

# Reference Committee Staff Report



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To	Finance and Responsible Governance Committee
Subject	Barrie Community Tennis Club Fee Increase
Date	March 5, 2025
Ward	All
From	K. Datema, Director Recreation & Culture Services
Executive Member Approval	J. Schmidt, General Manager of Community and Corporate Services
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

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## Recommendation(s):

1. That staff in Recreation & Culture Services be directed to assist the Barrie Community Tennis Club with fee by-law compliance over a three-year period as described within the Report to Finance and Responsible Governance Committee dated March 5, 2025.
2. That staff in Recreation & Culture Services be directed to assist the Barrie Community Tennis Club by allowing the rental of the fifth tennis court at Queens Park from Monday to Thursday as described within the Report to Finance and Responsible Governance Committee dated March 5, 2025.

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## Executive Summary:

**The purpose of this report is to recommend an action plan to assist the Barrie Community Tennis Club in becoming compliant with the municipal Fees By-law for court fees.** This report will describe the recent increase in court fees and the justification for fee increases to achieve a court fee that is in line with market rates.

During the 2023 budget process, staff in Recreation and Culture Services performed a benchmarking exercise with other municipalities in review of all rates and fees associated with Recreation & Culture services.

Through this process, it was identified that tennis and pickleball court fees were positioned well below market rate in comparison to other municipalities. The average market rate is \$11 per hour per court and the City of Barrie approved \$9.50 per hour per court to be phased in over the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years.

## **Key Findings:**

**The City's initiative to align court rental fees closer to market rates of surrounding municipalities has resulted in a financial impact on the Barrie Community Tennis Club (BCTC).** The initial increase in 2024 necessitated a club membership fee increase from \$110.00 to \$125.00. The BCTC has informed staff that the 2025 fee of \$9.50 per court per hour will necessitate a further membership fee increase of close to \$90.00 per member.

**The BCTC met with staff in January 2025 to explain the financial impact of the fee increase and to seek financial support.** As staff are not authorized to adjust or waive the Council approved Fees By-law, a report to committee is required to seek approval for the proposed remedy.

**Staff are committed to ensuring compliance with the municipal Fees By-law rather than fee abatement and propose a three-year plan for the BCTC to achieve compliance.** The membership increase of \$90 per member will be phased over three years (2025, 2026, 2027). The full rate would be realized in 2027 which is year three of the escalation plan.

Staff will increase the 2024 court fee of \$4.75 by \$1.58 each year over three years resulting in compliance with the \$9.50 fee in 2027. This aligns with the three-year BCTC membership fee increase.

**The BCTC has also requested the use of the fifth court at Queens Park from Monday to Thursday to allow a membership increase to generate additional revenue that will support the increase in fees.** There are five courts at Queens Park and the fifth court has historically been left vacant for public use. Staff support the request from BCTC but reserve the right to adjust as required, in cooperation with the BCTC, if the use of the fifth court proves problematic for public use.

## **Financial Implications:**

The financial implications to the Recreation & Culture operating budget associated with this recommendation would be a reduction in revenue of \$6,300 in 2025 and \$3,100 in 2026. This can be recovered through strategic cost avoidance and total budget management. It will be partially offset by fee increases elsewhere in the business. Should BCTC cease operations, this would result in lost revenue of \$9,498 (2024 value) and upwards of \$19,000 annually from 2027 onwards.

## Alternatives:

The following alternatives are available for consideration by the Committee:

Alternative #1 – Committee could maintain the existing fee by-law rate of \$9.50 per court per hour (i.e. Status Quo) This alternative is not recommended as it poses negative financial impact to the BCTC.

Alternative #2 - Committee could alter the proposed recommendation by phasing the fee increase over two years resulting in an annual membership fee increase of \$45 per year which achieves fee by-law compliance by 2026 instead of 2027. The corresponding fee adjustment would be an increase of \$2.38 per court per hour over two years to achieve compliance with the full fee of \$9.50. Although this alternative is available, it would be financially impactful to the BCTC.

## Strategic Plan Alignment:

Affordable Place to Live	X	A phased approach to the fee increase will eliminate barriers to membership and participation with the BCTC.
Community Safety		
Thriving Community		
Infrastructure Investments		
Responsible Governance		

## Additional Background Information and Analysis:

In 2023, Recreation staff reviewed neighboring and like-sized municipalities to determine market-rate for court rental fees. This information was used to generate the recommendation in the 2024 Budget & Fees By-Law submission. This supporting information is provided below. In recognition of the fact that the majority of these municipalities are in closer proximity to the GTA and population dense areas, Recreation staff put forward a fee recommendation (including the phased approach) that remains the lowest of all market comparators (\$9.50/hr).

2024 Municipal Benchmarking – Hourly Court Rental Fees						
Orillia	East Gwillimbury	Oshawa	Richmond Hill	Oakville	Brampton	Aurora
\$12.20	\$11.70	\$12.39	\$11.55	\$12.94	\$14.16	\$10.07

## Consultation and Engagement:

Representatives of the BCTC met with staff on Monday January 6, 2025, to present the challenges related to the fee increase.

Staff have corresponded via email with the BCTC since that meeting in preparation of the staff report and committee meeting on March 5, 2025.

**Environmental and Climate Change Impact Matters:**

There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

**Report Author:**

K. Datema, Director Recreation and Culture Services

**File #:****Pending #:**

Not Applicable