

# **Managers' Reports**

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# Request for Recommendation Priorities Committee

## Type of Decision

Meeting Date	March 8, 2006				Report Date	March 1, 2006			
Decision Requested	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
	Direction Only				Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed

## Report Title

Establishing the Definition of a "Senior" in the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law

## Policy Implication & Budget Impact

X This report and recommendation(s) have been reviewed by the Finance Division and the funding source has been identified.

Option 1 - Senior defined as age 55 + for leisure and recreation fees where a senior rate exists; there may be a minimal or no budget impact.

Option 2 - Senior defined as age 55 + where a senior rate exists (including transit); it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in budgeted net revenues of approximately \$170,000.

X Background Attached

## Recommendation

THAT Council approve option\_\_\_\_ relating to the definition of a senior as described in the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law; and

and that staff be directed to make the appropriate amendments to the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law.

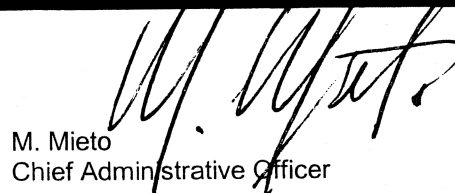
Recommendation Continued

## Recommended by the Department



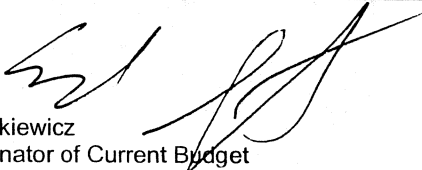

L. Hayes  
Chief Financial Officer / Treasurer

## Recommended by the C.A.O.



M. Mieto  
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: March 1, 2006

**Report Prepared By**  
E. Stankiewicz  
Co-ordinator of Current Budget**Division Review**  
C. Mahaffy  
Manager of Financial Planning and Policy**Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's direction regarding the age at which persons should be entitled to receive the benefit of the discounted fee for seniors, where it is available in the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law.

Seniors rates are only available for certain services or programs in the leisure and recreation services area and in the transit fee schedule. No other fees in the miscellaneous user fees bylaw would be affected.

**Background**

Effective January 1, 2006, most miscellaneous user fees have been increased by the rate of inflation as per Council policy. The inflationary factor is determined by the September Consumer Price Index, which was 3.4 percent. The current policy and by-law applies to all user fees with the exception of water, wastewater, waste management, building services and police fees, which are covered under different by-laws.

As a result of amalgamation, there continues to be inconsistencies in the miscellaneous user fee by-law throughout the City relating to the age requirement to receive a senior rate. Therefore, Council must clearly define the term "senior" where a senior rate is available within the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law. Seniors rates are only available for certain services or programs in the leisure and recreation services area and in the transit fee schedule. No other fees in the miscellaneous fees bylaw would be affected.

At the time of amalgamation, there was considerable variation with respect to leisure and recreation fees across facilities as well as fee categories (such as senior) which resulted in fee levels varying substantially. Over time, the leisure services department brought forward proposals to harmonize particular fee areas. To date, council has authorized harmonization of the ice rates, the aquatic rates, the playing field rates and the summer camp rates across facilities, where applicable. In the 2006 fees bylaw, the community hall rates will also be harmonized.

As part of the harmonization process, the definition of 'senior' where it applied was also harmonized for that activity or service. To date, that has affected only the aquatic and the skating rates. In the other leisure service areas, where the term 'senior' is used, past practice of the former area municipalities has been carried forward. Senior was variously defined at 55, 60 or 65 years of age.

However, it is seen as timely to move in the direction of having a single definition for 'senior' applied to all of the leisure services, where senior rates are available. As a result, the status quo option is not reasonable.

Date: March 1, 2006

***Options for Definition of the term "senior" where a senior rate exists in the By-Law:***

***Option 1***

***Senior defined as age 55 + for leisure and recreation fees***

***Senior defined as age 65 + for transit***

Prior to amalgamation, there were three definitions for the term senior - 55, 60, 65 throughout the former area municipalities for various leisure and recreation user fees. Over the past few years, there has been an attempt to harmonize the term senior to be consistent for all recreation user fees. This option would harmonize the definition of a senior to age 55 and over, for only leisure and recreational fees where a senior rate exists within the By-law.

It is anticipated that the lower rates (where available) will increase accessibility to the services and increase participation in leisure activities, all with the goal of increasing wellness in our community. This reduction in the age requirement to receive the senior rate is expected to have a minimal or no budget impact. It is anticipated an increase in usage should occur which should offset the rate reductions. It should be noted, that not all seniors rates will be affected, as there are many leisure and recreation instances where past practice results in reduced rates being available for seniors at 55 now.

***Option 2***

***Senior defined as age 55 + (applicable to all miscellaneous user fees, including transit, where a senior rate exists)***

This option would define a senior as age 55 and over, for all miscellaneous user fees where a senior rate is established in the by-law. The potential impact of this option would be a net reduction in Transit revenues of approximately \$170,000. However, this may result in increased ridership, therefore being more environmentally friendly. Under the terms of the Provincial Gas Tax Rebate Program, ONLY the year one reduction in revenue could be offset by this funding, if the initiative is increasing ridership. Future years would result in a net budget increase without an available funding source.

***Summary***

Council must choose how to define the term "senior" for the purpose of miscellaneous user fees by-law which will be prepared based on the option accepted.