

Council Considers Clear, Consistent & Consolidated Pricing Structure For Recreation Services

MISSISSAUGA, October 21, 2011 – This week, Mississauga General Committee endorsed a draft report recommending new fees for its recreation programs and services, and directed staff to seek public and stakeholder feedback before Council considers the final report in December.

The review of its pricing framework will update the City's fees for recreation programs and services including aquatics, arenas, community programs, fitness, active living programs, golf, meeting rooms and sports fields.

"We are proposing a new pricing framework that provides for future financial sustainability while allowing for broad access to recreation services for all residents," explained Community Services Commissioner Paul Mitcham. "The new pricing framework accounts for the actual cost for delivering the program or service including capital replacement costs. With this information, Council is better able to consider what, if any, subsidy through taxes is appropriate to ensure that our residents and stakeholders continue to enjoy the healthy, active living opportunities our City provides."

As part of the review, staff researched pricing policies in other municipalities and recommended proposed changes following key assumptions and principles which included:

- User fees reduce reliance on taxes to fund programs and services.
- Fees must be set knowing what the full cost of the service is.
- The method and rationale for setting fees must be transparent and understandable for everyone.
- Ability to pay will be a factor when setting fees and reflected in price and supported through ongoing financial assistance programs. The City's current ActiveAssist Program will enable 8,000 Mississauga residents to participate in recreation programs in 2011/2012.
- Fees and cost recovery performance will be reviewed regularly to ensure they meet financial targets and support the City's healthy active living philosophy and objectives in the City's Strategic Plan, Recreation Master Plan and Parks & Natural Areas Plan.

Among the report's 24 recommendations, the City will consider the following:

- Replace current, inconsistent pricing with a single 20 per cent discount for older adults, people with disabilities, students and youth. Membership fees, drop-in programs and meeting room rates are also available at the discount price.
- Introduce a pricing structure that will consolidate fees for similar programs and services across the City. This will effectively reduce 256 unique fees to 34 hourly fees providing residents increased ability to compare price and value.

- Propose that the older adult discount be uniformly applied to residents aged 65 or over for recreation programs and services, replacing the varying ages at which the discount now is applied.
- Move fees for sports field to an hourly rate, in line with municipal best practices, allowing for a more efficient way to manage and track use.

Derek Boyce, Manager, Business Planning and project lead for the Pricing Study added, "The proposed changes to setting fees reflects the ongoing demographic change in Mississauga's resident population; considers our clients ability to pay; allows us to better anticipate market trends and be nimble in adjusting our program and service choices. This financial accountability will ensure that funding for our programs and services is appropriate and sustainable today and in future. I encourage residents and stakeholders to come to a public engagement session and give us their input on the report recommendations."

Residents are invited to "have their say" at the public engagement sessions scheduled from November 7 to 9. For more information about the Pricing Study, session details or to leave comments online, go to the Pricing Study website at www.mississauga.ca/pricingstudy or call 905-615-3200 ext. 4773.

If approved by Council in December, the report's recommended changes to fees will be considered as part of the City's 2012 and 2013 business planning and budget process and implemented over the course of 2012 and 2013.

As Canada's sixth largest city, Mississauga is home to 734,000 residents and 55,000 businesses, including 63 Fortune 500 companies with Canadian head offices or major divisional head offices. A diverse, progressive and award-winning municipality located on the shores of Lake Ontario in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area, Mississauga is "Leading Today for Tomorrow" by focussing on delivering services, implementing its Strategic Plan, delivering value for money, maintaining infrastructure and continuing to be an employer of choice.

Media Contact:

Dolores Bartl-Hofmann
Public Affairs Specialist
City of Mississauga
905-615-3200 ext. 5051

dolores.bartlhofmann@mississauga.ca

TTY: 905-896-5151