



City of Belleville

Report No: DCSD-2024-03

Meeting Date: August 8, 2024

APPROVAL BLOCK

DF

BF

CAO

[Signature]

To: Members of the Finance Committee
Department: Community Services
Staff Contact: Dean Hustwick, Director of Community Services

Subject: City of Belleville 2024 User Fees Study (Draft)

Recommendation

“THAT the Finance Committee recommends that Council approve the recommendations as outlined in the Director of Community Services Report No. DCSD-2024-03.”

Strategic Plan Alignment

The City of Belleville’s Strategic Plan identifies nine strategic themes. This report aligns with the following themes:

- Infrastructure
- Arts, Culture, and Recreation
- Destination City
- Community Health, Safety and Security

Background

Recent History of User Fees

The Community Services Department has traditionally conducted annual evaluations of its user fees for parks, recreation, and culture services, drawing insights from local comparators to ensure a balanced and equitable fee structure.

Following completion of the major expansion of the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre in 2012, ice fees were significantly increased in 2015, resulting in considerable negative reaction by clients and the departure of numerous groups. These departures resulted in excess capacity and a significant decline in related revenue. Because of this, ice fees were frozen (recreation program fees continued to be increased annually) while those of adjacent municipalities caught up with Belleville’s rates.

Then in 2016-17, the former Yardmen Arena underwent a major renovation in preparation for becoming the home of the Belleville Senators. Because of the many inconveniences imposed on clients by having to squeeze into only three arenas rather than four, the City chose not to increase

ice fees during this period. Ice fees were held again the following year due to a decline in minor hockey registrations.

Just as program and revenue numbers once again began to grow, the COVID pandemic erupted in early 2020, which had a profound impact on the operations, revenue and cost recovery of all parks, recreation and culture programs. It also impacted public attitudes and goals related to health, employment and mobility, which has led to higher salaries and employee shortages. Operating costs for Belleville's programs and services have increased while some programs, especially for adults, are still lagging behind due to staff shortages and lower registrations, which affect revenue and cost recovery.

In 2021, the City completed its Parkland and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP), which included Recommendation #29 for the City to "undertake a comprehensive User Fee Study and Policy to outline a sustainable basis for reducing municipal subsidy on activities where possible and supporting ongoing subsidy where appropriate."

User Fees Study

In July 2023, the Community Services Department, in collaboration with the Finance Department, procured the services of StrategyCorp Inc. to help implement the PRMP recommendation. The objective of the Study was to evaluate the City's current fee schedule for parks, recreation and culture programs and services against comparable municipalities and to assess the City's approach to balancing taxation-funded subsidization with revenue generation through user fees.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was an important part of this project. A detailed online survey was conducted to assess public perceptions on many different aspects of the City's fees, with a very significant 1,264 responses. Furthermore, 20 interviews with stakeholder groups were conducted to solicit more direct and personalized feedback. Prior to Council consideration on September 9, 2024, the Fees Study will be posted on the City's website from August 9th to 23rd for stakeholder and public questions and comments.

Fees Assessment

Determining the appropriate level of fees is a complex process. Given the broader community benefits that are often associated with providing parks, recreation and culture programs and services, it is important to try to balance the often competing goals of revenue generation (and cost recovery), high rates of facility utilization, and barrier-free access to parks, recreation and culture.

Working collaboratively with the consultants, an innovative three-stage assessment framework was developed to help guide the review process.

- 1. Stage One: A Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology** that helps to link groups of fees according to different levels of community benefit (individual versus community) with associated cost-recovery levels (user pay versus subsidy). Evaluating the ratio of community versus individual benefits for any given program or service, and their respective places within the pyramid, is intuitive, requiring expertise and evaluation of all relevant local considerations. Likewise, the establishment of the various cost-recovery targets is also a subjective process.

2. **Stage Two: Municipal Comparator Analysis** that compared Belleville fees with those of similar medium-sized cities and municipalities within our general region. This also is a challenging process as it depends on receiving adequate information from the comparator municipalities in formats that are easily comparable, while each municipality has different quantities and qualities of programs, services and facilities.
3. **Stage Three: Ongoing Efficiencies Analysis** that identified new revenue generating opportunities and operational efficiencies. While this is a continuous process already imbedded in day-to-day operations, the consultants facilitated new conversations and brought forward new perspectives. The Study identified a number of specific revenue generating opportunities that staff will continue to evaluate for potential future adoption, including:
 - Differentiated fees for summer ice
 - On-line booking for dynamic pricing (last-minute bookings)
 - Extended operating hours of the QSWC
 - Re-evaluation of multi-day discounts
 - Out-of-town fees
 - New field lining fee
 - Capital surcharge
 - Statutory holiday premium charge

This assessment process is a very good framework and guide. But rather than a science it is more of an art that requires in-depth understanding of not only the programs and fee structure, but also industry trends, the local economy, knowledge of program users' and their levels of demand, mobility, ability to pay and barriers to access.

User Fees Policy

The Study also provides a proposed User Fees Policy (see Appendix D in Study) that describes the Pyramid methodology and provides a more structured approach to decision-making related to the review of fees. Included in the policy are the following guiding principles:

- Adherence to legislative requirements;
- Evidence-based;
- Flexibility;
- Accessibility and affordability: and
- Transparency:

Cost Drivers

In order to carry out this Study, the team needed to evaluate the full cost of providing our programs and services. While **direct operating costs** are easier to calculate, the **indirect costs** are much more complex but equally important. For that reason, the Community Services and Finance Departments worked together to carry out a methodical review of these indirect costs, which include but are not limited to administrative salaries and Corporate & Financial Services support. Through annual budgeting practices, City staff will continue to refine the allocation of costs across service areas to further support rate recommendations in accordance with the User Fees Policy.

The control, and reduction, of costs is also an important objective of staff. This is a regular part of day-to-day operations, but costs are generally harder to influence than price, especially in this period of higher inflation. Established wage rates and annual increases, overtime protocols and inflation have a strong influence on costs.

For the purpose of the Study, the annualized replacement value of assets utilized to provide services has been included as **capital costs**. These costs were pulled from the City's Asset Management Plan and have been reduced to account for long-term debt repayments included in the Budget. Therefore, the total capital costs (capital replacement costs and long-term debt payments) equal the annual capital lifecycle replacement costs.

Therefore, the Study considers the full cost of delivering services, including direct operating costs, indirect operating costs and capital costs.

Cost Recovery

While a key objective of the Study was to assess the City's approach to balancing taxation-funded subsidization of services and user-fee generated revenue, understanding and improving how those fees offset the full cost of program delivery was also important. **Cost recovery rates**, the percentage of program costs recovered through user fees, inversely determine the percentage of costs subsidized by taxpayers. If the cost recovery rate goes up, the amount of taxpayer money needed to subsidize a program or service goes down, and vice versa. Cost recovery rates are a direct function of public demand for programs, program fees, and program costs. The price elasticity of demand for these programs is high, meaning that as prices increase demand declines, especially when there are alternative options for consumers in adjacent communities. Therefore, just like in the private sector, the art of the business is in achieving that delicate balance and determining the right prices (fees).

Parks, recreation, and culture services play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life in communities. Establishing the appropriate mix of programs and services and funding sources for programming is a complex undertaking that requires both financial and policy lenses.

While municipalities are increasingly pursuing full-cost recovery for many of its programs and services, they have a difficult time recovering a high percentage of operating costs for parks, recreation and culture programs for several reasons. First, the high capital costs of related facilities. Second, the high operating costs of those facilities, which, like in Belleville, operate within an environment that generally pays higher wages, benefits and pensions than similar private sector environments. Third, municipal programs must be accessible by all residents compared with private facilities that can appeal to a more exclusive and wealthier segment of the population who can afford very high initiation, membership and service fees. Municipalities pursue goals of equality, accessibility and affordability, which do not always mix well with cost recovery. Fourth, as a level of government, municipalities operate under a very strict legislative and regulatory framework, which has associated costs.

To support this point, the Study refers to the United States National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) *2024 Agency Performance Review*, which found that the average operating cost recovery rate in a survey of its 60,000 member agencies was approximately 25% (which does not include capital costs).

The Study then groups Belleville's programs and services into community benefit tiers (from the Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology) and provides a target cost recovery range for each group. The grouping of the programs and services and the target cost recovery ranges have been based on a thorough assessment of all factors. However, this process is subjective and varies from one person's and community's perspective to another. Therefore, the target recovery ranges outlined in

the draft User Fees Policy should guide decision-making when recommending user rate adjustments for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services provided by the City.

Because of this subjectivity and other environmental factors, the target ranges of some of the programs, or even entire groups, may be difficult to achieve from the outset.

Although an increase in the recovery of operating costs from user fees may be achievable, the recovery of operating plus capital costs is challenging as the City strives to maintain affordability of programs and services. Nevertheless, the Study provides recovery rates for the combined costs for purposes of transparency and good financial management.

For program/service groupings that remain outside of the target ranges after new fee increases, City staff will continue to assess the programs and groupings and develop strategies to bring them within the range over time or, if not practical, will consider the feasibility of related services and/or targeted recovery ranges outlined in the draft policy that will be presented to Council for consideration. Through such a process, the model will be improved and fine-tuned.

Unique Considerations

Municipalities, facilities and programs all have their own unique considerations that influence demand, price, costs and cost recovery. They must also be considered carefully when evaluating comparators and setting fees. The Study identifies a number of unique considerations and program outliers that may guide decision-making on fees differently than the Pyramid model may normally suggest. These considerations may be related to operating costs, capital costs, revenue or a combination thereof. A couple of examples include the operation of a professional hockey franchise at the QSWC and the Belleville Marina, which offers fewer services than comparators and has unique infrastructure challenges.

Financial/Analysis:

2024 Fee Increases

The complexity of the review process, combined with an expedited budget schedule, meant the 2024 Operating Budget had to be approved by Council prior to the completion of the Study. Nevertheless, the preliminary findings of the study were available and pointed convincingly toward the need for fee increases. Based on that early information, and given the rising costs of operations, the City chose to incorporate numerous fee increases into the Budget for implementation at different dates throughout 2024. The result was an estimated revenue increase of \$210,000 in 2024 with an annualized increase of approximately \$300,000. The following table highlights the general approach to those increases.

Revenue Category	Program/Service	Fee Increase
QSWC Registration Programs	Adult Programs	5%
	Adult Program Revenue – Community Drop-Ins	33%
	Adult Program Revenue – Premier Sports Drop-Ins	100%
	Children/Youth Programs	5%
	Summer Camps	5%
	Programs	5%
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	Facility rentals – Minor Sports	3%
	Facility Rentals – Adult/Private	6%
	Public Swim – Child/Youth	33% (\$1)
	Public Swim - Adults	67% (\$2)
	Programs	5%
QSWC Arenas	Ice rentals Minor Sports	3%
	Ice rentals Adult/Private	8%
QSWC Leases/Space/Rental/Other	Gymnasium and Meeting Rooms	10%
	Advertising	10%
QSWC Senior’s Active Living Centre	Annual Membership	100%
	Programs	5%
Outdoor Aquatics	Public Swim – Child/Youth	33% (\$1)
	Public Swim - Adults	67% (\$2)
Community Centres	Parkdale Community Centre	10%
	Gerry Masterson Community Centre	10%
Harbours	Seasonal Dockage	10%
	Transient Dockage	10%
Parks Facilities	Facility Rentals	6%
Sports Fields	Minor Sports	3%
	Adults/Private	6%

Final Draft Report

After an extensive analysis, the Study concludes that even after the fee increases enacted in the 2024 Budget, there remain a number of gaps between Belleville’s current fees and optimal fee levels.

While the Study documents the specific details of the gaps and the specific recommendations, the bottom line is that it recommends some significant fee increases in both 2025 and 2026 (see Appendix A in Study). These increases will raise the City’s cost recovery rates which will simultaneously reduce the level of taxpayer subsidy. The increases will also better align the City’s fees with those of similar and nearby municipalities.

However, the size of the proposed increases over a short, two-year period will likely generate significant stakeholder reaction and potentially create some affordability issues for specific user groups and individuals. Some of the recommended increases could also lead to some registration, rental and revenue reductions.

Forecasted Cost Recovery & Revenue Trends

Results of Rate Recommendations	Target Cost Recovery Range	2025 Projected Revenue Increase *	2026 Projected Revenue Increase	Operating			Operating & Capital		
				2024 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2025 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2026 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2024 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2025 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2026 Forecasted Cost Recovery
QSWC Registration Programs	20-40%	60,500	36,500	29%	31%	33%	25%	27%	28%
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	40-60%	64,200	50,300	23%	25%	27%	20%	22%	23%
QSWC Arenas	40-60%	144,600	116,200	22%	24%	26%	19%	21%	22%
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	40-60%	77,100	85,500	18%	22%	26%	15%	18%	22%
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	40-60%	3,500	2,300	50%	51%	51%	43%	44%	44%
Outdoor Aquatics	20-40%	6,500	3,000	24%	27%	28%	15%	17%	18%
Community Centres	60-80%	7,100	7,800	65%	76%	89%	17%	20%	24%
Harbours	60-80%	97,000	118,400	62%	74%	89%	29%	34%	41%
Archives	Below 20%	6,500	6,900	51%	53%	55%	46%	48%	49%
Glanmore	Below 20%	15,700	19,200	11%	13%	15%	10%	12%	14%
Parks Facilities	Below 20%	1,300	1,400	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Parks	Below 20%	13,800	14,900	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%	4%
Sports Fields	20-40%	10,200	12,600	10%	11%	12%	8%	8%	9%
Total		508,000	475,000	20%	22%	24%	16%	18%	19%

*Includes annualized impact of 2024 rate increases adopted with 2024 Operating Budget.

Conclusion:

If implemented, the Study's proposed fee increases would have the following estimated financial impacts, assuming current levels of registrations:

- \$508,000 in additional revenue in 2025, including the annualized impact of 2024 rate increases adopted with the 2024 Operating Budget;
- \$475,000 in additional revenue in 2026;
- An overall increase in operating cost recovery from 20% in 2024 to 24% by the end of 2026 (16% to 19% in combined operating and capital cost recovery).

These estimates incorporate a modest and normalized inflationary increase in operating costs and does not necessarily consider significant cost escalations (e.g., renewal of union agreements and other salary adjustments). As such, fees will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis and, at a minimum, adjusted by amounts equivalent to changes in the cost-of-living (through adjustments to the City's Consolidated Fees & Charges Bylaw). Furthermore, a more comprehensive review is recommended every five years, but as the Policy permits, staff may address significant cost escalations in the interim period.

The following recommendations are presented for the Committee's consideration:

1. THAT the Finance Committee recommends that Council approve the City of Belleville 2024 User Fees Study and, subject to community feedback, approve the proposed City of Belleville User Fees Policy and 2025 User Rate recommendations;
2. THAT, as outlined in the draft User Fees Study, costs associated with field lining be referred to the 2025 Capital and Operating Budgets for Council's consideration with a proposed rate change that considers these increased levels of service and costs;
3. AND FURTHER THAT City staff continue to evaluate additional revenue generating opportunities for future Council consideration.

Report No. DCSD-2024-03

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Hustwick
Director, Community Services Department

Attachments:

City of Belleville 2024 Users Fees Study (Draft)

Appendix A: Proposed Fee Rates

Appendix B: Forecasted Cost Recovery & Revenue Trends

Appendix C: Resident Survey Results

Appendix D: Draft User Fees Policy for City of Belleville

City of Belleville

User Fees Study

August 2024





Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Project Context	3
1.2 Legislative and Policy Context	5
2. Methodology and Approach	7
2.1 Methodology	7
2.2 In-Scope Services and Fees.....	8
2.3 Evaluated Cost Drivers	11
2.4 Policy Evaluation Framework.....	14
3. Cost of Service and Revenue Analysis	23
3.1 Belleville’s Demographics and Forecasts	23
3.2 Current Revenues, Costs, and Recovery Estimates.....	25
4. Recommended Rates	29
4.1 Prioritization by Community Benefit	30
4.2 Cost Recovery Levels.....	33
4.3 Benchmarking Against Comparators	35
4.4 Recommended Changes to Fee Structure	38
4.5 Draft User Fees Policy for Parks, Recreation, and Culture Programs, Services, and Facility Rentals 40	
5. Further Analysis and Opportunities	43
5.1 Potential Revenue Generating Opportunities	43
Appendix A: Proposed Fee Rates	48
Appendix B: Forecasted Cost Recovery & Revenue Trends	65
Appendix C: Resident Survey Results	66
Appendix D: Draft User Fees Policy for City of Belleville	83

Executive Summary

In Summer 2023, the City of Belleville (“City” or “Belleville”) engaged StrategyCorp Inc. (“StrategyCorp” or “SCI”) to conduct a comprehensive review of user fees for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services. The objective of this review was to assess the City’s current funding approach for these services, accounting for the balance between taxation-funded subsidization of services and revenue generated through user fees.

This final report for the City’s User Fee Study provides an overview of the project’s approach and methodology, findings from a cost of service and revenue analysis, and a framework and set of recommendations for specific fee adjustments.

To assist the City of Belleville in determining the appropriate 2025 – 2026 user fees rate structure and methodology for future years, this report is framed around a three-stage assessment approach, which included:

- 1. Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology:** in stage 1, our team applied the Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology, which included prioritizing the groups of fees based on their significance to the community and the overarching objectives of the programs and services, and the identification of idealized target cost recovery percentages for each group of fees that correspond to their placement within this methodology. Stage 1 also included working closely with City staff to assess the full cost-of-service provision and to determine the respective cost recovery rates (accounting for both operating and capital costs) for the various groups of programs and services offered by the City.
- 2. Municipal Comparator Analysis:** in stage 2, our team assessed relevant 2024 comparator data to understand local market conditions and how Belleville compared to its peers.
- 3. Ongoing Efficiencies Analysis:** in stage 3, our team aggregated information from stakeholder interviews, comparator data, and market research to identify a set of new revenue generation opportunities in the Parks, Recreation, and Culture services space for the City’s consideration. A review of operational efficiencies within current programs and services was also completed in this stage.

Collectively, these steps guided the identification of proposed fee adjustments, which sought to strike a balance between financial needs, community interests, and broader policy objectives such as ensuring accessibility and affordability in service delivery. While this three-stage framework is theoretically clear, as detailed in this report, evaluating the ratio of community versus individual benefits for any given program or service (and their respective place within the pyramid methodology) is subjective and complex, requiring staff expertise and evaluation of all local and relevant considerations.

Proposed user fee rate adjustments resulting from this report are presented in Appendix A. This report has also drafted a User Fees Policy for the City of Belleville, which outlines a process for future reviews and updates to the user fee rates charged by the City for its Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals. This draft policy is outlined in Appendix D.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Context

The City of Belleville engaged StrategyCorp in Summer 2023 to conduct a comprehensive review of user fees for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services. The objective of this review was to assess the City's current funding approach for these services, accounting for the balance between taxation-funded subsidization of services and revenue generated through user fees.

As a result of this process, StrategyCorp was asked to provide recommendations to revise or adjust current user fees in alignment with the study's findings, and to develop a new policy framework and approach for clearer decision-making regarding updates to the City's user fees and charges. This review also assisted with the identification of new revenue generation opportunities in the parks, recreation, and culture space for the City's consideration.

To complete this study, a comprehensive methodology was employed to:

1. Estimate the full cost of service provision associated with the in-scope services;
2. Evaluate the current fee schedule against those of comparable municipalities;
3. Assess the share of community vs. individual benefits associated with the City's in-scope programs and services, and establish a fee-setting policy framework on that basis; and
4. Develop recommendations to align user fees with the new framework.

Parks, Recreation, and Culture services play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life in communities. Establishing the appropriate mix of programs and services and funding sources for Parks, Recreation, and Culture programming is a complex undertaking that requires both financial and policy lenses. Given the types of programs and services they provide, municipalities do not operate on a full cost-recovery basis and are not expected to (and doing so would not be financially feasible). Instead, provision of services at below full cost-recovery levels provides an implicit subsidy for the provision and access to facilities and services with broader public benefits that would not be otherwise provided by the private sector.

Assessing the full cost-of-service provision involves considering both direct and indirect operating and capital costs. Direct operating costs include those associated with staff salaries and benefits directly linked to service delivery and other operational expenses which are essential for providing these services (e.g., materials, supplies, third party contracted services), with indirect operating costs related to support and corporate overhead functions (e.g., management, human resources, finance, information technology/information management) that assist in facilitating the delivery of programs and services. Capital costs related to long-term investments in facilities or major equipment and fleet purchases also must be considered. However, determining service-specific costs, and the assignment of capital and maintenance costs for shared facilities, often requires assumptions in lieu of detailed activity-based costing.

Once a full cost of service provision is established, determining the appropriate mix of funding

between the tax base and recovery through user fees is multi-factorial, and must consider the assessed public benefit a service provides, the impact of user fees on service and facility utilization given market conditions (and therefore total revenue and cost recovery), and the relative importance of financial accessibility. Determining appropriate user fee rates is therefore both a technical question, in evaluating costs and relevant market dynamics influencing total revenue, and a policy question in deciding the degree to which municipal subsidy and access to a particular program or service is important.

Both the timing and unique local context in the City of Belleville are relevant to this study. The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on Parks, Recreation, and Culture services across the province, reshaping the costs and revenue landscape and providing cause for a reflection on the relative importance of different programs and services within that portfolio. Data for the years coinciding with, and immediately succeeding the pandemic is anomalous due to the impact of public health restrictions, and thus does not provide a good baseline for forward-looking estimates. Moreover, the increased importance of outdoor spaces and of Parks, Recreation, and Culture amenities created new latent demand for services that may not be accurately reflected in available historical data.

The City of Belleville is also unique among municipalities in the centralized provision of a number of these services within the Quinte Sports & Wellness Centre (QSWC). As both a large capital asset, but one that generates additional non-service revenue as the home of the American Hockey League's Belleville Senators (CAA Arena), Belleville has a uniquely complicated cost and revenue structure for its recreation services for which there are few direct local comparators. The presence of a professional hockey team also has unique influence on the broader QSWC operations, such as operational support requirements, parking challenges, and reduced rental/event opportunities due to team use (e.g., on gamedays, practices, and other designated dates for the Senators).

To account for these unique challenges as a component of this study, StrategyCorp engaged City staff in an iterative process to gather and assess the appropriateness of available data, and to develop assumptions and estimates where data was limited or unavailable. In evaluating the results, however, accounting for the lack of like-for-like comparisons remained critical.

Determining the right levels of subsidization and the appropriate user fees, beyond questions of financial stability, must be grounded in a municipality's strategic imperatives and policy approach. The City of Belleville Parkland and Recreation Master Plan indicates a shift away from simple cost recovery thresholds and towards one anchored in the concept of "public good". Our approach to this study employs a methodology to address this concretely (though imperfectly), and further supports the City's overarching goal in the plan to "continue to employ a Blended Two-Tier Model for the municipal delivery of parkland and recreation services, supported by updated policies governing subsidization, cost recovery, and user fees by program."

1.2 Legislative and Policy Context

Given that user fees are an instrument of policy, decisions around where and at what level to set them must be considered within the context of the legislative and policy frameworks that currently govern and guide the City of Belleville. These include *The Municipal Act, 2001*, which outlines the statutory authorities and responsibilities of Ontario municipalities and defines the legislative room the City has to charge user fees, as well as the policies, strategies, and plans that the City has itself defined.

For the purposes of this study, we have considered:

1. ***The Municipal Act, 2001, Part XII, and associated regulations***: Provides that municipalities can impose fees or charges for services or activities provided by or on behalf of them for costs owed, including costs related to administration and capital assets, and without regard to whether the service is mandatory or discretionary. One major category of fees prohibited under the regulations are those charged to recover costs for capital assets that are otherwise subject to development charges or other agreements instituted to recover those costs, intended to prevent the charging of separate fees for the same costs.
2. **Belleville Parkland and Recreation Master Plan**: The Belleville Parkland and Recreation Master Plan was completed in September 2021 to establish a comprehensive multi-year framework which provides guidance for municipal investment to enhance the City's parkland and recreational assets and services. The Plan draws upon the strengths of the City's existing parkland and recreation service provision in terms of facilities and amenities / features, while addressing gaps and opportunities to enhance the local recreation offer.

The Master Plan provides a comprehensive, multi-year framework with a 20-year horizon for the development of facilities, programming, and services. It provides a 10-year capital plan, consisting of short (1-3 years), medium (4-6 years), and longer-term (7-10 years) priorities to sustain and grow the recreation and leisure offer of the City of Belleville in an integrated manner.

User fees, and accounting for asset lifecycles, should be considered in the context of their contribution and alignment to the Master Plan and its objectives.

3. **City of Belleville Strategic Plan 2012-2032**: The City's current Strategic Plan was developed in 2012 and helps define the vision for the community and solidify the Corporation's mission to help make Belleville a better place to live, work, play, and invest.

The Plan identifies longer-term goals for the Corporation, with the intent of directing toward fulfilling those goals over time. Council endorsed nine strategic themes in the plan – themes that directly speak to parks, recreation, and culture services include:

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- Develop multi-purpose, marketable sports and recreation facilities;

- Plan and develop a parks system with facilities and services that promote health and wellness and address the needs of an ageing population and our youth; and
- Promote beautification of the community through excellence in urban design.

Destination City

- Promote and support the development of attractions, events, facilities and services that will draw visitors to the community; and
- Encourage the creation of a vibrant waterfront based on recreation and entertainment, accented with unique commercial and residential opportunities.

In addition, Parks, Recreation, and Culture services also intersect with some of the other themes in the current Strategic Plan, including:

Community Health, Safety & Security

- Support the provision of programs and services to reduce incidence of crime; and
- Encourage development of a viable social safety net.

Infrastructure

- Plan for and invest in new or expanded infrastructure to establish sufficient capacity to provide for growth of our community.

Transportation and Mobility

- Plan and develop transportation networks for cyclists and pedestrians.

2. Methodology and Approach

2.1 Methodology

This User Fee Study employed a structured approach to assess the cost-of-service delivery and levels of cost recovery under the City's current user fee schedule, and to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of those user fees in the context of the public good and regional competition and comparator services.

Completed activities included:

1. **Inventory and Categorization:** An exhaustive inventory of all user fees associated with Parks, Recreation, and Culture services were provided to StrategyCorp by City staff, which were then categorized based on types of services (e.g., QSWC Arenas, Outdoor Aquatics, Community Centres, Harbours, etc.) for a systematic analysis.
2. **Financial Data Collection and Analysis:** the StrategyCorp team received financial data related to user fee revenue, operating, and capital costs. Coming out of COVID-19, we looked at the historic data and compared the revenue numbers for the years 2018 to 2024 (forecasted using available actuals up to 2023 and budget figures for 2024).

We analyzed financial records to understand trends, fluctuations, and patterns in revenue generation over the specified review period. We then examined usage metrics for Parks, Recreation, and Culture facilities and programs, assessing attendance and utilization rates and participation trends.

As noted, recent financial and operational data is expectedly anomalous due to the substantial negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Parks, Recreation, and Culture facilities. During the pandemic, the City of Belleville made decisions to keep its facilities available and staff employed, which had significant implications on the City's expenses and ultimately on cost recovery levels. We discuss the approach in more detail within the report, but in many instances treat 2019 and 2023 as the most recent historical years for analysis purposes.

3. **Benchmarking against Comparator Municipalities:** The StrategyCorp team conducted benchmarking against two groups of peer municipalities, to assess how user fees in the study area compare. The benchmarking municipalities were selected through consultation with the City's project team and included:
 - a. **Four medium-size cities** consisting of Quinte West, Peterborough, Cornwall, and North Bay; and
 - b. **Twelve proximate municipalities** that have closer proximity to Belleville, which include: Cobourg, Cramahe (Colborne), Brighton, Prince Edward County, Stirling, Marmora, Centre Hastings, Tweed, Deseronto, Napanee, and Kingston.

While some of the proximate comparators do not have the same facilities and/or services

as Belleville, it was important to consider them in the benchmarking analysis, as their residents may use Belleville's services and vice versa. We analyzed fee structures, pricing models, and investigated existing policies to identify best practices and potential areas for improvement for Belleville.

4. **User Survey:** As a next step, StrategyCorp administered an online survey to users of Parks, Recreation, and Culture facilities and programs at the City of Belleville to gauge satisfaction levels with the current fee structures and understand what the residents of the City and users of the facilities and programs think about existing fees. The survey garnered an impressive 1,264 responses. In this survey, we solicited feedback on perceived value, affordability, and suggestions for improvements.

A summary of the findings from this survey are included in Appendix C.

5. **Stakeholder Consultation:** With consultation from City staff, StrategyCorp reached out to key user groups and individuals throughout this study to better understand the context and impacts of fee changes on different demographic groups within the community. We also examined whether user fees create barriers to access and participation, with a focus on promoting inclusivity and addressing potential disparities.

Through these interviews, we gathered qualitative insights on the community's perspective regarding the current user fees and potential areas for adjustment, as well as potential new revenue generating opportunities.

6. **Legal and Policy Compliance Review:** The StrategyCorp team also conducted a review of existing legal and regulatory policy frameworks governing user fees for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services to ensure that the user fee structures align with legal requirements and adhere to established policies.
7. **Synthesis and Recommendations:** At the final stage, StrategyCorp synthesized the findings from the financial analysis, benchmarking exercise, user survey, stakeholder consultations, and legal review. This report provides evidence-based recommendations for potential user fee adjustments, considering financial sustainability and broader community objectives, while also suggesting a new policy framework and approach for clearer decision-making regarding regular staff-led updates to user fees and charges and a collection of new revenue generation opportunities in the parks, recreation, and culture space for the City's consideration.

2.2 In-Scope Services and Fees

The City of Belleville offers a variety of Parks, Recreation, and Culture services and programs to residents and visitors. The City has several parks and recreation facilities that offer various activities and programming for all ages and abilities.

The services and fees in-scope for this review consisted of:

- Ice / Floor surfaces and event fees, including three community arenas and the 4,400 seat C.A.A. Arena;

- Gymnasium;
- Aquatic facilities - indoor and outdoor;
- Indoor Track facility;
- Fitness Studio;
- Meeting Rooms;
- Multi-purpose spaces;
- Sports fields and ball diamonds, including extra charges for value-added services, including lighting, portable lavatories, seating, etc.;
- Eight lane Track and Field facility;
- Parks and open spaces;
- Pavilions, band shells and covered picnic shelters;
- Market Square;
- Weddings, receptions, and wedding photos;
- Marina Operations:
 - Seasonal and transient dockage;
 - Personal watercraft (e.g., Seadoo);
 - Boat launches;
 - Services (e.g., fuel, pump-out, hydro);
- Museum - National Historic Site:
 - Admissions and discounts;
 - Tours;
 - Photos;
 - Grounds;
 - Rooms;
 - Filming; and
- Community Centres:
 - Recreation activities;
 - Private functions; and
 - Events with Alcohol.

The user fee study also included analysis and recommendations for recreation programs and services, such as summer camps, fitness classes, swimming / skating lessons, tournaments, advertising, etc.

Categorization

A pivotal aspect of this review involved the careful selection of categories pertinent to Recreation, Culture, and Parks' costing for the in-scope services and fees. By establishing these categories, a thorough evaluation of the full cost of programs and services becomes feasible. This encompasses not only the direct and indirect costs associated with program design and delivery but also the expenses related to the operation and maintenance of capital assets.

This categorization process was undertaken at the outset of the engagement, facilitated through communications with City staff, as well as interviews with managers and supervisors for each category. **Subsequently, these services were systematically grouped into distinct categories, as demonstrated below:**

Budget Area: QSWC Registration Programs

- Fitness Programming / Classes
- Day Camps
- Skating lessons/power skating
- Preschool, children and youth programs

Budget Area: QSWC Indoor Aquatics

- Templeman Aquatic Centre Rentals
- Templeman Aquatic Centre Programming

Budget Area: QSWC Arenas

- Ice Rentals
- Recreational Skating

Budget Area: QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other

- Ball Hockey Rentals
- Event Rentals – C.A.A. Arena, Family Dental Centre, Mackay Insurance, and Wally Dever Arenas
- Fitness / Gym Areas Rentals
- Meeting Room Rentals – Training Room, Gym Meeting Room, Youth/Pool Room, Pro-shop Meeting Room, Fireplace Room, Minor Sports Meeting Room, Multipurpose Room, McFarland Pub, 50+ Centre
- Advertising – Arena Boards, In-Ice Logos, Zamboni Wrap, TV Ads, Posters, Marquee Sign, etc.

- Leases – Food concession, physiotherapy and massage services

Budget Area: QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre

- Seniors Programming / Activities

Budget Area: Outdoor Aquatics

- Kinsmen Pool Rentals
- Kinsmen Pool Programming

Budget Area: Community Centres

- Hall Rentals – Parkdale Community Centre, Gerry Masterson Community Centre

Budget Area: Harbours

- Meyers Pier
- Victoria Park Harbour
- Other Harbour Fees – Personal Watercraft, Power Amps, Pumpout, Transient Dock, etc
- Boats Ramps

Budget Area: Archives

- Scanning / Copying / Printing

Budget Area: Glanmore National Historic Site

- Special Events / Photos / Filming
- Admission

Budget Area: Parks

- Parks and greenspace
- Playgrounds

Budget Area: Parks Facilities

- Market Square & Bernice Parrott Stage
- Parks Special Events – Lion's Pavilion, Wedding-related, Large Park Events, etc

Budget Area: Sports Fields

- Sports Field Rentals – Ball Diamonds, Field & Artificial Turf, Track
- Tournaments / Special Events

2.3 Evaluated Cost Drivers

Evaluating the full cost of service provision requires a view of operating costs (both direct and indirect) and capital costs. While direct operating costs – those driven directly by service activities

– are most often evaluated in the context of cost recovery rates, a full view that includes other administrative supports (indirect operating costs), and the asset management costs associated with facilities used in the programs and services (capital costs), are critical to developing a clear picture of true cost recovery rates.

Below, we provide an overview of the relevant cost drivers for each category:

Direct Operating Costs

When considering Parks, Recreation, and Culture services, the direct operating costs typically involve the expenses directly associated with providing and maintaining these programs and services. These costs include staff salaries and benefit expenses directly linked to service delivery and other operational expenses which are essential for providing these services (e.g., materials, supplies, third party contracted services, maintenance costs, etc.).

Indirect Operating Costs

Indirect operating costs support the programs and services but are not tied to a specific activity. These relate to support and corporate overhead functions like management/administration, human resources, finance, information technology/information management, among others, that assist in facilitating the delivery of programs and services by the City.

Specifically, indirect operating costs identified and evaluated within this review include but are not limited to:

- **Administrative Salaries:** Salaries and benefits for administrative staff responsible for overseeing parks, recreation, and culture programs.
- **Corporate & Financial Services Support:** Costs associated with providing other administrative services such as human resources and finance.
- **Insurance:** Insurance premiums covering liability, property, and other relevant insurances to protect the City and its assets associated with Parks, Recreation and Culture facilities.
- **Communication and Outreach:** Costs associated with communication efforts, including public relations, marketing, and community outreach programs to promote Parks, Recreation and Culture events.
- **Training and Development:** Expenses related to training programs and professional development for staff involved in organizing and managing Parks, Recreation and Culture services.
- **Technology and Software:** Costs for information technology infrastructure, software applications, and systems supporting the management and operation of Parks, Recreation and Culture services.
- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** Costs associated with legal counsel and compliance with regulations relevant to Parks, Recreation, and Culture services.

As a result of this rate-setting exercise, staff will continue to refine its direct and indirect costing allocations across various service areas to enhance the accuracy of its cost recovery and associated revenue requirements in accordance with the policy drafted in Appendix D.

Debt Repayment

Debt repayment included in this study represents the total costs to service long-term debt (principal and interest) that have been approved by Council and subsequently issued to the City for a set term and interest rate.

Similar to direct and indirect costs, debt repayment is budgeted annually, and are based on existing borrowing agreements for prior capital investments at the QSWC and Parks service areas. These costs are net of development charge revenue that reflect the growth proportion of these capital investments as outlined in the City's Development Charges Study.

Capital Costs

The annualized replacement value of assets commonly utilized to provide direct department services has been included to reflect capital costs of service. The replacement value approach determines the annual asset replacement value over the expected useful life of the respective assets. This reflects the annual depreciation of the asset over its useful life based on current asset replacement values using a sinking fund approach. This annuity is then allocated across to the components of the capital assets to be incorporated in the calculation of the full cost of service (programs provided through capital assets or facility rentals). Replacement costs and useful life estimates stem from the City's Asset Management Plan.

Annualized capital replacement costs have been reduced to account for long-term debt repayments already included in the City's budget so that total capital costs (i.e. capital replacement costs and long-term debt payments) are equal to the annual capital lifecycle replacement costs.

The inclusion of capital costs in this manner allows for user fees to be considered in the context of the amount of funds – in excess of direct and indirect operating costs – that would need to be generated to help replace the assets and facilities and maintain services at similar levels, using similar facilities. It is important to note that the inclusion of capital costs in the calculation of cost recoveries is not widely disclosed among municipalities, making it challenging for the City to compare the full costs of providing services. However, the importance of prudent asset management planning in Ontario is growing, as many municipalities face significant funding gaps for infrastructure replacement. This underscores the need to consider capital costs as part of the full cost of providing services to ensure ongoing investment in infrastructure, allowing for adequate planning and addressing the replacement and maintenance of assets. The City will be completing further analysis of capital costs and reallocating to the appropriate categories as required.

The full cost of service provision included in this review, therefore, encompasses both the direct operating costs of delivering programs and services and the operational and maintenance costs

associated with capital assets used for service provision (e.g., facilities), and indirect operating costs for City departments.

2.4 Policy Evaluation Framework

As noted in the introduction, appropriately setting user fees for Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs and services in a municipality involves several considerations, including applying both a financial and policy lens.

Municipalities like the City of Belleville employ user fees to recover costs for providing programs and services. As capital costs for recreation facilities (e.g., the QSWC) can be more substantial than other municipal services, this analysis has considered both operating and capital costs to better understand full cost-recovery rates relative to the target cost-recovery rates.

However, given the broader community benefits that are often associated with providing Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs and services, it is important to balance the interests in achieving a target cost-recovery rate with sufficient utilization of programs and services, while promoting free and low fee program options to help ensure universal access and remove barriers to recreation services.

With this in mind, the policy evaluation framework that was designed for this review drew heavily upon the **Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology** (described in further detail below), which is a structured and tested approach aimed at establishing a well-balanced and equitable user fee structure. Using this methodology helps to evaluate the public good generated by specific programs and services and to categorize and prioritize fees and charges imposed by a municipality.

Our policy evaluation framework also drew upon **municipal comparator research** to gain an understanding of the market conditions in which Belleville offers its Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs and services. This consideration is important in situations where alternatives to municipal facilities exist within or outside of a local community that can impact utilization rates when municipal fees are increased. Engagement with staff highlighted the importance of the municipal comparator exercise in setting user fees, given the number of communities close to Belleville that offer competing recreation facilities (particularly arenas and sports fields). However, as further described in subsection 2.4.3., although comparator data contributes to the broader picture of where Belleville's user fees are set in comparison to similar municipalities, there are several limitations to the applicability of the data that must be considered.

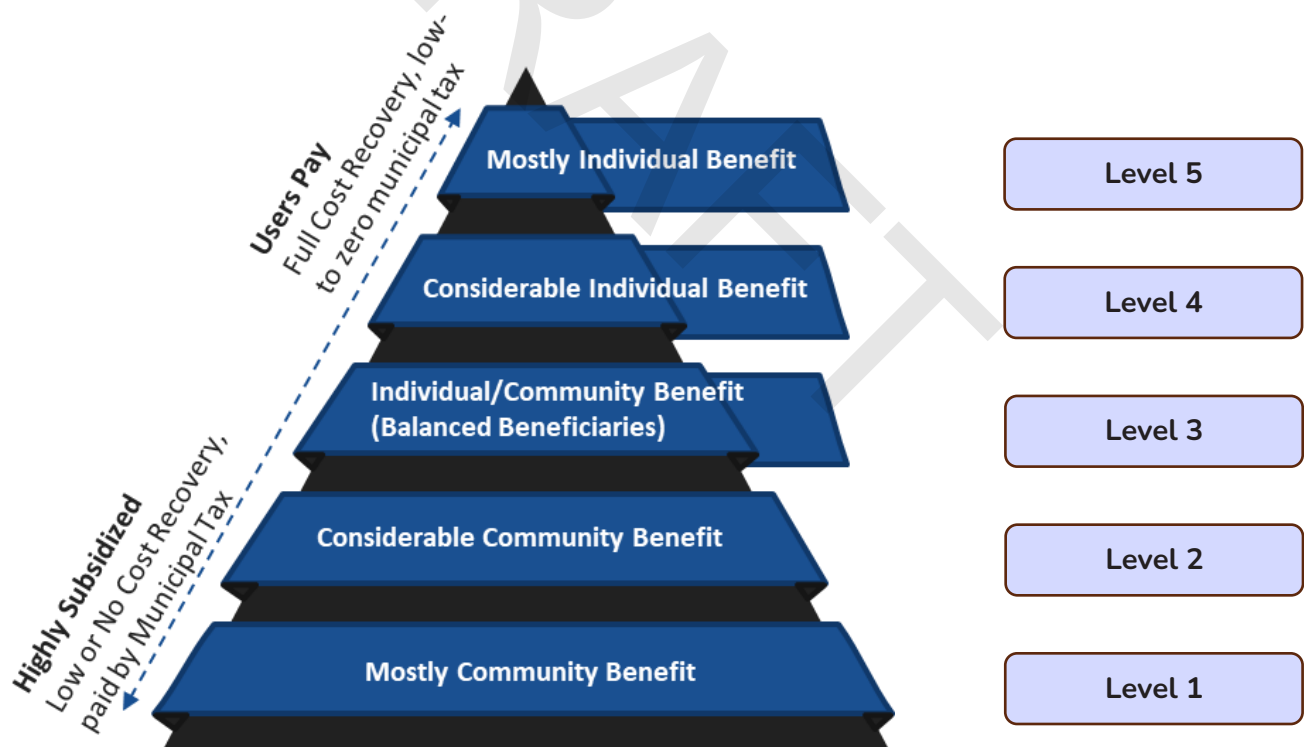
Last, outcomes from **public engagement** were also a factor in our policy evaluation framework. The insights derived from our engagement activities played a role in shaping the evaluation of programs and services against the Public Benefit Pyramid, which we recognize is an inherently subjective exercise that will be shaped by individual values and perspectives but is nonetheless important in understanding the impact on the community of a particular program or service. By actively involving the community in the decision-making process – and in future user fee reviews – Belleville can better ensure that user fee adjustments align with the values and expectations of the public, particularly with regards to access and affordability of services.

2.4.1 Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology

As noted, the policy evaluation framework that was designed for this review drew heavily upon the Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology. This methodology is intended to evaluate the appropriateness of user fees and relative tax subsidy levels by considering the relative distribution of the benefits generated by a given service between the community at large and the individual users of a service.

The Pyramid Methodology enables a clear framework for evaluating decisions on the level of cost recovery (and conversely, municipal subsidization): theoretically, where the majority of benefits are community-based, a lower cost recovery level is acceptable as the provision of and access to a service accrues significant social benefits to the community as a whole. Conversely, for those services that the benefits mostly accrue to individual users of the service, a higher cost recovery rate is implied. In each instance, the payers of the service finance its availability in proportion to the benefits they receive through user fees.

The diagram below demonstrates how the pyramid methodology helps strategically categorize and prioritize programs, services, or facilities based on key criteria, providing a visual representation of their alignment within five levels ranging from “Mostly Individual Benefit” to “Mostly Community Benefit”:



Using the Pyramid Methodology, **programs and services can be subjectively assessed and categorized into one of five levels**, ranging from Level 1, where service benefits are broadly distributed amongst the community and are considered core (i.e., programs and services that enhance social wellbeing, develop and maintain healthy lifestyles, and help residents connect

with nature) to Level 5, where benefits mostly accrue at an individual level and the impact of changes to the service and fees are constrained.

This classification provides a strategic framework to identify and propose high-level cost recovery ranges for each of the City’s in-scope service areas. The target cost recovery ranges that are applicable to each level in the Pyramid Methodology are illustrated in the table below:

Levels	Lenses to Evaluation					Target Cost Recovery Range
	Value Exchange	Necessity	Dependencies	Expectations	Social Value	
Level 1	Mostly Community Benefit	Drop-in opportunities	High	Must do	High	Below 20%
Level 2	Considerable Community Benefit	Instructional, basic	Medium-High	Traditionally expected to do	Medium-High	20-40%
Level 3	Balanced Beneficiaries	Instructional, intermediate	Medium	Should do	Medium	40-60%
Level 4	Considerable Individual Benefit	Competitive, not recreational	Medium-Low	Could do	Medium-Low	60-80%
Level 5	Mostly Individual Benefit	Specialized, Elite	Low	Highly questionable	Low	80% and above

As illustrated above, programs and services in Level 1 of the Public Benefit Pyramid provide the most benefit to the community and may be those that enhance quality of life for all residents or address other social needs. These may be provided at little or no cost to residents, with the municipality heavily subsidizing the activities (e.g., passive parks / greenspace use).

Level 2 programs and services are those that provide considerable community benefit with some impact to individual physical or mental well-being of the participant. These often include beginner-level general and children’s recreational programming, with fees set to cover a small portion of the full costs to provide the programs or services. For the purpose of this report, we have also included outdoor field and ball diamond use because of the seasonal nature and unique growing conditions of such facilities that limit both use and revenue potential.

In the middle of the Public Benefit Pyramid includes Level 3 programs and services – those that provide a balance of community benefit and impact on individual physical or mental well-being. These include higher skilled programming and could encompass most sports leagues/programs and health and wellness programming, where fees are set to recover a higher percentage of costs than recreational programming in Level 2.

On the higher end of the Public Benefit Pyramid includes programs and services in Level 4. These represent more specialized services (e.g., harbour fees, community centres) or programming that targets specific groups such as athletes in competitive leagues. Fees for Level 4 programs and services would be set to recover a higher proportion of the costs of service delivery.

Last, Level 5 programs and services represent those which have much less community benefit that warrant municipal subsidization. These include those offerings that often compete with local private sector operators (e.g., golf courses) or services that fall outside of traditional Parks and Recreation core mandates. Level 5 programs and services may be priced to recover all or nearly all of the costs for service delivery, reducing the need for tax subsidization.

Note that for the purposes of this report, specific programs and services have been categorized by service area which aligns with the City's budget process (see section 2.2). While this provides for an orderly evaluation of programs and services, some specific fees within each category may warrant a higher cost recovery target than the category as a whole (e.g., advertising fees within the QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other budget area).

While this approach is theoretically clear, we acknowledge that evaluating the ratio of community versus individual benefits (and its respective place within the pyramid / five levels) for any given program or service is subjective and complex and may look different in other communities or to different groups. It is therefore important to apply a consistent analytical lens when assessing how benefits are assigned, and ensuring transparency with how decisions were made with regards to categorization.

For this review and as illustrated in the table above, we leveraged several different “lenses” to assess where programs and services “fit” within the Pyramid Methodology, in addition to incorporating community and staff input from our engagement activities. **These included:**

- **Value exchange:** Determining who directly benefits or receives value from the program or service, including users and other stakeholders.
- **Necessity:** Assessing the degree to which a program or service is required. This includes whether it is stipulated in provincial legislation or provided as discretionary, and if discretionary, if/how it is enshrined in policies, agreements, and other legal mechanisms.
- **Expectations:** Considering the nature and level of service provided, to what degree is it customary or expected to be provided by the public.
- **Dependencies:** The degree to which organizations, non-municipal government services, and stakeholder groups within a community rely on the program or service, and the potential impacts of adjusting fees or service levels on them.

- **Societal value:** The overall impact on the community of a program or service, contributing to its overall attractiveness and strength as a place to live, play, and work.

Again, these five levels and the degree to which a program or service adheres to the descriptions within it are subjective, and some services will naturally fit within or between categories differently based on the interpretation of the evaluator or may even change over time. They do, however, provide a useful guide in considering the expected community versus individual benefit of a specific program or service at a given moment in time, and the associated target cost-recovery range that should be expected based on this determination.

With a defined view of the Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology as a theoretical framework, the next step in assessing subsidy levels and user fee rates is to assess programs and services against these levels and to determine implications on that basis. This forms the basis for determining the relative levels of subsidy through the municipal tax base, which represent an “ideal state” for the City’s user fee structures, prior to establishing the realistic future state that can be achieved after accounting for potential mitigating factors such as market conditions and/or accessibility and affordability objectives.

2.4.2 Public Engagement Strategy

Public engagement activities form a vital component of the process of assessing where programs and services “fit” within the Pyramid Methodology and in leveraging the different lenses outlined above. Public engagement can also help to validate how the programs and services were categorized into their respective levels and identify new opportunities for revenue generation.

For the purposes of this review, two key public engagement activities were conducted to gather insight and perspectives from members of the public and key user groups in the City of Belleville. These insights, in addition to other factors, were used to help validate where the City’s programs and services should “fit” within the Pyramid Methodology.

Public engagement activities included:

1. **Community Survey:** A City-wide online survey, shared widely through the City’s website and social media, was conducted between September 13 – October 6, 2023, with prompts and a reminder to maintain awareness and encourage participation.

The survey covered a variety of topics, from Parks, Recreation, and Culture amenities to future development plans, enabling us to gain an understanding of the community's needs and aspirations. An impressive 1,264 responses were collected in less than a month.

2. **Key Informant Interviews:** In addition to the comprehensive online survey, a total of 20 interviews were carried out with representatives from diverse user groups within the community. These one-on-one interactions provided a nuanced and qualitative dimension to our data collection process.

The representatives – each chosen to encapsulate the unique perspectives of their respective user groups, including minor sports groups, clubs serving different demographic groups, as well as businesses – shared invaluable insights during these

interviews. Conversations focused on the specific needs, concerns, and aspirations of these distinct groups within the community.

These interviews not only provided a deeper understanding of the community's dynamics but provided a view of the lived experience and values of user groups. The narratives shared during these conversations provided a more holistic view, capturing the intricacies of lived experiences and the diverse ways in which Belleville's programming and services impact individuals and groups.

2.4.3 Municipal Benchmarking Analysis

For this review, an examination of 2023 user fees across various municipalities was also conducted. This review included analysis against two groups of municipalities: one representing medium-sized cities and the other representing a more regional, market scan for Belleville. The aim of this exercise was to glean insights into the user fees and methodologies employed by these comparable municipalities. It should be noted that although comparator municipality data contributes to the broader picture of where Belleville's user fees are set in comparison to other municipalities, there are some limitations to the applicability of the data that will be elaborated on below.

The Municipal Comparators analyzed for this benchmarking exercise include:

- 1- **Four medium-sized “similar to Belleville” cities** consisting of: Quinte West, Peterborough, Cornwall, and North Bay.
- 2- **Eleven regional municipalities** that have closer proximity to Belleville: Cobourg, Cramahe (Colborne), Brighton, Prince Edward County, Stirling, Marmora, Centre Hastings, Tweed, Deseronto, Napanee, Kingston.

The former group of comparators are similar to Belleville from a population and social/economic perspective, as well as similar scope of programs and recreation services offered. While the latter are comparators located approximately 45 minutes in each direction from Belleville.

This benchmarking exercise shed light on the different approaches adopted by these comparator municipalities. These jurisdictions establish user fee by-law that encompass the fees and services in different ways. This variance underscores the flexibility and adaptability inherent in tailoring user fee structures to the unique needs and priorities of each community, as well as variability in how municipalities track and report financial data. This exercise serves as a valuable tool for comparison and contributes to the data points against which Belleville can assess and refine its user fee structures, ensuring its fees align with regional market conditions.

For the four medium-sized municipalities, there is more ability to analyze trends in the data as there are similar facilities and program areas. The regional comparators, many with a smaller scope of service and programs offered, had less data available on their user fees. In this report, trends in the data can provide a benchmark where there was enough data available to identify conclusive trends.

Limitations and discrepancies in the comparability of user fees included:

- **Different Service Offerings:** There are discrepancies in the types of facilities and programs available throughout the comparator municipalities. One finding was that most municipalities had user fees associated with both sports fields and ice rentals. However, for aquatics, not all the comparator municipalities had programs because some of the comparators do not have public swimming pools. Data was also less robust in other areas such as fitness studios and meeting rooms.
- **Fee Breakdown:** The costs associated with user fees are divided in different ways based on the municipality. For example, in some municipalities “Field Lights” are included/built into the costs to rent sports fields, but in the case of Belleville it is a separate fee.
- **Inconsistent Categorization of Fees – Sports Fields:** There are discrepancies in how the rates for sports fields are categorized across comparator municipalities. For example, some municipalities separated their fees based on location and time of day, whereas others have specific rates for adults in comparison to youth users. Others still have separate rates for sports fields and baseball diamonds altogether, whereas others sort their fees into field categories labelled “A”, “B”, etc., to capture the different types of amenities available at each location. Although a consistent methodology was followed to identify the most appropriate and comparable information to Belleville, it is important to note that there are inherent limitations in this subset of data due to the differences in how these fees are categorized and what is included / not included within them.
- **Exact cost recovery for each comparator:** The data to determine the cost recovery rates that each of the comparator municipalities are using for their user fees is not easily accessible. Access to such data on the cost recovery rates that comparator municipalities are targeting would provide an additional level of analysis to understand why user fees for comparators may be greater or less than Belleville’s current fee rates.
- **Regional Comparators:** As mentioned above, while the four medium size comparators have many user fees that are comparable to the services and programs Belleville offers, the regional comparator group by comparison varies greatly in size and thus do not offer the degree of programs and services that Belleville does.
- **Snapshot of Current State:** As comparator benchmarking reflects the current state of comparable fees from selected municipalities, it is challenging to determine future trends in terms of how fees amongst Belleville’s peers will adjust over time.
- **Facility Maintenance Standards:** The City of Belleville maintains high standards for how it maintains its facilities and fields. Engagement with both staff and community members highlighted that Belleville offers large, modern, clean, and high-quality recreation facilities for which there are few rivals in the immediate region (particularly for the QSWC). The City also prioritizes critical investments in accessibility and preventative maintenance in its facilities, investments that may not be prioritized as heavily in other communities but should be recognized when comparing against peers. This influences the costs of delivering programs and services for the City (i.e., higher capital costs), and

as a result, user fees may be higher than in comparable municipalities but also priced closer to what the true costs of providing newer, higher-quality facilities are.

Spotlight on the CAA Arena and Belleville Senators

In addition to the above noted limitations/discrepancies, features unique to Belleville for which there are few direct local comparators also complicate the municipal comparison exercise. For one, Belleville is home to the American Hockey League's Belleville Senators, which play out of the CAA Arena within the QSWC. The Senators are one of only six Canadian franchises that currently operate in the American Hockey League. The partnership with and presence of the Senators is an asset and point of pride for the community and a unique draw in the region, which provides both positive economic and social benefits for residents and the City.

However, as noted in section 1, the presence of a professional hockey team also has a unique influence on the operations and finances of the Community Services Department and specifically the QSWC. The initial capital investment to upgrade and modernize the arena, regular operational and maintenance support for the functioning of the team (including the need for two ice resurfacers), and reduced rental and revenue opportunities due to team operations ultimately lower the cost recovery rate for the QSWC facility. This represents a unique factor that should be considered when comparing municipalities without a similar professional hockey team.

Benchmarking Approach

Benchmarking fee rates for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services should be considered only one data point as part of the aggregated findings, given the lack of available or comparable fee data in several municipalities.

A methodology, described below, was employed to address common gaps in information. As the level of service and volumes vary widely from municipality to municipality, it was critical to establish a common basis for comparison. While an exact comparison is difficult, the following methods were used to gain benchmark figures that matched Belleville's fees as closely as possible:

1. **Inclusion of HST:** While the majority of user fees for many of the comparators included HST by default, some services/facilities did not. All fees were therefore calculated to include 13% HST to help consistency between benchmarks.
2. **Adjustment of the length of time of service/facility use:** Rental periods for the comparators were adjusted to match, as best as possible, that of Belleville to get a more accurate number of "how much is charged for how much time". As an example, if a comparator charged for a meeting room per day (approximately 8 hours) whereas Belleville charged per hour, the comparator's rate would be divided by 8 to get an estimation of an hourly rental rate.
3. **Average calculation for similar uses and scopes:** If there was more than one of, or similar services/facilities within a comparator municipality, an average of the fees associated were calculated. For example, if a municipality offered several pavilions with similar capacities

but at different prices, an average of those prices would be calculated to represent the pavilion rental fee for that particular municipality.

DRAFT

3. Cost of Service and Revenue Analysis

3.1 Belleville’s Demographics and Forecasts

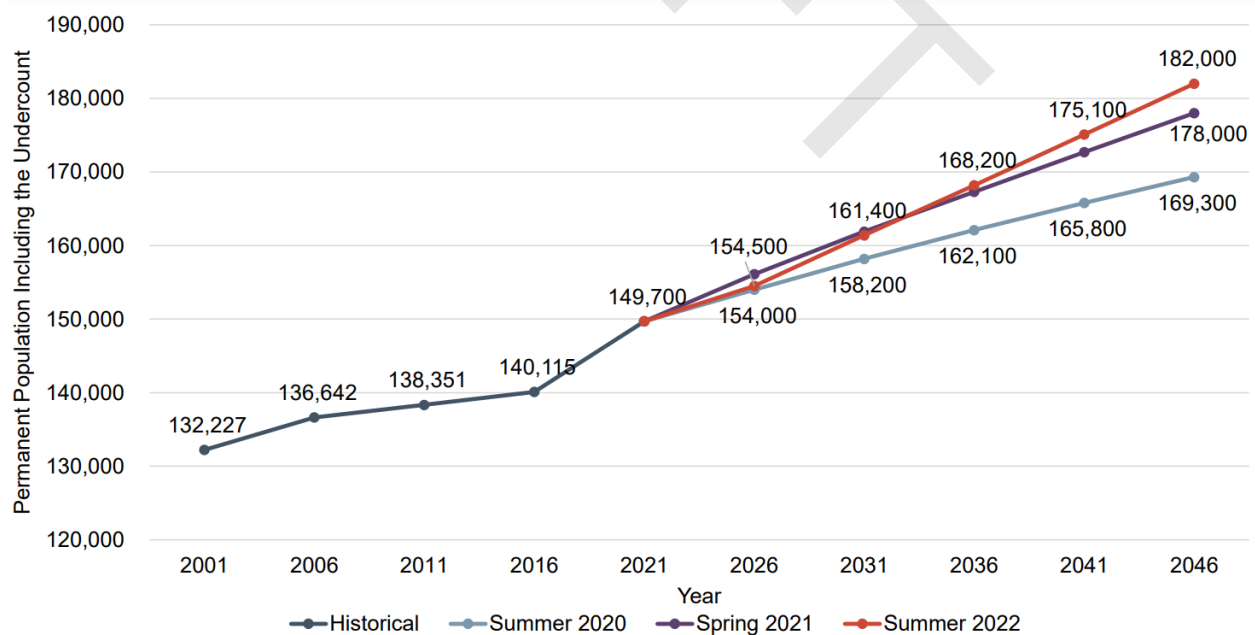
Section 3.1 analyzes Belleville's demographics and population and socioeconomic forecasts, aiming to develop a comprehensive portrait of the community's composition and future trajectory.

Through an exploration of population dynamics, age distributions, ethnic diversity, and socioeconomic indicators, this section provides a nuanced understanding of Belleville's present societal landscape, especially as it relates to the Parks, Recreation, and Culture service needs. Moreover, it illuminates the forward-looking aspect by incorporating forecasts, offering insights into anticipated demographic shifts, population growth patterns, and potential areas of change.

As per the 2022 population projections established by the Ontario Ministry of Finance (MOF), the permanent population of the Hastings County Census Division – which includes the City of Belleville and others – is anticipated to rise from 149,700 in 2021 to 182,000 by 2046, reflecting an annual growth rate of approximately 0.9%. Notably, these projections surpass the 2020 and 2021 MOF population forecasts by approximately 4,000 and 13,000 individuals, respectively.

The recent upward adjustment in forecast population between 2020, 2021, and 2022 MOF projections (see figure below) imply a more robust long-term population growth outlook for the Hastings County Census Division. Looking ahead, MOF’s long-term population projection is expected to stabilize, influenced by the near-term provincial economic outlook slowing relative to recent years, affecting both southern Ontario and the Hastings County Census Division.

Hastings County Census Division Ministry of Finance Long-Term Population Forecast Comparison, 2021 to 2046

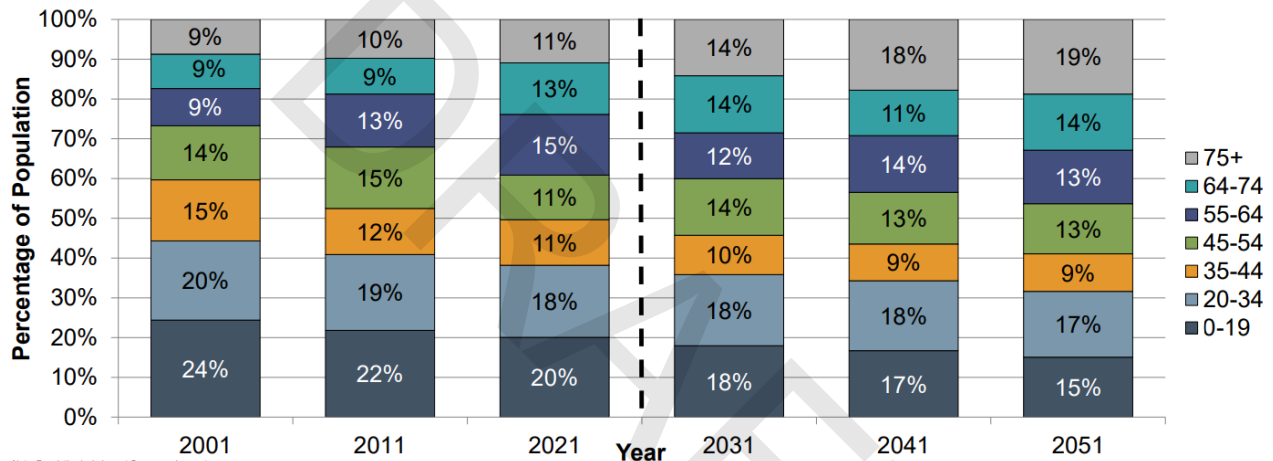


Source: Historical data from Statistics Canada Census, 2001 to 2021. Forecast data from Ministry of Finance prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2022.

The City of Belleville specifically has witnessed a notable acceleration in both population and housing growth from 2016 to 2021, surpassing the trends observed in the previous decade. While the City's population continues to expand, it is undergoing an aging demographic shift.

Projections indicate that between 2021 and 2046, the 75+ age group (older seniors) will emerge as the fastest-growing population segment, boasting an average annual growth rate of 2.8%.¹ This demographic shift implies an increased reliance on net migration for population growth, as opposed to natural increase. This will also increase demand for some of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs / services provided by the City of Belleville for this age demographic. In the longer term, this shift has the potential to gradually offset both population and employment growth rates.

Figure- Population by Age Forecast, 2021 to 2051



Conversely, it is important to note that the 0-19 age category is expected to reduce from about 20% in 2021 to 18% by 2031 and continue to slowly reduce thereafter. These trends point to a potential change in service demands for the younger age cohort as well.

As noted above, Belleville has and will continue to experience substantial outward growth pressure in the coming decades, which is primarily driven by its relative proximity to the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the City's housing market, characterized by its relatively competitive pricing, making it an attractive option for a diverse range of demographic groups. In the 2022 Watson, "Population, Housing, and Employment Growth" report for the City, the population base is anticipated to steadily increase from 56,600 in 2021 to around 75,000 by 2051. A thriving

¹ City of Belleville Population, Housing, and Employment Growth Forecast Update, Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., December 21, 2022.

waterfront community, Belleville's appeal also extends well beyond its affordability, meaning that significant expansion can be expected in the coming years.

As noted, this growth will inevitably impact demand for the City's Parks, Recreation, and Culture services. It is also possible that new residents will have higher expectations for programming and service delivery, driven by their experience in larger urban settings. This will require the City to continue taking a strategic approach to the development and maintenance of Parks, Recreation, and Culture facilities that align with the growing demographics of the community and cater to its diverse needs and interests.

3.2 Current Revenues, Costs, and Recovery Estimates

3.2.1 Revenues

Delving into the revenue figures for the broad categories encompassed by Parks, Recreation, and Culture services, a stark and noticeable decline becomes apparent, particularly attributed to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The substantial decline in revenue experienced in Belleville (something all municipalities experienced during this period) paints a vivid picture of the significant economic impact experienced by these sectors. The extensive repercussions of the pandemic, spanning closures, event cancellations, and reduced participation in Recreation and Culture activities, have undeniably left a mark on the revenue streams within these high-level service categories.

The data (as delineated in the table below), underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by the Community Services Department, reflecting the adverse effects of the pandemic on both user fees and associated revenue-generating activities. While the revenue numbers are exhibiting a positive trajectory in the latest 2023 actuals and within the budget figures for 2024, it's noteworthy that the recovery is still in progress, and a few areas still have not regained their pre-pandemic levels seen in 2018 and 2019, as issues such as staff shortages for fitness and swimming programs persist in 2024.

Still, the encouraging uptick in revenue, especially throughout 2023, signals a promising rebound and resilience of staff within the Parks, Recreation, and Culture services. This forward-looking perspective acknowledges the strides made in revitalizing these sectors, emphasizes the ongoing commitment to growth, and sets the stage for continued efforts to surpass and exceed the pre-pandemic benchmarks. As the recovery continues to gain momentum, the focus remains on leveraging this positive trend to restore and enhance the vibrancy of these essential community services.

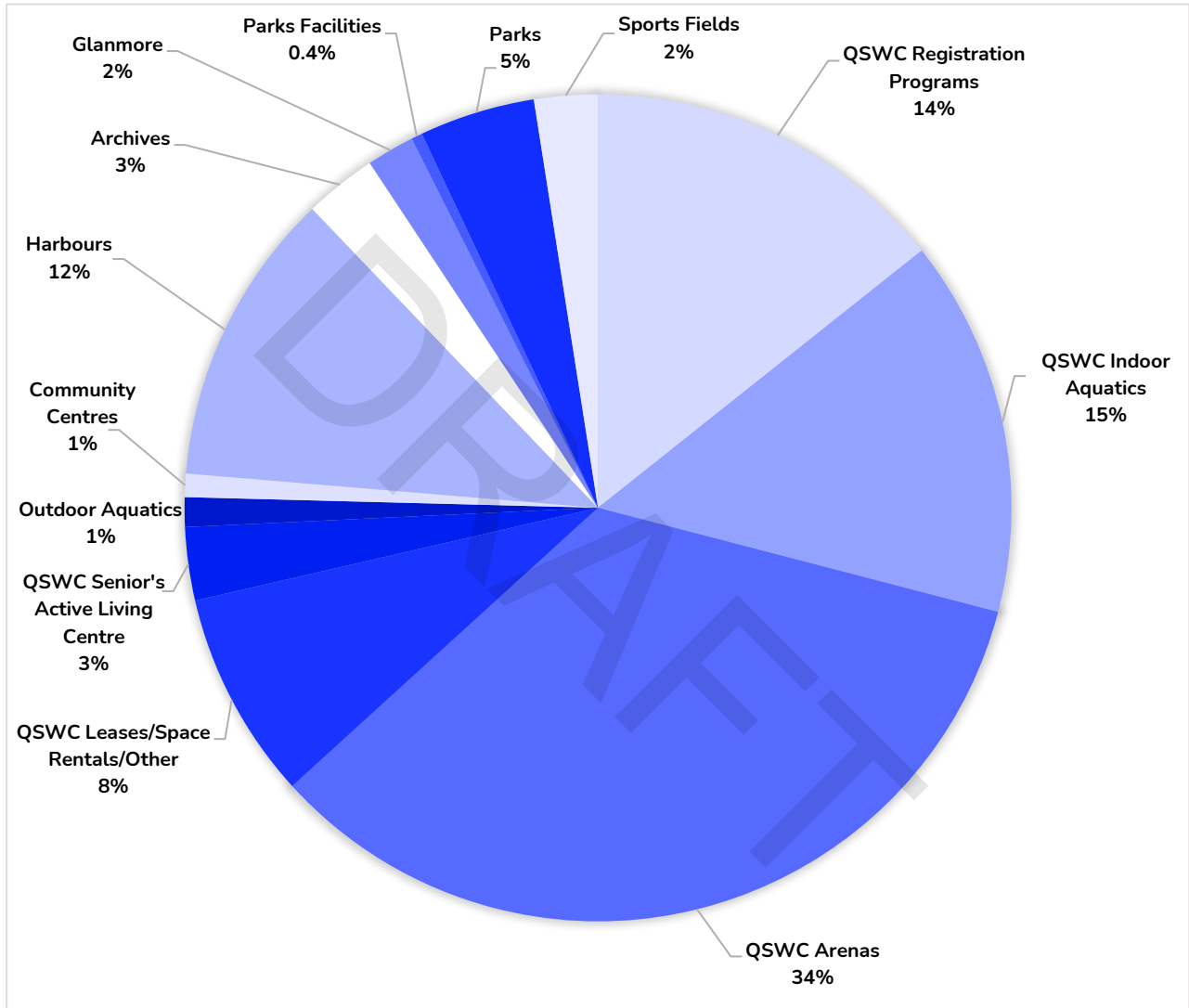
Regarding the 2024 Budget, the City's current budgeted revenue is around \$3.8 million, which represents an expected increase of around four per cent over 2023 actuals. The table on the following page provides an overview of historical revenue figures for each of the service areas, and these Budget 2024 amounts:

Historic and projected demonstration of revenue generated by parks, recreation, and culture services, 2018-2024

Revenue	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
QSWC Registration Programs	664,500	679,100	136,900	36,800	161,300	397,700	547,400
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	640,800	646,800	195,600	87,000	400,800	543,500	563,900
QSWC Arenas	1,006,500	1,061,900	562,300	587,700	999,700	1,361,300	1,308,000
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	418,000	449,600	143,800	59,800	190,100	327,600	311,600
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	66,100	75,200	34,600	63,400	100,600	115,700	109,500
<i>Total - QSWC</i>	2,795,900	2,912,600	1,073,200	834,700	1,852,500	2,745,800	2,840,400
Outdoor Aquatics	14,000	21,700	-	54,700	32,900	33,200	44,200
Community Centres	14,700	16,900	1,900	1,100	51,600	21,300	35,000
Harbours	347,700	308,600	266,900	265,500	386,200	420,400	441,000
Archives	105,300	92,500	72,600	83,100	86,800	77,000	108,500
Glanmore	72,500	70,600	94,300	78,500	155,200	102,300	71,400
Parks Facilities	13,300	13,600	9,900	11,400	13,900	15,700	16,600
Parks	75,100	58,700	51,500	40,000	149,500	168,300	173,000
Sports Fields	88,100	72,800	10,000	40,800	80,400	85,500	95,000
<i>Total - Non-QSWC</i>	730,700	655,400	507,100	575,100	956,500	923,700	984,700
Total	3,526,600	3,568,000	1,580,300	1,409,800	2,809,000	3,669,500	3,825,100
		1.17%	-55.71%	-10.79%	99.25%	30.63%	4.24%

As shown in the figure below, about three quarters (74%) of the Budget 2024 revenue is related to the QSWC facility alone, with about half of that total derived from arena revenues and the remainder split between indoor aquatics, registration programs, leases and space rentals, and the Senior's Active Living Centre:

2024 Budgeted Revenue by Service Area



3.2.2 Operating and Capital Costs

The below tables offer a comprehensive overview of both operating (direct and indirect), debt repayments, and capital requirements over the past few years. As demonstrated below, operating costs have grown year-over-year since 2021, with a near 15% increase expected in 2024*.

Operating Costs: Historic and projected demonstration of operating costs (direct and indirect) generated by parks, recreation, and culture services, 2018-2024

Operating Costs	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget*
QSWC Registration Programs	1,407,200	1,477,800	1,062,900	1,063,300	1,215,500	1,591,200	1,905,200
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	1,954,900	1,941,500	1,366,200	1,456,600	1,728,000	1,960,100	2,432,200
QSWC Arenas	2,563,400	2,590,700	2,212,600	2,380,100	2,706,400	3,079,200	3,535,900
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	1,213,000	1,235,200	1,103,900	1,134,700	1,252,500	1,448,500	1,772,000
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	123,900	127,800	149,400	158,800	200,200	167,200	218,200
Total - QSWC	7,262,400	7,373,000	5,895,000	6,193,500	7,102,600	8,246,200	9,863,500
Outdoor Aquatics	122,800	134,500	62,400	137,400	122,000	161,800	185,300
Community Centres	26,700	31,300	21,500	27,600	77,500	74,400	54,000
Harbours	548,900	577,100	501,800	478,600	551,400	786,300	710,000
Archives	164,400	160,900	157,500	162,500	170,400	194,300	214,500
Glanmore	465,900	527,600	491,600	513,300	585,100	609,400	666,200
Parks Facilities	313,900	331,300	548,100	543,600	481,900	355,300	438,600
Parks	2,475,100	2,640,500	2,696,200	3,072,200	3,354,800	3,212,200	3,437,400
Sports Fields	693,000	735,400	661,000	768,600	636,300	717,400	914,000
Total - Non-QSWC	4,810,700	5,138,600	5,140,100	5,703,800	5,979,400	6,111,100	6,620,000
Total	12,073,100	12,511,600	11,035,100	11,897,300	13,082,000	14,357,300	16,483,500
		3.63%	-11.80%	7.81%	9.96%	9.75%	14.81%

*Per City of Belleville, the increase to operating costs in 2024 is due to a 16% increase in direct labour costs relative to 2023 figures.

**Per City of Belleville, indirect support from general government was introduced in the 2024 budget, yielding additional indirect costs to reflect corporate support from finance, human resources, and other general government services.

Debt Repayment and Capital Costs: Historic and projected demonstration of capital costs and debt repayment generated by parks, recreation, and culture services, 2018-2024

	Debt Repayment (net of Development Charges)							Capital Costs
	2018 Actuals	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Actuals	2023 Actuals	2024 Budget	2024 Budget
Total QSWC	1,251,200	2,010,800	2,770,400	2,770,400	2,770,400	2,309,400	2,311,900	2,007,800
Outdoor Aquatics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103,900
Community Centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	148,700
Harbours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	825,900
Archives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22,800
Glanmore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69,300
Total Parks & Sports Fields	277,900	277,900	277,900	277,900	277,100	277,400	277,900	1,758,200
Total	1,529,100	2,288,700	3,048,300	3,048,300	3,047,500	2,586,800	2,589,800	4,936,600
		49.68%	33.19%	0.00%	-0.03%	-15.12%	0.12%	

4. Recommended Rates

The Community Services Department has conducted annual evaluations of its user fee rates for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services, drawing insights from local comparators to ensure a balanced and equitable fee structure. Between 2015 and 2020, the City generally chose not to increase user fee rates as they were understood to be above local comparators, after a previous significant increase in fees, and a period of catch-up was required. Incremental changes to program fees were made each year, however.

In addition, the years spanning 2020 to February 2022 were exceptional due to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the fact that in the remainder of 2022, many services did not fully resume. In response to facility closures and the economic strain experienced by many community members during these times, the City opted to forego user fee increases as part of its community strategy, in line with the majority of comparator municipalities evaluated through this review. This decision, as highlighted in Section 1 of this report, aimed to alleviate financial burdens on residents and foster greater community resilience during the challenging period marked by the pandemic's impact. As a result, 2023 was the first full year since 2019 of operating services at full delivery.

While these decisions were justified at the time, in many cases the user fee rates in 2024 are now below local comparator rates and the City is not achieving the levels of cost recovery that might be expected for some programs and services. As a result, the City chose to proactively increase some of its 2024 user fee rates in-line with the preliminary findings of this review, with 2025 – 2026 rates to be recommended pending the final outcome of this report. This approach signifies the City's dedication to thoroughly assessing and optimizing its longer-term fee structure to align with cost recovery priorities, evolving community needs, and marketplace conditions before making significant changes to user fees.

To assist the City in determining the appropriate 2025 – 2026 user fee rate structure and consistent with the policy evaluation framework outlined in section 2.4 and our recommended policy framework for future City-led updates (Appendix D), our approach to arriving at proposed recommended rate adjustments was based on the following stages:

1. **Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology:** the application of the Public Benefit Pyramid Methodology in stage 1 included two tasks:
 - a. The first task involved helping to prioritize the groups of fees based on their significance to the community and the overarching objectives of the programs and services. This prioritization task considered insights and feedback gained from the public engagement activities conducted in 2023, helping to ensure that this categorization process was reflective of community needs, preferences, and expectations. This task also resulted in the identification of idealized target cost recovery percentages for each group of fees that correspond to their placement in the Pyramid Methodology. This task is further explained in section 4.1.

- b. As a second task in stage 1, our team worked closely with City staff to assess the full cost-of-service provision and to determine the respective cost recovery rates (accounting for both operating and capital costs) for the various groups of programs and services offered by the City. This step and the resulting cost recovery rates for each group is further explained in section 4.2.
- 2. **Municipal Comparator Analysis:** during stage 2, our team and City staff assessed relevant 2024 comparator data to understand local market conditions and how Belleville compared to its peers. This is a vital step in the process, as alternatives to municipal facilities may exist within or outside of the community that can impact facility utilization rates when fees and charges are raised, regardless of the current or targeted cost recovery rate. This step is further explained in section 4.3.
- 3. **Ongoing Efficiencies:** as a stage 3, our team aggregated information from City staff, stakeholder interviews, comparator data, and market research to identify a set of new revenue generation opportunities and cost efficiencies in the Parks, Recreation, and Culture services space for the City's consideration. This step is further explained in section 5.

Collectively, these steps guided the identification of proposed fee adjustments, which sought to strike a balance amongst financial needs, community interests, and broader policy objectives such as ensuring accessibility and affordability in service delivery.

4.1 Prioritization by Community Benefit

To inform appropriate target cost recovery rates and user fee levels, programs and services types were categorized against their placement on the Public Benefit Pyramid as outlined in section 2.4. Programs and services were placed into the five levels in the pyramid with the implication that those with greater individual versus community benefits warrant a lower level of subsidization through the municipal tax base, and vice versa.

As noted, the assessment of programs and services against this framework is an inherently complex and subjective exercise, with “level of community benefit” being assessed using five different “lenses” (e.g., value exchange, necessity, expectations, dependencies, and societal value). Each of these should be assessed against the unique considerations of the community within which those services are being offered: what is considered a community benefit in one municipality may be seen as a primarily individual benefit in another.

In assigning tiers of community benefit to Belleville's programs and services, we utilized these lenses to determine best fit, informed by insights and feedback gathered from the public engagement activities and consultations with key user groups and City staff.

Based on the resulting tier of assessed community benefit on the Public Benefit Pyramid, each group of fees was assigned an idealized target cost recovery rate, which provides (based on the inverse) the optimal theoretical level of subsidy through the municipal tax base that should be

provided for the program or service, not accounting for other mitigating factors such as market conditions or broader policy objectives.

The table below provides the categorization of Belleville's programs and services into the community benefit tiers and provides a target cost recovery range for each group. Note we have not categorized every user fee using this methodology, but rather have bundled programs and services into groupings that align with the categories used in calculating cost recovery rates in section 4.2. While imperfect, this approach still allows for a sufficient level of assessment to understand respective target cost-recovery rates and provides a structured approach to determining what an idealized cost recovery range would look like into the future for these types of programs and services.

Program or Service Group	Examples	Assessed Level in Pyramid	Target Cost Recovery Range	Outliers/Comments
QSWC Registration Programs	Instructional programming / health and wellness programs, youth summer camps, children/youth programs	Level 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	20-40%	Adult fitness and sports are outliers that warrant lower municipal subsidization (Level 3).
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	Aqua fitness, minor sports, private bookings	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%	Public swimming is an outlier that warrant higher municipal subsidization (Level 2).
QSWC Arenas	Ice rentals, skating programs	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%	The Belleville Senators lease of the CAA Arena is an outlier that impacts overall arena revenue and expenses.
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	Facility rentals including meeting rooms and floor rentals, leases at the QSWC	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%	Advertising is an outlier in this category where little or no municipal subsidization should be required (Level 5).
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	Senior's programming	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%	

Outdoor Aquatics	Swimming lessons, advanced aquatics, pool rentals	Level 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	20-40%	Aquafit and private bookings are outliers that warrant lower municipal subsidization (Level 3).
Community Centres	Facility rentals (Parkdale, Gerry Masterson, and Multi-Occasion Room)	Level 4 – Considerable Individual Benefit	60-80%	Rentals by non-profit organizations is an outlier that warrants higher municipal subsidization (Level 2).
Harbours	Dock rentals, pump outs, boat ramp	Level 4 – Considerable Individual Benefit	60-80%	
Archives	Scanning images, black and white copies, colour prints	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%	Hastings County provides 50% of the operating funding for this service.
Glanmore	Admission fees, memberships, educational programs, wedding photos	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%	
Parks Facilities	Facility rentals, tourism events, parks, picnic and pavilion rentals	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%	Private/for-profit events and bookings are outliers that warrant lower municipal subsidization (Level 4)
Parks	Passive parks / greenspace use (playground, splashpad)	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%	
Sports Fields	Soccer and other pitches, ball diamonds, lighting, tournament fees	Level 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	20-40%	While these types of sports would ordinarily be categorized in Level 3 in terms of their perceived community benefit and cost

recovery, they have been categorized in this report as Level 2 because they require outdoor facilities that have shorter operating seasons, are impacted by weather, and require longer recovery periods for growth and maintenance.

Adult soccer programs could be an outlier that warrants lower municipal subsidization (Level 3).

4.2 Cost Recovery Levels

After the types of programs and services were categorized against their placement on the Public Benefit Pyramid, the next major step was to determine their respective cost recovery rates. The cost recovery rates, calculated as a proportion of the relevant operational (direct and indirect) and capital costs that are covered by the total fee revenues generated, are important metrics to determine – the greater the cost recovery rate, the lower the required subsidy from the municipal tax base. For the purposes of this review, they are also the basis of comparing where the rates are *now* in terms of revenues to cost against where the municipality *should* be in the future (before consideration of any mitigating factors), based on the idealized cost recovery ranges outlined in section 4.1.

Cost recovery rates are a function of user fees and demand for services (which determine total revenue generated) and the cost-of-service delivery. While cost control and reduction measures are an important aspect of this, typical cost recovery ratios for these services indicate that revenue is the primary source of flexibility. As a point of reference, the United States National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) *2024 Agency Performance Review* found that the average operating cost recovery rate in a survey of its 60,000 member agencies was around

25%², with median cost recovery rates higher than this amount for locations under 100,000 residents (i.e., operating cost recovery rate for jurisdictions serving 50,000 – 99,999 residents was nearly 29%). Note that this figure does not incorporate capital costs, which would certainly bring these figures lower after accounting for those expenses. While not necessarily a direct representation of average ratios in Ontario municipalities, the NRPA figure is indicative of the relative scale of total revenues generated versus costs of service delivery for parks and recreation agencies in the United States, which are likely to be broadly similar to those in southern Ontario.

As a result, avenues for enhancing revenue streams are an important factor in the financial sustainability of Parks, Recreation, and Culture services. User fees are the most obvious and straightforward approach, but other revenue levers can be considered as well. This report includes a few revenue generating opportunities for City consideration in section 5.2.

Additionally, as the gap between revenues and costs are necessarily subsidized by the municipal tax base, increased cost recovery rates create an opportunity for municipalities to invest greater resources in other services without raising taxes. Conversely, it is also important to recognize that for many programs and services offered by the City, a higher cost recovery rate or a rate at or above 100% is unlikely given the broader community benefits to be achieved through a higher utilization and therefore level of municipal subsidization.

² National Recreation and Park Association. 2023. [2024 Agency Performance Review](#).

The table below provides two measures of estimated cost recovery rates for the City of Belleville's service categories: the first based on 2024 operating costs alone and the second based on combined 2024 operating and capital costs:

2024 Budget	Revenue	Direct Costs		Indirect Costs	Debt Repayment	Net Operating Costs	Operating Cost Recovery	Capital Costs	Operating & Capital Cost Recovery
		Direct Labour	Operations & Maintenance	Support/Overhead					
QSWC Registration Programs	547,400	1,241,100	363,700	300,400	-	1,357,800	29%	314,200	25%
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	563,900	1,430,100	701,700	300,400	-	1,868,300	23%	401,100	20%
QSWC Arenas	1,308,000	1,428,900	1,506,200	600,800	2,311,900	4,539,800	22%	964,300	19%
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	311,600	285,800	301,200	1,185,000	-	1,460,400	18%	292,200	15%
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	109,500	179,800	38,400	-	-	108,700	50%	36,000	43%
Outdoor Aquatics	44,200	93,400	91,900	-	-	141,100	24%	103,900	15%
Community Centres	35,000	-	54,000	-	-	19,000	65%	148,700	17%
Harbours	441,000	167,700	392,100	150,200	-	269,000	62%	825,900	29%
Archives	108,500	152,700	61,800	-	-	106,000	51%	22,800	46%
Glanmore	71,400	550,500	115,700	-	-	594,800	11%	69,300	10%
Parks Facilities	16,600	135,000	273,600	30,000	-	422,000	4%	152,200	3%
Parks	173,000	2,056,100	1,050,900	330,400	277,900	3,542,300	5%	1,288,900	3%
Sports Fields	95,000	306,500	217,000	390,500	-	819,000	10%	317,100	8%
Total	3,825,100	8,027,600	5,168,200	3,287,700	2,589,800	15,248,200	20%	4,936,600	16%

*Note that 2024 cost recovery data has been used as the basis for comparison.

Broadly speaking, these calculated cost recovery rates help to illustrate where the City's rates are *now* in terms of revenues to cost, which will provide an essential base for comparing where the rates *should* be moving forward.

The cost recovery rates for 2024 also highlight Belleville's general return to pre-pandemic cost recovery levels observed in 2018 and 2019 as the impact of COVID-19 restrictions have receded. However, the evolving economic landscape creates newly emerging challenges, with higher inflation (including an increasing cost of goods), elevated maintenance costs, and the anticipated surge in user demand (due to demographic changes) necessitating a proactive approach to ensure the City can maintain adequate cost recovery rates for these services over the longer-term. It is therefore imperative in future years to establish and monitor cost recovery goals and explore new strategies that go beyond maintaining current recovery levels, such as new revenue generating opportunities (a few have been proposed in this report for the City's consideration). Doing so will not only mitigate the impact of recent inflation and increased costs but will also help the City to adapt to changing economic conditions as they arise.

4.3 Benchmarking Against Comparators

As noted above, to benchmark Belleville's user fee levels, several comparator municipalities were reviewed including:

Category	Municipality
	City of Quinte West

Category	Municipality
Comparator Municipality – Medium City; similar to Belleville	City of Peterborough
	City of Cornwall
	City of North Bay
Comparator Municipality – Local Region	Town of Cobourg
	Township of Cramahe (Colborne)
	Municipality of Brighton
	Prince Edward County
	Township of Stirling-Rawdon
	Municipality of Marmora and Lake
	Municipality of Centre Hastings
	Municipality of Tweed
	Town of Deseronto
	Town of Greater Napanee
City of Kingston	

While comparator data is often incomplete or inconsistent (e.g., individual fees often do not represent a perfect match between jurisdictions in terms of time allotment), reviewing the findings from the municipal comparator exercise provides useful context for how Belleville's fees compare with its neighbours and other similar jurisdictions.

The following high-level themes emerged from the municipal comparator analysis:

Program or Service Group	Examples	Trends / Notes
QSWC Registration Programs	Adult fitness / instructional programming, summer camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult fitness program fees are slightly lower in Belleville than in comparable municipalities.
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	Aquafit, swimming lessons, recreational swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belleville's recreational swimming user fee is slightly lower than the average for comparators.
QSWC Arenas	Ice rentals, recreational skating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice time rates are below those charged by comparable cities, but above some of Belleville's smaller-sized neighbours, which could have an impact on the local market and demand for facilities. Several comparator municipalities charged higher rates for minor sports prime time ice rentals for non-residents.

QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	Facility rentals, advertising / naming rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility rental fees varied amongst comparators, with Belleville below some and above others.
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	Seniors' programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In nearly all cases, comparators do not provide specific seniors' rates for rental spaces or have a similar "50+ centre." For seniors' programming more broadly, many comparators do not offer similar programs. However, where they do offer such programs, Belleville often has a lower fee.
Outdoor Aquatics	Aquafit, swimming lessons, recreational swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the comparators do not have an outdoor pool.
Community Centres	Facility rentals (Parkdale, Gerry Masterson, and Multi-Occasion Room)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below the average for off-peak rentals of halls.
Harbours	Dock rentals, pump outs, boat ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the associated harbour fees are below those charged by comparable municipalities (in some cases significantly below). However, staff noted that Belleville's facilities do not offer the same full-service amenities as other comparators (e.g., winter wrapping and storage, boat maintenance and repair, canteen, leisure and recreation facilities and activities, etc.).
Glanmore	Admission fees, Memberships, educational programs, wedding photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was limited data available because many of the comparator municipalities do not have similar user fees as they do not operate national historic sites or museums. The few that do have museums have admissions that are slightly lower. Some also have a flat rate for admission. However, the quality and draw of museums can differ greater between facilities. Note that as of July 2024, the City is currently finalizing the Belleville Museum Needs Feasibility Study with a third-party consultant. This study will include minor recommended rate adjustments to admission fees starting in 2025.
Parks and Parks Facilities	Facility rentals, passive parks / greenspace use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User fees are near average in most cases, with some slightly over and others slightly under Belleville's

		rates.
Sports Fields	Soccer pitches, baseball diamonds, lighting, tournament fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most municipalities do not have a specific fee for sports field lighting. • Many municipalities that were analyzed did not have or do not rent their track. • Most municipalities charge per game or hourly rates in comparison to Belleville’s up to four hours. • Most municipalities do not charge field rates based on the number of days of a tournament.

4.4 Recommended Changes to Fee Structure

Based on the preceding activities outlined in sections 4.1 – 4.3, there is a gap – in some areas a significant gap – between the City’s current fee schedule and optimal fee levels. This gap cannot be closed solely through inflationary cost-of-living style increases.

At the program / service group-level, evaluating the City of Belleville’s current fee levels and cost recovery rates against the Public Benefit Pyramid methodology (and with consideration for appropriate market benchmarks and other mitigating factors) indicates that there is a strong basis for increasing fee levels to both reduce the current gap in cost recovery and ensure go-forward rates are adjusted for inflation. **As a result, this report is recommending that the City implement several proposed fee adjustments for 2025 – 2026, which aim to strike a balance amongst financial needs, community interests, and the City’s broader policy objectives.**

These adjustments would include both one-time fee increases in 2025 and 2026 (catch-up increases) to reduce the current cost recovery gap and account for inflation of costs incurred during recent rate freezes. Additionally, the City may consider implementing ongoing inflationary adjustments starting in 2027 to reflect growing costs expected over time. For example, inflationary adjustments could be set at two (2) per cent per annum, with discretion retained by the City of Belleville to adjust this rate higher or lower depending on the external environment (e.g., in accordance with future Consumer Price Index rates).

City of Belleville staff should also retain discretion to determine rates for any new programs or services added after this review is concluded, with those rates subject to evaluation against the fee setting methodology during the next scheduled user fee review.

At the program / service group-level, the following table outlines the City’s budgeted 2024 Operating and Operating + Capital cost recovery rates, as well as the targeted cost recovery range for each group (determined based on the program / service group’s position within the Public Benefit Pyramid methodology). Note that green cells represent cost recovery rates *within* the respective target range, with red cells representing recovery rates outside of these ranges.

The table below also outlines the revenue increase (dollar value and percentage) that would be required (if any) to meet the desired target within that range:

2024 Forecast	2024	2024	Target Cost Recovery Range	Operating		Operating & Capital	
	Forecasted Operating Cost Recovery	Forecasted Operating & Capital Cost Recovery		Targeted revenue increase (\$)*	Targeted revenue increase (%)*	Targeted revenue increase (\$)*	Targeted revenue increase (%)*
QSWC Registration Programs	29%	25%	20-40%	54,700	10%	154,000	28%
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	23%	20%	40-60%	409,000	73%	569,400	101%
QSWC Arenas	22%	19%	40-60%	1,031,100	79%	1,416,800	108%
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	18%	15%	40-60%	397,200	127%	514,100	165%
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	50%	43%	40-60%	-	0%	17,600	16%
Outdoor Aquatics	24%	15%	20-40%	11,400	26%	42,600	96%
Community Centres	65%	17%	60-80%	8,200	23%	127,200	363%
Harbours	62%	29%	60-80%	127,000	29%	787,700	179%
Archives	51%	46%	Below 20%	-	0%	-	0%
Glanmore**	11%	10%	Below 20%	28,500	40%	38,900	55%
Parks Facilities	4%	3%	Below 20%	5,300	32%	12,900	78%
Parks	5%	3%	Below 20%	12,800	7%	77,200	45%
Sports Fields	10%	8%	20-40%	87,800	92%	151,200	159%
Total	20%	16%		2,173,000	57%	3,909,600	102%

*Comparative fees are considered in the projection of targeted revenue increases where minimum targeted ranges are met within service areas.

**For the Glanmore National Historic Site, a separate Museum Needs Feasibility Study is being finalized that will include minor recommended rate adjustments to admission fees starting in 2025. These adjusted rates have been reflected in Appendix A.

Based on the policy framework outlined above, this report has recommended increases across the Recreation, Parks and Culture portion of the City of Belleville's Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law that range from 2% - 22%. Regarding program fees specifically (e.g., learn to skate, fitness classes, etc.), the recommended increase for 2025 – 2026 has been set at 6% to balance the need to increase cost recovery rates with affordability and accessibility for community members.

Specific fee recommendations for each in-scope program and service are outlined in Appendix A, with a table of projected cost recovery and potential revenue implications included in Appendix B.

Note that these increases are not expected to fully eliminate the cost recovery gap for all program / service groupings. However, the recommendations will help to bring the City's cost recovery rates closer to the determined optimal levels over time and the user fees closer in line with comparable benchmarks for other municipalities. For program / service groupings that are still not in the optimal range after fee adjustments, it is recommended that the City review those groupings with a plan of how to get them into the target range over time.

As outlined in the Draft Policy - User Fees Policy for Parks, Recreation and Culture Programs, Services and Facility Rentals, a regular cycle of comprehensive fee reviews in future years (e.g., every five years) should also follow to ensure rates remain up to date, with similar annual inflationary increases prescribed for the intervening years.

It is important to note that for each program / service grouping, there will also naturally be a few program / service “outliers” that fall outside of the categorization grouping (i.e., any user fees charged within a set group that reflect a different community benefit level on the pyramid). As a result, rate adjustments have not been applied consistently in all cases across the fees and charges in each program / service grouping. A list of outliers for reference purposes is included in the table under section 5.1. Additionally, there may be other mitigating factors that would limit rates increases, such as marketplace conditions (i.e., any fees that based on comparator information would likely result in significant impacts to utilization if large increases were proposed) and objectives around accessibility and affordability.

As an example regarding accessibility and affordability, many municipalities include policies for specific segments of the population for which the community benefit calculus may differ (e.g., youth, seniors, and low-income residents are often charged differential rates to support accessibility such as the City’s Recreation Fee Assistance Program). The City of Belleville sets differential rates across several of its programs and services for minor sports, a structure which received broad support through stakeholder engagement and through analyzing the methodology with City staff. It is recommended on that basis that any fee increases continue to ensure increased accessibility for minor sports participants over the general adult population, including lower total fees and fee increase rates over time.

4.5 Draft User Fees Policy for Parks, Recreation, and Culture Programs, Services, and Facility Rentals

As noted in this report, municipal fee-setting is a complex exercise that requires the consideration of a wide range of factors that go beyond simple financial and cost-recovery metrics. Decisions on user fees need to balance financial sustainability and affordability of services with a public policy decision around the degree to which the broader community should subsidize each offering through municipal taxes. Rate adjustments must also consider the impact of local market conditions and how a municipality compares to its peers, while planning for longer-term changes to increase efficiency and potentially diversify revenue sources.

Despite this complexity, decisions around user fees are often made on an ad hoc basis. User fees are often set individually using unclear rationale at the inception of a program or service and thereafter set a historical expectation for the cost of that service to the public that forms a hard-to-break precedent. If the full cost of service delivery and rates of recovery are not well understood and integrated into decision-making around fees, then inflation and changes to the community will naturally cause any initial misalignment between fee structures and service costs to expand over time. As that gap grows, eventual decisions to make shifts away from historical fee structures is challenged by public expectations and the requirements for establish sufficient justification.

With that in mind, a clear and transparent policy for the City of Belleville that can underpin recreation fee-setting in future years was a critical output of this report. Making explicit the principles that underpin the provision and cost-recovery expectations for a given service and adopting a clear and formulaic process to adjust fees in alignment with those principles, ensures that public expectations can be clearly set and that fees can shift in alignment with changing financial and community circumstances. This avoids the need, which is commonplace, for unexpected and substantial one-time fee increases following annual fees reviews.

This suggested new policy framework is included as Appendix D. It is intended to help enable decision-making regarding regular staff-led updates to Parks, Recreation, and Culture user fees and charges.

Broadly consistent with the approach used in this report, the draft policy relies on the use of the Public Benefit Pyramid methodology and outlines four general steps to be followed by City staff when conducting a comprehensive review of user fees approximately every five years:

1. **Categorization of User Fees:** First, staff will consider the full breadth of Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals offered by the City of Belleville and determine where each type of program or service falls into this methodology based on the Public Benefit Pyramid, with the level of expected municipal subsidy directly proportional to the level of community benefit provided.
2. **Determine Cost Recovery Levels:** Second, staff will establish standard cost recovery targets that correspond to each level of the Public Benefit Pyramid, with the fees for the programs and services classified under this approach priced to achieve the targeted recovery percentage.
3. **Determine Costs and Cost Recovery Rate:** Third, for each user fee, staff will determine, as feasibly as possible, the full costs associated with providing the program or service. Assessing the full cost-of-service provision involves a complex financial assessment of both direct and indirect operating and capital costs.
4. **Determine Fee Adjustments:** Last, after determining cost recovery rates for programs and services offered, the City will compare these rates to the standard cost recovery targets as determined in step 2. In addition to comparing current cost recovery rates against the standard cost recovery targets, City staff will also consider other mitigating factors when proposing fee adjustments such as market conditions (municipal and private sector competitors) and considerations of accessibility and affordability. After considering mitigating factors, staff will recommend appropriate fee adjustments for programs and services, with increases proposed to achieve or move closer to the respective desired recovery percentages. Rates would also be subject to an automatic annual inflationary increase each year to ensure they remain consistent with desired cost recovery targets between each comprehensive review.

This four-step approach aims to maximize the level of cost recovery for programs and services while simultaneously considering other City objectives or considerations. This process involves

not just a thorough evaluation of current rates and potential rate adjustments, but also the underlying assumptions that were used to determine the expected community or individual benefit for the types of programs and services offered by the City. This draft policy also recommends that where necessary (e.g., significant marketplace changes), specific one-time adjustments to user fees would be permitted during the annual By-Law review and outside of the comprehensive review cycle, though these adjustments should be limited in use to preserve longer-term stability and predictability with respect to user fee rates.

We also recommend that this draft fee-setting policy should be aligned with the City's broader financial strategy, including long-term financial planning, budgeting processes, and capital investment plans. This ensures a cohesive approach to fiscal management, linking user fee revenues to the overall financial health of the City. Capital replacement costs, in particular, represent a significant portion of service delivery costs for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services and capital expenditures should be linked to and considered in the context of the required user fees to maintain optimal cost recovery ratios (though as noted earlier in the report, it is generally not realistic to expect a high rate of cost recovery for both operating and capital costs for these services while also maintaining high rates of use and accessibility).

5. Further Analysis and Opportunities

As noted in this report, cost recovery rates are a function of user fees and demand for services and the cost-of-service delivery. While cost control and reduction measures are an important aspect of this, revenue is the primary source of flexibility. As a result, a critical output of this report was also the identification of new revenue generation opportunities in the Parks, Recreation, and Culture services space for the City's consideration.

While preliminary, these initial opportunities have been identified from an aggregation of multiple sources including the interviews with Belleville staff and stakeholders, desktop research, and the comparator municipality benchmarking exercise. Each of these opportunities are outlined in section 5.1 and would require a further study/analysis by City staff to validate their applicability and/or desirability for Belleville.

5.1 Potential Revenue Generating Opportunities

5.1.1 Maximize Revenue from Ice Time

Summary of Opportunity: Ice time is a category of Belleville's user fees that show an opportunity for increased revenue. While the City has made efforts to increase utilization, a few new options such as dedicated fees for summer ice time and a new dynamic pricing model for ice time rentals could be investigated:

- **Differentiated Fees for Summer Ice:** At present, Belleville is one of the few locations in the region offering summer ice, which is a unique draw but can be costly to operate. Users of summer ice are typically weighted towards those who are particularly active in the sport and/or higher-level / elite hockey programs looking to continue training during the off-season. These individuals would likely pay a premium rate for utilizing high quality ice time during the summer months, particularly where few alternatives exist in the local region (though increasing fees too heavily could incentivize other municipalities to enter the summer ice market). Belleville currently does not have a separate rate structure for summer ice, despite potentially higher costs in these months and with limited competitors nearby. The City could investigate adding a new category of ice rental fees for the summer months to account for higher costs to operate or instead add a surcharge on top of the existing ice rental rates that applies only during defined summer months (e.g., extra surcharge would apply between May 1st – August 31st). The latter approach may be less complicated as the City could simply adjust the surcharge rate in future years if market conditions change.
- **Dynamic Pricing for Ice Time:** Ice utilization (and therefore revenues) can be increased with dynamic pricing models that allow individuals or groups to rent available ice time at discounted rates where the facilities would otherwise go unused. The City incurs costs to keep the QSWC arenas open regardless of usage, so attracting last minute ice users can help collect some revenue and improve the underlying cost recovery rate for these facilities. Dynamic pricing can help accomplish this and is a practice that has been

implemented in some municipalities to increase usage of otherwise unused ice times. For example, in Mississauga, the City maintains an online portal for booking [last minute ice](#) within 120 hours or 5 days of the available timeslot, with rates of \$108.20 per hour for non-prime time and \$190.50 per hour for prime time. This represents a discount of approximately 39% and 42% respectively off the equivalent resident rates for ice time when booked in advance. We note that Belleville has already implemented a last-minute discount (up to 25% off for 5 days' notice and up to 33% off for 3 days' notice) for some arena rental fees (though ice users are required to call or email staff for available discounts). Implementing a dynamic pricing model with online bookings could help to offset a potential loss in facility utilization rates for more price sensitive users when ice time rental fees are increased.

At the QSWC, staff are also investigating options such as extending ice time hours (e.g., until midnight on weeknights) to accommodate a greater number of users. Whether the revenue from extended hours would ultimately improve the underlying cost recovery rate for arenas will depend on utilization during these periods and staff costs, but staff should be encouraged to continue exploring changes such as these that could be quickly and easily implemented.

5.1.2 Harbour / Marina Fees

Summary of Opportunity: While Belleville's harbour / marina facilities are an economic driver in the community with both seasonal and transient boaters, marina facilities are generally expensive to maintain and operate. As of 2024, the City is currently recovering about 60% of the operating costs for the marina through user fees but is recovering less than 30% when accounting for both operating and capital costs together. In addition, Belleville's marina user fees are on average lower than the other municipal comparators examined.

The revised user fee rates proposed in this report will help close the cost recovery gap with Belleville's harbour facilities. While there are important tourism considerations at play, users with private boats do not generally belong to a segment of the population that should have user fees heavily subsidized by municipal taxation. A few areas for further study exist:

- **Belleville's marina fees are low amongst comparators:** Boat ramps are one area where the City of Belleville considerably lags behind its peers. For example, the comparator average for a daily fee is \$19 for municipalities similar to Belleville and \$12 for regional comparators. But Belleville currently charges just \$6. Season pass fees are similarly below comparators by a wide margin. As a result, further study should be completed as to whether these fees should be increased in out-years (2027+) above the recommendations made in this report.

5.1.3 Discounted Multi-Day Bookings

Summary of Opportunity: Belleville currently offers significant discounts for multi-day bookings at municipal facilities. The rationale for discounting practices such as this (particularly rates for three or more-day rentals) should be further evaluated, as the municipal comparators do not generally provide similar discounted rates for multi-day rentals. Further staff analysis regarding

the daily total cost of discounted multi-day rates and utilization of these facilities could help to determine whether a discounted rate is required, and if so, how steep the discount should be.

- **Consideration – Understanding who is utilizing discounted rates for multi-day rentals:** There are both regular and non-profit/service club discount rates for Day Rentals - Ice Out (3 or more days). Studying utilization of these services at this discounted rate is important information in determining who is benefiting (other than non-profits) from these discounted rates and if the usage is high enough to offset the discount.

5.1.4 Out-of-Town Fees

Summary of Opportunity: The idea of adding additional “out-of-town” user fees was raised in consultations. Differentiated out-of-town fees may aim to strike a balance between maintaining accessible services for the City’s local residents and addressing the fiscal considerations associated with extending these amenities to non-local individuals.

While the survey indicated that 72% of respondents felt that out-of-town residents should pay more, this would need to be studied further to understand the rates of utilization by out-of-town users in comparison to local ratepayers. If utilization of some programs and services is already at full capacity and there is a waitlist where out-of-town users are potentially taking away spots from Belleville residents, then it may be worth exploring differentiated (and higher) “out-of-town” rates. However, if these services are not at full capacity, differentiated rates may create a disincentive that may harm utilization and ultimately City revenues / cost recovery rates.

There are two scenarios that could be considered regarding out-of-town fees:

- **Scenario 1 – Differentiated out-of-town rates for programs / services:** One option could be to create a differentiated fee schedule for out-of-town resident use of Belleville’s programs and services. However, as indicated above, this would need to be further explored to ensure that it does not significantly harm utilization rates.
- **Scenario 2 – Utilizing the Public Benefit Pyramid methodology to determine which programs / services potentially provide a greater benefit to out-of-town users over locals and exploring a higher fee structure to increase cost recovery rates for these:** There are a few user fees that may already be serving primarily an out-of-town audience (e.g., some hockey programs) that could be increased because of a primarily individual without needing to implement a separate out-of-town fee schedule. This would need to be further studied by examining utilization rates.

Note that in both scenarios, the administrative costs, including human resources, to implement a new “out-of-town” user fee structure and the ongoing monitoring requirements (i.e., to separate residents and out-of-town users) should be considered before moving ahead with either approach.

5.1.5 Field Rental Fees/Field Lining

Summary of Opportunity: Regarding field rentals, several different revenue generating opportunities have been identified through staff engagement and comparator research.

Currently, Belleville’s field rental fees are set at a nightly rate (or up to four hours per session). However, this arrangement is unlikely to continue into the future, and so there is an opportunity to both evaluate the structure of Belleville’s field rental fees and how best to incorporate future costs for field lining into these fees.

There are several opportunities that could be investigated by staff within this category:

- Field rental duration:** One opportunity to optimize revenue through field rentals would be to move away from the nightly (up to four hours) rate to an “hourly” or “per game” rate. For example, the rate for “Field A – Minors – Nightly Rate” is set at \$37.01, whereas the average for “Similar to Belleville” municipal comparators is \$34.80. Although Belleville’s rate is higher than the average for this group of comparators, all municipalities that are a part of this average have a *per game or hourly rate*, not a nightly rate. This means that other municipalities can capture higher user fee revenues through hosting additional games per night, given that most games are two hours or less in length. Belleville staff indicated that if only one game is scheduled within these four-hour blocks, they can technically schedule multiple games in that period, but these additional bookings are done on an ad-hoc basis only.
- Field lighting:** There is an opportunity to further review the field rental rates and explore whether having a separate lit (night) and unlit (day) rate would be desired. Currently, field rentals are the same rate (subject to adult vs. minor sports rates), with an additional \$26 charge for using the field lighting system. Additionally, some of Belleville’s baseball diamonds do not currently have lights to allow night-time use. While adding lighting to these fields would involve one-time costs for the City, Belleville could potentially increase baseball diamond utilization and the ability to generate additional revenue, particularly if the City can host additional tournaments each year.
- Field lining:** While further study should be completed by the City of Belleville regarding field lining, this is a new City cost that could be passed along to users through field rental fees. Based on the City’s calculations, field lining costs could amount to \$68,000 annually, and a portion (to be determined) of these costs could be recovered by either being built into the general field rental rates or a separate surcharge. The City may also wish to investigate charging organized user groups directly for this service, with the user groups recouping these costs through their respective registration fees.

5.1.6 Capital Surcharge

Summary of Opportunity: Some municipalities impose a dedicated capital surcharge in addition to direct fees for utilizing certain recreation programs or services to account for the associated capital costs and the replacement and renewal of facilities. As an example, the City of North Bay has implemented a capital reserve fund charge for several of its recreation services, such as a dedicated fee of \$12.00 per hour for its soccer field and baseball diamond rentals and a capital reserve fund fee of \$2.00 per hour for its arena users.

The inclusion of a capital surcharge would require further study by City staff to determine the appropriate rate and the selection of which programs / services it would apply to but would present a potential new revenue tool to help improve cost recovery rates, particularly for the QSWC arena, indoor pool, and other capital-intensive facilities. Imposing a capital surcharge may also improve transparency with respect to user fees and the portion of those fees dedicated to capital replacement costs.

5.1.7 Allocating Costs for Programs and Services

Summary of Opportunity: The Community Services Department has made considerable efforts in making positive changes to their approach to financial management and accounting, and staff are encouraged to continue their work on allocating costs in the appropriate service areas to better reflect and understand their respective cost recovery rates. By allowing staff to gain a more accurate picture of the allocation of costs across programs and services, the City will be able to more effectively review areas where minimum cost recovery targets are not being met and develop strategies to improve cost recovery rates over time following future user fee reviews.

5.1.8 Statutory Holiday Premium Charges

Summary of Opportunity: The City should explore the option of increasing user fees during statutory holidays to help recover some of the additional operating costs associated with providing services and programs on these days (e.g., overtime pay).



Appendix A: Proposed Fee Rates

Appendix A outlines the recommended user fee rates for 2025 – 2026. These amounts are intended to increase the City’s cost recovery rates over time and better align the user fee rates with those in similar and nearby municipalities. Fees have been rounded to the nearest 25 cents.

RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURE

BUDGET AREA: QSWC ARENA				
Arenas – Ice Rentals HST Extra unless Otherwise Indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Non-Prime Adult Weekday (6am-10am)	\$87.00	\$94.00	\$101.50	\$109.50
Non-Prime Minor Sports (6am-10am) Weekday	\$78.00	\$80.35	\$86.75	\$93.75
School Board Course Weekday (Non-Prime)	\$26.00	\$26.80	\$29.00	\$31.25
Non-Prime Adult Weekday (10am-4pm)	\$111.00	\$119.90	\$129.50	\$139.75
Non-Prime Minor Sports Weekday (10am-4pm)	\$99.00	\$102.00	\$110.25	\$119.00
Prime Time Adult Weeknights (4pm-11pm) Weekend (6am-11pm)	\$172.00	\$185.80	\$200.75	\$216.75
Minor Sports Discounted Prime Weeknights 4-6pm & 9-11pm Weekends 7-9am & 9-11pm	\$152.00	\$156.60	\$182.75	\$182.75
Minors Sports Prime Weeknight 6-10pm Weekends 9am-9pm	\$163.00	\$167.90	\$181.25	\$195.75
Benefit Ex Games	\$450.00 Plus expenses	\$486.00 Plus expenses	\$544.25 Plus expenses	\$609.50 Plus expenses
BUDGET AREA: QSWC REGISTRATION PROGRAMS				
Skating Programming				

Learn to Skate - 25 min rate	\$9.50	\$10.00	\$10.50	\$11.25
Private Skating Lessons	\$24.50	\$25.50	\$27.00	\$28.75
Semi-Private Skating Lessons	\$14.25	\$14.75	\$15.75	\$16.50
Power Skating - 45 min for beginners; 55 mins for intermediate / advanced	\$14.50 - \$17.50	\$14.50 - \$17.50	\$15.50 - \$18.50	\$16.25 - \$19.75
Recreational Skating - 50 min rate	\$3.00	\$4.00 - \$5.00	\$4.25 - \$5.25	\$4.50 - \$5.50
Shinny Hockey / Figure Skating - 50 min rate	\$5.50	\$6.00	\$6.50	\$7.00

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Arena Ball Hockey & Event Rentals HST extra unless otherwise indicated				
Floor Rental – Adults Per hour	\$74.50	\$80.50	\$98.25	\$119.75
Floor Rental – Minor Sports Per hour	\$63.25	\$65.15	\$79.50	\$97.00
CAA Arena Day Rental (spectator events) Ice In – 1 day** Plus Expenses	\$3,700.00 Plus Expenses	\$4,070.00 Plus Expenses	\$4,965.50 Plus Expenses	\$6,057.75 Plus Expenses
CAA Arena Day Rental (spectator events) Ice Out – 1 day** Plus Expenses	\$3,015.00 Plus Expenses	\$3,320.00 Plus Expenses	\$4,050.50 Plus Expenses	\$4,941.50 Plus Expenses
CAA Arena Day Rental (spectator events) Ice Out 3 or more days ** Plus Expenses	\$2,330.00 Plus Expenses	\$2,565.00 Plus Expenses	\$3,129.25 Plus Expenses	\$3,817.75 Plus Expenses
CAA Arena Day Rental (spectator events) Non-profit/Service Clubs Ice In – 1 day **	\$3,625.00	\$3,990.00	\$4,867.75	\$5,938.75

CAA Arena Day Rental (spectator events) Non-profit/Service Clubs Ice Out – 1 day**	\$2,015.00	\$2,220.00	\$2,708.50	\$3,304.25
CAA Arena Day Rental (spectator events) Non-profit/Service Clubs Ice Out 3 days or more **	\$1,585.00	\$1,745.00	\$2,129.00	\$2,597.25
Bar Privileges (extra charge)	\$250.00	\$275.00	\$335.50	\$409.25

*** Last Minute Discount – 5 days' notice up to 25% off, 3 days' notice up to 33% off – at the CS Department discretion

*** Sponsored Skates – (ice rate + expenses) *** Stat Holidays – Prime Time Rate All Day

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER Event Rentals – FDC, Mackay and Wally Dever HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Floor Rental Ice In – 1 day **	\$2,935.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,940.50	\$4,807.50
Floor Rental Ice Out – 1 day **	\$2,435.00	\$2,680.00	\$3,269.50	\$3,989.00
Floor Rental Ice Out – 3 days or more **	\$1,830.00	\$2,015.00	\$2,458.25	\$2,999.25
Floor Rental Non Profit/Service Clubs Ice In – 1 day **	\$2,935.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,940.50	\$4,807.50
Floor Rental Non Profit/Service Clubs Ice Out – 1 day **	\$1,590.00	\$1,750.00	\$2,135.00	\$2,604.75
Floor Rental Non Profit/Service Clubs Ice Out – 3 days or more **	\$1,315.00	\$1,450.00	\$1,769.00	\$2,158.25

** Day rate or 10% of the gross gate, whichever is greater + \$0.50 cents per ticket surcharge + applicable expenses (covering the floor, boards, insurance, forklift, electrical, SOCAN, extra labour etc.)

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER				
Fitness Areas HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Full Gym hourly rate Prime Time	\$71.50	\$78.65	\$94.50	\$113.50
Full Gym hourly rate Non-Prime	\$60.00	\$66.00	\$79.25	\$95.00
Half Gym hourly rate Prime Time	\$50.00	\$55.00	\$66.00	\$79.25
Half Gym hourly rate Non-Prime	\$39.00	\$42.90	\$51.50	\$61.75
Daily Rental **	\$585.00	\$643.50	\$772.25	\$926.75
Daily Rental with alcohol**	\$755.00	\$830.50	\$996.50	\$1,195.75
Fitness Room – Hourly Rate	\$38.00	\$41.80	\$50.25	\$60.25
Recreational – Drop in Visit Gym, Swim, Skate or Workout Studio	\$3.00	\$4.00 - Child/ Youth \$5.00 - Adult	\$4.25 - Child/ Youth \$5.25 - Adult	\$4.50 - Child/ Youth \$5.75 - Adult
Shinny / Ticket Ice – Pay as you go (HST included)	\$5.50	\$6.00	\$6.25	\$6.50
Adult Sports – Pickleball, Badminton, Basketball & Volleyball, etc. – Pay as you go (HST included)	\$3.00	\$6.00	\$6.25	\$6.50

Please note: Gym /Fitness Rooms rental fees are plus applicable expenses. Staff: \$26, \$35 or \$46.35/ hour plus tax, depending on the activity. Rentals are not permitted to be in direct competition with our programs or leases.

BUDGET AREA: QSWC REGISTRATION PROGRAMS Fitness Programming HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Adult Fitness/Programs (General Classes) - Hourly Rate	\$8.00	\$8.50	\$9.00	\$9.50
Adult Fitness/Programs (General Classes) - Half Hour Rate	\$5.00	\$5.25	\$5.50	\$5.75
Adult Fitness/Programs (Specialty/Yoga Classes) - Hourly Rate	\$9.00	\$9.50	\$10.00	\$10.50
Preschool, Children & Youth Programming (e.g., sports, educational, arts and crafts) - Pay as you go / course	\$6.00	\$6.50	\$7.00	\$7.50
Day Camps (JK to Grade 8) - Daily Rate	\$34.00 - \$36.00	\$34.00 - \$36.00	\$36.00 - \$38.25	\$38.25 - \$40.50
Personal Training - Private	\$23.00 - \$45.00	\$26.00 - \$51.00	\$27.50 - \$54.00	\$29.25 - \$57.25
Personal Training - Semi- Private	\$14.00 - \$25.00	\$15.00 - \$26.00	\$16.00 - \$27.50	\$17.00 - \$29.25
BUDGET AREA: QSWC SENIOR'S ACTIVE LIVING CENTRE				
Seniors Programming				
Older Adult Fitness/Programs - Hourly Rate	\$8.00	\$8.50	\$8.75	\$8.75
Older Adult Fitness/Programs (Specialty/Yoga Classes) - Hourly Rate	\$9.00	\$9.50	\$9.75	\$10.00
Older Adult Yoga Classes - Hourly Rate	\$7.00	\$7.35	\$7.50	\$7.75
50+ Centre Activities (arts and crafts, games, tech talks, French lessons, cooking classes, etc.) - Yearly Membership Only**	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$10.25	\$10.50

BUDGET AREA: OUTDOOR AQUATICS Kinsmen Pool HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Kinsmen Pool – Whole Pool	\$107.00	\$113.45	\$121.75	\$127.50

Includes 2 lifeguards				
Kinsmen Pool – Half Pool Includes 2 lifeguards	\$63.00	\$66.80	\$72.25	\$75.75
Kinsmen – Whole Pool Minor Sports Includes 1 lifeguard	\$92.00	\$94.80	\$98.75	\$102.75
Kinsmen – Half Pool Minor Sports Includes 1 lifeguard	\$55.25	\$56.90	\$59.00	\$61.50
Kinsmen – Per Lane (maximum 2 lanes) No lifeguard, shared pool only	\$16.00	\$17.00	\$18.25	\$19.75
Public Swims – HST included	\$3.00	\$4.00 – Child/ Youth \$5.00 - Adult	\$4.24 - Child/ Youth \$5.30 - Adult	\$4.49 - Child/ Youth \$5.62 - Adult

Please note: All private pool rentals are for up to 30 people. Additional lifeguards may be required depending on participant number, equipment requested, or rental details. All pool rental rates are hourly.

BUDGET AREA: QSWC INDOOR AQUATICS	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Templeman Aquatic Centre HST extra unless otherwise indicated				
Main Pool – Prime Time up to 30 people Includes 2 lifeguards	\$180.00	\$190.80	\$206.00	\$222.50
Main Pool – Non-Prime Time up to 30 people Includes 2 lifeguards	\$167.00	\$177.05	\$191.25	\$206.50
Half Main Pool – Prime Time Includes 2 lifeguards	\$116.00	\$123.00	\$132.75	\$143.25
Half Main Pool – Non-Prime Time Includes 2 lifeguards	\$103.00	\$109.20	\$118.00	\$127.50
Lane Rentals – per hour 3 lane maximum No lifeguards/shared pool only	\$16.25	\$17.00	\$18.25	\$19.75
Therapy Pool/Preschool Pool Prime Time Includes 2 lifeguards	\$107.00	\$113.45	\$122.50	\$132.25
Therapy Pool/Preschool Pool Non-Prime Time Includes 2 lifeguards	\$94.00	\$99.65	\$107.50	\$116.00
Main Pool - Minor Sports Prime Time	\$139.00	\$143.20	\$154.75	\$167.25

Includes 1 lifeguard				
Main Pool - Minor Sports Non-Prime Time Includes 1 lifeguard	\$113.00	\$116.40	\$125.75	\$135.75
Half Main Pool - Minor Sports Prime Time Includes 1 lifeguard	\$75.00	\$77.25	\$83.50	\$90.25
Half Main Pool - Minor Sport Non-Prime Time Includes 1 lifeguard	\$62.00	\$63.90	\$69.00	\$74.50
Lane Rental – Minor Sports – hourly Non-Prime No lifeguards	\$13.00	\$13.15	\$14.25	\$15.50
Therapy Pool/Preschool Pool Minor Sports - Prime Time Includes 1 lifeguard	\$92.00	\$94.80	\$102.50	\$110.75
Therapy Pool/Preschool Pool Minor Sports - Non-Prime Includes 1 lifeguard	\$79.00	\$81.40	\$88.00	\$95.00
Per Extra Lifeguard	\$26.00	\$26.80	\$29.00	\$31.25
Public Swims – HST included	\$3.25	\$4.00 – Child/ Youth \$5.00 - Adult	\$4.25 - Child/ Youth \$5.25 - Adult	\$4.50 - Child/ Youth \$5.50 - Adult
BUDGET AREA: QSWC INDOOR AQUATICS				
Aquatic Programming				
Swimming Lessons - Group Rate	\$9.50 - \$13.25	\$10.00 - \$14.25	\$10.50 - \$15.00	\$11.25 - \$16.00-
Swimming Lessons - Semi-Private Rate	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$14.75	\$15.75
Swimming Lessons - Private Rate	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$25.50	\$27.00
Aquafit Programs - Per Session Rate	\$10.00	\$10.50	\$11.25	\$12.00
Aquafit Programs - Season Pass Rate	\$242.00	\$286.00	\$303.25	\$321.50
Advanced Leadership Programs (e.g., Bronze Star, Bronze Cross) - Full Length Program	\$132.5 - \$293.80	\$139.13 - \$308.49	\$147.50- \$327.00	\$156.25 - \$346.50

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Meeting Rooms HST extra unless otherwise included				
Training Room, Gym Meeting Room, Youth/Pool Room, Pro-shop Meeting Room				
2 hour Maximum – Non Profit	\$34.00	\$37.40	\$45.75	\$55.75
2 hour Maximum – Private	\$53.00	\$58.30	\$71.25	\$86.75
Half Day– Non –Profit 4 hour maximum	\$51.00	\$56.10	\$68.50	\$83.50
Half Day– Private 4 hour maximum	\$75.00	\$82.50	\$100.75	\$122.75
Full Day – Non Profit	\$72.50	\$79.75	\$97.25	\$118.75
Full Day – Private	\$99.00	\$108.90	\$132.75	\$162.00
Fireplace Room & Minor Sports Meeting Room				
2 hour Max – Non-Profit	\$41.00	\$45.10	\$55.00	\$67.25
2 hour Max – Private	\$56.00	\$61.60	\$75.25	\$91.75
Half Day– Non-Profit 4 hour maximum	\$76.50	\$84.15	\$102.75	\$125.25
Half Day– Private 4 hour maximum	\$99.00	\$108.90	\$132.75	\$162.00
Full Day – Non Profit	\$118.00	\$129.80	\$158.25	\$193.25
Full Day – Private	\$181.00	\$199.10	\$243.00	\$296.25
Multipurpose Room & McFarland Pub				
Hourly Rate Non-Profit	\$34.00	\$37.40	\$45.75	\$55.75
Hourly Rate Private	\$52.00	\$57.20	\$69.75	\$85.25
Half Day – Non-Profit (4 hours max)	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$134.25	\$163.75
Half Day – Private (4 hours max)	\$152.00	\$167.20	\$204.00	\$249.00
Full Day – Non-Profit	\$178.00	\$195.80	\$239.00	\$291.50
Full Day – Private	\$298.00	\$327.80	\$400.00	\$488.00

Kitchenette - Non-Profit (extra)	\$26.00	\$28.60	\$35.00	\$42.50
Kitchenette – Private (extra)	\$26.00	\$28.60	\$35.00	\$42.50
Audio Visual Equipment - Non-Profit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Audio Visual Equipment - Private	\$60.00	\$66.00	\$80.50	\$98.25

Please note: All private pool rentals are for up to 30 people. Additional lifeguards may be required depending on participant number, equipment requested, or rental details. All pool rental rates are hourly. Prime Time – (4-10pm Monday to Friday & All Day Saturday & Sunday) Non-Prime Time (6am-4pm Monday to Friday). All pool rental rates are hourly.

Non Profit – no admission/no selling add \$25.00 per rental if selling/admission.

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Meeting Rooms HST extra unless otherwise indicated				
50+ Centre – (Restricted Availability & Uses)				
2 Hour Max – Non-Profit	\$41.00	\$45.10	\$55.00	\$67.25
2 Hour Max – Private	\$56.00	\$61.60	\$75.25	\$91.75
Half Day – Non-Profit 4 hour maximum	\$76.50	\$84.15	\$102.75	\$125.25
Half Day – Private 4 hour maximum	\$99.00	\$108.90	\$132.75	\$162.00
Full Day – Non-Profit	\$118.00	\$129.80	\$158.25	\$193.25
Full Day – Private	\$181.00	\$199.10	\$243.00	\$296.25
BUDGET AREA: COMMUNITY CENTRES				
Hall Rental (i.e. Parkdale Community Centre)				
Hourly Rate	\$37.00	\$40.70	\$46.75	\$53.75
Half Day 4 hour maximum	\$73.00	\$80.30	\$92.25	\$106.00
Three Quarter (3/4) Day 6 hours maximum	\$124.00	\$136.40	\$156.75	\$180.25
Full Day 8 hours maximum	\$175.00	\$192.50	\$221.25	\$254.50
BUDGET AREA: COMMUNITY CENTRES				
Gerry Masterson – Main Hall				
Friday or Saturday Rental	\$300.00	\$330.00	\$402.50	\$491.25
Event with Alcohol	\$400.00	\$440.00	\$536.75	\$655.00
Sunday Rental	\$150.00	\$165.00	\$201.25	\$245.50
Monday to Thursday	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$134.25	\$163.75

Gerry Masterson- Multi Occasion Room				
Full Day (seminars/ workshops)	\$75.00	\$82.50	\$100.75	\$122.75
½ Day (4 hours) (seminars/ workshops)	\$50.00	\$55.00	\$67.00	\$81.75
6 hour (Parties/ showers)	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$134.25	\$163.75

BUDGET AREA: SPORTS FIELDS				
Sports Fields HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Ball Diamonds & Field & Artificial Turf ****				
“A” Field - Nightly Rate Adult (up to 4 hours)	\$40.00	\$42.40	\$47.50	\$53.25
“A” Field - Nightly Rate Youth (up to 4 hours)	\$32.75	\$33.75	\$37.75	\$42.25
“B” Field – Nightly Rate Adult (up to 4 hours)	\$35.00	\$37.10	\$41.50	\$46.50
“B” Field – Nightly Rate Youth (up to 4 hours)	\$27.75	\$28.60	\$32.00	\$36.00
Lights Nightly – Extra Fee	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$29.00	\$32.50
Tournaments/Special Events (Fields, Track, Fishing etc.. Per Complex plus applicable expenses)				
One Day Tournament – Adult	\$280.50 or \$107.00 day/field	\$297.40 or \$113.45 day/ field	\$333.00 or \$127.00 day/field	\$373.00 or \$142.25 day/field
One Day Tournament – Minor	\$224.00 or \$78 day/field	\$230.75 or \$80.35 day/ field	\$258.50 or \$90.00 day/field	\$289.50 or \$100.75 day/field
Two Day Tournament – Adult	\$338.00 or \$124 day/field	\$358.30 or \$131.45 day/ field	\$401.25 or \$147.25 day/field	\$449.50 or \$165.00 day/field
Two Day Tournaments – Minor	\$280.50 or \$104 day/field	\$288.95 or \$107.15 day/ field	\$323.50 or \$120.00 day/field	\$362.50 or \$134.50 day/field
Three Day Tournament – Adult	\$366.00 or \$136 day/field	\$388.00 or \$144.20 day/ field	\$434.50 or \$161.50 day/field	\$486.75 or \$181.00 day/field
Three Day Tournament – Minor	\$310.00 or \$104.00 day/field	\$319.30 pr \$107.15 day/ field	\$357.50 or \$120.00 day/field	\$400.50 or \$134.50 day/field

Lights Nightly – Extra Fee	\$26.00	\$26.00	\$29.00	\$32.50
-----------------------------------	---------	---------	---------	---------

A Diamonds – Rotary Park, Field of Abilities, Tom Gavey, Al Kelleher, Legion Park

B Diamonds – Thurlow Park, Parkdale #1

A Soccer Pitches – M.A. Sills Park, Zwick’s Park

B Soccer Pitches – Thurlow Park, Riverside Park, Hillcrest Park

**** Artificial Turf Field - 25% increase for Spring Rentals (before Victoria Day) and Fall Rentals (After September 30) due to extra demand and maintenance requirements.***

BUDGET AREA: SPORTS FIELDS Sports Fields HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Track				
Track – Adult – Nightly rate	\$40.00	\$42.40	\$47.50	\$53.25
Tack – Minor – Nightly rate	\$32.75	\$33.75	\$37.75	\$42.25
Track Meets – Private/High schools Daily rate	\$595.00 plus expenses	\$612.85 plus expenses	\$686.50 plus expenses	\$768.75 plus expenses
Track Meets – Elementary Schools Daily Rate	\$329.00 plus expenses	\$338.90 plus expenses	\$379.50 plus expenses	\$425.00 plus expenses

*** Track Memberships are for regular use/season)

BUDGET AREA: GLANMORE Glanmore National Historic Site HST extra unless otherwise indicated <i>Note: proposed admission rates in the table below reflect recommendations from the City’s Museum Needs Feasibility Study; the remaining fees and charges have been adjusted per this report’s recommendations.</i>	2024 FEE	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Wedding Photos (3hrs) evening/weekend	\$300.00	\$366.00	\$446.50
Wedding Photos (3hrs) weekday	\$200.00	\$244.00	\$297.75
Breakfast Room/Lower Level (3hrs) weekday	\$250.00	\$305.00	\$372.00

Breakfast Room/Lower Level (3hrs) Evening/weekend	\$400.00	\$488.00	\$595.25
After Museum hrs. (4:30) per hr. weekend	\$75.00	\$91.50	\$111.75
After Museum hrs. (4:30) per hour weekday	\$50.00	\$61.00	\$74.50
Set up/take down fee – extra fee	\$100.00	\$122.00	\$148.75
Use of Kitchen –extra fee	\$75.00	\$91.50	\$111.75
Grounds only events (3hrs) evening/weekend	\$300.00	\$366.00	\$446.50
Grounds only event (3hrs) weekday	\$250.00	\$305.00	\$372.00
Grounds only – photos anytime	\$50.00	\$61.00	\$74.50
Filming Rates – per day filming Mon-Fri (8-4:30pm)	\$3000.00	\$3,660.00	\$4,465.25
Filming Rates – for site prep Mon-Fri (8-4:30pm)	\$1000.00	\$1,220.00	\$1,488.50
Filming Rates – per hr. site supervisor after 4:30pm weekday	\$50.00	\$61.00	\$74.50
Filming Rate – per hr. site supervisor weekends	\$75.00	\$91.50	\$111.75
Filming Rate – per hr. site clean up after filming	\$50.00	\$61.00	\$74.50
Admission – Adults (25-64) (includes HST)	\$8.00	\$8.50	\$8.50
Seniors (65+) (includes HST)	\$6.50	\$7.00	\$7.00
Youth (13-24) (includes HST)	\$6.50	\$6.00	\$6.00
Children (5-12) (includes HST)	\$4.50	\$3.50	\$3.50
Children under 5 and members (includes HST)	Free	Free	Free
School groups per person (includes HST)	\$4.50	\$3.00	\$3.00
Non-school groups per person (includes HST)	\$6.50	\$5.50	\$5.50
Glanmore Membership			
Individual	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00
Family	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Corporate	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
“Museum Kids” Discover Kits			
Mini	\$12.00	\$14.75	\$17.75

Regular	\$20.00	\$24.50	\$29.75
Toymaker Time Machine			
Child 8+	\$40.00	\$48.75	\$59.50
Adult	\$60.00	\$73.25	\$89.25
Special Events (i.e. Halloween/ Christmas// Gaslight Tour)			
Adult	\$10.00	\$12.25	\$15.00
Student/ Senior	\$8.50	\$10.25	\$12.75
Child	\$6.50	\$8.00	\$9.75
Under 5	Free	Free	Free
Evening/ Weekend Group Tours		\$8.00/per person	\$9.75/per person
Regular Group Rate (Minimum 10 people)	NEW \$6.50/per person Plus \$75.00/hour	Plus \$91.50/hour	Plus \$111.75/hour

BUDGET AREA: HARBOURS				
Harbours HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Meyers Pier				
Seasonal Mooring per foot of Boat	\$47.50	\$52.25	\$63.75	\$77.75
Victoria Park				
Seasonal Mooring per foot of Boat	\$44.50	\$48.95	\$59.75	\$72.75
Other Harbour Fees				
Monthly rate per foot of boat	\$19.50	\$21.45	\$26.25	\$32.00
Personal Watercraft (seadoo/jet ski) per foot of boat added to existing boat slip	\$11.00	\$12.10	\$14.75	\$18.00
Seasonal Dock Personal Watercraft	\$700.00	\$770.00	\$939.50	\$1,146.00
Power 15 amp	\$125.00 / season	\$137.50 / season	\$167.75 / season	\$204.75 / season
Power 30 amp	\$200.00 / season	\$220.00 / season	\$268.50 / season	\$327.50 / season
Power 50 amp or 30 amp x 2	\$300.00 / season	\$330.00 / season	\$402.50 / season	\$491.25 / season
Pumpouts	\$17.70 / each	\$19.50 / each	\$23.75 / each	\$29.00 / each
Transient Dock – Serviced Per foot of boat	\$1.70	\$1.90	\$2.25	\$2.75

Transient Pier Wall - Unserviced Per foot of boat	\$1.15	\$1.30	\$1.50	\$2.00
Boat Ramps				
Daily	\$6.00 (including taxes)	\$6.00 (including taxes)	\$7.25 (including taxes)	\$9.00 (including taxes)
Seasonal Pass	\$58.00	\$58.00	\$70.75	\$86.25
Commercial Season (3 passes)	\$106.00	\$106.00	\$129.25	\$157.75

BUDGET AREA: PARKS FACILITIES Parks Facilities HST extra unless otherwise indicated	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Market Square & Bernice Parrott Stage**				
City of Belleville Function	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Non Profit Groups Daily Rate	\$59.00	\$62.55	\$67.50	\$73.00
Commercial or Private Function Daily Rate	\$102.00	\$108.15	\$116.75	\$126.25
Commercial or Private Function – Charging Admission Daily Rate	\$503.00	\$533.20	\$575.75	\$622.00
Parks Special Events**				
Covered Sites – Daily Rate	\$119.00	\$126.15	\$136.25	\$147.25
Large Uncovered Site – Daily Rate	\$79.00	\$83.75	\$90.50	\$97.75
Small Uncovered Site – Daily Rate	\$55.00	\$58.30	\$63.00	\$68.00
Lion’s Pavilion with Alcohol – Daily Rate	\$596.00	\$631.80	\$682.25	\$737.00
Lion’s Pavilion Non-Profit – Daily Rate	\$119.00	\$126.15	\$136.25	\$147.25
Lion’s Pavilion Private – Daily Rate	\$177.00	\$187.65	\$202.75	\$218.75
Wedding Ceremony (4 hours)	\$119.00	\$126.15	\$136.25	\$147.25
Wedding Pictures (2 hours)	\$55.00	\$58.30	\$63.00	\$68.00
Wedding Reception	\$351.00	\$372.10	\$401.75	\$434.00
Large Park Events (up 2000/day) - No Admission	\$214.00	\$226.85	\$245.00	\$264.50

Daily Rate				
Large Park Events (up 2000/day) – Admission Charged Daily Rate	\$823.00	\$872.40	\$942.25	\$1,017.50
Tent Fee	\$25.50	\$27.05	\$29.25	\$31.50
Locates	\$60.00	\$63.60	\$68.75	\$74.25

** Daily rate or 10% of the gross gate, whichever is greater + applicable expenses (electrical, fencing, SOCAN, insurance, security, paid duty alcohol, staging, Parks fees etc.)**

*** If events are charging for parking, approval must be given by Council. All costs are subject to Parks Service Fees.

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Advertising HST extra unless otherwise indicated				
Arena Boards/Wall Boards/Wall Decals Per item (\$50.00 less for additional purchased)	\$535.00	\$588.50	\$718.00	\$876.00
In-Ice Logos Per ice logo (\$100.00 less for additional logo)	\$510.00 - \$1000.00	\$561.00 - \$1,100.00	\$684.50 - \$1,342.00	\$835.00 - \$1,637.25
Digital TV LCD Per week	\$25.00/month	\$27.50/month	\$33.50/month	\$40.75/month
Framed Wall Posters Medium Size	\$25.00/month	\$27.50/month	\$33.50/month	\$40.75/month
Framed Wall Posters/Digital TV LCD Large Size frame each/Digital TV LCD Digital TV per month	\$50.00/month	\$55.00/month	\$67.00/month	\$81.75/month
Framed Wall Posters – Medium Size 6 month prepaid contract \$50.00 less for additional purchased	\$125.00	\$137.50	\$167.75	\$204.75
Framed Wall Posters – Medium Size 12 month prepaid contract \$50.00 less for additional purchased	\$250.00	\$275.00	\$335.50	\$409.25
Framed Wall Posters – Large Size	\$250.00	\$275.00	\$335.50	\$409.25

6 month prepaid contract \$50.00 less for additional purchased				
Framed Wall Poster - Large Size 12 month prepaid contract \$50.00 less for additional purchased	\$500.00	\$550.00	\$671.00	\$818.50
Digital TV LCD Digital TV per 6 month prepaid contract	\$270.00	\$297.00	\$362.25	\$442.00
Digital TV LCD Digital TV per 12 month prepaid contract	\$480.00	\$528.00	\$644.25	\$786.00
Marquee Sign – 2 sided LED Video Board per week QSWC	\$60.00	\$66.00	\$80.50	\$98.25
Marquee Sign – 2 sided LED Video Board per week Zwick's	\$25.00	\$27.50	\$33.50	\$41.00
Marquee Sign – 2 sided LED Video Board per month	\$200.00	\$220.00	\$268.50	\$327.50
Marquee Sign – 2 sided LED Video Board per year	\$2000.00	\$2,200.00	\$2,684.00	\$3,274.50

For Arena & Wall Boards, Wall Decals and In Ice Logos – choose from a variety of locations in FDC, Mackay and Wally Dever Arena

For Digital TV - Admin fee of \$20.00 for each ad change. Appears at least 4 times per/hour for 8 seconds on TV Screens
(QSWC)

For Marquee Sign – Minimum ad/every 10mins, 6 ads every hour, 114 ads/day, 3420 ads/month or 1 – 10 second ad per week event and no charge for Zwicks marquee sign for event promotion if advertising event on the QSWC marquee sign***

BUDGET AREA: QSWC LEASES/OTHER	2024 FEE	EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Advertising HST extra unless otherwise indicated				
Zamboni Wrap • 2 panels	\$300.00	\$330.00	\$402.50	\$491.25
Sportfield Advertising	\$250.00 - \$1000.00	\$275.00 - \$1,100.00	\$335.50 - \$1,342.00	\$409.25 - \$1,637.25

BUDGET AREA: ARCHIVES Archives (HST included)	2024 FEE	PROPOSED 2025	PROPOSED 2026
Scanning Images	\$5.00 per image (or by donation)	\$5.25 per image (or by donation)	\$5.50 per image (or by donation)
Black & White Copies	\$0.25 per page	\$0.25 per page	\$0.30 per page
Colour Prints	\$1.00 per page	\$1.00 per page	\$1.10 per page

DRAFT

Appendix B: Forecasted Cost Recovery & Revenue Trends

Appendix B outlines the forecasted cost recovery and potential revenue implications over the following years based on the user fee recommendations included in Appendix A. These represent **estimates only** for reference purposes and do not account for any potential changes in utilization / revenue that may occur due to user fee adjustments and/or broader economic/social conditions.

Results of Rate Recommendations	Target Cost Recovery Range	2025 Projected Revenue Increase*	2026 Projected Revenue Increase	Operating			Operating & Capital		
				2024 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2025 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2026 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2024 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2025 Forecasted Cost Recovery	2026 Forecasted Cost Recovery
QSWC Registration Programs	20-40%	60,500	36,500	29%	31%	33%	25%	27%	28%
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	40-60%	64,200	50,300	23%	25%	27%	20%	22%	23%
QSWC Arenas	40-60%	144,600	116,200	22%	24%	26%	19%	21%	22%
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	40-60%	77,100	85,500	18%	22%	26%	15%	18%	22%
QSWC Senior's Active Living Centre	40-60%	3,500	2,300	50%	51%	51%	43%	44%	44%
Outdoor Aquatics	20-40%	6,500	3,000	24%	27%	28%	15%	17%	18%
Community Centres	60-80%	7,100	7,800	65%	76%	89%	17%	20%	24%
Harbours	60-80%	97,000	118,400	62%	74%	89%	29%	34%	41%
Archives	Below 20%	6,500	6,900	51%	53%	55%	46%	48%	49%
Glanmore	Below 20%	15,700	19,200	11%	13%	15%	10%	12%	14%
Parks Facilities	Below 20%	1,300	1,400	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Parks	Below 20%	13,800	14,900	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%	4%
Sports Fields	20-40%	10,200	12,600	10%	11%	12%	8%	8%	9%
Total		508,000	475,000	20%	22%	24%	16%	18%	19%

*Includes annualized impact of 2024 rate increases adopted with 2024 Operating Budget.



Appendix C: Resident Survey Results

Overview

StrategyCorp, in collaboration with the City of Belleville, conducted a comprehensive city-wide survey to collect feedback from the community on user fees.

This survey, comprising **fifteen (15) questions**, sought insights from residents and service users about the current user fee structures. It also aimed to identify areas for improvement, ensuring that fees for parks, recreation, and culture services are fair, reasonable, and accurately reflect the value provided while maintaining accessibility for all residents and service users. Finally, the survey included **seven (7) demographic questions** to support the analysis and interpretation of the survey results.

Note that this was a self-selecting survey, in which respondents chose whether to participate in the survey and does not represent a randomized sampling of the City's population.

Summary of Results

- The survey gathered **1,264 total responses**:
 - Over 70% of respondents were residents of Belleville, and over 60% had lived in the City for 10+ years.
 - A large majority (84%) of respondents were homeowners, followed by about 10% being renters.
 - While approximately 4% of respondents were below the age of 25, nearly 40% of respondents indicated that they had children. Of those with children, 46% have children that are 11 to 16 years old, and 48% have children that are 4 to 10 years of age.
- Regarding the most used services/programs, 59% selected parks and greenspace, 48% special events, 48% health & wellness programs, and 30% sports programs.
- The majority (49%) selected "other" when asked the reasons behind not using the services and programs offered by the City. Respondents highlighted limitations in senior and children's programming, a shift towards online alternatives due to COVID-19, and personal circumstances like time constraints impacting participation in city programs. Additionally, concerns about program costs, access issues, and the need for a more accessible fee structure were prevalent, affecting the usage of City facilities.
- 69% of survey participants believe the balance between tax subsidies and user fees is appropriate. Regarding the statement that services benefiting the broader community should be funded by higher taxes instead of user fees, 41% agreed or strongly agreed,

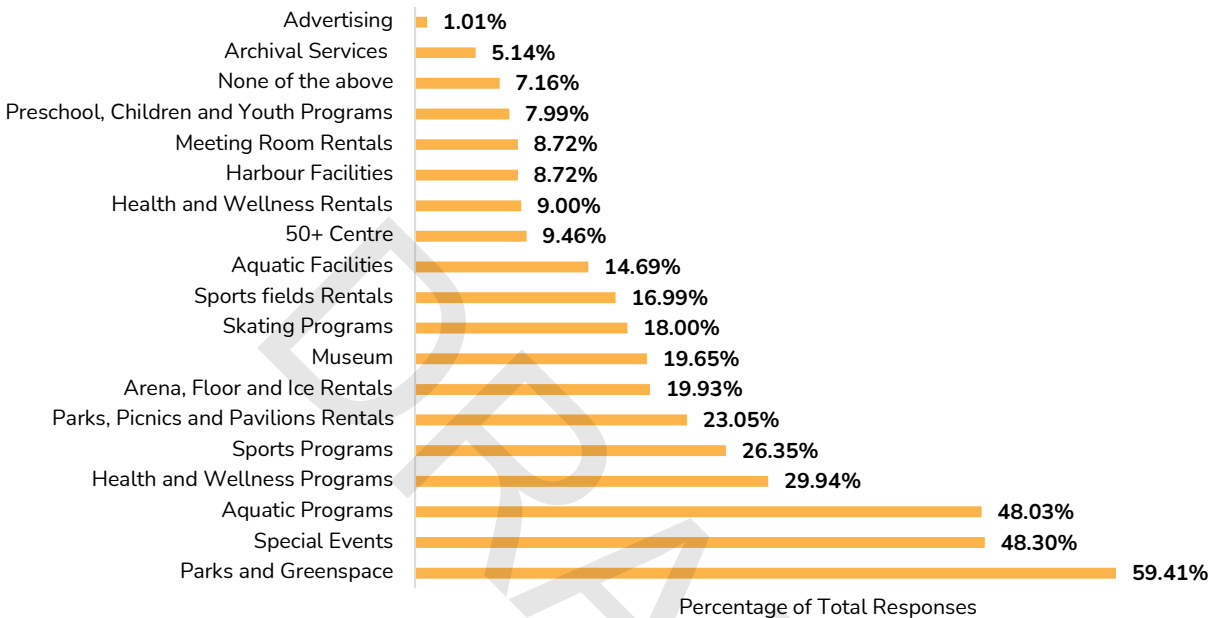
while 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this approach.

- Nearly 97% of respondents have not utilized the City's Recreation Fee Assistance Program, with 70% unaware of its existence. Despite this, more than 67% strongly agreed/agreed with the idea of adjusting fees according to an individual's life and financial situation.
- When asked which services should be subsidized through taxes, 45% of respondents answered aquatic programs, 44% answered parks and greenspace, and 30% answered preschool, children, and youth programs.
- A majority of respondents agreed to a discounted rate for preschoolers, youth, seniors and families (4 members+) with 77%, 71, 67% and 66% respectively. Additionally, 74% of respondents find the current user fees to be within their household's budget.
- 77% of respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the City, while 37% are not.
- 62% indicated that user fees have not affected their use of services, while 23% reported a decrease in usage due to cost. Furthermore, 65% do not consider user fees as a barrier to accessing these services.
- 72% of respondents answered that non-residents of Belleville should pay higher fees for City services and programs.
- Additional commentary from respondents indicated a need for an income and residency-based equitable fee structure, with concerns about high taxes and affordability. They suggest investing user fees in facility and program development, improving the booking system and facility accessibility, and implementing specific fee adjustments like discounts for multiple enrollments, flat annual rates, and a tiered system based on user type.

Detailed Results

Question 1: What services and programs do you and/or your family participate in (check all that apply) (Percent of participants who selected each services/programs category)

Answered: 1148 Skipped: 116

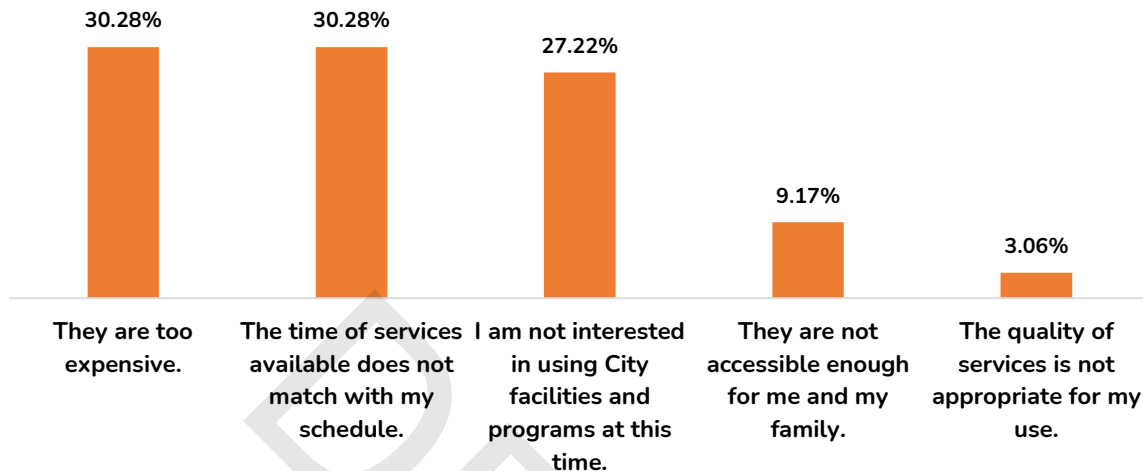


An additional choice for this question was “Other” – a selection that gathered a total of 59 open-ended responses. These responses have been synthesized into the following themes:

- **Walking Track/Trail:** Respondents commonly use walking tracks and trails, including waterfront trails, and some walk their dogs in different parks or trails regularly.
- **Sports and Physical Exercise:** Activities include hockey, table tennis, soccer, gymnastics, tai chi, qigong, pickleball, and the use of a sports dome.
- **Aquatic Activities:** Use of a rehab pool and participation in swimming and rehabilitation swims are noted.
- **Spectator Activities:** Some respondents attend events as spectators, specifically mentioning baseball games at Alemite Park.
- **Clubs and Facilities:** Usage of lawn bowling clubs, the 50+ Centre, and renting community centre facilities for events like birthday parties are mentioned.
- **Other Recreation Activities:** Summer camps, a model train show, and playing the piano.
- **Facility Use:** Access to boat ramps, tennis courts at Potters Creek, and schoolyards.
- **Exercise and Wellbeing:** A few individuals mention participating in indoor walking and rehabilitation exercises.

Question 2: If none, what are the reasons for you not using any of these City facilities and programs (if any)? (Percent of participants who selected each reason)

Answered: 638 Skipped: 626

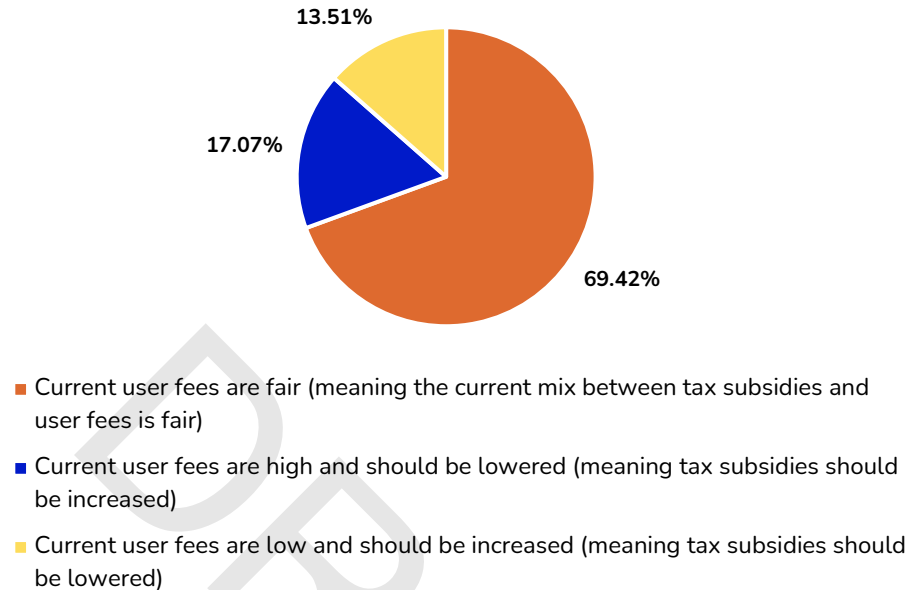


An additional choice for this question was “Other” – a selection that gathered a total of 311 open-ended responses. These responses have been synthesized into the following themes:

- **Program Limitations and Availability:** Several respondents mentioned that the programming for seniors or children under three years is either very limited or not appealing. Some specific activities previously available are no longer offered, leading to a decline in facility use. There’s also a mention of difficulty in getting space in some classes.
- **Online Alternatives and COVID-19 Impact:** The pandemic has changed habits, with some individuals opting for online alternatives like yoga, while others have been deterred from public facilities due to catching COVID-19 during essential activities.
- **Personal Circumstances:** Time constraints due to personal responsibilities like caring for elderly parents, busy schedules, or health issues were cited as reasons for not participating in city programs. There are also references to recent relocations and renovations that take priority over recreation activities.
- **Cost Concerns and Access Issues:** Cost is a recurring theme, with some respondents finding the programs expensive compared to other municipalities or mentioning the increased costs as a reason for reducing use. Access issues also arose, such as difficulty with registration or facility bookings, and the need for a more accessible fee structure.

Question 3: Please choose the statement you most agree with.

Answered: 1125 Skipped: 125

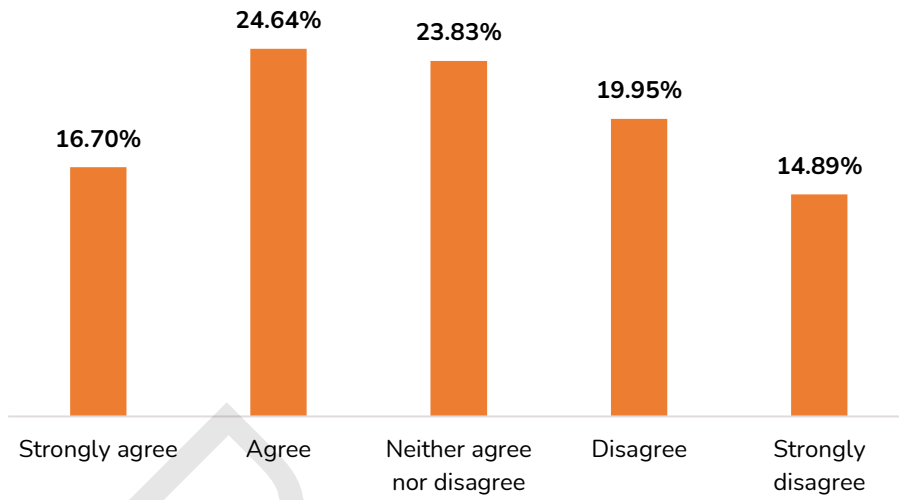


Question 4: The community benefits by using City of Belleville parks, recreation, and cultural facilities, through:

- Healthy lifestyle promotion (physical fitness, mental well-being, stress reduction);
- Crime reduction;
- Economic development (tourism, jobs, local spending);
- Developing skills and creativity;
- Cultural and educational enrichment; and
- Community engagement and improved self-esteem.

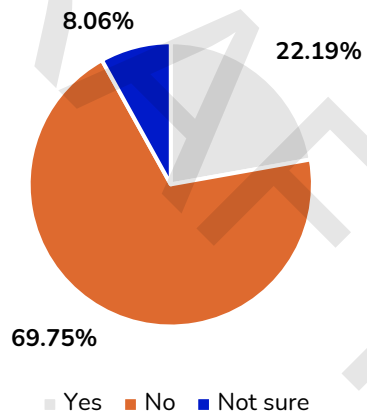
Please express your opinion on this statement: "The greater the community benefit, services should be paid through a higher percentage of property taxes and not through user fees."

Answered: 1108 Skipped: 156



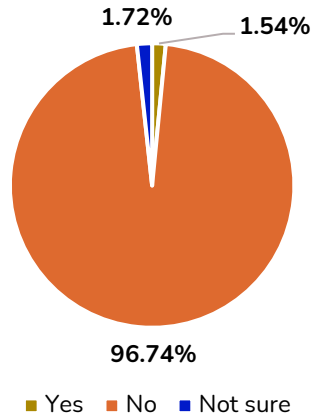
Question 5: Did you know the City of Belleville has a fee assistance program available for recreation programs?

Answered: 1104 Skipped: 160



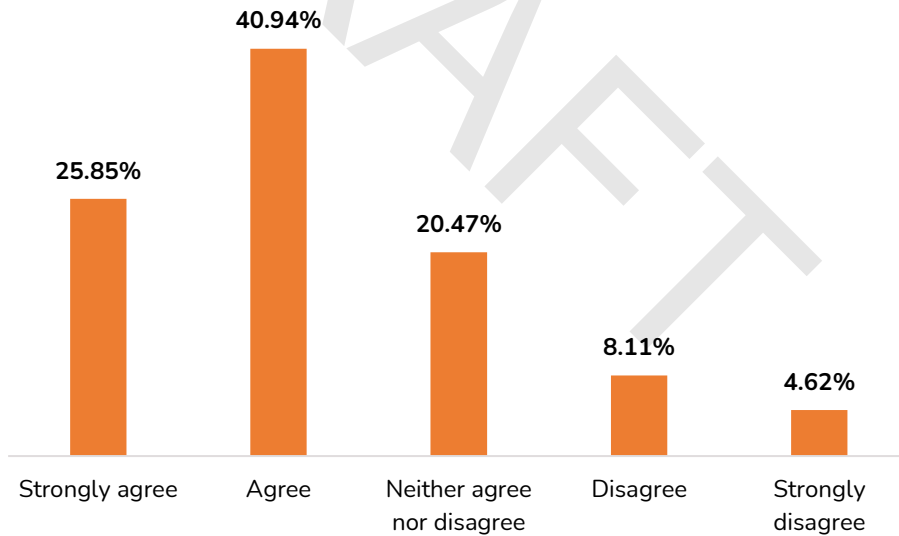
Question 6: Have you ever used the City’s Recreation Fee Assistance Program?

Answered: 1104 Skipped: 160



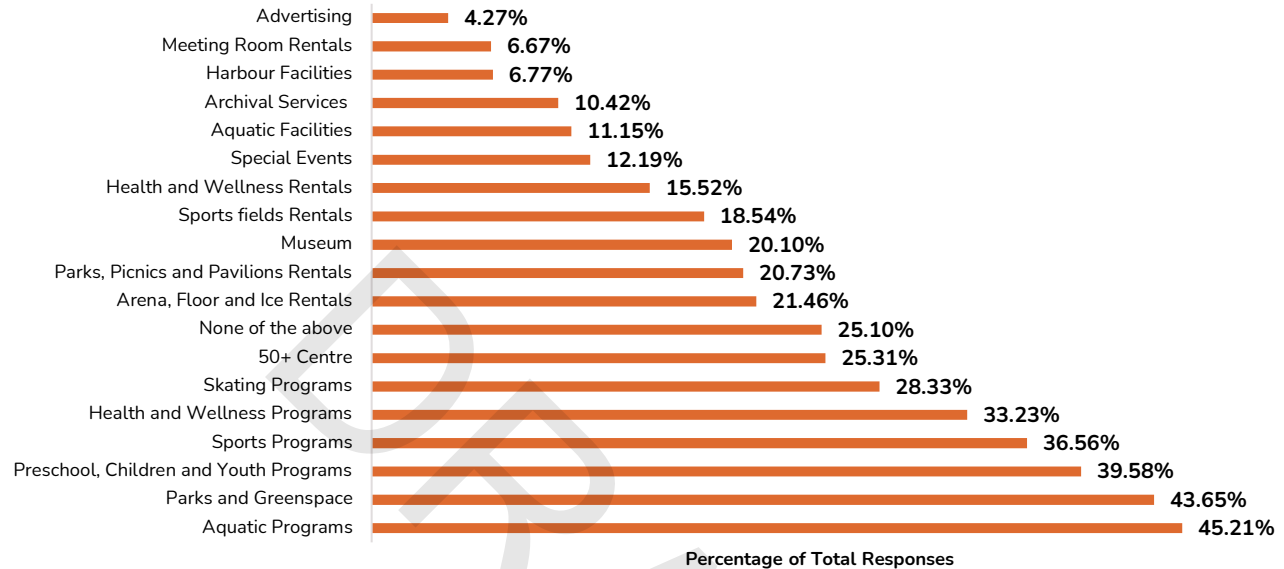
Question 7: the City of Belleville currently offers a fee assistance program for Belleville residents whose income is insufficient to pay for recreational programs. Do you agree with the policy of setting fees based on a person’s life circumstances or ability to pay?

Answered: 1060 Skipped: 204



Question 8: Which services do you feel should be subsidized more through property taxes than increased user fees? (check all that apply) (Percent of participants who selected each service category)

Answered: 1060 Skipped: 204



An additional choice for this question was "Other" – a selection that gathered a total of 46 open-ended responses. These responses have been synthesized into the following themes:

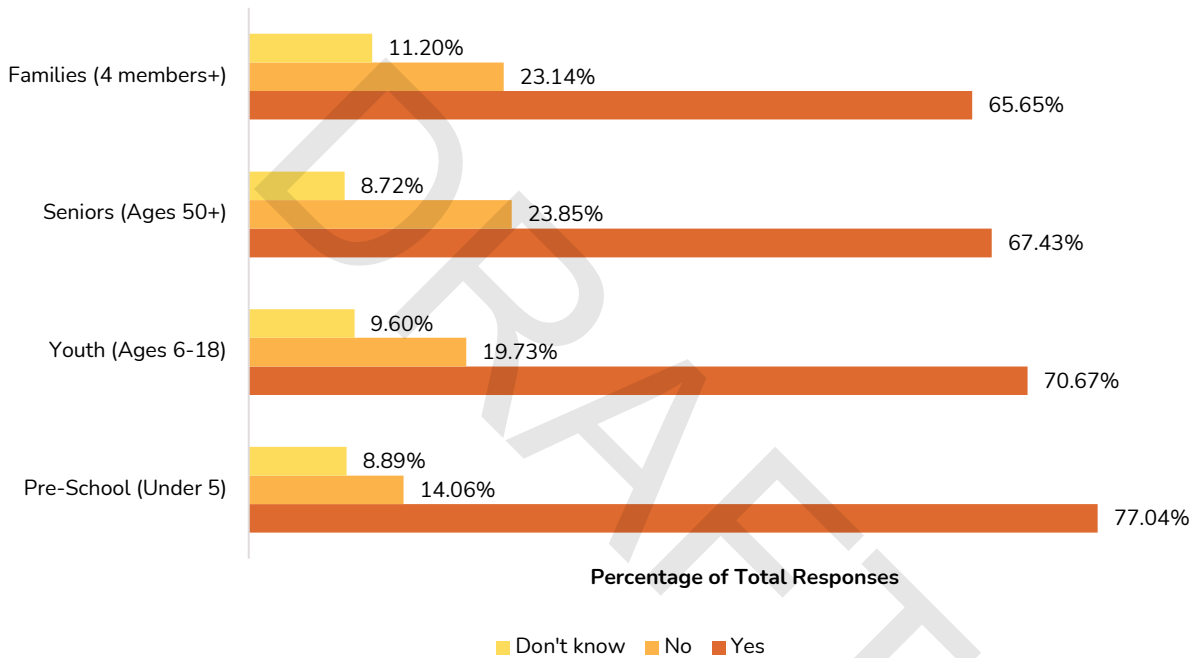
- Concern Over High Taxes and Government Spending:** A significant number of respondents express frustration over the existing high tax rates and skepticism about government spending. They feel that their taxes are already too high and are critical of how tax dollars are being utilized, particularly in areas like road maintenance, waste management, and overall infrastructure.
- Support for Specific Programs and Facilities:** While there is a general resistance to increasing taxes, some respondents show support for specific programs and facilities. This includes a desire for more parks and green spaces, lower fees for children and youth programs, and support for community events. There's a notable emphasis on programs that benefit children, families, and seniors.
- Equity and Accessibility Concerns:** Several responses highlight the need for equitable access to services, especially for low-income families and children. There's a call for adjusting income levels for fee assistance programs in light of inflation and ensuring that essential services like swimming lessons are accessible to all, regardless of finances.
- Alternative Funding Sources:** Some respondents suggest looking at alternative funding sources instead of increasing property taxes. This includes utilizing casino revenues more effectively and expecting large businesses and new companies in the area, like Amazon,

to contribute more to the community.

- Mixed Views on User Fees:** There's a mix of opinions regarding user fees. Some respondents believe that user fees should cover the cost of certain services, while others argue for lower user fees, especially for children's and family programs, suggesting these should be subsidized through taxes to ensure broader accessibility.

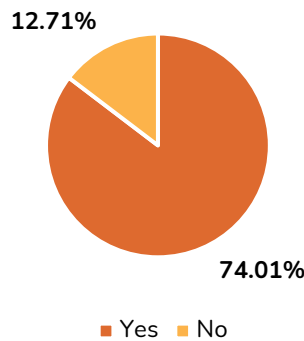
Question 9: For the user groups listed below, do you think there should be a discounted rate for services compared to regular adult fees?

Answered: 1047 Skipped: 217



Question 10: Do you find the current user fees to be affordable for your household's budget?

Answered: 1031 Skipped: 233

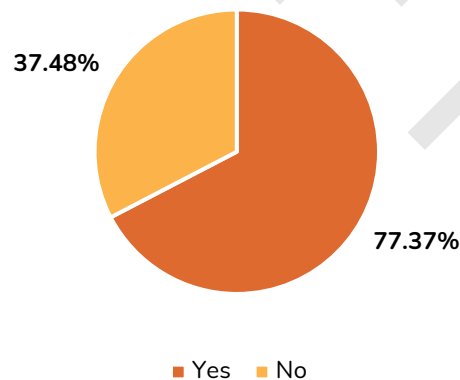


137 respondents have inputted in explaining their answer to this question. These responses have been synthesized in the following themes:

- **Financial Strain and High Cost of Living:** Many respondents express that the current user fees are a strain on their budgets, often citing the high cost of living, including expenses like mortgages, rent, and basic necessities.
- **Diverse Opinions Based on Income and Age:** Responses vary significantly based on income levels and age. Higher-income individuals find the fees more manageable, while those with lower incomes, including seniors and young families, struggle more. There's also a sense of unfairness expressed by some middle-income earners regarding subsidies available to lower-income groups.
- **Suggestions for Pricing Models:** Some respondents suggest alternative pricing models, such as discounts for bulk purchasing, annual rates to avoid discouragement by ongoing fees, and reduced rates for seniors. These suggestions indicate a desire for more flexible and equitable fee structures.
- **Lack of Awareness and Non-Usage:** Several respondents indicate that they are not currently using the services due to various reasons, including lack of awareness of the fees, retirement, or other priorities. This non-usage might reflect either a lack of need or a disconnect between the services offered and the community's awareness or ability to access them.

Question 11: Are you satisfied with the services you use at the City of Belleville?

Answered: 707 Skipped: 557



For those respondents who answered 'yes,' the following themes were mentioned as reasons for their satisfaction:

- **Aquatic and Wellness Facilities:** High satisfaction with the city's swimming pools, aquatic programs, and the Wellness Centre, which offers a variety of fitness and wellness services for all ages.

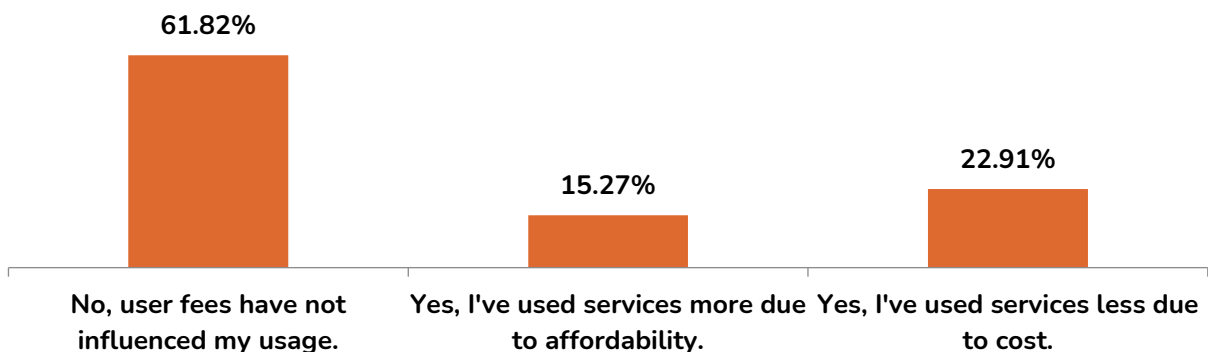
- **Parks, Outdoor Spaces, and Recreation Activities:** Positive feedback on the maintenance and free use of parks and playgrounds, along with appreciation for sports facilities like gymnasiums and soccer fields.
- **Programs for Seniors and Youth:** Commendations for the services at the 50+ Centre and youth-focused programs, including swimming lessons and family-oriented activities.
- **Quality of Staff and Services:** Praise for the friendly, knowledgeable staff and the overall cleanliness and maintenance of facilities.
- **Affordability and Community Engagement:** Appreciation for the affordability of services, with concerns about potential fee increases, and enjoyment of free city events and culture programs.

For those respondents who answered 'no', the following themes were mentioned as reasons for dissatisfaction:

- **Resource Allocation and City Priorities:** Concerns about the improper prioritization of tax dollars, particularly regarding repeated downtown renovations and perceived neglect of other areas like Thurlow.
- **Accessibility and Availability of Services:** Frustrations with the difficulty in booking services, especially swimming lessons, and the limited availability of programs like aquatic adult programs and private swimming lessons.
- **Facility Maintenance and Management:** Complaints about the condition / maintenance of facilities, such as soccer fields and arena showers, and issues with field bookings.
- **Cost and Affordability:** Concerns about high fees for services and the affordability of sports and wellness programs for average families.

Question 12: Have the user fees influenced your decision to use or access certain city services?

Answered: 1008 Skipped: 256

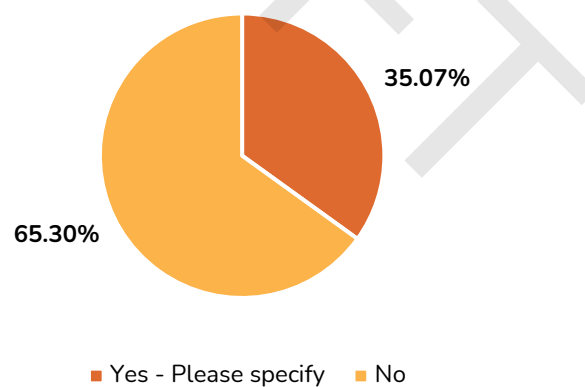


An additional choice for this question was "Other" – a selection that gathered a total of 52 open-ended responses. These responses have been synthesized into the following themes:

- **Financial Constraints and Cost of Living:** The general cost of living and personal financial limitations are major factors affecting the use of city services, with some respondents expressing difficulty affording services due to rising costs in other life areas.
- **Desire for Flexible Membership Options:** A preference for more flexible and potentially cost-effective membership options, such as yearly memberships for facilities like workout studios or QSWC, instead of per-use fees.
- **Accessibility and Mobility Issues:** Challenges related to transportation and physical access to facilities, particularly for seniors and those with mobility concerns, impact the decision to use city services.
- **Program Availability and Scheduling:** The availability of programs and their scheduling, including conflicts with personal schedules and the absence of desired programs, influence service usage.
- **Comparative Assessment with Other Communities:** Some responses include comparisons of Belleville's services, fees, and facilities with those in surrounding areas, affecting perceptions of value and quality.

Question 13: Are there any services you would like to access more frequently but find the user fees to be a barrier?

Answered: 536 Skipped: 728



For those respondents who answered 'yes', the following themes were mentioned as barriers:

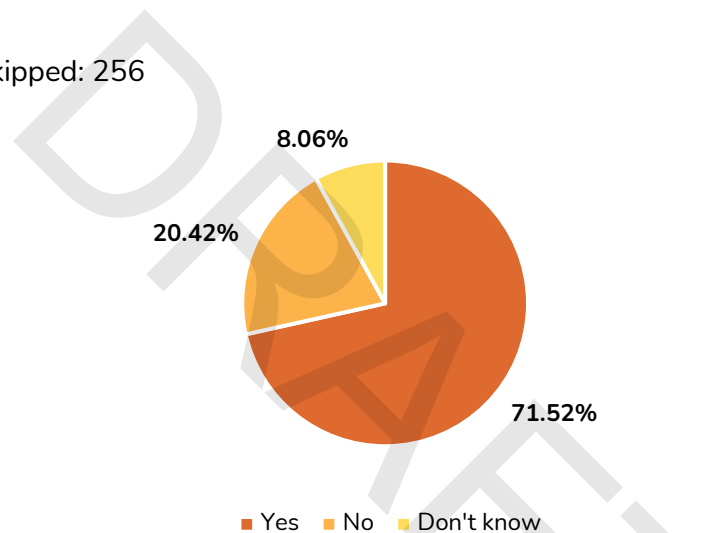
- **Cost of Recreation and Wellness Programs:** Many respondents find the fees for swimming lessons, aquafit, fitness classes, and wellness programs prohibitively expensive. This includes specific mentions of high costs for activities like line dancing, gym usage, and senior-focused fitness programs.
- **Accessibility and Facility Usage Issues:** Challenges in accessing facilities due to high

costs or physical barriers, such as difficulty accessing therapy pools for wheelchair users, and issues with room and field rentals. The high cost of ice rentals and the lack of affordable indoor sports facilities are also noted.

- **Parking and Conservation Area Fees:** Several responses highlight the barrier created by parking fees, particularly in conservation areas and during special events, which discourages the use of these spaces. **Note: this is not a municipal issue/jurisdiction.**
- **Limited Availability and High Demand for Programs:** The difficulty in securing spots in high-demand programs like swim lessons and summer camps due to them selling out quickly, combined with the high cost, is a significant barrier for many respondents.

Question 14: Do you feel that non-residents should pay higher fees than residents of Belleville?

Answered: 1008 Skipped: 256



An additional choice for this question was "Other" – a selection that gathered a total of 53 open-ended responses. These responses have been synthesized into the following themes:

- **Tax Subsidies and Fairness Considerations:** Many respondents express a need to understand the extent of tax subsidies for city services before deciding on differential pricing. There's a concern about fairness, especially for non-residents who lack local access to similar facilities or live close to Belleville and contribute to its economy.
- **Variable Pricing Based on Service Demand and Location:** Some responses suggest that higher fees for non-residents might be justified for services that are in high demand or fully booked. However, there's also a consideration for those living near Belleville or in areas without similar facilities, suggesting a more nuanced approach to pricing.
- **Community and Regional Benefits:** A few respondents highlight the importance of Belleville as a regional centre, suggesting that non-residents contribute to the community in various ways. This perspective leans towards equal fees or minimal differences, recognizing the mutual benefits of shared services and facilities.

Question 15: Please provide any suggestions, concerns, or ideas for improving the user fee system in Belleville.

Answered: 349 Skipped: 915

The responses could be summarized in the following key themes:

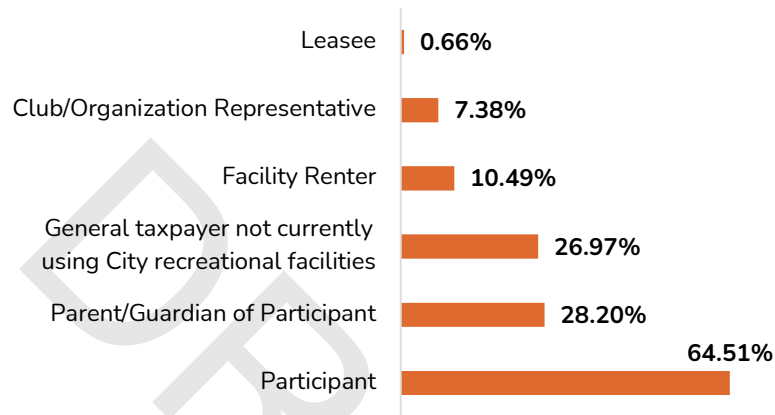
- **Equitable Fee Structure Based on Income and Residency:** There is a call for a fee system that considers income levels and residency status. Suggestions include higher fees for non-residents, especially those who don't contribute to the city's tax base, and lower fees for residents, particularly for low-income families and seniors.
- **Concerns About High Taxes and Affordability:** Many respondents expressed concerns about high taxes in Belleville and the impact of further increases on the cost of living.
- **Investment in Facilities and Program Development:** Suggestions include using user fees to invest in the development of new facilities, such as more soccer fields and outdoor sports spaces, and maintaining existing facilities like Mary Ann Sills Park.
- **Improvements in Booking and Accessibility:** Respondents highlight issues with the online booking system and suggest improvements for easier access. Additionally, they expressed a need to improve accessibility to facilities, particularly for those with disabilities.
- **Specific Suggestions for Fee Adjustments and Discounts:** Ideas include offering discounts for multiple program enrollments, considering flat annual rates for frequent users, and providing tax receipts for program fees. There is also a suggestion for a tiered fee system based on the type of user (e.g., private vs. commercial functions).

Demographic Information

The following questions were asked to ensure the community engagement process included a diversity of experiences and perspectives. Answers were for statistical purposes only.

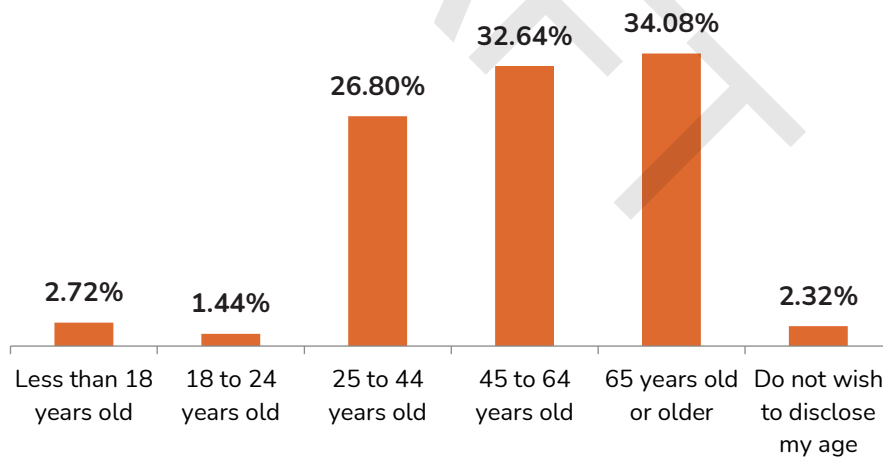
Question 16: Which type of user best describes you (choose all that apply)? (Percent of participants who selected each type of user)

Answered: 1264 Skipped: 0



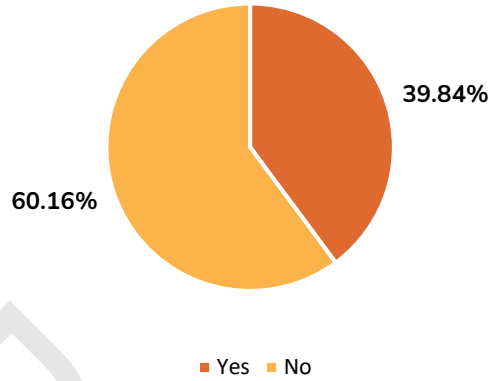
Question 17: How old are you?

Answered: 1250 Skipped: 14

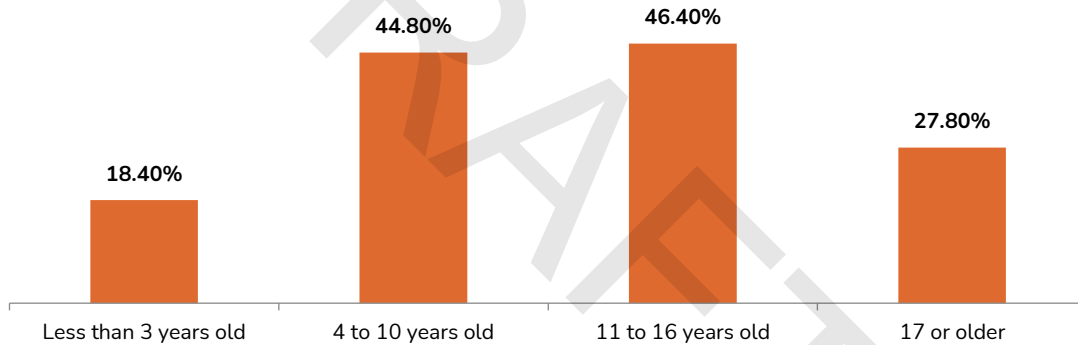


Question 18: Do you have children in your household?

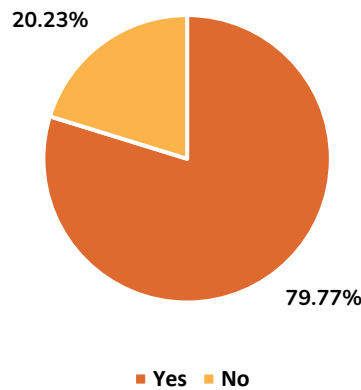
Answered: 1250 Skipped: 14



Question 19: If yes, how old are they? (Check all that applies) (Percent of participants who selected each category)

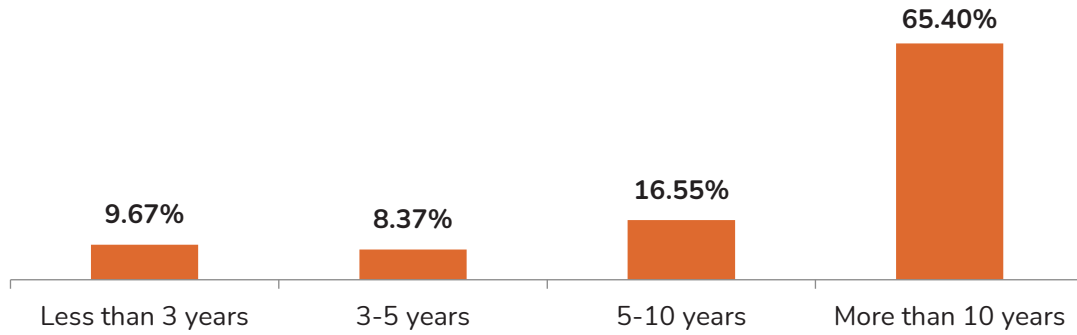


Question 20: Do you live or own property/business in the City of Belleville?



Question 21: If yes, how long have you lived or owned property/business in the City of Belleville?

Answered:1139 Skipped: 125

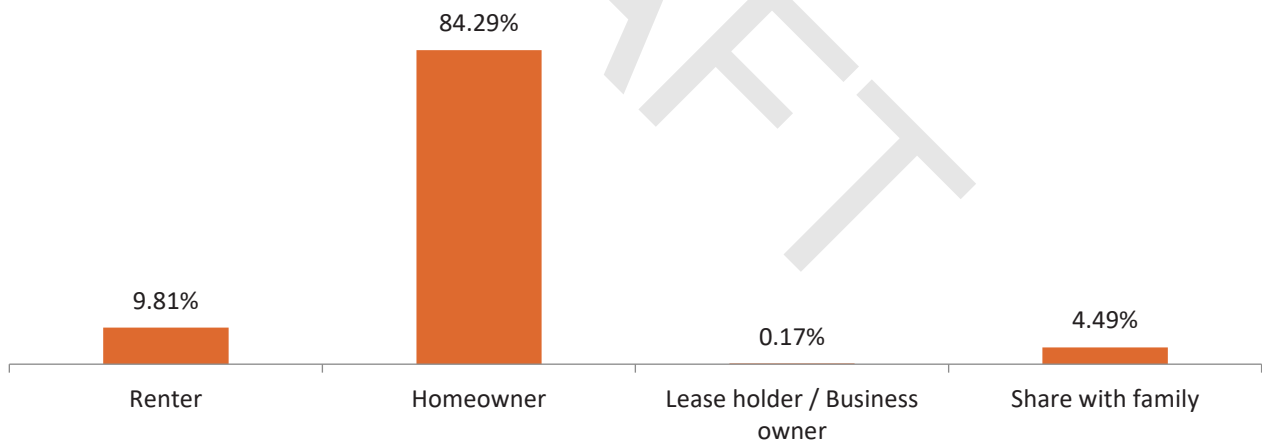


If not in Belleville, respondents mentioned the following places:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Tweed | Trenton | Napanee | Foxboro | Deseronto | Ameliasburg |
| Timmins | Prince Edward | Stirling | Kingston | Roslin | Roblin |
| Centre Hastings | Campbellford | Picton | Carrying Place | Rossmore PEC | Plainfield |
| Quinte West | Sidney Township | Madoc | Tyendinaga | Thomasburg | Trent Hills |
| Shannonville | Brighton | Cloyne | Whitby | Brockville | |

Question 22: What is your living status?

Answered:1188 Skipped: 76



Appendix D: Draft User Fees Policy for City of Belleville



DRAFT Policy – User Fees Policy for Parks, Recreation, and Culture Programs, Services, and Facility Rentals

Dated:

1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy addresses the process for reviewing and updating user fees charged by the City of Belleville for its Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals.

2. DEFINITIONS

“Belleville” or “City” means the Corporation of the City of Belleville.

“By-Law” refers to the Parks, Recreation and Culture programs, services and facility rental fees outlined under the City of Belleville’s Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law.

“Community Services Department” refers to the City of Belleville department responsible for programs and services including, but not limited to, recreation services, culture services, parks, and other outdoor spaces.

“Comprehensive review” refers to a periodic staff-led evaluation of the City’s Parks, Recreation and Culture programs, services and facility rental fees in the Consolidated User Fees By-law including determining categorization of programs and services, full costs for service delivery, proposed user fee rate adjustments, rationale and justification for proposed adjustments, and a reporting and communications plan for revisions to the By-Law.

“Council” means the elected Mayor and Members of Council for the City of Belleville.

“User fees” includes any fees or charges levied by the City of Belleville’s Community Services Department for the provision of Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals.

3. PURPOSE

Appropriately setting user fees for Parks, Recreation, and Culture services in a municipality involves several considerations, including applying both a financial and policy lens. Municipalities like the City of Belleville employ user fees to recover costs for providing programs and services, which generally aim to recover not just operating costs but also a portion of the associated capital costs. Capital costs for recreation facilities (e.g., arenas, community centres) can be more substantial than other municipal services, meaning that a thorough understanding of the full costs to provide services and a target cost-recovery rate are key considerations.

However, given the broader community benefits of providing recreation and culture services, it is important to balance the interests in achieving a target cost-recovery rate with sufficient utilization of programs and services. Determining appropriate user fee rates is therefore both a technical question, in evaluating costs and relevant market dynamics influencing total revenue, and a policy question in determining the degree to which municipal taxpayer subsidy and access to a particular service is important for a community.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the City's decision-making related to periodic reviews of Belleville's Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law for Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals. This policy framework provides City staff with principles and guidance for the establishment and management of these user fees, encompassing various elements such as fee-setting methodologies as well as cost recovery considerations and objectives. It relies on the use of the Public Benefit Pyramid methodology, described in greater detail in section 5.2, which is a structured approach that helps to evaluate, categorize, and prioritize fees and charges imposed by a municipality.

This policy is designed to outline how City staff should conduct a comprehensive review of recreation user fees that maximizes the level of cost recovery for programs and services while simultaneously considering other City objectives or considerations. This process involves not just a thorough evaluation of current rates and potential rate adjustments, but also the underlying assumptions that were used to determine the expected community or individual benefit for the types of programs and services offered by the City. It will help ensure that fees and charges remain justified and appropriate based on the costs of providing those services and with consideration to several guiding principles included herein.

4. SCOPE

Part XII of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and associated regulations provides that municipalities can impose fees or charges on persons for services or activities provided by or on behalf of them for costs owed. The costs included in a fee or charge may include costs incurred by the municipality for administration, enforcement, and the establishment, acquisition, and replacement of capital assets, and without regard to whether the service is mandatory or discretionary.

This policy applies to all Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, user fees, and facilities owned and/or administered by the City of Belleville's Community Services Department.

5. POLICY

5.1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Decision-making surrounding the Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals under the City's Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law is intended to ensure that fees and charges remain justified and appropriate based on the costs of providing those services and with consideration to several guiding principles. These guiding principles include:

5.1.i: Adherence to legislative requirements: User fee rates will be set in accordance with Part XII of the Municipal Act, 2001 and its associated regulations and revised if provincial legislative/regulatory changes occur.

5.1.ii: Evidence-based: User fee rates will be periodically reviewed (comprehensive review every five years with annual inflationary adjustments in intervening years), and any proposed adjustments to the rates (including annual updates to the By-Law) will be made using an evidence-based and justifiable rationale which is communicated to Council and the broader community.

5.1.iii: Flexibility: User fee structure should be adaptable to changing circumstances (e.g., changing economic and social conditions, changing local or regional competitors) with potential for specific adjustments occurring between the five-year comprehensive review cycle where necessary.

5.1.iv: Accessibility and affordability: User fee rates should balance the achievement of a target cost-recovery rate with objectives related to equity and fairness for all residents, ensuring facility utilization rates remain high, and consideration for the market rates offered by local and/or regional competitors.

5.1.v: Transparency: Members of the public should be engaged in consultations during user fee reviews, with any resulting changes to the user fee structure and the underlying rationale being communicated by the City to promote stability and predictability for users.

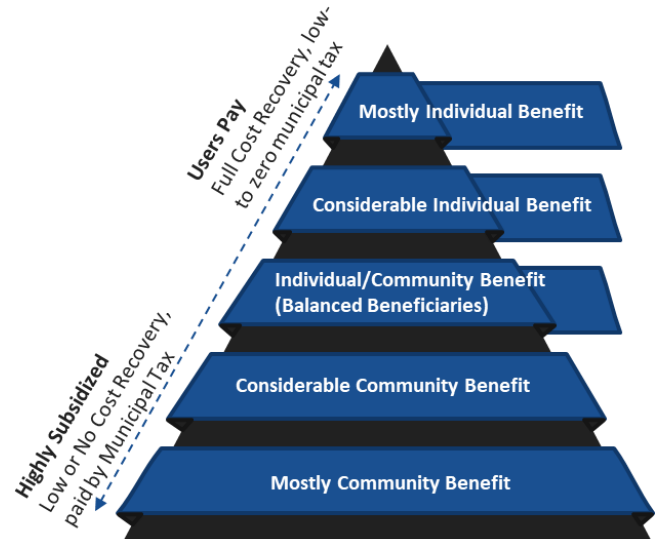
5.2. FEE SETTING FRAMEWORK

The Pyramid Methodology is the fees setting framework to be utilized by the City in navigating periodic reviews of its Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law for Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals. The Pyramid Methodology is a structured approach that helps to evaluate, categorize, and prioritize fees and charges imposed by a municipality to promote a well-balanced and equitable user fee structure.

This framework is a broad, high-level model to guide the approach to setting user fees, which encompasses four steps to be followed by City staff when conducting a comprehensive review:

5.2.i: Categorization of User Fees: First, City staff will consider the full breadth of Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals offered by the City and determine where the types of programs or services fall into this methodology based on the Public Benefit Pyramid illustrated in Figure 1, with the level of typical municipal subsidy directly proportional to the level of community benefit provided.

For the purposes of this policy, programs and services that fit into the “individual benefit” levels refer to those where the benefits of service provision mostly accrue to specific households or individual users of the service, and not the wider Belleville community. These programs and services are typically paid for directly by the individuals who use them, through fees or charges, and are often not largely funded by municipal taxation. Conversely, programs and services that fit into the “community benefit” levels refer to those that benefit the entire community or a larger group of residents. These programs and services are often funded through municipal taxation collected from the wider community, as most or all residents benefit from their provision whether they directly use the programs or services or not.



Categorizing types of user fees against their placement on the Public Benefit Pyramid assists with the evaluation of the expected community vs. individual benefit of a specific program or service, and the associated target cost-recovery level based on this determination. This can range from a fully tax-supported program or service (for which the full costs of service provision are recovered through municipal taxation, and no user fees are charged to participants or users), to a balanced individual vs. community benefit (where a portion of the costs for service provision are recovered through user fees and the remainder through municipal taxation), to a non or nearly non-tax-supported program or service (for which user fee revenues are expected to recover the full costs of service provision with little or no municipal subsidization required).

Note that when categorizing types of user fees against the Public Benefit Pyramid, it is not required that every user fee be categorized using this methodology. Rather, the full breadth of programs and services should be consolidated into logical bundles that can be assessed to understand their respective target cost-recovery rates (e.g., aquatic programs, community hall rentals, arena ice rentals, advertising, etc.), with any outliers in these bundles identified and analyzed separately.

Acknowledging that evaluating the ratio of community versus individual benefits (and its respective place within the pyramid / five levels) for any given type of program or service is subjective and complex, it is important to apply a consistent analytical lens when assessing how benefits are assigned, and ensuring transparency with how decisions were made with regards to categorization. For additional clarity, this policy outlines several different lenses which may be applied by City staff when assessing its programs and services within the Public Benefit Pyramid. These include:

- **Value exchange:** Determining who directly benefits or receives value from the program or service, including users and other stakeholders.
- **Necessity:** Assessing the degree to which a program or service is required. This includes whether it is stipulated in provincial legislation or provided as discretionary, and if discretionary, if/how it is enshrined in policies, agreements, and other legal mechanisms.
- **Expectations:** Considering the nature and level of service provided, to what degree is it customary or expected to be provided by the public.
- **Dependencies:** The degree to which organizations, non-municipal government services, and stakeholder groups within a community rely on the program or service, and the potential impacts of adjusting fees or service levels on them.
- **Societal value:** The overall impact on the community of a program or service, contributing to its overall attractiveness and strength as a place to live, play, and work.

This categorization process should be completed with care and consider feedback collected from engagement with user groups and community members.

5.2.ii: Determine Cost Recovery Levels: Second, City staff will establish standard cost recovery targets that correspond to each level of the Public Benefit Pyramid, with the fees for the programs and services classified under this approach priced to achieve the targeted recovery percentage. For many programs and services offered by the City, a target cost recovery percentage at or above 100% is unlikely given the broader community benefits to be achieved through a higher level of municipal subsidization and concerns about affordability and accessibility.

The following table sets out the classification levels and corresponding target cost recovery percentages for each:

Level	Benefit Determination	Social Value	Target Cost Recovery
Level 1	Mostly Community Benefit	High	Below 20%
Level 2	Considerable Community Benefit	Medium-High	20-40%
Level 3	Individual/Community Benefit (Balanced Beneficiaries)	Medium	40-60%
Level 4	Considerable Individual Benefit	Medium-Low	60-80%
Level 5	Mostly Individual Benefit	Low	80% and above

Note that these target cost recovery percentages represent a general guideline and may be adjusted in the future. Additionally, the intended cost recovery percentage for some selected programs and services *within* a given category may fall outside these target rates.

5.2.iii: Determine Costs and Cost Recovery Rate: Third, for the types of user fees, City staff will determine, as feasible as possible, the full costs associated with providing the program or service. Assessing the full cost-of-service provision involves considering both direct and indirect operating and capital costs:

- **Direct operating costs:** Costs related to staff salary and benefit expenses directly linked to service delivery (i.e., processing efforts) and other operational expenses which are essential for providing these services (e.g., materials, supplies, third party contracted services, maintenance costs, etc.).

- **Indirect operating costs:** Costs related to support and corporate overhead functions like management/administration, human resources, finance, information technology/information management, among others, that assist in facilitating the delivery of programs and services being provided by the Community Services Department.
- **Capital costs:** Costs related to long-term investments in significant facilities or major equipment and fleet purchases, and debt repayment.

After determining full costs for all types of user fees, the City will determine the respective cost recovery rate for each program or service, which is calculated as a proportion of the relevant operating and capital costs that are covered by the total revenue generated through user fees or other sources.

5.2.iv: Determine Fee Adjustments: Last, after determining cost recovery rates for all Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs, services, and facility rentals offered, City staff will compare these rates to the target cost recovery targets as determined in 5.2.ii.

In addition to comparing current cost recovery rates against the cost recovery targets, City staff will also consider other mitigating factors when proposing fee adjustments. These factors include:

- **Market Conditions:** City staff must assess current user fees and any identified adjustments against the fees charged by municipal and/or private sector operators providing similar services in the local region. This consideration is important for Parks, Recreation, and Culture programs and services where alternatives to municipal facilities may exist in the community that can impact facility utilization rates. Completing a municipal and private sector benchmarking exercise can assist with assessing local market conditions. Where the City provides programs or services that are similar to those provided by competing operators, user fees should generally be aligned with those charged in the private sector to avoid overcharging (reducing utilization rates of municipal facilities) or undercharging users (potentially undercutting local businesses).
- **Affordability:** City staff must carefully balance user fee adjustments with considerations of affordability, ensuring that essential services or those with greater community benefit remain accessible to all community members from a cost perspective. These concerns may be mitigated where the municipality has targeted recreation subsidies and fee assistance programs for residents/taxpayers in need. Belleville currently has a separate policy to this effect (“Recreation Program Subsidy/Fee Assistance Policy”), and the City has committed to providing affordable access to municipally run recreation programs and activities for all residents of Belleville, regardless of age or income.

After considering mitigating factors (local market conditions and affordability), City staff may recommend fee adjustments for programs and services with current cost recovery rates below the standard cost recovery targets, with increases proposed as appropriate to achieve the desired recovery percentages.

To ensure user fee rates remain consistent with desired cost recovery percentages, between each comprehensive review, recreation user fees shall undergo an automatic annual inflationary increase on MONTH 1st of each year, as stipulated in the Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law. To provide stability and predictability to users, annual inflationary increases shall be included in the amended Consolidated Fees & Charges By-Law.

5.3. REPORTING

To promote transparency and ensure community members are aware of rate adjustments, a reporting and communications plan should be included for annual adjustments and each comprehensive review. This plan would communicate changes to residents regarding the approved user fee structure and the underlying rationale for changes.

5.4. REVIEW

A comprehensive review and reporting of user fees should be conducted by City staff every five years with appropriate annual inflationary increases prescribed for the intervening years.

Where necessary, specific one-time adjustments to user fees between comprehensive reviews and outside of annual inflationary increases would be permitted during the annual By-Law review. This could result from changing circumstances (e.g., changing market conditions), but such adjustments should be limited to promote longer-term stability and predictability with respect to user fee rates.



DRAFT Policy – User Fees Policy for Parks, Recreation, and Culture Programs, Services, and Facility Rentals

Schedule “A” – RECREATION FEE CATEGORIES

Program or Service Grouping	Examples	Categorization	Target Cost Recovery Range
QSWC Registration Programs	Adult fitness / instructional programming, summer camps	Level 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	20-40%
QSWC Indoor Aquatics	Aquafit, swimming lessons, recreational swimming	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%
QSWC Arenas	Ice rentals, skating programs	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%
QSWC Leases/Space Rentals/Other	Facility rentals, advertising / naming rights	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%
QSWC Senior’s Active Living Centre	Senior’s programming	Level 3 – Balanced Beneficiaries	40-60%
Outdoor Aquatics	Aquafit, swimming lessons, recreational swimming	Level 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	20-40%
Community Centres	Facility rentals (Parkdale, Gerry Masterson, and Multi-Occasion Room)	Level 4 – Considerable Individual Benefit	60-80%
Harbours	Dock rentals, pump outs, boat ramp	Level 4 – Considerable Individual Benefit	60-80%
Archives	Scanning images, black and white copies, colour prints	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%
Glanmore	Admission fees, Memberships, educational programs, wedding photos	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%
Parks and Parks Facilities	Facility rentals, passive parks / greenspace use	Level 1 – Mostly Community Benefit	Below 20%
Sports Fields	Soccer pitches, baseball diamonds, lighting, tournament fees	Level 2 – Considerable Community Benefit	20-40%