



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Examination of Winterlicious and Summerlicious Program Criteria and Process

Date:	May 10, 2007
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	Donald G. Eastwood, General Manager Economic Development, Culture & Tourism
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2007\Cluster A\EDCT\ECON DEV\ed0706-019

SUMMARY

This report addresses notice of motion 3.2 from the April 11, 2007 Economic Development Committee meeting.

Staff reviewed the process used to implement the Summerlicious and Winterlicious programs, specifically:

- (i) a reduction to the guest cheque average;
- (ii) the development of a program to address Toronto-based restaurant chains;
- (iii) the City of Toronto's costs for the Winterlicious and Summerlicious Program; and
- (iv) the communication plan for additional culinary experience program, including additional culinary programs that could encourage more Toronto dining establishments to participate in a City of Toronto sponsored program.

City staff convened a consultation session with Tourism Toronto and a number of restaurant industry representatives, including the speakers who raised the issues addressed in the motion.

Toronto Special Events is amending the current criteria to include fine dining chains in the program, if the restaurants meet the criteria. The current guest cheque average will not be altered to maintain the criteria of the program, and staff will develop an additional culinary program through an enhancement request in the 2008 operating budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism recommends that:

1. The current guest cheque average not be altered in order to maintain the criteria of the program;
2. Staff amend the current criteria to include fine dining chains in the program if the restaurant meets the program criteria;
3. Staff develop and put forward an enhancement request in the 2008 operating budget for an additional culinary program to encourage participation of more dining establishments; and,
4. Staff be directed to initiate discussions with Tourism Toronto or the Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) regarding the long term strategy for the Summerlicious and Winterlicious program.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report, at this time.

There could be financial implications resulting from the creation of an additional program including staff resources and funding.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 26, 27, 28 and 31, 2005, City Council adopted “The Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs produced by Toronto Special Events (All Wards)” without amendment which includes the adoption of the criteria and process established by staff to determine how the invitation list for participation in the program was developed.

On July 25, 26, and 27, 2006, Toronto City Council adopted, without amendment, the motion “Encouraging Greater Participation of Scarborough Restaurants in the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs.”

On September 12, 2006 EDPC received the report “The Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs Produced by Toronto Special Events” and requested that the General Manager of EDCT consult with the Ontario Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Association, to review opportunities for inclusion of restaurants in the Summerlicious and Winterlicious programs that meet the Council-approved criteria but have multiple venues, and report back to the appropriate successor Committee dealing with these matters.

On April 11, 2007 EDC received the report “Review of Winterlicious and Summerlicious Program Criteria” and requested that the General Manager of EDCT undertake a full

examination of the process with respect to Winterlicious and Summerlicious and report back to the Committee.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Winterlicious and Summerlicious culinary programs were developed in 2003, without an increase to staff or budget, to extend the WinterCity Festival and the Celebrate Toronto Street Festival into city-wide celebrations and create an added incentive for spending and visits to Toronto. These programs focus on showcasing Toronto's diverse and unique fine dining experiences at a compelling price point. They fit the definition of wine and culinary tourism developed by the Province of Ontario which is; "tourism in which the opportunity for wine and/or culinary related experiences contributes significantly to the reason for travel to the destination or to itinerary planning while at the destination." (from *Ontario Wine and Culinary Tourism Strategy Exec. Summary, 2001*)

This report addresses notice of motion pertaining to the Winterlicious and Summerlicious restaurant promotions. The motion was considered by staff in a consultation session with Tourism Toronto and a number of restaurant industry representatives, including the speakers who raised the issues addressed in the motion. The outcome of the consultation session was as follows:

(i) Reduction to the guest cheque average

The process was reviewed and, unanimously, the panel agreed that in order to sustain the integrity and success of the prix-fixe programs the current guest cheque average must not be modified.

Winterlicious and Summerlicious are fine dining programs. The reduction of the current guest cheque average may result in four/five star restaurants currently participating in the promotion may reconsider their involvement.

The speaker who raised the issue regarding reduction of guest cheque average rescinded his position in writing prior to the meeting, and verbally at the consultation meeting, understanding the potentially negative impact on the long term sustainability and success of the programs.

(ii) Development of a program to address Toronto-based restaurant chains

Staff will be amending the current criteria to include fine dining chains in the program, if the restaurants meet the criteria. Inclusion would be limited to one Toronto location only. This was agreed to by the consultation panel.

(iii) The City of Toronto's costs for the Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs

The City of Toronto's costs include staff resources of 75% of a full time employee totalling \$48,474.90. City funding of \$95,084.41 supports the

development, programming and promotion of the event which is also leveraged by corporate sponsorship.

(iv) Communication plan for additional culinary programs

In addition to the Winterlicious prix-fixe program, a number of culinary experiences are hosted by a restaurant or food related venue. The culinary experiences are ticketed, unique, one of a kind events comprised of a food component and an entertainment and/or learning component. Restaurants or venues interested in hosting a culinary experience provide a concept or proposal that is distinctive and includes all of these elements. This program is open and accessible to any restaurant across the city.

In Winterlicious 2007, the culinary experiences were very successful with five out of eight culinary experiences sold out and 91% of all available tickets sold. The culinary experience component of Winterlicious will continue to expand in future to include a larger number of participants, both in terms of venues and attendees. Staff will review the addition of culinary experiences to the Summerlicious program.

Further, staff and attendees at the consultation session discussed options for the creation of additional culinary programs that would encourage more Toronto dining establishments to participate in a City of Toronto sponsored program, including discount promotion and coupon promotions.

Staff will continue to consult with and seek assistance from the restaurant industry, Tourism Toronto and Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) to develop an additional culinary program to encourage the inclusion of more dining establishments to participate in a City of Toronto sponsored program.

Toronto Special Events will make recommendations for this programme as part of the 2008 budget process with the goal of implementation as part of Summerlicious 2008.

The City of Toronto supports the development and production of many food related programs and events that meet a wide range of objectives within the hospitality industry and engage a variety of restaurants at all levels. Programs and events addressing the needs of some of the hospitality industry include: Bloor West Village Ukrainian Festival, Caravan, Corso Italia Toronto Fiesta, Hot & Spicy: The Island Soul Edition, Sante: The Bloor Yorkville Wine Festival, Taste of the Danforth, Taste of Little Italy, Taste of Lawrence, Taste of TEDA, Tastes of Thailand, Toronto Ribfest, Vegetarian Food Fair, Wine and Cheese Show and World's Fare: Celebration of Food and Culture. City produced events such as the Tasty Thursdays Series and WinterCity food components include the participation of restaurants from all forms of dining. As well, the culinary experience program that is part of Winterlicious is another opportunity for restaurants across the city to participate.

When Winterlicious and Summerlicious were created, Toronto Special Events did not receive additional staff or an increase in budget. All costs associated with the programs were absorbed and have been underwritten by the securing of corporate sponsors.

COMMENTS

Winterlicious and Summerlicious are niche programs focused on fine dining. The programs have a proven success record and the criteria and process are inherent to this success. Toronto Special Events is amending the current criteria to include fine dining chains in the program, if the restaurants meet the criteria. Inclusion would be limited to one Toronto location only. Any additional modification of the criteria and process may result in four/five star restaurants reconsidering their involvement.

The criteria is inherent in the program's success as it creates motivation for fine dining restaurants to participate and fulfills the consumer expectation of a unique fine-dining experience.

Staff will initiate discussions with Tourism Toronto or the Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) regarding the long term strategy for the Summerlicious and Winterlicious program.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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