

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**FROM:** Warren Harris, Commissioner of Recreation and Parks

**DATE:** March 22, 2019

**MEMORANDUM NO.:** MEM-RP-2019-0001

**RE:** Recreation Rates and Fees Strategy Update

### **PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:**

The purpose of this Memorandum is to update Members of Council on the status of the Recreation Rates and Fees Strategy project timeline and community engagement process.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In December 2018, Council approved Resolution 2018-0184 regarding the terms of reference for the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan being undertaken in 2019/20. As illustrated in Appendix A, the Rates and Fees Strategy is one of the core components of the supplemental information required to inform the Strategic Action Plan.

In January 2019, staff awarded Proposal P-122-18 to the firm of Watson & Associates Limited to carry out the scope of work related to the rates and fees review.

### **COMMENTS:**

#### **Project Goal**

The goal of the Recreation and Parks Rates and Fees Strategy is to review the existing rates and fees structure and provide a new framework to rationalize rates, subsidy/cost recovery levels, and future trends based on projected demographics.

#### **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles for the review of the Recreation and Parks Department rates and fees are consistent with other municipalities and a policy framework developed by Parks and Recreation Ontario:

- Affordable access is critical to the delivery of Recreation and Parks programs, services and facilities;
- User fee policies must be specific to the needs of the residents of Halton Hills;
- Rates and fees should strike a balance between reliance on tax base funds, other funding sources, and user fees;
- All residents should have affordable access to basic services in order to enjoy a better quality of life.

## **Project Objectives**

Staff have identified the following key objectives of a Rates and Fees Strategy:

- To determine how the rates and fees should respond to changing demographics, employment forecasts and income levels;
- To define a fair and transparent recovery rate for the various programs and services provided in Recreation and Parks;
- To ensure that required service delivery is sustainable without significant burden on the tax base;
- To define a rate structure that aligns with those services that most benefit the community and the public's ability to pay (public : private services and benefits);
- To engage the public in key aspects of the rate review per the Town's public engagement process.

## **Key Tasks**

Watson & Associates Limited will be carrying out the following key tasks as part of the project scope:

1. Provide an analysis of demographic trends for the next ten years and implications for rates and fees for the delivery of services for children, youth, adults and older adults. Review trending employment rates and incomes levels in Halton Hills and implications for a cost recovery assessment.
2. Review the Recreation and Parks' existing comparative rate review (2017) and provide a summary of key pricing policies in Halton Region and other comparably sized municipalities.
3. Assess the current level of subsidy in existing programs and services in Halton Hills for the following business areas such as aquatics, arenas, community programs, active living programs, sports fields, parks, hall and meeting room

- rentals, advertising.
4. Provide a policy framework that outlines the key principles to be addressed in a rate recovery model – how and in what context fees will be established and managed, as well as the guiding principles that would influence a rates and fees policy.
  5. Outline a proposed rate recovery model for each service area based on the direct, indirect, and capital costs required for program and service delivery. The model would be developed in Excel or acceptable alternative for future use by the Town in assessing rate recoveries.
  6. Facilitate the community engagement process with support from Town staff.

## Public Engagement



Staff propose to carry out the following public engagement program to align with the Public Engagement Charter:

Engagement Tools - Consult	Target Date(s)
Dedicated Web Page, Media Release, Web Page Banner, Newspaper ad (Tanner and IFP), E-mail blast to PerfectMind program participants, R+P E-news/Current E-news (subscribed members), E-mail blast to Registered Group contacts, Poster at Facilities, Digital Displays at Facilities, Counter Stand Sign/Display	Launch April 18 through end of survey
Let's Talk On-Line Survey (3 weeks)	April 25 - May 16
Hard copy On-Site Survey	April 25 - May 16
Social media - Twitter and Facebook posts	Monthly
Facility marquees (GCC, MMSP, AACC)	Week of April 23 - 30
Focus Group	April 23
Informal Open House 1 (Gellert Community Centre)	April 30

Corporate and Community Affairs Committee Presentation	August 26
Open House 2 or Focus Group 2	TBC
Council Presentation	September 30

# **CONCLUSION:**

Staff are working with the firm Watson & Associates Limited to complete a Recreation Rates and Fees Strategy in 2019 as a component of the overall Strategic Action Plan. Council will be apprised of the Strategy's outcomes later in 2019 as part of a directions report to be prepared by staff, following the public engagement process.

Reviewed and approved by,



**Brent Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer**