

Date: July 29, 2020	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of Budget Committee	
From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Community Services	Meeting date: October 7, 2020

## Subject

**2021 Parks, Forestry & Environment Fees and Charges**

## Recommendation

1. That the Parks, Forestry & Environment fees and charges, as outlined in Appendix 1, Appendix 2, and Appendix 3 attached to the Corporate Report dated July 29, 2020 from the Commissioner of Community Services entitled "2021 Parks, Forestry and Environment Fees and Charges" be approved.
2. That User Fees and Charges By-law 0156-2019, as amended, be repealed effective at the end of December 31, 2020.
3. That a new consolidated user fees and charges by-law, effective January 1, 2021, which will include the approved fees and charges of various City departments, be enacted to incorporate and establish the new, revised, and existing fees and charges for the Parks, Forestry and Environment division as outlined in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 attached to the Corporate Report dated July 29, 2020 from the Commissioner of Community Services entitled, "2021 Parks, Forestry and Environment Fees and Charges".

## Report Highlights

- Fees for Parks, Forestry and Environment services include rates for park permits, requested tree maintenance, sports fields, cemeteries, marinas and associated services provided for specific residents, individuals and organizations;
- Parks, Forestry and Environment fees and charges are reviewed annually to recover increased costs and respond to market conditions;
- Incremental revenues of \$85,000 are forecasted as a result of the proposed fee changes.

## Background

On an annual basis in accordance with the *Municipal Act 2001, SO 2001, c.25*, Parks, Forestry and Environment reviews the rental rates for City-owned and operated facilities including parks, sports fields, cemeteries and marinas, along with additional fees for Parks, Forestry and Environment services provided to specific residents, individuals and organizations.

Ensuring that fees and charges maintain cost recovery reduces the burden on the City's tax requirements. If fees do not increase to cover increased costs, tax support for rentals and services must increase and the costs to administer are left to all taxpayers instead of those who directly benefit from the service. The 2021 fees and charges, if approved through this report, will be added into a new consolidated user fees and charges by-law.

## Comments

As part of the draft 2021-2024 Corporate Business Plan Update and 2021 Budget development process, staff have reviewed the fees and charges for Parks, Forestry and Environment services with the objective of ensuring that recommended price increases maintain cost recovery without affecting demand. Staff reviews current market rates, utilization and demand for rentals and services, user and staff feedback, and prior increases to determine specific pricing changes. The recommended pricing changes to Parks, Forestry and Environment services are outlined below.

### Parks

Fees for the rental of park facilities and associated services help offset the costs to maintain 3,162 hectares (7,812 acres) of City-owned parkland and open space, and for services to individual park users. In order to maintain cost recovery, rate increases are required to offset increased operating costs for materials, vehicles, equipment and labour. Fee increases of 3% are recommended for parks rental rates, vendor permits and associated services to offset inflationary costs. Historical increases for parks rental fees and associated services have not detrimentally impacted demand for facility use. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 1.

### Marinas

The majority of the fees for marina rentals and services are recommended for 3% increase to recover the inflationary costs to deliver services. Further reviews and benchmarking has resulted in an increase to daily and seasonal slip rentals (5-9%) as well as an increase to the sewage pump out fee (7.4%). Charter fees at Credit Village Marina are currently lower than recreational fees at the same location so staff are proposing a phased increase over 2 years to bring the charter fees to be in line with the other fees. With the increases proposed, fees at the marina will remain competitive. As well, during the 2020 season the Personal Water Craft (PWC) ramp fee was introduced as a set fee rather than a per foot charge. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 1.

### Park Planning and Development

The majority of fees related to Park Planning and Development are recommended to remain unchanged, as greenbelt and park processing fees are charged as a percentage of works

completed. Additional fees are recommended to have a 3% increase to offset inflationary costs. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 1.

### Forestry

Fees charged for Forestry services include on-demand tree works, tree permits and tree replacement costs as well as streetscape processing fees. To offset increased costs for contractor services, vehicles, equipment, materials and labour for requested services, an increase of 3% is recommended. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 1.

### Cemeteries

Under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002 S.O 2002, c.33 the City is required to maintain abandoned and municipally owned Cemeteries in a state of good repair. Lot sales, interment fees and other service charges are used towards offsetting annual operating costs for the ongoing care of 11 municipally owned or maintained cemeteries. A portion of the total fees charged for burial rights is placed in a reserve fund, where interest collected is used towards the perpetual care and maintenance of cemeteries owned and maintained by the City.

For most fees, staff is proposing rate increases of 3% to recover increased costs and to ensure that fees are consistent with market rates across the GTA with the exception of any veteran fees which remain unchanged. Cremated remains scattering fee is proposed to be revised to include care and maintenance as one fee which results in an increase of 11% for the combination. A few fees are proposed being increased well above the 3% to be more in line with benchmarking allowing Mississauga to be similar to comparators.

	2020 Fee	Benchmarking	Recommendation	
Corner Posts (4)	\$23	\$117-\$285	\$35/ post	54.4%
Corner Posts (2)	\$23	\$35-\$109		
Regular Transfer of Interment Rights (formerly Owner Transfer)	\$55	\$142-\$211	\$150/Transfer	173%
Land Record Search (formerly Legal Inquiries (Lawyer's Letters))	\$48	\$149	\$100/Inquiry	109%
Genealogical Information Search	\$89	\$104	\$100/Request	13%

Historically, increases to fees for Cemetery Services have not detrimentally impacted revenues. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 2.

### Sports Fields

Parks Operations maintains 373 sports fields across the City to support over 140,000 hours of bookings annually for baseball, cricket, soccer, football, rugby, sport courts and artificial fields. Pricing for sports fields is founded on the principle that in order to maintain service sustainability, sports fields should endeavour to maintain or incrementally increase their cost recovery rate year over year.

Over the last several years, staff have consulted with most outdoor sports field users both individually and through the Outdoor Sports Field User Network on user fees to receive feedback and support for rental fees prior to Budget Committee's consideration.

A rate increase of 3% is proposed to recover increased costs for 2020 and anticipated for 2021. Discussions took place with the Outdoor Sports Field User Network in early 2020 and increased fees were discussed as reasonable and would not have negative impacts to participation rates or demand for City facilities. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 3.

For 2021 and 2022 Fees and Charges, sports fields rates are currently under a comprehensive review with a revised cost recovery model being developed. City staff will work with the Outdoor Sports Field User Network throughout 2020/2021 to receive feedback and develop a strategy for rolling out revised fees in 2021/2022. Included in this review are the proposed category changes for the sports fields from Lit/Unlit to Major/Minor. The category change is the result of the standard terms used during the benchmarking review as well as the higher costs of maintaining some fields. Major fields will consist of both lit and/or irrigated fields. These fields have a higher maintenance level being cut 3 times a week and also have utility costs associated with them. The change in category affects approximately 12 fields as most irrigated fields are lit but will result in higher fees for those clubs that use the irrigated (unlit) fields. In the past cricket fees have been only categorized under the unlit fields which are now classified as Minor so a Major category has now been added for cricket to be in line with all other sports.

Comparators with other municipalities' shows that Mississauga have 3 affiliated fees (2 youth and 1 adult) while most others have just one. For 2021, staff are also proposing to remove the Affiliated Youth Weekend fee and combine with the Affiliated Youth/ School which are the fees most often used.

## **New Fees**

### **Dog Walker- Non Resident**

A new fee is being introduced for a non-resident dog walking permit standardizing the fees to the traditional resident/ non-resident ratio. Since 2015 there has been a yearly increase of non-resident/commercial dog walkers in City parks. Dialogues with this group have taken place and support of the new fee has been received. This fee can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Corporate Tree Planting Fee (101+ participants)**

A new category under the approved tree planting fee has been created. The proposed fee amount is based on the costs associated with event organization including site preparation, event delivery using 10 staff, plant material (5 units per participant) plus the required post-event watering and site maintenance. This fee ensures that the Forestry Section is able to recover all costs associated with delivering large-scale corporate tree planting events while charging a fair market rate. This fee can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Columbarium Niche**

The introduction of tiered fee for the niches are proposed which include the existing fee for the bottom level along with 2 new fees for the middle and top rows of the columbarium's. This allows various price point options for the clients. This fee can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Ossuary Internment Rights**

This service is a new option for clients. An ossuary is a receptacle for the co-mingling of cremated remains. Once the remains are placed in the ossuary, they are non-recoverable. This fee can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Cricket Batting Cages-Major Fields**

There has been a demand for use of cricket batting cages on major fields and currently this is on a first come basis not giving all groups opportunity to practice. A new fee to permit the batting cages allows equal opportunity to anyone, even when the field is in use. The fee will contribute towards the cost of maintaining these cages. This fee can be found in Appendix 3.

## **Financial Impact**

As a result of the projected increases, an \$85,000 revenue budget increase is proposed in the 2021-2024 Budget and Business Plan.

## **Conclusion**

Fee increases assist Parks, Forestry and Environment in offsetting increased annual operating costs including labour, equipment, materials and supplies for the ongoing care and maintenance of City owned open space assets. The proposed fees for Parks, Forestry and Environment have been adjusted to assist in maintaining user demand for rentals, along with maintaining cost recovery for on-demand services to reduce the pressure on the tax levy.

## **Attachments**

Appendix 1: Parks, Marinas and Forestry Fees and Charges

Appendix 2: Cemetery Fees and Charges

Appendix 3: Sports Field Fees and Charges



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Shari Lichterman, CPA, Commissioner of Community Services

Prepared by: Patti Laurie, Acting Manager, Operational Planning and Analysis