer a continuum of learning and more advanced instruction.	Aquatic leadership training, fitness memberships, fitness classes, etc.
Premium and Commercial Programs/ Services	Premium and Commercial Programs and Services are specialized or are advanced in nature, requiring specialized instruction and/or access to specialized facilities or equipment. Generally, these programs serve a smaller number of participants with specific higher-level skills.	Semi-private or private swim lessons, specialized camps and break programs, exclusive use of facilities, exclusive use of facilities with higher level amenities, use of facilities or amenities for commercial purposes.

8. **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

- 8.1.1 The **Direct Costs** to provide programs and services will be identified every five years;
- 8.1.2 A **market driven fee comparison** will be completed annually;
- 8.1.3 Council will review and approve a **fee structure** to accommodate an increase in annual costs and a potential phased-in implementation of the related fees to provide the programs and services; and

9. **ANNUAL FEE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

- 9.1.1 In setting annual fees for consideration for Council, staff will undertake the following;
- a) Apply the current annual rate of inflation (CPI for Canada, All Items, Not Seasonally Adjusted per Statistics Canada) to the existing fee;
 - b) Consider the impact of fee increases on participation in the respective program or service;
 - c) Compare the draft revised rate to the average of the surrounding community within its market;
 - d) Consider the impact of the proposed fee increase to the budget cost recovery target; the current overall cost recovery percentage for the Recreation and Culture department is 45%. The cost recovery percentage of 45% should

remain the annual goal of the Recreation and Culture department unless directed otherwise by Council.

- e) Arrive at a fair-minded fee that will not impede participation and contribute to the increased costs to provide the service; and
- f) Develop a summary Fee Schedule for Council's consideration.

10. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
User Fee	A payment required to gain access to a recreation program or facility e.g., program registration, rental of an hour of ice, public swim entrance, fitness membership, etc.
Direct Costs	The cost to provide a program or service that includes direct incremental wages, fringe benefits, and any equipment/supplies associated with the program.
Indirect Costs (Departmental)	The sum of support costs to provide a program or service including supervision, facility costs, utilities, maintenance, and administrative costs.
Corporate Overhead Costs	A percentage of the corporate support costs associated with offering a program or service (Human Resources, Finance, Clerks Office etc.)
True Cost of Delivery	The direct and indirect costs to provide a program or service including direct, indirect and corporate overhead costs.
Subsidy	A waiving of a portion or all the fees associated with a program or services. Subsidies may be associated with the ability to pay, age or ability of participants etc.
Equipment Reserve	An allocation of a percentage of the annual Departmental revenues to an Equipment Reserve Fund. These funds are to be utilized to update equipment repairs and replacements.