



100 John West Way  
Aurora, Ontario  
L4G 6J1  
(905) 727-3123  
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora

# General Committee Report

No. FIN23-038

---

**Subject:** 2024-26 Rates and Fees Update

**Prepared by:** Laura Sheardown, Financial Management Advisor

**Department:** Finance

**Date:** October 17, 2023

---

## Recommendation

1. That Report No. FIN23-038 be received; and
2. That a bylaw be enacted to set the 2024, 2025 and 2026 fees and charges for applications, permits, use of Town property, the sale of documents and for the prescribed service charges for administrative matters as itemized on the attached schedules.

## Executive Summary

All fees and charges listed on the schedules attached to the Fees and Charges Bylaw are for user pay services, where the requesting party is the sole beneficiary from the service. Many of these fees are on a full cost recovery basis, which allows the Town to fully recover the cost of providing a specific service or use of property.

The regular review of the Fees and Charges Bylaw allows staff an opportunity to ensure that the Town is maximizing its cost recovery of user pay services and to make changes if required. Please note that this review of the bylaw is setting the fees and charges for 2024, 2025 and 2026, which is necessary to align with the Town's newly adopted multi-year budgeting framework.

- The changes in the Town's fees and charges for 2024, 2025 and 2026 predominantly relate to an adjustment for inflation
- Should a need arise to modify the fees and charges for 2024, 2025 or 2026, the Town's Fees and Charges Bylaw can be amended

## Background

### Last Review of Fees and Charges Bylaw

Council last reviewed the Town's Fees and Charges Bylaw in December of 2022. The bylaw is structured to align fees with departmental owners in the form of schedules for each department to facilitate reviews and updates as required. It has been the Town's practice to review the attached schedules annually and to make revisions as required.

## Analysis

**The changes in the Town's fees and charges for 2024, 2025 and 2026 are predominantly related to an adjustment for inflation**

As can be expected, the Town's service delivery costs have been subject to considerable inflationary pressures over the past few years. As a result, an inflationary increase of 4.0%, 3.0% and 2.0% for 2024, 2025 and 2026 respectively have been applied to the fees and charges to maintain applicable service cost recovery benchmarks. These inflationary pressures were calculated based on the Town's basket of goods and services in April 2023.

All fee or description changes that are not related to inflationary changes are flagged with the '\*' symbol on the right-hand side. The final schedules to the Fees and Charges Bylaw will only include the 2024-2026 fees columns. Any changes to fees include the old information being ~~struck-through~~ and the new information is underlined within the schedules.

### Schedule A – General Fees and Charges

No changes are being requested currently, other than inflationary increases.

### Schedule B – Planning and Development Services

The changes to this schedule primarily include the elimination of services no longer required or adjustments to better reflect the cost of providing the services:

- Increase to the percentage charged for subdivision and site plan engineering fees
- Increase and relocation of water model and sanitary sewer model fees from Schedule H to Schedule B, for better alignment with the program areas

- Addition of a real property administration fee for covering the cost of intaking, reviewing, and executing Real Property inquiries for all matters of this nature
- Elimination of plotting of drawings fee as these are being provided in an electronic form to residents

### **Schedule C – Corporate Services**

No changes are being requested currently, other than inflationary increases.

### **Schedule D – Community Services**

The changes to this schedule are a combination of converting specific categories of fees to ranges, restructuring of existing fee categories and the introduction of new fees:

- Addition of a non-profit rate for outdoor event set-up (Item 1k)
- Amending the description of park permit deposit (Item 1m)
- Addition of price ranges for parking lot rental (Item 1q)
- Conversion of drop-in activities rates to a range from one set price (Item 5b & e)
- Expanding the price range for single drop-in admission (Item 5d)
- Addition of a group rate for drop-in activities (Item 5f)
- Addition of an option to collect a percentage of gross sales instead of a flat fee from food vendors at Special Events (Item 9g)
- Restructuring and conversion of all membership fees to ranges (Item 10)
- Clarification of ages is added to the daily user fee categories (Item 11)
- Elimination of Summer Squash Special category (Item 13b)
- Addition of Deck Supervisor and event set-up fees (Item 15j & k)
- Conversion of arena floor rental fees to a range (Item 18b & c)
- Addition of non-resident rental rate for gymnasiums (Item 18j)
- Expanding the box office fees to provide a better breakdown of the amount charged (Item 18r)
- Addition of production service fees for Aurora Town Square (Item 18u)
- Revision of the rate description as well as the addition of a non-profit rental rate (Item 19a)
- Revision of rate description to include timeframe (Item 19b)
- Addition of Pickleball Courts to the item description (Item 19c)
- Conversion of playing field user fees to ranges (Item 20)
- Reduction of Sports Dome fees for Aurora Youth Soccer Club starting in 2024 (Item 22c, e, g & k)

The conversion of set rates to ranges of fees simplifies a very complex and extensive list of rates and allows staff to respond to changing needs of the user groups and ensure the correct percentage of cost recovery for services provided.

Staff are currently reviewing all the field, ball diamond and arena floor rental rates in conjunction with the Pricing Policy that was completed in 2021. Increases to these rates are anticipated to be phased in over several years, beginning in 2024, to improve our cost recovery while maintaining affordability in comparison to the benchmark averages identified in the Pricing Policy study. Staff will be consulting with impacted user groups prior to setting the 2024 rates.

### **Schedule E – Operational Services**

The changes to this schedule include:

- An increase to the water meter wire charge to better reflect the cost of providing this item
- Increasing the bulk water fees during construction to better reflect the cost of the water consumed during this timeframe
- Maintaining the residential waste bag tag at \$5 until 2026, where it increases to \$6 as this allows easier cashiering (less change)
- Addition of the Street Pole Banner Program fees for applications and installation and removal of banners

### **Schedule F – Finance**

The only change to this schedule reflects the alignment of fees for the addition of unpaid charges to tax bill, including unpaid Provincial Offences Act charges.

### **Schedule G – Building Services**

No changes are being requested currently, other than inflationary increases.

### **Schedule H – Development Planning Division**

The changes to this schedule were mostly the division of fee categories to better address different requests, including:

- Official Plan Amendment fees were broken into major and minor categories

- Introduction of a recirculation/revision fee for applicants that fail to respond to the requests for information after the third submission for all types of applications/submissions
- Addition of a per unit or lot charge for part lot controls, like site plan approval fees
- Removal of Site Plan Review fee for Stable Neighbourhoods as this is no longer done
- Breakdown of telecommunications/antenna facilities into Level 1 and 2 fees based on the height of the proposed system
- Increase of Ontario Land Tribunal processing fees to better reflect the amount of staff effort to complete the required documentation
- Changing the timeframe for the file maintenance fee from once a year to once every six months
- Elimination of additional public meeting fee
- Creation of a heritage removal request fee for the delisting of a property from the Heritage Listing
- Addition of a fee for staff bringing a report to Council outside of the regular Planning Process
- Addition of a fee for amending existing development agreements
- Expansion of the pre-application consultation to create different fees for different stages of application process

#### **Schedule I – Bylaw Services Division**

The changes to this schedule include:

- Revision of the remedial action administration fee to better reflect the effort required from staff to provide the service
- Addition of an order file management fee to recognize the staff effort involved in this action
- Introduction of a property standards appeal fee to cover the cost of compensation for the committee members

#### **Schedule J – Animal Services Division**

The changes to this schedule reflect primarily the increase required to cover the cost of providing this service, including:

- Revision of the trapping fee from a daily fee to a flat fee to simplify the pricing model

- Increase to private property deceased wildlife removal to better reflect the cost of providing this service
- Introduction of an animal offenses appeal fee to cover the cost of compensation for the committee members
- Addition of an animal surrenders and aggressive dog assistance fee as staff are receiving requests of this nature, which will also cover calls for assistance from the Health Department for dog bites and residents unable to hold animals

### **Schedule K – Access Aurora**

Staff are requesting that the Civil Marriage fee remain at the 2023 rate as it is higher than almost all the municipalities in York Region.

### **Schedule L – Short-Term Rentals**

No changes are being requested currently, other than inflationary increases.

### **Should a need arise to modify the fees and charges for 2024, 2025 or 2026, the Town's Fees and Charges Bylaw can be amended**

As staff are setting the Town's fees and charges three years into the future, there is a possibility that one or more of these fees may require revision as new information becomes available. In instances where staff determine that a new fee or charge revision is in order, a replacement fee and charge schedule for the year in question will be brought to Council for its review and approval.

### **Advisory Committee Review**

The Finance Advisory Committee is not mandated to review the proposed fee changes prior to the review by General Committee.

### **Legal Considerations**

Section 11(2)(3) and Section 391(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* allow a municipality to enact bylaws for its financial management, and in particular, to impose fees or charges on persons for services or activities provided or done by or on its behalf. Other sections affecting the setting of fees and charges appear in the Planning Act and the Building Code Act.

## **Financial Implications**

The revised fees and charges proposed were used in the development of the revenue projections to be included in the 2024 – 2026 budget and therefore impacts the proposed 2024 - 2026 tax levy.

The proposed 2024-26 fees and charges have been adjusted to reflect changes to departmental costs, which have been subject to significant inflationary pressures over the past several years, in providing applicable services to users. All fee increases will alleviate pressure on the 2024-26 tax base; when costs increase because of inflation, but non-tax levy revenues do not, the tax levy must accommodate this additional budget burden. That's why it is important that fees and charges keep pace with inflation; the proposed fees and charges within this bylaw strive to achieve this goal. Council should be aware that the fees presented in these schedules include HST where applicable.

## **Communications Considerations**

The Town of Aurora will use 'inform' as the level of engagement for this project.

Finance and Corporate Communications staff will work together to ensure the proposed fee changes are posted in accordance with the Town's Notice Provision Policy.

## **Climate Change Considerations**

The information contained within this report does not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaption.

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

Reviewing and updating the Town's fees and charges on a regular basis for user pay services contributes to achieving the Strategic Plan guiding principle of 'Leadership in Corporate Management' and improves transparency and accountability to the community.

## **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

1. Accept, amend or reject any or all of the recommendations of this report.

2. Leave fees at the previously approved 2023 levels and absorb the cost of providing services that a cost recovery fee has not been approved for within the Town's tax levy for the next three years.

## **Conclusions**

Staff recommend endorsement of the proposed changes to the Fees and Charges Bylaw. This proposed update of the 2024, 2025 and 2026 fees and charges ensures that all changes brought forward are a fair representation of the cost of these services and that they are in line with surrounding municipalities for similar services.

## **Attachments**

Schedule A – General Fees and Charges

Schedule B – Planning and Development Services

Schedule C – Corporate Services

Schedule D – Community Services

Schedule E – Operational Services

Schedule F – Finance

Schedule G – Building Division

Schedule H – Development Planning Division

Schedule I – Bylaw Services

Schedule J – Animal Services

Schedule K – Access Aurora

Schedule L – Short-term Rentals

## **Previous Reports**

None.

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on September 28, 2023

## **Approvals**

Approved by Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel, Director, Finance

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer