



Recreation & Culture Fees and Charges Framework, Facility Allocation Review, and Implementation Strategy

Council Presentation
August 25, 2025

Agenda



- Project Context
- Assessment of Current Practices
- Fee Setting Process and Allocation Framework
- Implementation Action Planning

Project Context



- Recreation & Culture Fees and Charges structure and principles have not been revised since 2007.
- Regular market reviews have been completed.
- City policies and practices related to subsidy and financial accessibility have not been reviewed recently.
- Regional relationships and agreements may not align with current allocation priorities.

Considerations Guiding this Review and Framework Development

- Optimizing the **individual and community benefits** derived from delivery of recreation and culture services.
- Recognizing the **current and future community characteristics**.
- Ensuring fees and allocations are not a barrier to **participation**.
- Ensuring **economic viability** of services and sustainability of operations.
- Ensuring **transparency and equity** in the process for developing the fee setting and allocations.

Work Completed



- ✓ Policy and Planning Background Review
- ✓ Analysis of Current Service Delivery
- ✓ Leading Practices in Recreation Service Delivery (fees, allocations)
- ✓ Community Group, Advisory Committees and Staff Engagement
- ✓ Municipal Comparator Review

Engagement Key Findings



- Recreation and culture are **highly valued**, and an important component to provided a high quality of life to residents.
 - Providing inclusive and welcoming spaces and programs.
 - Youth programming is very important.
- **Allocation** processes are a **primary concern** for organizations.
 - Working within current facility / space limitations.
 - Desire / demand to expand program offerings / host tournaments.
 - Concerns over maintenance levels.
- **Transparency** of current processes should be enhanced.
 - Unsure of how decisions are currently made.
 - Concerns that some activities are prioritized over others.
 - Fees and charges are considered fair for arena users.

Analysis of Current Approaches

SCOT Assessment of Current Practices



STRENGTHS (INTERNAL)

- Flexibility to address community need and shifts in demand.
- Positive relationships between City Staff and Community Organizations.
- Consistency in in-take process for space requests.
- Hosting of user group meetings to facilitate scheduling.
- Competitive fees within market area.



CHALLENGES (INTERNAL)

- Out of date policies, which do not reflect current operational realities.
- Limited formal written procedures.
- Lack of process consistency due to ongoing requests for exceptions.
- Staff resourcing to manage scheduling and implementation of potential changes.



OPPORTUNITIES (EXTERNAL)

- Establish the City as the leader in fee setting and allocation processes in the Region.
- Changing market conditions conducive to adopting new approaches.
- Growing recognition of the importance of recreation and culture.
- New infrastructure.



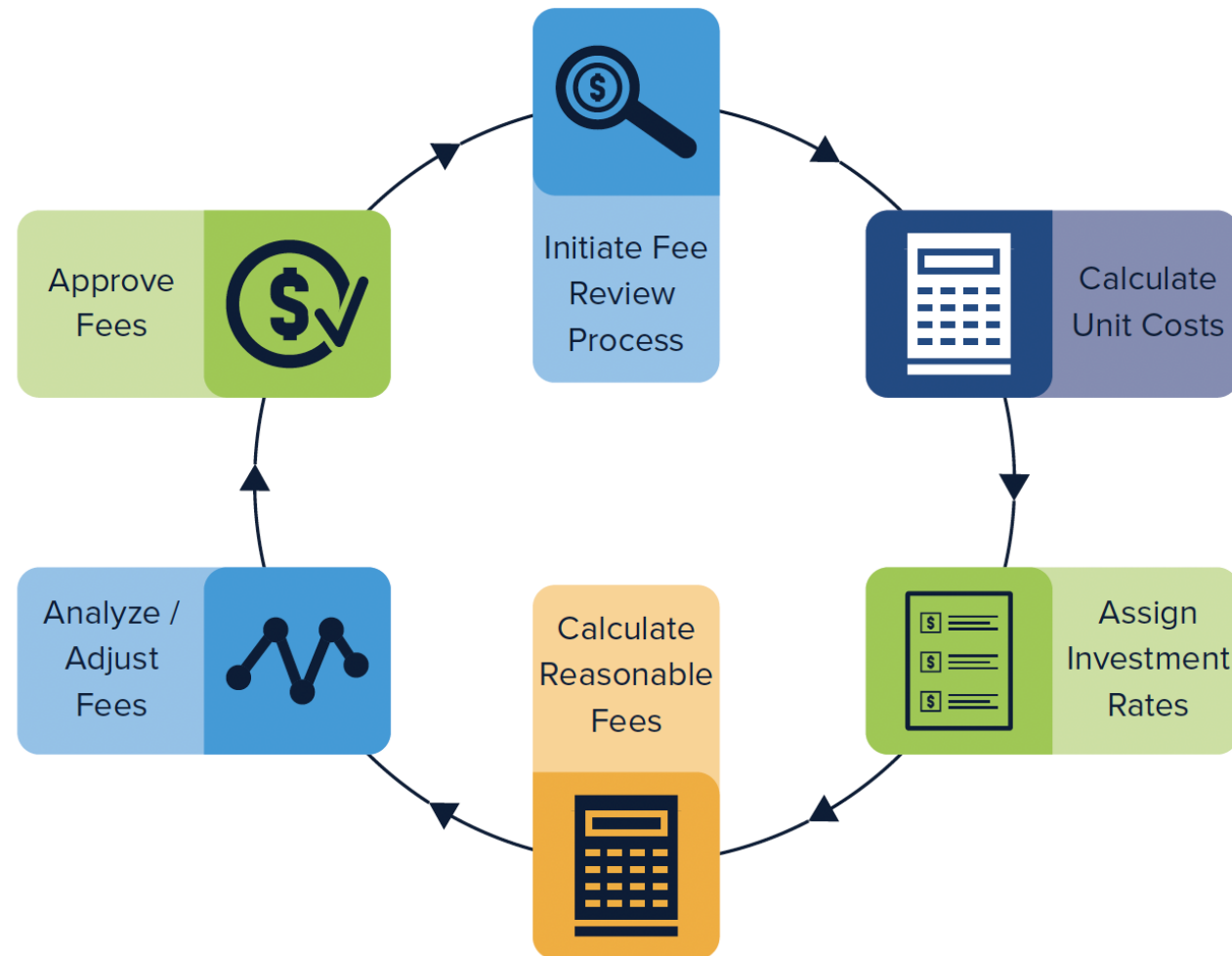
THREATS (EXTERNAL)

- Lack of perceived transparency in processes by community groups.
- Potential misalignment with regional partners.
- Changing community demands for activities.
- Group perception of 'local' as the Tri-Municipal Region.



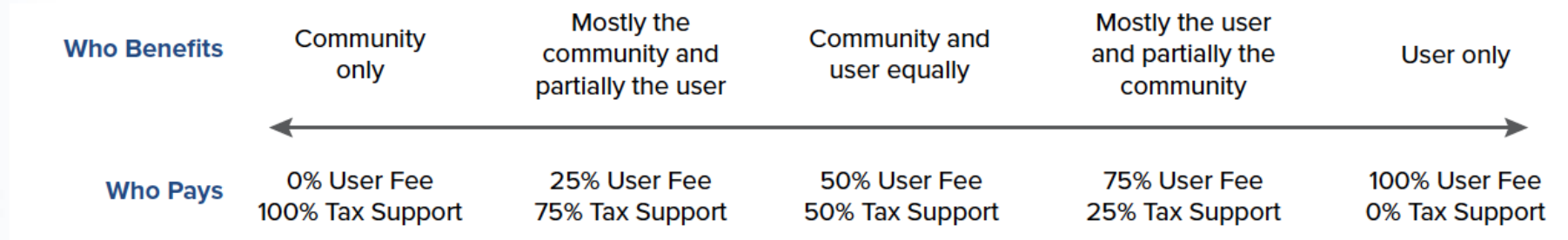
Proposed Frameworks and Implementation Planning

Recreation & Culture Fee Setting Framework



Assigning Investment Rates

Benefits-Based Philosophy: Fees are aligned with the level of public versus individual benefit. Services with broad community benefit receive greater tax support, while those with individual benefit are more user-funded.



Defining Types of Uses and Users



Uses / Activities

- Regular Activity
- Tournament

Users

- Youth Not for Profit
- Junior League / Youth For Profit
- Adult Not for Profit
- For Profit / Commercial

Implementation Strategy – Adjusting Fees



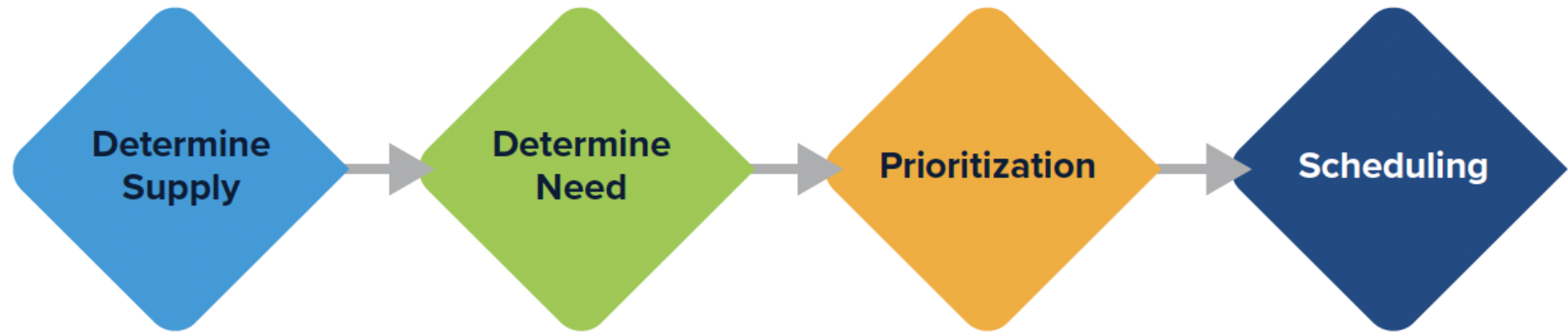
Situation	Potential Implementation Approach
If reasonable fee is slightly higher than or equal to existing fee (increase of 0 – 3%).	Apply reasonable fee.
If reasonable fee is moderately higher than existing fee (increase of 4 – 6%).	Phase in the reasonable fee over a planned timeframe (e.g., 3 – 5 years). Work with community groups to ensure affordability.
If reasonable fee is significantly higher than existing fee (increase of 7% or more).	Phase in the reasonable fee over a planned timeframe (e.g., 5 + years). Work with community groups to ensure affordability. Strive to increase utilization. Keep existing fees until higher utilization rates are achieved and then re-evaluate.
If reasonable fee is slightly lower than existing fee (decrease of 0 – 3%).	Keep existing fee fixed until the unit cost increases.
If reasonable fee is moderately lower than existing fee (decrease of 4 – 6%).	Either keep existing fee fixed until the unit cost increases or lower the fee.
If reasonable fee is significantly lower than existing fee (decrease of 7% or more).	Lower the fee. If lowering does occur for rental fees, work with community groups to explore options for decreasing participant fees.

Implementation Strategy – Fee Assistance



- In addition to this framework **fee assistance considerations are needed** to ensure financial barriers that some residents might experience are addressed.
- Work collaboratively with community groups, schools.
- Explore sponsorships / partnerships to offset costs.

Allocation Framework



Allocation Framework – General Priority Ranking

PRIORITIZATION HIERARCHY

1. City delivered or supported programs and events.
2. Local not-for-profit child / youth (0 – 18 years) groups.
3. Local, not-for-profit adult (19 years +) groups.
4. School programs, or events.
5. Non-local, not for profit groups.
6. For profit groups, or commercial organizations.

Allocation Framework - Scheduling



- **Excess demand** for youth / adult not for profit.
 - Receive equal ratio of prime and non-prime allocation
 - When all else equal to assess prioritization consideration could be given to:
 - Requests that demonstrate alignment with long term development standards, social development best practices.
 - Requests that are open to sharing space and being cooperative.
 - Requests that demonstrate alignment with governing bodies.
 - Requests that support physical, cognitive or sensory accessibility accommodations.

Allocation Framework - Scheduling



- **Event Hosting**

- Special events considered outside of normal allocation process.
- Hosting of tournaments by local not for profit organizations considered within normal allocation process and rational for allocation may be requested (i.e., how does it align with principles and benefit community).

Allocation Principles



ACTIVITY ALIGNMENT

Where applicable, the Allocation Policy will use standards based on best practices to ensure groups receive the right amount of time in spaces suited to their activity needs.



EQUITY

Public recreation and cultural services are intended to be accessible to everyone—regardless of income, gender, ability, or age.



ACCESSIBILITY

City programs are inclusive and aim to welcome and support participation from all individuals.



CLARITY

The Allocation Policy will clearly and transparently outline how space is assigned.



COLLABORATION

Because recreation and cultural facilities offer public value, the City and community groups share responsibility for making the best use of these spaces.



ADAPTABILITY

As recreation and culture needs evolve, the Allocation Policy must remain flexible to respond to changing trends and space demands.

Implementation Action Planning



- Creation of process / procedure documents for staff and public.
- Communication to groups on outcomes from this project.
- Potential adoption of Council approved policy.



Thank You! Questions?