

RES.#A253/21 -

2022 FEE SCHEDULE FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING

Approval of 2022 Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming.

Moved by: Linda Jackson
Seconded by: Ronald Chopowick

THAT the 2022 Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming be approved as set out in Attachment 2, effective February 1, 2022;

AND THAT TRCA's member municipalities be so notified.

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

Staff annually conduct a review of the Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming and recommends changes as required. This review considers the value provided to customers through TRCA programs and facilities, current market conditions and comparable fees imposed by other public authorities such as local municipalities, school boards, the Province, at provincial parks, and other Conservation Authorities. Proposed fee changes ensure TRCA provides safe, well-maintained parks and inclusive recreation and education experiences to diverse communities while protecting natural and cultural assets.

As an outcome of the fee schedule review process, TRCA staff are proposing to increase fees in a number of different areas to enable necessary cost recovery for park and facility access and education program delivery.

RATIONALE

The proposed changes to the 2022 Fees for Public Facilities and Programming, including comparisons to 2021 fees, is provided as *Attachment 1*. The proposed 2022 Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming is provided as *Attachment 2*. The Access to TRCA Public Facilities report summarizing programs TRCA has implemented to alleviate barriers to participation and encourage access to TRCA's public facilities and programming is included as *Attachment 3*.

Fees for access to parks and programs provide the funds required to operate and maintain conservation parks and their assets, as well as provide community programming and natural-science and cultural education for area schools and school boards. Ensuring that TRCA facilities and programs are accessible and safe for public enjoyment is of great importance to the millions of people who live near and visit TRCA greenspaces.

With COVID-19 operating precautions, certain attractions such as pools or large special events were restricted in 2020 and 2021. Park and trail use has however increased, particularly for walking and other passive park activities. Increased use, weather impacts, and the resulting increased requirements for park and trail maintenance coupled with aging infrastructure has resulted in increased operating costs within the Conservation Parks and Lands Division in particular. As a result, fee increases over inflation are necessary to ensure that increasing costs do not have a negative effect on maintenance and our ability to keep parks and amenities safe, clean and green for public enjoyment.

As communities around Conservation Parks and Lands managed properties grow, demand for access to greenspace and passive park use also increases. As landowners and managers of

conservation areas, TRCA is obligated to ensure a standard of care for our lands. Providing a clean and safe environment for all visitors is an integral part of why we need to collect fees. The proposed fee changes will assist TRCA in covering costs to provide accessible and enjoyable greenspace and programs for public enjoyment.

Financial sustainability of TRCA's public use facilities and education centres remains of paramount importance given recent amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, new and potential new *Conservation Authorities Act* regulations, and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 to operations. To this end, fee increases coupled with new program growth enables TRCA to continue to remain responsive to community interests and needs and ensure that TRCA facilities and programs remain viable into the future.

With the above in mind, TRCA is currently undertaking a feasibility study of paid parking at TRCA owned Conservation Lands. Associated revenue will be used for maintenance of trail head parking areas and the trails themselves. Fees will vary by location depending on demand and a new parking fee category will be required for implementation of any new paid parking location. These fees, varying by location, will be within general admission ranges noted in the schedule. Any additional fee categories to facilitate this new cost-recovery program for parking will be provided to TRCA's Board of Directors for consideration and approval as appropriate. In addition to paid parking at trail head parking areas, TRCA will pilot a per-car parking fee in 2022 at Petticoat Creek Conservation Area. Rather than collecting general admission for each individual patron arriving in a vehicle, a single vehicle rate will be applied. It is expected that implementing a per-car parking fee will encourage local visitors to enter via active transportation means or carpool, alleviating line ups at main entry gates. The proposed parking rate is in line with local municipal parking for recreational or tourism areas.

School-based education and community and family programming across TRCA has been and will continue to be impacted as a result of COVID-19. The proposed fee adjustments allow for the additional flexibility required to remain viable due to COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainties. Limits on our program's participation numbers will require flexibility in the design and offering of each program. In 2021, staff have continued to adjust program delivery models accordingly to meet Province of Ontario COVID-19 regulations and guidelines at the time of participation. Where appropriate and enabled through the 2021 Public Use Facilities and Programs Fee Schedule, fee adjustments throughout the year were at times required in certain program areas to support efforts to remain financially responsible in meeting program delivery costs, and to ensure that program value was matched to the fees. Based on experience gained through 2020 and 2021, staff have developed fee ranges for program offerings to provide both flexibility and accountability in covering program delivery costs while also reflecting the value of the program to our participants. Fee ranges allow staff to adjust programs and fees in-year based on demand and market conditions, thereby ensuring TRCA can continue to respond to the growing demand for programs and services within the communities we serve.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategy set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:
Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

The 2020 and 2021 operating years have uniquely affected the Tourism and Recreation and Education and Outreach services areas due to the impacts of COVID-19. In many cases, budgeted revenues were negatively impacted by changing pandemic related restrictions. However, fees have continued to be generally well supported by the public TRCA serves. The

public has high expectations of park, trail and program experiences. As much as possible, major changes to fees have been avoided other than to ensure that budgets keep pace with operating costs in ensuring safe and sustainable operation of programs and facilities and provision of quality and enjoyable public experiences.

Given the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 and 2022, preliminary budget forecasts for 2022 remain relatively conservative, with gross revenue from fee increases outlined below calculated on 2021 projections.

The 2021 revenue forecast for the User Fees, Sales and Admissions line item of these two services areas were as follows:

Tourism and Recreation Service Area:	\$6,111,000
Education and Outreach Service Area:	\$1,852,000

On average TRCA's public use facilities and programs fees are projected to increase approximately 5% in 2022, which will translate into an estimated gross revenue increase year-over-year of the following:

Tourism and Recreation Service Area:	\$305,550
Education and Outreach Service Area:	\$92,600

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Following Board of Directors consideration and approval, TRCA will notify its partner municipalities of the changes to the 2022 Fee Schedule and the updated fee schedule will be utilized for finalizing the 2022 budgets.

Conservation Parks and Lands together with Education and Training staff will work with internal Corporate Services partners, including Marketing and Communications and ITRM, to ensure all required updates are adopted in updated publications and materials, including the 2022 Fee Schedule for Public Facilities and Programming on the TRCA public website and online booking and reservation systems.

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Attachments: 3

Attachment 1: Change from 2021 to 2022 Base Fee

Attachment 2: 2022 Fee Schedule

Attachment 3: 2022 Access Report