

## **Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs New criteria and process for restaurant participation**

<b>Date:</b>	June 17, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Economic Development Committee
<b>From:</b>	Executive Director, Cultural Services Economic Development, Culture & Tourism
<b>Wards:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:/2008/Cluster A/EDCT/ECON DEV/ed0807-033 (AFS #7744)

### **SUMMARY**

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Winterlicious and Summerlicious were initiated in 2003 to promote Toronto's unique hospitality industry, showcase Toronto's diverse cuisine, profile fine dining experiences at a range of price points, and generate economic activity for the restaurant industry during a slow time of business.

From 2003 to 2008, Winterlicious and Summerlicious prospective participants have been determined using specific third-party critic and consumer review and rating publications. Due to changes in these publications, they are no longer relevant to the process. Therefore a new criteria and process is being proposed to be implemented as a pilot project for Winterlicious and Summerlicious 2009.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The Executive Director of Cultural Services recommends that:**

1. City Council approve "Winterlicious and Summerlicious Prix Fixe Promotion New Criteria and Process for Participation" (Appendix 1) as a pilot project for implementation for Winterlicious and Summerlicious 2009.
2. Staff report back in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2009 on the results of the 2009 pilot Winterlicious / Summerlicious program.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no immediate financial implications arising from the adoption of this report to the 2008 Operating Budget, Cultural Services. Additional program costs associated with the enhanced administrative, research and quality control measures of the new criteria will be identified during the pilot year and reported back in time for the 2010 budget cycle.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **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 to determine how the invitation list for participation in the program was developed.

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

On September 12, 2006, the Economic Development and Parks Committee received the report “The Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs Produced by Toronto Special Events (All Wards)” 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, the Economic Development Committee 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.

On June 19, 20 and 22, 2007, City Council adopted the motions outlined in the report “Examination of Winterlicious and Summerlicious Program Criteria and Process”.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

This report was initiated to seek approval from Council to implement changes to the existing Winterlicious and Summerlicious criteria and process for participation.

The Winterlicious and Summerlicious culinary programs were developed by Toronto Special Events in 2003 to showcase Toronto’s diverse and unique fine dining restaurants. These two seasonal culinary promotions met the needs of the provincial government’s

Culinary Tourism strategy and the recommendations outlined in the Council approved Tourism Action Plan.

Over the past five years the program has become so successful that many other cities across Canada (i.e. Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa) have developed similar promotions based on the “licious” model.

Surveys conducted for both Summerlicious and Winterlicious promotions, document extremely high satisfaction ratings by both consumers and participating restaurants. The promotions also generate significant economic activity. For example, for Winterlicious 2008 over 192,000 prix fixe meals were served representing approximately \$9.5 million of direct spending based on 130 participating restaurants during the two week promotion.

Winterlicious and Summerlicious:

1. generate positive economic activity and impact on the local economy;
2. profile Toronto’s finest restaurants and chefs;
3. create an incentive for residents and tourists to dine out at Toronto’s fine dining restaurants; and
4. create a compelling, added incentive for tourists to travel to Toronto.

## **COMMENTS**

The current criteria and process has become problematic because the publications whose reviews were the basis for previous program criteria, are now published with less frequency, they have changed their criteria for review policies and the number and scope of the restaurants they review has been reduced significantly.

As a result, a new eligibility criteria and process has been created to replace the existing criteria. The services of Ipsos Reid Public Affairs was engaged to execute consultation with representatives of Toronto’s hospitality and tourism industries (Appendix 2) to discuss the new criteria and process and provide feedback.

The proposed changes to the criteria and process are:

1. Eliminating the ratings system and replacing it with restaurants demonstrating that their average price point of a 3-course from the restaurant’s regular lunch and/or dinner menu meets a minimum requirement;
2. Moving from an invitation process to an application process;
3. Establishing a Winterlicious and Summerlicious Advisory Board which will review all application forms for consideration to participate in the program, determine price point categories, determine final notification lists and issue notification letters. The Advisory Board will also provide advice and support to staff to help guide the programs long-term (3 to 5 year) strategic development.

The establishment of the Winterlicious/Summerlicious Advisory Board (Appendix 3), along with the new application process, will create a more citywide and inclusive program.

The new criteria will be a pilot project for 2009 Winterlicious and Summerlicious. It is anticipated that additional program costs will result from increased administration, research and quality control measures. This will be re-evaluated at the conclusion of Winterlicious 2009, through consultation sessions with Toronto's hospitality and tourism industry. Cultural Services will report back to Council in the fall of 2009, for full implementation in 2010.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Rita Davies, Executive Director

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1: Prix Fixe Promotion - New Criteria and Process  
Appendix 2: Ipsos Reid Public Affairs - Consultation List  
Appendix 3: Advisory Board – Terms of Reference