



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: August 25, 2025

TITLE: Recreation and Culture Fees and Charges and Facility Allocation Framework - Discussion

DIVISION: Community and Protective Services

SUMMARY:

The City's Recreation and Culture Fees and Charges and Allocation Review has been completed. A consulting firm was contracted to assist the department in this review and was required to complete:

- a review of the City's existing policies and practices,
- a market survey and jurisdictional scan of identified communities and facilities,
- community consultation with identified user groups, committees and Council, and
- provide the City with an overall project report, recommendations, and implementation plan.

The resulting two Frameworks, one for Fees and Charges and one for Allocation, outline the principles and priorities that inform key implementation strategies and approaches. Council is being asked to consider the two interconnected Frameworks, as they provide the policy-level direction for administration to follow in regard to recreation and culture fees and charges and the allocation of recreation and culture facilities and spaces.

Once Council has had an opportunity to review and respond to the proposed Frameworks, request for approval will be brought to a subsequent Council meeting.

PROPOSED MOTION:

A motion is not required.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

The City's Recreation and Culture fees and charges and allocation principles have not been reviewed or updated in many years. While market reviews have been completed, primarily with

the Tri-municipal partners, the structure, principles (levels of costs recovery, financial accessibility, priorities for use of space, definitions of users categories, etc.) have not been updated.

Over time, exceptions and inconsistencies in the application of fees were being experienced by the community, causing a lack of transparency, consistency, and equity for some in the community. This also has created challenges for staff to make independent and confident decisions in applying these fees and allocating facility time, as well as the ability to inform accurate financial planning and reporting.

The landscape of recreation and culture service delivery has shifted, both regionally and provincially. The increase in private business delivery of sport programming, sport academies, regionalized sport groups, and the increasing use by non-local users due to limited facility access in other municipalities (i.e. Edmonton) and the opportunities for sport and culture event tourism all need to be considered when establishing allocation priorities. Consideration was also required related to regional contributions and access related to cost-share arrangements that may impact allocation of spaces.

This project did not include direct programming fees, but included consideration for several 'extra' fees such as standardized staffing rates, equipment rentals, etc.

Once the Frameworks are approved, the implementation of the updated Fees and Charges and Allocation principles will be implemented at the beginning of the next full cycle of the allocation season for the particular facilities / amenities. (Example: Sport Fields / Ball Fields - Spring 2026; Ice Users - Fall of 2026.) This will allow user groups to adjust to any potential impacts.

Analysis

Below are some high-level results that are noted in the two Framework documents.

Fees and Charges:

- Most of the current fees and charges aligned with the Framework. Those that did not align were either considered 'new' fees, or will see an increase of a maximum 8 per cent/year until the fee aligns with the Framework.
 - New Fees / Fee Categories include:
 - Ice / Dry Space / Fuhr Sport Park / Class A Natural Sport and Ball Fields - **Jr League / Junior Profit rate**
 - Fuhr Sport Park / Class A, B, and C Natural Sport and Ball Fields - **Adult Not-For-Profit rate**
 - Prime / Non-Prime - **For other non-ice amenities.**

- Full cost accounting work for the various facilities / amenities was completed, however further refinement is required to increase full confidence in the results. All Full Cost Accounting amounts were tested with industry averages for similar facilities. Where discrepancies were identified, the industry standards and/or market were used to establish an appropriate fee.
- Fee categories which exist in some facilities / amenities are not required in others based on operational realities and use and as a result were not included, or removed.

Allocation

- Through consultation the definition of 'Local' consistently included the Tri-Municipal area, this makes any required access limitations for regional user groups challenging for administration. A revised definition of Local was created for clarity.
- Public Access (E.g. public skate) was prioritized.
- Equity, Accessibility, and Standards of Play are now included in the considerations for allocation.
- Increased transparency through defined priorities, refined processes, and increased user communication and collaboration.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

Refinement of proposed Frameworks.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

Public consultation was completed as a part of the project, focusing on recreation and culture user groups, the Community Services Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee, and Council.

Representatives from the City's regular user groups were invited to in-person or an online session, and they were provided a survey that they could complete following the initial sessions with their Boards or Management.

All information received from the various consultation opportunities were collected and informed the resulting Frameworks.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

Following the approval of the Frameworks, information sessions / user group meetings and materials will be provided to the user groups. For further clarity, any changes to current fees and allocation will be highlighted.

As part of the Implementation Plan, Administration will be finalizing a User Fee and Allocation Guide that will be available online for reference by the community. It will provide users with a 3-year projection of fees for better planning.

IMPACTS:

There will be a number of impacts and outcomes from the project:

- Increased transparency on fees and allocation of spaces for the community.
- Increased transparency and long-range planning on fees for users.
- Increased accuracy for longer-range budgeting.
- Clear direction and tools for Bookings staff to apply fees and allocate spaces in a consistent, transparent manner. This will increase efficiencies of work.

The review of related, historical policies and procedures will need to be completed, following the approval of the Frameworks, and where applicable brought forward to be rescinded or updated.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Revenue targets will be adjusted as the fee increases are implemented for the various facilities. Any financial impacts or adjustments resulting from the for Recreation and Culture Fees and Charges Framework will be identified through the Corporate Planning process.