

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: August 7, 2024</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of Budget Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: October 2, 2024</p>

Subject

2025 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 August 7, 2024 from the Commissioner of Community Services entitled "2025 Parks, Forestry & Environment Fees and Charges" be approved.
2. That User Fees and Charges By-law 0199-2023, as amended, be repealed effective at the end of December 31, 2024.
3. That a new consolidated user fees and charges by-law, effective January 1, 2025, 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 August 7, 2024 from the Commissioner of Community Services entitled, "2025 Parks, Forestry & Environment Fees and Charges".

Executive Summary

- Fees for Parks, Forestry and Environment services include rates for park permits, requested tree maintenance, sports fields, cemeteries, marinas, museums 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 \$118,000 are forecasted as a result of the proposed fee changes.

Background

On an annual basis in accordance with the *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c. 25, Parks, Forestry and Environment reviews the rental rates for City-owned and operated facilities and programs including parks, sports fields, cemeteries, museums 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 appropriate proportion of cost recovery ensure those who benefit directly contribute to these services, reducing the burden on the City's tax requirements. If fees do not increase proportionately to cover increased costs, tax support must increase and the costs to administer are left to all taxpayers. The 2025 Fees and Charges, if approved through this report, will be added into a consolidated user fees and charges by-law.

Comments

As part of the draft 2025-2028 Corporate Business Plan Update and 2025 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 adversely affecting demand. Staff reviewed cost impacts as well as 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 over 3,178 hectares (7,853 acres) of City-owned parkland and open space, and for services to individual park users. This approach is designed to ensure fee recovery that directly benefits those who hold permits, thereby maintaining the high quality and accessibility of our parks for all 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 review of slip management processes and user feedback has resulted in the recommendation to remove the Monthly and Seasonal Buddy Pass between both City-owned marinas in exchange for a Weekly option. This would enable marina users to access both Marinas during non-peak times from Sunday at Noon to the following Friday at noon for their selected week(s). This fee was based on the previous monthly fee, reallocated into a weekly fee.

With the increases proposed, fees at the marina will remain competitive. This approach is designed to ensure fee recovery that directly benefits those who hold permits, thereby maintaining the high quality and accessibility of our parks for all users. Revenues for Marina rentals and services are expected to remain on target in 2025 as previous increases have not impacted demand for these services. 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 be increased by 3% 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 for most fees. The second and final year of a recommended 50% increase for Non-Resident/Corporate Tree Planting fee is recommended for events ranging from one to 100 participants. This increase is based on aligning the operating recoveries with the actual costs of events. These fees also better align with benchmarking of similar programs within the Greater Toronto Area. By aligning these fees with actual costs this team can provide increased events for community and affiliated groups through increased revenues and cost recovery. Historically, increases to fees for Forestry Services have not detrimentally impacted revenues. 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.

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

Sports Fields

Parks Operations maintains over 370 sports fields across the City to support permitting for major and minor baseball, cricket, soccer, football, volleyball 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. This approach is designed to ensure fee recovery that directly benefits those who hold permits, thereby maintaining the high quality and accessibility of our parks for all users.

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.

In 2025, a rate increase of 3% is proposed to offset inflationary costs. The Outdoor Sports Field User Network has been advised of the changes for 2025 fees. Historically, minimal increases to Sports Fees has not had detrimental impacts to participation rates or demand for City facilities. Fee increases are recommended in Appendix 3.

Looking to 2026 Fees and Charges, sports fields rates have undergone a comprehensive review with a revised cost recovery and benchmarking model underway. The goal of this model is to revise fees to reflect operating costs by sport, while ensuring alignment with neighbouring municipalities. To address cost recovery deficiencies in sports user fees, rate increases will need to be considered over several years commencing in 2026. City staff will work with the Outdoor Sports Field User Network through late 2024 and early 2025 to receive feedback and develop a strategy for rolling out revised fees from 2026 to approximately 2029.

Additionally, fees for permitting of Tennis/Pickleball Courts has been introduced based on user demand. These fees are reflective of operating costs and benchmarking amongst neighbouring municipalities.

New Fees

Tennis/Pickleball Court Fees

Given the increase in popularity and continued user demand, fees for permitting of Tennis/Pickleball Courts are recommended for select operational hours to offer this amenity to user groups as well as Residents who wish to reserve specific play time. This fee will be for specific courts across the City and during specific time blocks to ensure open play time is still available for the public who wish to participate in drop-in play. The fee being proposed is based on recovery of operational costs and benchmarking of nearby Municipal facilities.

Non-Resident/Corporate Group Forestry Event

Events offered by the Forestry Team historically has been for tree planting. More recently there has been requests for non-planting events, including those for invasive species removal, stewardship and maintenance of natural areas. Based on this demand Forestry is proposing a

new fee to deliver these events to Non-Resident and Corporate Groups. The fee will be assessed based on the number of participants, materials required and resource impacts to deliver the event. As with the Non-Resident/Corporate Tree Planting event fees, these fees do not apply to Residents, Community or School groups.

Financial Impact

As a result of the projected increases, a \$136,000 revenue budget increase is proposed in the 2025 Budget and Business Plan. Revenues are not anticipated to be impacted by any increases to fees.

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: General Parks, Forestry & Environment 2025 Fees and Charges

Appendix 2: Cemeteries 2025 Fees and Charges

Appendix 3: Outdoor Sports Amenities 2025 Fees and Charges



Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

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