



SUBJECT: 2025 rates and fees
TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Finance Department

Report Number: F-30-24

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: November 4, 2024

Date to Council: November 19, 2024

Recommendation:

Approve the 2025 rates and fees as outlined in finance department report F-30-24, effective January 1, 2025 or such other date as is indicated; and

Enact a By-Law, substantially in the form attached as Appendix A to finance department report F-30-24, in a form satisfactory to the Commissioner, Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Designing and delivering complete communities
- Providing the best services and experiences
- Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
- Driving organizational performance

Executive Summary:

The City of Burlington conducts an annual review of its user fees for various services, adjusting them as necessary under the Municipal Act. The proposed 2025 Rates and Fees By-law reflects an average increase of 3% across most services to address inflationary pressures. This increase aims to ensure cost recovery and minimize

property tax increases, as user fees, licenses, fees and fines are projected to contribute 12% of the base budget revenues.

Key Highlights:

1. **General Fee Adjustments:**

- A standard 3% increase for most services.
- Some services, like building permits and by-law compliance, will have specific increases or remain unchanged based on recent reviews.

2. **Service-Specific Changes:**

- **Development and Growth Management:** A comprehensive fee review is ongoing, with a proposed 3% increase for current fees.
- **Community Services:** Transit fares and recreation fees will see various adjustments, including specific increases for summer swim passes and outdoor pool rentals.
- **Public Works:** Engineering and infrastructure service fees will increase by 3% to account for rising costs.

3. **Financial Management:** A new fee for tax payment transfers is introduced, alongside a modest increase for tax certificates to align with other municipalities.

4. **Engagement:** The City will notify stakeholders of the changes, effective January 1, 2025, and has made efforts to ensure that the updated fees are accessible and compliant with AODA standards.

The adjustments aim to sustain the quality of City services while balancing affordability for residents. The proposed changes will be presented to Council for approval as part of the 2025 operating budget cycle.

Background and Discussion:

The City of Burlington charges user fees for services provided to the community. Each year, the City reviews its fees and charges under the Municipal Act and adjusts where appropriate.

The 2025 City of Burlington Rates and Fees by-law (Appendix A) provides a listing of rates and fees for services provided by the City, as well as new proposed fees currently not being charged by the City.

The results of the annual rates and fees review have been incorporated in the 2025 City of Burlington Rates and Fees by-law.

In response to ongoing inflationary pressures, many services are looking to implement an average increase of approximately 3%. Some areas that haven't adjusted their fees in years are proposing additional increases. Several services that underwent a fee review in 2024 will maintain their rates for 2025. Additionally, a few service areas are undergoing comprehensive fee reviews, which may lead to proposed changes to their 2025 rates and fees. Any modifications resulting from these reviews will be submitted to Council for approval.

Strategy/process/risk

Charging user fees is based on the principle that those who benefit from a service should contribute to its cost. User fees represent a significant portion of the City's revenue, following property tax revenue. For 2025, user fees, licenses, fees and fines form 12% of the proposed revenues for the budget. To help minimize property tax increases, the City of Burlington has actively pursued a high level of cost recovery for its services while balancing affordability and access. Below is a summary of the proposed fee changes for each service:

Development and Growth Management

- **Community Design and Development Review**

A Development Fee Review with Watson & Associates is underway and estimated to be completed by the end of 2024. A report will be brought to Council at that time with proposed amendments to rates. In the meantime, an increase of 3% across the board is proposed to align with increasing costs.

- **Building Code Permits and Inspections**

The *Building Code Act (BCA), 1992* provides municipalities with the authority to collect fees to fully recover the cost of administration and enforcement of the BCA and the Ontario Building Code (OBC). Regulations made under the BCA/OBC outline the details of what can be included as part of the cost including direct and indirect costs, and provisions for a reserve fund. The basic principle for providing building permit and inspection services is: "Fees for Service."

Rates and fees within the Section 6.11 of the City of Burlington Building Permit By-law 66-2019 as amended, are indexed to the overall % increase for the total Human Resource expenditures as approved in the annual budget in relation to the Building Section and are to be adjusted annually on February 1st. Flat fee rates shall be rounded to the nearest dollar amount (increments of half dollar shall be rounded up). All other fees shall be rounded to the nearest cent.

- **By-Law Compliance**
 - **Animal Services**

Animal Services fees are proposing an increase of 3%. A comprehensive review of the Animal Services by-law is anticipated to be completed in 2025, at which point all fees will be reassessed.

- **Municipal By-Law Enforcement**

By-Law Enforcement fees are not proposing an increase in 2025.

- **Licensing**

There are no proposed increases for Licensing at this time. A comprehensive review of the licensing by-law is scheduled for 2025, which will include an assessment of necessary licenses for the future and a determination of suitable fees for these licenses.

Community Service

- **Transit**

Burlington Transit fares are developed using rates based on payment type, cash fare or PRESTO fare. The respective PRESTO Fare Concession provides a reduced fare, based on universal classes common to all Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area transit agencies. Specific to Burlington Transit, rates & fees approve the fare respective fare concession rates each year. The following table lists the fare concessions, age range for each, and the corresponding savings realized per trip with the reduced PRESTO fare option. A further savings is achieved on PRESTO fares each month after 40 full fare trips per calendar month using PRESTO Loyalty; each subsequent trip is free of charge in that month.

Based on current approved fare concession rates, savings range from 21.43% to 45.71%, with select fare concessions realizing 100% savings. PRESTO Loyalty savings are a minimum of 21.43% to 45.71% and upwards, based on actual usage in that month.

Concession	Concession Age Range			Cash Fare	PRESTO Fare	PRESTO Savings	PRESTO % Savings	40 Cash Trips	40 PRESTO Trips	Month PRESTO Savings	Savings %	PRESTO Loyalty > 40 trips in a month	Month PRESTO Loyalty Fare	Savings %
Adult	20	to	64	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.75	\$ 0.75	21.43%	\$ 140.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 30.00	21.43%	actual Qty > 40, no fare charged	\$ -	> 21.43%
Senior	65	&	up	\$ 3.50	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 140.00	\$ -	\$ 140.00	100.00%	n/a		
Youth: weekdays before 6pm	13	to	19	\$ 3.50	\$ 1.90	\$ 1.60	45.71%	\$ 140.00	\$ 76.00	\$ 64.00	45.71%	actual Qty > 40, no fare charged	\$ -	> 45.71%
Youth: weekdays after 6pm & weekends	13	to	19	\$ 3.50	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 140.00	\$ -	\$ 140.00	100.00%	n/a		

● **Recreation, Community and Culture**

With a focus on increasing participation and fostering a sense of belonging for all residents, rates and fees are determined by community needs, customer feedback, participation rates, market trends and competition.

In general, a 3% increase was implemented as Market analysis was conducted for some fees. To ensure the reasonability of these rates, they were evaluated and compared with those of other municipalities, including Toronto, Oakville, Hamilton, Halton Hills, Guelph, and Milton and in some cases, the private sector.

For the year 2025, the Finance Department provided a guideline of an increase of 3% for rates and fees.

Highlights:

- 3% overall average rate increase for all services
- 5% increase applies to use of school board space as set by the school boards
- 6% increase for outdoor pool rentals – will account for the 2024 3% planned increase that was missed plus a 2025 3% increase.
- 8% increase for recreational summer swim passes – will account for the 2024 5% planned increase that was missed plus a 2025 3% increase. The increase will continue to provide cost effective swimming opportunities while better reflecting value for service. The rate continues to be lower than surrounding municipalities.
- City Instrument Use (Yearly Fee) – 103% increase proposed as part of a planned 2-year step increase. Market rate for some instruments for one month is more than double our current annual fee.
- The Ice User agreement concluded in July 2024 with the debt payments for Appleby Ice Centre completed at this time. Consequently, additional revenues and contributions to the reserve fund will be realized due to no longer having debt and without a corresponding increase to the customer, as the increase to rates were held to the guideline of 3%. [Arena Rate Strategy - RCC-18-2023](#)

New Rates:

- Band Performance Fees, BTTB and Jr Redcoats – Transparency for fees charged by band for performances
- High Five Training – New offering as a standalone course; previously embedded in other courses.
- Sport Lesson/Recreation clinic – Focused learning opportunities
- Pickleball and Tennis court rate – For bookable courts.
 - [Pilot Pickleball Rentals at Palmer Park memo to the Council](#)

Discontinued & Replaced with Existing Rates

- Extended Care hourly rate (add on to camps) – Included in daily camp fee

Discontinued Rates

- Arena Debt Repayment – Debt ended in July 2024
- In-Ice Logos or ice resurface –Requests will be going through 3rd party vendor
- Arena Board Discount Advertising –Only one rate is required.
- Arena Board/Wall/Window/Floor – Do not require multiple fee structures
- Golf Cart – 10 and 20 Rides – No longer used or requested
- Green Fees – 20 game transferable pass – No longer used or requested.
- School Board use of Tennis Court – Not used by school board

- **Fire Emergency Response, Prevention, and Training**

The objective of the rates and fees billed by Fire Protection and Prevention Service is to promote and support fire safety in the community, encourage Fire Code (O.Reg. 213/07) compliance, decrease emergency incidents, mitigate costs incurred due to non-compliance, additional costs incurred at an incident, and for any services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of another municipality (Municipal Act, 2001).

Rates for Fire Emergency Response are set at 100% cost recovery or as per the current MTO (Ministry of Transportation) rate. Rates for Fire Training have been increased at a rate of 2%.

There are no new rates/fees proposed for Fire Emergency Response, Prevention, and Training for 2025.

- **Customer Experience**

No increases are proposed are proposed for 2025 rates relate to Corporate Customer Experience.

Public Works

- **Engineering Services**

- **Roads and Structures – Design and Construction**

Tender Fees and Field Inspection rates have increased by 3% to align with inflation. The Trench Excavation and Driveway Modification Permits have increased by 3% to cover the increase in staff time required with the utility corporations and to account for the increase in volume of these services. The Curb Cut permits have increased by 3% to cover the anticipated increase to the curb cutting contract and administrative support. Right-of-way occupancy for equipment, material and site protection has increased by 3% to align with inflation. A lump sum inspection rate for commonly requested utility work activities has been established for simplicity.

- **Surface Water Drainage**

For 2024, a 5% increase across the board to align with increasing human resource costs is proposed.

- **Geographic Information and Mapping**

Existing fees are proposed to increase by 3%.

- **Transportation Services**

- **Traffic Operations Management**

A proposed increase of 3% in 2025 has been applied to all fees to account for inflation.

- **Parking**

No increase to the Neighbourhood On-Street Parking Program (NOSPP) and Private Property Agency Officer fees are proposed for 2025. Parking Services intends to review costs with the planned implementation of the City-wide permit system.

- **Roads Park and Forestry**

- **Roadway and Sidewalk Maintenance**

A 3% increase is proposed for the Windrow Program in response to rising contract service costs. This increase is applicable to the 2025/2026 winter season, with the program continuing to cover a maximum of 1,000 driveways.

- **Parks and Open Space Maintenance**

An increase of 3% in 2024 is proposed for the adopt-a-bed program and the downtown planters.

- **Urban Forestry**

For 2025, a 3% increase to public and private tree permits is proposed to align with inflation, while respecting the sensitivity of the program.

- **Cemetery**

The following key changes are proposed for Cemetery:

- 3% overall rate increase for cemetery services to align with the increase in inflation.
- 10% increase for Columbarium rates for Niche Markers, Niche Markers McMillan Blocks and Niche Markers McMillan Blocks with Portraits. Increase is to offset commodity price increases for the bronze plaques and costs for the detailed description of the deceased.
- 2 new rates for memorial benches (backless and back) based on demand.

- **Sign Production Service**

For Sign Production, the following changes are proposed and noted:

- 3% rate increase for all sign production services to align with increases in inflation, aluminum prices and overall production costs.
- No new or discontinued rates.

Legal and Legislative Services

- **Corporate Legal**

No increase is proposed for Corporate Legal or Legislative Services rates and fees.

Enabling Services

- **Financial Management**

Finance staff is proposing a modest fee increase of 0.5% raising the cost of Tax Certificates to \$70.00. This adjustment aligns with the fees charged by other municipalities.

A new fee is proposed for Tax Payment Transfers. This fee applies when a tax payment needs to be transferred between accounts, such as when a property owner moves or has more than one property tax account and a payment redistribution is required among or between accounts. This fee is also consistent with those in other municipalities.

All other fees will remain unchanged from 2024.

- **Corporate - City Wide Charges**

Corporate fees reflect items charged across city services. Fees are centralized to ensure consistency in charging across the organization. There are no proposed fee increases to corporate fees for 2025.

Options Considered

Not applicable.

Financial Matters:

Rates and fees are reviewed annually by City staff and adjusted where appropriate to reflect cost increases while ensuring that market conditions are suitable for the adjustments.

Total Financial Impact

Any additional revenues from increased/new fees or volume adjustments will be reflected in the 2025 proposed operating budget.

Climate Implications:

Not applicable.

Engagement Matters:

The proposed fee increases affect several stakeholders.

City staff will be notifying impacted stakeholders of amended fees as per their established process. Unless otherwise indicated, fees will be adjusted January 1, 2025, to provide enough notice to the public. Fee increases will be posted on the City of Burlington website in advance of the January 1st increases.

Finance continues to collaborate with Burlington Digital Services to ensure that the website presentation of the Rates and Fees Schedule is accessible and compliant with AODA standards.

Conclusion:

The amendments to user rates and fees aim to alleviate financial pressures on the City's programs and services, ensuring that the City can maintain high-quality offerings for Burlington residents. In 2025, many fees will rise by an average of 3% to address inflation, while some areas will see larger increases due to a thorough fee review or rising costs associated with service delivery.

Respectfully submitted,

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Supervisor, Accounting Services

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Appendices:

A. By-Law XX-2024 – Rates and Fees

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Commissioner Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.