



The Recreation & Culture Division continues to strive for fiscal accountability while ensuring the delivery of quality services to all residents. These services contribute to the quality of life in our community and the overall health of our residents. Research has proven that recreation contributes to physical and mental health, acts as a protective factor for youth-at-risk and helps improve the circumstances for those living in poverty.

While preparing the recommended fees for 2022, the impact of Covid-19 still has to be taken into consideration. The Recreation and Culture Division continues to be hard hit due to two Stay at Home Orders that have essentially closed all recreation facilities for all of 2021. The few services that are able to operate include virtual programs, program activity kits and facility rental permits for “Elite Athletes”.

Per the direction of the City’s Treasurer, the 2022 Tariff of Fees Update will require greater sensitivities as residents and businesses continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The core principles for the City’s user fees continue to be:

- a) justifiable and reasonable for cost recovery;
- b) comparable with neighboring municipalities; and
- c) affordable to citizens/users, yet competitive
- d) consideration of the financial hardship Covid-19 has had on individuals and business.

Further direction provided from the Treasurer stated to increase fees/charges by CPI (RBC Economics Forecast – 1.9% for 2022), in light of being affordable to users, comparable to neighboring municipalities and provide necessary cost recovery. With respect to Recreation, charges to users for City programs will need to be balanced with COVID-19 related restrictions and participation levels while there may be opportunities to increase fees to meet anticipated demand for specific recreation programs.

Following these guidelines, staff continued to undertake a market competitive analysis of user fees to determine the City’s position against other municipalities as comparators in preparation for the 2022 budget. The mandate has always been to benchmark the City’s fees against a minimum of two municipal comparators, City of Markham and the City of Vaughan and others where appropriate, depending on the service provided. Staff focused on rates that were significantly lower than our municipal comparators and assessed the impact of increasing rates on the users. Based on the benchmarking undertaken, and the direction to increase fees by CPI (1.9%), the recommendation is to increase the majority of fees by 1.9% or in some cases the fee increase was rounded off to 2%. In an effort to generate some additional revenue for the city, staff primarily focused on increasing fees where it was determined that the fees were consistently lower based on municipal benchmarking. Staff also looked at increasing fees in the non-resident and commercial fee categories as well as the semi-private and private fee categories. Fee increases in these categories have only been recommended if the city’s current fees were deemed to be lower through the benchmarking exercise.

OVERVIEW OF PRINCIPLES AND FEE CHANGES

All fees listed in the fee by-law chart are pre-tax.

General recreation and culture registered and drop-in programs, events and advertising fees

Staff verified that Richmond Hill's user fees are either within the same range of Markham and Vaughan, and per the direction provided by the Treasurer, a 1.9% fee increase is being recommended for the majority of services in these sections. Exceptions to this include:

- Facility Rental Permits for gyms, meeting rooms, sports field, ice rentals, pool rentals and park permits were not increased in light of the continuing pandemic.
- Programs delivered by organizations in partnership with the city have some percentage increases, based on the current agreements in place.
- Drop-in programs in the general program area, including for Adults 55+, were not increased to ensure affordability during Covid recovery.
- Heritage Centre Services were not increased as the market for those services continue to be developed.
- DDO programs were not increased as the programs are relatively new and staff are working to develop an audience for them, which has been stalled due to Covid-19.
- Aquatic Leadership programs increased from between 0 – 10% to remain competitive and to assist with cost recovery as the program delivery model is updated.
- Semi-private and private lessons increased by 5%.
- Skating programs increased by 3.5% - 5% as there was additional room to increase them to better align with Markham and Vaughan's rates.
- A price correction of 9% was made to the Seniors 6 month skating membership to follow the pricing model of a Seniors 6 month swimming membership. All other rates and fees between skating and swimming follow a similar pricing model.
- Costs for the Logo installation in arenas will be invoiced based on full cost recovery.

Facility Rental Permits – gyms, meeting rooms, sports fields, park permits, Richmond Green Sports Centre and Dome

After reviewing the facility rental permit fees, it was determined not to increase the fees in light of the continuing pandemic. The groups that would typically permit our facilities have yet to experience the fee increases that were approved in the 2020 Tariff of Fee By-law since almost all of the groups have been unable to permit our facilities in 2020 and 2021. Those user groups will already be subjected to a 2% - 5% user fee increase that was previously approved, upon full resumption of facility rental permits.

Staff will undertake a comprehensive fee review of the facility rental permit fees in conjunction with our municipal comparators, Markham and Vaughan, to ensure an affordable pricing strategy for 2023 for these user groups.

All sports fields and sport field rates have been reclassified in accordance with the Parks Operations Levels of Service Study. This classification of fields is similar to our comparator municipalities including both Markham and Vaughan. Staff also included a rate for Classification "A" Hardball and Softball Diamonds for future pricing in the event that the City builds this classification of ball diamonds since all the existing Diamonds are classified as "B" or lower. Please see Appendix A (attached) for the information on each classification of sports field.

Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts

Staff conducted an analysis of current fees compared to similar sized venues including Markham, Oakville, Milton and Kingston. Each Theatre operation prices their services differently, some including base line costs in the building per day rental charge and others pricing out services separately. In order to remain consistent with the pricing at these theatres, staff have recommended a 1.9% fee increase on the majority of the fees at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Exceptions to this are as follows:

- Capital Improvement Fund Increased by 50% for tickets under \$19.99, which works out to \$.50 per ticket. This increase is based on municipal benchmarking.
- Ticket printing has increased from 10 – 20% due to the replacement of the box office software in order to recover costs.

New Programs and Services

The programs and services delivered each year fluctuate based on community demand. The fee by-law captures new programs and services that were either added in 2021 (e.g. additional virtual programs) or are planned to be added in 2022.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2022 proposed operating budget will include the following revenue impacts as a result of the fee recommendations in this report.

Recreation Program	Estimated Revenues
Aquatics	\$82,400
Fitness	\$17,000
Skating Programs	\$10,300
General Programs	\$43,300
Sports Fields and Parks	\$400
Indoor Facilities, film and road closure permits	\$3,900
Sports Dome	\$29,700
Advertising	\$2,700
Cultural Services Programming	\$1,000
RHCPA	\$24,000
Total	\$214,700

The additional revenue projections are primarily based on 2019 user statistics, and are based on an assumption that it will take some time to realize regular participation rates and normal operations due to Covid-19.

NOTE: The Recreation and Culture Division will require the flexibility, similar to 2021, to add new fees and to increase rates and fees accordingly in 2022 as we continue to adapt in order to navigate through the pandemic and post-pandemic recovery.

COMMUNICATION

The City of Richmond Hill User Fees and Charges By-Law for all departments will be posted on the City website. The rate adjustments in recreation and program service delivery is communicated through the Community Recreation Guide.



Appendix A – Parks Level of Service

Classification of Ball Diamonds

Classification	Irrigated	Infield	Outfield Soil Profile	Drainage	Size	Amenities	Quantity 2017
A - Hardball Lit Fields	Yes	Mix or Clay; Mound	Less than 25% silt plus clay	Yes	Adult	Backstop; HR Fence; Bleachers; Warning Track; Foul Poles; Perimeter Fencing; Dugouts; Dugout Covers; Home Plate; Parking	Town to determine once classifications are defined.
B- Hardball Lit Fields	Yes	Mix; Mound	Up to 40% silt and clay	May Be	Adult	Backstop; Dugouts HR Fence; Bleachers; Warning Track; Perimeter Fencing; Home Plate	Town to determine once classifications are defined.
C- Hardball Unlit Fields	No	Mix; Mound	Greater than 40% silt plus clay	No	Youth	Backstop; Benches; HR Fence; Home Plate	Town to determine once classifications are defined.
A - Softball Lit Premier Fields	Yes	Mix or clay Pitching Rubber	Less than 25% silt plus clay	Yes	Adult	Backstop; Bleachers; Warning Track Dugouts; HR Fencing; Home Plate	Town to determine once classifications are defined.

Classification	Irrigated	Infield	Outfield Soil Profile	Drainage	Size	Amenities	Quantity 2017
B - Softball Lit Fields	No	Mix	Up to 40% silt and clay	May Be	May be Youth or Adult	Backstop; Bleachers; Warning Track Benches Perimeter Fencing; Home Plate	Town to determine once classifications are defined.
C – Softball/T - ball Unlit Fields	No	Mix	Greater than 40% silt plus clay	No	Youth	Backstop	Town to determine once classifications are defined.
D – Informal Fields	No	May be mixed	Native Soil	No	Varies	May be backstop	Town to determine once classifications are defined.

Classification of Soccer Fields

Classification	Lit/ Irrigated	Drainage	Size	Soil Profile (Target)	Amenities	Quantity 2017
Class A	Yes/ Yes for grass	Yes	Regulation	Less than 25% silt plus clay	Bleachers; Perimeter Fencing; Goals;	1 grass; 3 artificial turf
Class B	Yes/Yes	Yes	Regulation or may be undersized	Up to 40% silt and clay	Bleachers; benches; Goals	18
Class C	No / Optional	No	May be undersized	Greater than 40% silt plus clay	Goals;	23
Class D – School fields	No/No	No	Undersized	Native soil	Goals	14