



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
Date: January 28, 2020

From: Elizabeth Ayers
 Director, Recreation and Sport Services
File: 11-7000-00/Vol 01

Re: **Community Services Pricing Policy Progress Update and Guiding Principles**

Staff Recommendation

That the Community Services Pricing Policy Guiding Principles as detailed in the staff report titled "Community Services Pricing Policy Progress Update and Guiding Principles", dated January 28, 2020, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services, be endorsed.

Elizabeth Ayers
 Director, Recreation and Sport Services
 (604-247-4669)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Finance Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Arts, Culture & Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Social Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

On October 15, 2019, Council endorsed the staff recommendation to take a holistic approach to reviewing Community Services pricing and develop a pricing policy for Community Services programs, admissions and rentals, with the following referral:

That a pricing policy for Community Services programs, rentals and admissions be developed, and report back to Council with a draft policy for consideration, as described in the staff report titled "Age of Eligibility for Seniors Pricing," dated August 29, 2019, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services.

In developing the Community Services Pricing Policy, staff will ensure the process includes consideration of: "the recreation pricing structure for seniors" and "options for an appropriate age for free admission to community recreation centres," as directed by previous referrals.

Staff were also directed to provide progress updates to Council every three months. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on work to date on the Community Services Pricing Policy, an overview of the policy development process and recommended timelines, and to seek Council endorsement of the proposed Guiding Principles that will guide policy development.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.

4.1 Robust, affordable, and accessible sport, recreation, wellness and social programs for people of all ages and abilities.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #5 Sound Financial Management:

Accountable, transparent, and responsible financial management that supports the needs of the community into the future.

5.1 Maintain a strong and robust financial position.

5.4 Work cooperatively and respectfully with all levels of government and stakeholders while advocating for the best interests of Richmond.

This report supports the 2013-2022 Social Development Strategy Strategic Direction #3 Address the Needs of an Aging Population:

Action 7—Implement, monitor and update the Older Adults Service Plan, placing priority attention on:

7.5 Reviewing the pricing structure for City programs for older adults to ensure it remains equitable and sustainable, while also being affordable for those with limited incomes.

This report supports the Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan Key Action 2.4 Social Participation:

Priority Action 1: Increasing the affordability of social participation activities through the development and implementation of a Pricing Policy for recreation programs.

Analysis

Progress Update

Since October, staff have developed the process for the Community Services Pricing Policy project, including in-depth stakeholder involvement and public engagement at multiple points to ensure an open and transparent process. Staff have reviewed Guiding Principles from other municipalities and drafted a set of Guiding Principles for the development of Richmond's Community Services Pricing Policy. As well, an initial stakeholder meeting was convened with representatives from the boards of Community Associations and Societies across all areas of Community Services. At this meeting, a high-level overview of the policy development process was presented, including the proposed plan for stakeholder involvement, the timeline for project completion, and the draft Guiding Principles.

Process and Timeline Overview

The City delivers parks, recreation and cultural services directly, as well as indirectly through Community Associations and Societies, and a policy that sets a framework for setting the fees for Community Services programs, admissions and rentals is best developed in collaboration with these organizations.

As outlined in the chart on the following page, the policy development process prioritizes stakeholder involvement and public engagement throughout.

	Develop Guiding Principles	Background Research	Develop Policy Options	Impact Assessment	Public Feedback	Revisions	Present to Council for Adoption
Policy Development Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of other municipal pricing policy Guiding Principles Draft Guiding Principles Stakeholder feedback Seek Council endorsement of Guiding Principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of other municipal pricing policies Document and review of existing practices Community demographics and future trends Public engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group to develop policy options based on background research Stakeholder feedback Public engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group to examine financial and operating impact of policy options Develop policy recommendations Stakeholder feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public feedback on draft Pricing Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of public feedback Revisions to Policy as needed Working Group feedback Stakeholder feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek Council adoption of Pricing Policy
Original Timeline	December 2019 – January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May – June 2020	July – August 2020	September 2020
Proposed Amended Timeline	December 2019 – January 2020	February – March 2020	April – June 2020	June – August 2020	September – October 2020	November – December 2020	January 2021

The proposed plan for involving stakeholders includes two methods:

1. A Working Group that involves both staff and Community Association and Society board representatives that allows for in-depth involvement in identifying policy options and recommendations; and
2. Stakeholder Meetings that involve representatives from all Association and Society boards to provide feedback on the work of the Working Group at key junctures in the process.

At the first Stakeholder Meeting held on January 16, 2020, participants spoke favourably of the stakeholder engagement plan, but expressed concern about the timeline for reporting back by Q3 2020 to Council, as the current timeline would neither allow for the time needed to collaborate with stakeholders to develop the Pricing Policy, nor adequately engage the public.

Therefore, based on stakeholder feedback and staff analysis, an amended timeline is outlined in the table above that better accommodates the time required for meaningful stakeholder involvement and public feedback. Rather than Q3 2020, staff recommend reporting back in early Q1 2021.

Guiding Principles

The first key step in the policy development process is to confirm a set of Guiding Principles for Richmond's Community Services Pricing Policy. Guiding principles are based on an organization or group's values and, in the context of developing a policy, they shape the policy content and focus all parties on a common understanding of what is important when prioritizing and decision-making.

Staff conducted a review of Guiding Principles from eight (8) other municipal pricing policies and drafted a preliminary set of principles for Richmond that align with objectives in City strategies, such as the Community Wellness Strategy and Seniors Service Plan, and reflect the unique and diverse needs of Richmond's community. The draft Guiding Principles were presented at the Stakeholder Meeting held on January 16, 2020 and stakeholder representatives engaged in discussion of how the set of principles reflected their organizations' needs. Key considerations that are important to Community Associations and Societies were identified, such as:

- environmental considerations in cost impact;
- consideration of market forces;
- the need to balance revenue generating programs with programs and services designed to support community needs; and
- the importance of ensuring participation in leisure activities for all residents, including the economically disadvantaged and people with extra support needs.

Ultimately, meeting participants felt the draft Guiding Principles adequately captured the considerations listed above that are important to their organizations, and confirmed their support of the draft principle statements.

It is proposed that the following Guiding Principles be used to inform the development of the Community Services Pricing Policy for programs, admissions and rentals (collectively referred to as 'programs and services') delivered by the City of Richmond and/or Community Associations and Societies in Community Services facilities and spaces.

Richmond's Community Services Pricing Policy will:

1. Ensure the economic viability of high-quality programs and services and sustainability of operations.
2. Recognize the individual and community benefits derived from participation in programs and services.
3. Ensure equitable access to programs and services while being responsive to current and future community needs and demographic trends.
4. Be designed to encourage maximum participation by ensuring fees do not preclude participation.
5. Provide a framework to transparently communicate the process for developing the pricing of programs and services.

Staff are seeking Council's endorsement of these principles to guide the next steps of Pricing Policy development.

Next Steps

Moving forward, staff will continue to conduct background research that will inform the Working Group's activities, confirm Working Group membership, and prepare for the initial round of public engagement. Staff will continue to provide quarterly progress updates to Council via memoranda. As the process evolves, should opportunities arise to tighten the timeline, staff will endeavour to do so.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Richmond's Community Services Pricing Policy will provide a philosophical framework that will guide how fees for Community Services programs, admissions and rentals are established. The Guiding Principles state the values that are important collectively to the City and Community Association and Society boards in the development of the Pricing Policy, and will act as a 'compass' or 'guide post' in considering policy options and recommendations. The resulting Policy will enhance the ability of the City and Community Associations and Societies to articulate the set of factors considered in setting fees and how pricing decisions contribute to achieving strategic goals, such as community well-being and social connectedness.



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