



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs Full implementation of new criteria and process for restaurant participation

Date:	October 2, 2009
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:/2009/Cluster A/EDCT/ECON DEV/November/ed0911-035

SUMMARY

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.

A new criteria and process was implemented as a pilot project for Winterlicious and Summerlicious 2009 to replace the review based process used from 2003 to 2008. This report summarizes the results of the 2009 Winterlicious and Summerlicious criteria and process pilot project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve "Winterlicious and Summerlicious Prix Fixe Promotion Criteria and Process for Participation" (Appendix 1) for full implementation for future Winterlicious and Summerlicious programs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2009 Winterlicious and Summerlicious pilot programs are completed with no changes to the 2009 approved budget. The 2010 budget will remain at the same level as 2009.

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”.

On July 15, 16 and 17, 2008, City Council adopted the report “Winterlicious and Summerlicious Culinary Programs New Criteria and Process for Restaurant Participation”, adopting the motion to implement the report as a pilot project for 2009 and requested that the General Manager, EDCT report back on the results.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

This is a report back to Council on the results of the 2009 pilot project of the Winterlicious and Summerlicious criteria and process for restaurant 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) and in the GTA 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, during Winterlicious 2009 over 240,000 prix fixe meals were served representing approximately \$11.9 million of direct spending based on 150 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 new eligibility criteria and process implemented during Winterlicious and Summerlicious 2009 is based on an application process. This replaced the previous program criteria and process based on third-party and consumer review and rating publications, which had become problematic.

The application process created a citywide and inclusive process that resulted in over two hundred application submissions being received from restaurants located in all parts of the city, regardless of review and ratings history.

The Winterlicious and Summerlicious Advisory Board reviewed all application submissions for consideration to participate in the program, determined eligibility and price point categories and issued notification letters. The Advisory Board has also provided advice and support to staff to help guide such things as setting the annual rates for participation fees and the program's long-term strategic development.

An online customer satisfaction survey and a mystery diner program were reviewed as methods of evaluating quality control and overall worth of the restaurant promotion. The mystery dining program was deferred to Winterlicious 2010.

The online customer satisfaction survey conducted during Winterlicious 2009 by Ipsos Reid found that 99% of respondents said Winterlicious is a worthwhile effort on the part of the City of Toronto.

The establishment of the Winterlicious/Summerlicious Advisory Board along with the new application process has created a more citywide and inclusive program and increased accessibility to participate. Full implementation will maintain the citywide, inclusive and accessible nature of the programs.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Amendment No. 1: Prix Fixe Promotion - New Criteria and Process