

1.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The public engagement process for the pricing project utilized the City's website, print advertising, direct mail to stakeholders, posters, and press releases around General Committee meetings, to communicate information and promote a variety of input opportunities that will be made available to residents and community organizations.

Public engagement sessions provided information, facilitate communication between the City and its stakeholders, and give residents and stakeholders an opportunity for input prior to finalizing the pricing project recommendations. In order to make all relevant information easily accessible to all residents the website includes all reports, a public input section, and an informative pricing study video.

1.1. Public Input

Public consultation sessions outlining preliminary proposals and direction of the City's pricing study were held in the second week of November, one was a general session while the other two were targeted towards particular groups and distinct demographic segments. The first session focused on older adults and was held Monday, November 7th from 2:30 – 4:30 PM in the Lucy Turnbull Room of the Mississauga Senior's Centre. This was followed by a general public session which was held on Tuesday, November 8th from 6:30 – 8:30 PM in the Nolan Ryan Auditorium of the Central Library. Finally, a session for community groups and organizations was held Wednesday, November 9th from 6:30 – 8:30 PM in the Staging Room of the Living Arts Centre. While the sessions were promoted and invitations sent to community groups and organizations, resident attendance and participation in the sessions was limited.

Consultation with affiliated sports organizations have be deferred until early in 2012 as sports field rental rates have already been approved for 2012 and to provide more time to discuss in detail the impacts of the pricing study on these fees. As a result the recommendations of sports field rental rates will only come into effect in January of 2013.

The three public input sessions followed a similar format beginning with participant registration, followed by a brief introduction and welcome from the Acting Director of Recreation and Parks. The City's pricing video (also available on the City's pricing study website) was shown and the consultant and the pricing study's project manager conducted a 40 minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing key points. Following this presentation a question and answer session facilitated by the consultant was provided, after which participants were invited to view presentation display boards and to speak individually with staff members of the study team to ask questions, as well as offer their comments and feedback. With consideration to this feedback the chart below summarizes the public comments and feedback and details how the pricing study responds to and addresses each particular issue.

Public Comments and Feedback

| Public Comment | Pricing Study Response |
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| Price Consolidation | |
| <p>Residents who attended the sessions generally expressed their support for the streamlining of price points for recreation services and programs. <i>(Approximately 30-40 participants)</i></p> | <p>Recommendations 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 16, 17, and 20</p> <p>One of the pricing study key aims was to introduce a consistent and consolidated price structure for both Recreation programs and memberships. Recommendations 6 and 7 provide the basis for streamlining programming fees within each line of business. Moreover, recommendations 3 and 4 streamline the differential pricing structure, while 8 and 10 simplify the aquatic pricing, and 16, 17, and 20 rationalize and consolidate meeting rooms and sports field rental rates.</p> |
| Societal Benefit | |
| <p>Those who provided written comments strongly supported the concept of higher subsidy for those activities that encourage healthy living. <i>(Approximately 15 participants)</i></p> | <p>Principle 1</p> <p>The concept that programs and services that generate a greater societal benefit should be priced at an affordable price point is embedded in the pricing study's report as Principle 1. As such it is also represented in the recommended 2012 rates and fees put forward in the report. These rates attempt to strike a suitable balance between access and financial sustainability and responsibility.</p> |
| Non Prime-Time Rental Rates | |
| <p>Those who attended the public sessions felt that lower prices for non prime-time meeting room rentals should be maintained. <i>(Approximately 5-6 participants)</i></p> | <p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The non prime-time meeting room rental rate for Older Adult affiliated groups will continue to be free of charge.</p> |
| Non Prime-Time Drop-in Rates for Older Adults | |
| <p>During the Older Adult public session it was raised by a number of attendees that the older adult drop-in recreation rates were possibly too high for many residents. <i>(Approximately 6-8 participants)</i></p> | <p>Recommendation 5a NEW</p> <p>A new recommendation was added to the report based on this feedback to introduce a new gymnasium drop-in rate for older adults. This will be set at \$2.40, or 20% of the current gymnasium drop-in rate of \$3.00. Often there is excess capacity of meeting room space during weekday mornings and early afternoons. A lower price point is recommended to encourage</p> |

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| | utilization by older adults who are more often available at those particular times. |
| Affiliated Meeting Room Rates and Privileges | |
| A question was raised at one of the public sessions as to whether the new pricing structure will affect the existing rules in which groups that are affiliated with the city receive a certain number of meeting rooms at no charge. <i>(Approximately 3 participants)</i> | Recommendations 16, 17, 18, and 19 With respect to the arrangement for affiliated groups with respect to meeting rooms, the pricing study does not recommendation any changes to the number for free meeting room rentals that they receive as part of their affiliation privileges. |
| Consolidating Swim Rates | |
| There was some concern expressed via the online feedback tool public that combining the fun swim and lane swim into one price point could lead to improper scheduling and programming decisions in the future. <i>(1 participant)</i> | Recommendation 8 Consolidating the rates for fun swims and lane swims into one price point is recommended in order to simplify the rate structure. Streamlining the rates will make the rates easier to understand and as a result facilitate purchasing decisions. Programming and scheduling decisions are not made based on the price point charged but rather the participation rates and attendance for each scheduled swim. Aquatic Supervisors analyze the previous year's data and make adjustments for the following year based on visible utilization trends. |

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| Older Adult Age Eligibility | |
| In the Older Adult public session those attending believed that the age in which a person is eligible for older adult discounts should not be raised to 65. <i>(Approximately 6 participants)</i> | Principles 2 and 3 Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 The pricing study supports an increased emphasis of the concept of the financial support based on the individual's ability to pay rather than discounts solely based on a participant's age. However in analyzing the impact to residents of eliminating age based discounts entirely it was determined that resulting changes in price may be too great for a number of residents. As a result, it is recommended that discounts to targeted groups be consolidated at 20% and that the age of eligibility for older adults be increased – based on demographic analysis |

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| | <p>– to 65 years of age. In addition the Active Assist fee assistance program provides a \$275 credit to help low income families and individuals in Mississauga participate in Recreation and Parks programs.</p> |
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| Older Adult Swim/Skate Fees | |
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| <p>A number of individuals that attended the Older Adult public session felt that the 50 swims/skates for \$50 should not be eliminated. <i>(Approximately 3 participants)</i></p> | <p>Recommendations 4, 8, and 11</p> <p>The extension of the 20% discount to aquatic drop-in and membership rates provides a number of cost effective options for Older Adults to swim and skate. An older adult will now be priced at \$2.70 for a single swim or skate, while a monthly swim/skate pass will cost \$12.00. If an individual swims or skates once a week the single visit option will be the most cost effective. Anything greater and the monthly pass is a more cost effective option.</p> <p>The monthly pass is also more cost effective compared to the 50 swims/skates for \$50 for those swim more than 10 times per month, or just over twice a week. Another benefit is that the upfront cost is much lower for those living on fixed monthly incomes. Passes can also be purchased on a month by month basis meaning the future commitment is limited.</p> <p>This along with the continued programming of Loonie Swims/Skates, and other low cost promotional events led to the recommendation to eliminate the 50 swim/skate for \$50.</p> |
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| Strategies for Recovering Capital Expenses | |
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| <p>A question regarding capital costs was raised at one of the public sessions, asking; Since the City of Mississauga has introduced an infrastructure levy to the property tax rate, is it 'double counting' if the cost recovery fee for each line of business is based on both operating and capital costs. <i>(1 participant)</i></p> | <p>Principle 4</p> <p>There are two broad categories of capital expense – capital maintenance and capital replacement. The pricing study primarily focused on capital replacement, that being the estimated cost of redeveloping a facility at the end of its lifecycle. The cost recovery ratios in this report are based on these capital costs. On the other hand capital maintenance, which are the costs associated with major repairs to a facility to keep it in a proper state of repair, were not included in the report.</p> |
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| | <p>Both the cost recovery targets and infrastructure levy seek to support the City of Mississauga in planning for current and future capital expenditures. However as both are only recovering a small portion of the current capital funding requirements there is no ‘double counting’. Moreover while the cost recovery ratios focused on a small percentage of revenue generating recreation amenities, the infrastructure levy is focused on all city facilities, many of which have no potential for generating revenue on their own.</p> |
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Fitness Membership Rates

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| <p>Residents expressed concerns both at public sessions and through the pricing study website that existing rates are too high for certain segments of the city’s residents. <i>(1 participant)</i></p> | <p>7.8 Fitness Membership Rate Recommendation</p> <p>In attempting to balance affordability of our fitness membership with the actual cost for delivering the service, staff researched pricing policies in other municipalities and the private sector. Our current and proposed rates are quite comparable to other municipal fitness facilities and non-municipal providers. This allows us to continue providing access to recreation programs and services within a framework that ensures financial sustainability of fitness services in the future.</p> <p>In addition, at present there are a number of options available within our current fitness membership product that allows for increased flexibility, including the options of a 1 month, 3 month and 12 month memberships, as well as no initiation or membership registration fees that most private operators require.</p> |
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Recreation Pricing and Affordability

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| <p>Both at the public sessions and through comments submitted through the website residents expressed their concern that rates are already too high for a number of residents. <i>(Approximately 10-12 participants)</i></p> | <p>Principles 1, 2 and 3</p> <p>As stated previously the pricing study supports the concept of support being provided based on the individual’s ability to pay. As a result, accessibility must be addressed through both financial assistance programs – such as ActiveAssist – and the price point itself.</p> |
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| | <p>Also, activities with a greater societal benefit will be priced at an affordable price point to ensure that access to these programs is as great as possible while at the same time ensuring financial sustainability.</p> <p>Lastly, if rates and fees are lowered and cost recovery rates not maintained these costs will not be eliminated. Rather residents will continue to pay for them however instead of funding them through user fees they will be paid for by way of an increase on the property tax rate. The only other alternative would be for the program or service to be eliminated.</p> |
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