

City-run Golf Courses – Seniors’ Card

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| Date: | July 30, 2010 |
| To: | Community Development and Recreation Committee |
| From: | Brenda Patterson, General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation |
| Wards: | All |
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SUMMARY

Fees at City-run golf courses are established annually by City Council through the Operating Budget process, and are based on a scan of industry trends and a variety of parameters. The current fee structure provides substantial discounts for senior golfers (those aged 65 and older), ranging from 32% to 40% for weekday, 18-hole rounds, compared to a regular adult ticket.

Fee structures are assessed on an ongoing basis, and there may be opportunities to provide seniors with further savings, over and above the substantial discounts they are already entitled to. Some of these opportunities, as set out in this report, are incentives like the early-bird pilot package being recommended to Council in a companion report, and combining golf with a food and beverage package, which may be feasible through the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

In order to qualify for the discount rates, seniors only need to show some form of verification of age such as a valid driver’s license, senior citizen’s ID card, etc.

Financial Impact

No financial impacts would arise at this time. Any changes to the golf fee structure based on the information outlined in this report would be minor, with details elaborated through the 2011 Operating Budget process.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of July 6, 7 and 8, 2010, in considering the matter, “Community User Access to City-run Golf Courses” (Item CD34.5), among other things, requested the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consider options for the implementation of a seniors card in the development of the 2011 fees for golf, and report on the feasibility to City Council on August 25, 2010, through the Community Development and Recreation Committee.

City Council Decision Document – Item CD34.5:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/cc/decisions/2010-07-06-cc51-dd.htm>

COMMENTS

Fees for golf at the five City-run courses are established by by-law, annually by City Council, during the Operating Budget process. *Chapter 441, Fees and Charges*, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code establishes a wide range of fees for golf categorized on a number of parameters, including: individual golf course use patterns and surrounding area characteristics, time of day/season, weekday/weekend, holes played and demographic categories. The fees are collected by the golf pro, with revenue disbursement pursuant to the contract with the City. Staff recommendations on annual fees for golf are developed in consultation with the pro, and take into consideration conditions and trends in the industry, along with the City’s public objectives of providing affordable, accessible programs and services to a variety of community user groups, including seniors, women and youth.

The current golf fee structure provides substantial discounts to senior users. For example, seniors’ discounts for 18 holes on a weekday range from discounts of 32% to 40% compared to a regular adult ticket. Staff continue to assess the feasibility of fine-tuning fees to promote the use of the courses, and tailor golf experience to various user groups, including seniors. Parks, Forestry and Recreation’s companion report to the August 16th Executive Committee recommending minor amendments to the golf fee schedules also proposes a pilot “early bird” package at Humber Valley Golf Course, which could be very attractive to senior golfers and would result in an additional discount (total of 43% off the regular adult rate).

In order for seniors to qualify for the discount rates, they simply show identification validating proof of age (i.e. driver’s license, senior citizen card, etc.). While a dedicated senior’s card would make it easier for the local pro shop staff to identify seniors, it does not address the issue of filling spaces during off-peak times at various sites. Offering further discounts through the sale of a senior card outside of the normal fee structure could make it more difficult to achieve revenue targets for the golf operation.

With respect to the fees for seniors, as noted above, the courses already offer substantial reductions. Fine-tuning of programs is carried out on a continual basis, and from time to time, leads to recommendations like the current “early-bird” pilot, also discussed above.

These types of promotions offer seniors opportunities for further savings. Subject to Council approval of the early-bird pilot program, staff, in consultation with the pro, will assess the results and whether there is further potential for similar arrangements that may also benefit senior golfers. In addition, with the forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP), which will see the golf pro operations (carts, instruction, golf management) and food and beverage service combined (these are currently run under separate contracts), there may be additional opportunities to provide further package incentives for seniors. The extent and nature of these cannot be projected until the RFP process runs its course. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that any discounts or promotions for seniors or others, have to be balanced against the implications such measures have on the revenue stream of the golf courses.

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SIGNATURE

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