



REPORT FIN-2024-028

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

PREPARED BY: Mary Hasan, Director of Finance/Treasurer

PRESENTED BY: Mary Hasan, Director of Finance/Treasurer

MEETING DATE: November 6, 2024

SUBJECT: 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law
File No. F05 BUD

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Report FIN-2024-028 entitled 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law be received; and

That Council give 3 readings to By-law No. 2024-067 being a by-law to adopt the User Fees and Charges By-law.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.) Report on the results of the Public Information Meeting (PIM) held on October 9, 2024 as it relates to the 2025 Proposed User Fees and Charges.
- 2.) Provide Council with the results of the community engagement survey issued through the Township's Online Engagement Platform, [EngagePuslinch.ca](https://engagepuslinch.ca).
- 3.) Provide updates to the User Fees and Charges By-law based on Council's direction at the September 25, 2024 Council Meeting.
- 4.) Provide updates to the User Fees and Charges By-law based on current information being available to staff.
- 5.) Seek approval from Council to enact the 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law.

Background

Council has received the following reports/presentation materials to date as part of User Fees and Charges deliberations:

Report	Council Meeting/PIM
REPORT FIN-2024-024 - 2025 Proposed User Fees and Charges	September 25, 2024
2025 Proposed User Fees and Charges PIM Presentation	October 9, 2024
REPORT FIN-2024-028 – 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law	November 6, 2024

PIM

A PIM was held in person and via electronic participation on October 9, 2024 at 7:00 pm to obtain public input on the proposed 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law.

There were no comments raised at the PIM regarding suggested updates to the proposed 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law.

A question was asked whether the Township compared outdoor to outdoor tennis courts or whether indoor tennis courts were included in the comparison. Subsequent to the PIM, based on staff’s review of Report FIN-2021-025, when the per hour of usage fees were established for the Township’s outdoor tennis courts, these were based on outdoor tennis court fees in comparator/boundary municipalities.

Community Engagement Survey – Engage Puslinch

Attached as Schedule A to this report are the results of the community engagement survey issued through the Township’s Online Engagement Platform, [EngagePuslinch.ca](https://engagepuslinch.ca) for Council’s information. The survey was open from September 18, 2024 to October 18, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. Multiple survey results were received from the same ID Session in a very short time frame, suggesting that the same user submitted several surveys. To prevent manipulation of the survey results, entries with the same Session ID have been combined into a single submission, with all comments included. While survey responses are anonymous, when an anonymous respondent submits a survey, the system creates a unique user ID in the coded survey report. If multiple entries share the same user ID, it indicates that the same user submitted multiple responses. There were a total of 69 respondents with 85 completed surveys and 142 visits to [EngagePuslinch.ca](https://engagepuslinch.ca) as part of 2025 user fees and charges engagement. There were a total of 39 completed surveys and 91 visits to [EngagePuslinch.ca](https://engagepuslinch.ca) as part of 2024 user fees and charges engagement. The Township has seen an increase in 2025 user fees and charges engagement, however, this is due to multiple surveys being received by the same user as outlined above.

Council Direction at the September 25, 2024 Council Meeting

Council at its meeting held on September 25, 2024 directed staff as follows:

- *That the Haul Route Permit Security Deposit be added to the schedule prior to the public meeting; and*
- *That Council direct staff to require user groups or persons that are eligible to receive the reduced rates to provide annual reports on memberships (residents versus non-residents), costs charged to members, etc.; and*
- *That Council direct staff to include a reporting obligation into the eligibility criteria for the eligible user groups or persons in order to qualify for the reduced rate for the 2025 User Fees and Charges By-law; and*
- *That eligible user groups or persons be required to provide the required reporting during the 2025 year in order for the Recreation Committee to review and make a recommendation to Council regarding the reduced rates for the 2026 User Fees and Charges By-law; and*
- *That Council direct staff to reduce the hourly rate for the gymnasium to \$42 per hour prior to the public meeting.*

Please note, the PIM presentation materials addressed the Council direction noted above and the User Fees and Charges By-law has also been amended to reflect the above Council direction.

At the PIM, it was recommended that the annual financial and participant reporting for reduced rate eligibility be the last business day of June. Given the Recreation Committee's meeting schedule, it is recommended that this reporting deadline be changed to the last business day of January. This will enable the Recreation Committee to review and make recommendations to Council regarding the reduced rates to be offered as part of the 2026 User Fees and Charges By-law.

Further Recommendations Based on Current Information Being Available to Township Staff.

The below updates are being proposed by Township staff based on more current information being available and have been incorporated in the User Fees and Charges By-law:

- Township staff recommend reducing the fee for the Doors of Puslinch poster from the previously proposed \$18 (net of HST) to \$10 (net of HST). This adjustment aims to boost sales, as the Township currently has a surplus of these posters that are not selling well.
- The Township's Sign By-law was passed by Council at its meeting held on October 9, 2024. Schedule B of the Sign By-law included the applicable fees which have now been incorporated in the User Fees and Charges By-law.

Recreation Committee Recommendations

The Recreation Committee received Report FIN-2024-024 – 2025 Proposed User Fees and Charges and the PIM presentation materials for information at its meeting held on October 15, 2024. The Recreation Advisory Committee passed Resolution No. 2024-024 as follows:

That the Recreation Advisory Committee provides the following comments for Council's consideration:

That non-resident rental rates be established for all other recreation facilities other than the Puslinch Community Centre.

Township staff recommend that the Recreation Advisory Committee conduct this analysis as part of the 2026 User Fees and Charges By-law to ensure that any proposed changes (as applicable) are in line with comparator and boundary municipalities and do not result in negative financial implications to the Township. This analysis will help align with the Recreation Advisory Committee's 2025 goal of addressing reduced rate reporting obligations as outlined above.

Financial Implications

The fees approved as part of the User Fees and Charges By-law will be incorporated in the 2025 Operating Budget.

Applicable Legislation and Requirements

Section 391(1) of the Municipal Act

Section 7(1) of the Building Code Act

Section 69 of the Planning Act

Engagement Opportunities

The Township has incorporated a number of engagement opportunities associated with the 2025 Proposed User Fees and Charges process as outlined below:

- Recreation Advisory Committee Input
- Social Media Posts and/or Advertisements at [Facebook.ca/TownshipofPuslinch](https://www.facebook.com/TownshipofPuslinch) and [Twitter.com/TwpPuslinchON](https://twitter.com/TwpPuslinchON)

- Community Engagement Survey at EngagePuslinch.ca from September 18, 2024 to October 18, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.
- Township Website Banner and Budget Page at puslinch.ca/government/budget/
- Wellington Advertiser Advertisement
- PIM on October 9, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
- Media releases related to EngagePuslinch.ca survey.

Attachments

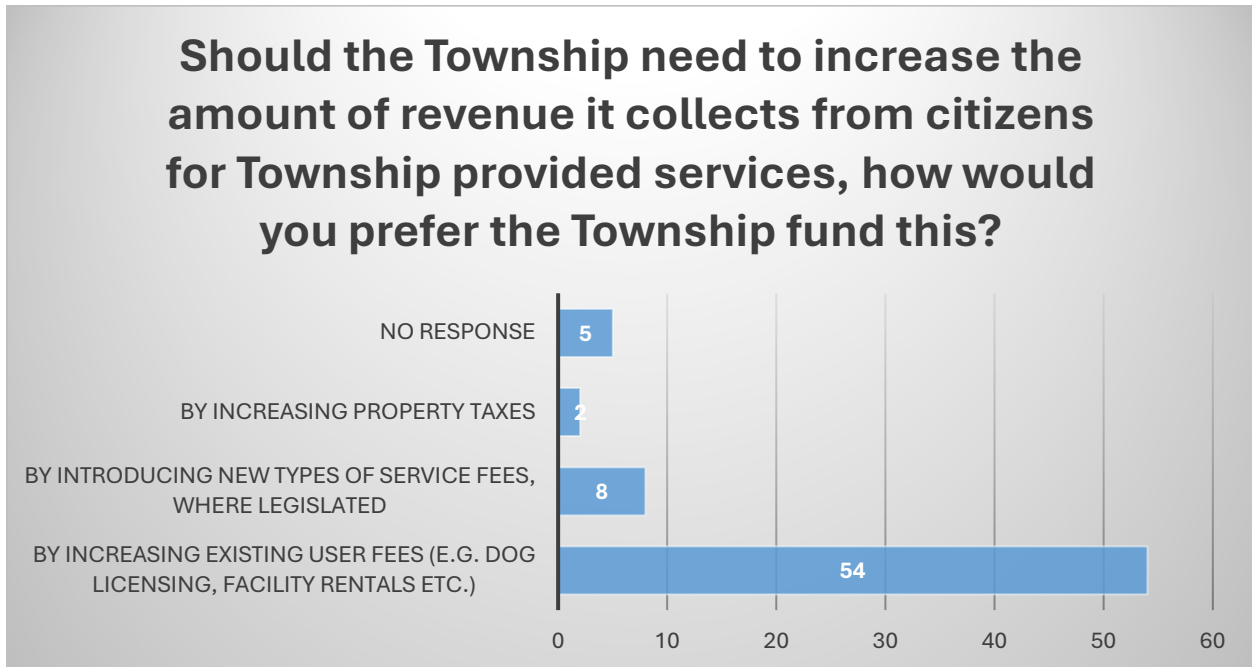
Schedule A - Engage Puslinch Community Engagement Survey Results

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Hasan
Director of Finance/Treasurer

Q1. Should the Township need to increase the amount of revenue it collects from citizens for Township provided services, how would you prefer the Township fund this?

Question Options	Responses
No response	5
By increasing property taxes	2
By introducing new types of service fees, where legislated	8
By increasing existing user fees (e.g. dog licensing, facility rentals etc.)	54



Q2. Do you have any comments or feedback that you would like Council to consider on the proposed User Fees and Charges?

Please note that some users filled out the survey more than once. Multiple bullet points in one row show the different answers the respondent gave each time they filled out the survey.

Submission Date and Time	Comments
2024-09-25 10:09:09 -0400	
2024-09-29 08:25:44 -0400	
2024-09-29 13:53:46 -0400	Given the already high taxes, may I suggest that anything new be funded by finding a savings somewhere else. Too much wasted money.
2024-09-29 21:09:15 -0400	
2024-10-01 08:10:15 -0400	
2024-10-01 12:01:00 -0400	
2024-10-03 15:49:52 -0400	
2024-10-04 20:32:00 -0400	on a fixed income increases are abhorrent

2024-10-08 18:38:33 -0400	Specific user fees should only be increased if more revenue is needed for those specific areas ie facility rentals. Otherwise increase property taxes for everyone to pay their fair share. My dog tags shouldn't increase because you need more money for roads.
2024-10-14 23:10:49 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:08:48 -0400	I don't agree that the township should continue to allow groups to Expand their programs to pull in more participants from other areas such as Guelph and using Township resources at a reduced cost to do so.
2024-10-16 20:15:44 -0400	Please stop raising taxes —
2024-10-16 20:18:17 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:18:24 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:19:30 -0400	I would like to see facilities and resources pay for themselves in most cases...or where possible. Resist raising property taxes to pay for facilities that are only used by some.
2024-10-16 20:21:52 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:22:04 -0400	The Township already charges exorbitant taxes for the most minimal of services as compared to any other surrounding municipality and/or similar municipality in other areas of the province. It is indeed shocking that the Township feels it approximately increase fees and or taxes at this juncture.
2024-10-16 20:22:35 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:23:08 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:25:51 -0400	Charge the fees to those that use the facilities and not those that do not.
2024-10-16 20:25:57 -0400	Property tax already too high.
2024-10-16 20:26:51 -0400	I believe raising the user fees would be the right choice as a lot of the rentals are possibly non residents of Puslinch. .
2024-10-16 20:27:01 -0400	We already paying too much property tax and getting nothing. Just a garbage collection, even that is painful to separate all garbage. Half of the time they don't pickup garbage because of they see few papers or plastic. Town is already collecting from 52 houses atleast \$ 572,000 and what we're getting nothing.
2024-10-16 20:27:17 -0400	User fees are appropriate since align the cost to the user
2024-10-16 20:28:18 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:33:24 -0400	
2024-10-16 20:36:42 -0400	We pay a ridiculous amount of taxes for so little. Don't even consider raising them, hire someone better to manage the funds!
2024-10-16 20:36:57 -0400	Do not increase taxes. They are too high already for very limited services.
2024-10-16 20:37:43 -0400	We are already paying high property tax than other small towns. We don't see much use of the tax money in our neighbourhood maintenance.
2024-10-16 20:51:52 -0400	Property tax already outrageous.

2024-10-16 20:52:03 -0400	I prefer neither option but if you have to choose one, then I ticked off the first one. I am not sure what additional type of service fees would even be considered? Yes we already pay a hefty amount for property taxes, we do not get the same garbage collection or yard waste collection like Guelph does, and they have much larger bins that are easier to use and keep animals out. We don't even have fibre internet around here and coverage is poor. So I do hope township will start to using the taxes we do pay to focus on things that are important to the residents.
2024-10-16 21:03:33 -0400	User fees should apply to the individual users at the time, not subsidized by property taxes that are going up far too quickly.
2024-10-16 21:04:01 -0400	Dog licensing was outsourced by the township to a third party and the cost to citizens has since increased >300% Garbage bags are 25% more expensive. Property taxes are less than half in similar locales such as Campbellville. There should be no reason that the township would need to increase revenue. Why solicit the opinions of citizens when you are already actively increasing all of these costs anyway?
2024-10-16 21:12:43 -0400	I would like Hammersley Road to have a hydrant added.
2024-10-16 21:22:15 -0400	Taxes shouldn't go up for services we don't use. It's up to user to pay for whatever it is
2024-10-16 21:56:06 -0400	Taxes are much too high already compared to service levels.
2024-10-16 22:18:57 -0400	
2024-10-16 22:19:00 -0400	General public or commercial users should be charged rates higher than residents, in good faith.
2024-10-16 22:19:18 -0400	I believe user fees should be collected by users from using it. It is unfair to increase property taxes for this.
2024-10-16 22:24:52 -0400	
2024-10-16 23:29:59 -0400	None of the above
2024-10-17 00:00:46 -0400	
2024-10-17 01:03:23 -0400	We don't want to have taxes raised, period
2024-10-17 02:34:41 -0400	No need to use facilities in Puslinch. Still consider our neighbourhood Guelph as we were N1H6H9. Why should we pay for facilities we do not use
2024-10-17 03:00:19 -0400	
2024-10-17 05:38:25 -0400	Stop increasing our taxes. We pay more and get less services. Charge the users via fees vs just taking the easy route and increasing taxes
2024-10-17 05:53:32 -0400	
2024-10-17 06:02:12 -0400	
2024-10-17 06:56:12 -0400	I feel fees should be increased in facility rentals for people that live outside Puslinch. Faculty rental for Puslinch residents should be less as we pay taxes here.
2024-10-17 06:58:51 -0400	Find ways to eliminate inefficiencies so that increasing revenue is not required. The cost of living over the last few years has gone up enough without our various layers of government making it worse. Failing that, user fees makes those who are enjoying the benefit of the service to contribute more towards the service.

2024-10-17 07:09:39 -0400	Applying the fee to the usage is transparent and attaches responsibility to the user.
2024-10-17 07:43:50 -0400	Makes sense users pay for the service
2024-10-17 08:03:19 -0400	
2024-10-17 08:31:17 -0400	
2024-10-17 08:36:10 -0400	For those of us living in "rural residential" our taxes are sky high vs similar townships nearby. Get your hands out of our pockets and start being more efficient with what you have. User fee increases have already been implemented, please stop.
2024-10-17 09:17:45 -0400	Taxes are already high enough and we pay for garbage with the bag costs
2024-10-17 09:26:32 -0400	I am NOT paying for this on my taxes!
2024-10-17 09:26:51 -0400	Absolutely not on taxes
2024-10-17 11:06:08 -0400	
2024-10-17 16:26:04 -0400	
2024-10-17 16:26:46 -0400	
2024-10-17 16:47:49 -0400	Perhaps you should look at how often facilities used. Would lower fees generate more usage and more revenue?
2024-10-17 18:20:00 -0400	
2024-10-17 18:41:52 -0400	The township receives more than enough Property Taxes & should be able to accommodate this request at no extra cost. I would like to know exactly what the extra cost that is being incurred & why
2024-10-17 22:44:14 -0400	
2024-10-16 10:17:55 -0400	
2024-10-16 22:08:05 -0400	Property taxes are already high. There should be no increases
2024-10-16 22:57:52 -0400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The taxes are insane here. We need to have less government and more community. • We get very little service as it is for what we pay for the amount of taxes we have. I understand how the split is up between Wellington County and Puslinch, But I just don't feel the amount of money collected is warranted by the township for the Resources that are provided. • I don't think any fee should be increased. I think there should be Natural attrition with respect to the township staff. And any money recouped should go towards any resources or fee increases needed. I'm not saying that we need to let people go what I'm saying is that as people leave try to find a way to reduce the staff size by not replacing and re-organizing the workload. • I don't believe taxes should be raised at all. • I think too many people work there too much money is spent in the office. • Start charging less. • Reduce the number over of staff and stop raising taxes. • I am not in favour of any of the choices above, and don't like the fact that there isn't really a choice that I am in favour of. The services in this township are significantly lacking and it seems like

	<p>the township and the staff are out of touch with the communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well, I don't really want to choose any of the options you have listed. My least favourite option is raising taxes. I just wish this township would operate more the way Mississauga operated when Hazel McCallion was there. She made sure she had a fiscally responsible budget and didn't overspend. The mayor Posted a while back that there's not much room for growth in Puslinch — yet We keep hiring more and more people to work at the township. I cannot understand why you need to keep hiring and generating new positions when there's little to no new growth. Perhaps we need to start looking at Township cost the way we look at our own personal finances and really questioning any expansion made or upgrades or new staff hiring that are unnecessary.
2024-10-16 20:32:59 -0400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO TOO PROPERTY TAX INCREASE. INCREASE USERS FEE. WE ALREADY PAYING HIGH TAX. We're not getting anything from town. So please don't think to about property taxes. Users can pay when they used facilities. Thanks. Don't touch property taxes to increase. It too much, very expensive property taxes. No too property taxes. If you increase property taxes. You'll see in election what We'll do.

Q3. What is your age?

Question Options	Responses
Under 18	0
18-24	0
25-34	2
35-44	10
45-54	22
55-64	20
65+	12
No Response	3

What is your age?

