

# Town of Milton user fees likely going up 2 per cent

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

Users of Town services such as leisure programs and facility rentals can likely expect to pay about 2 per cent more for the privilege this year.

The Town appears to be continuing its quest to have users pay their own way with the unveiling of its 2001 user fee rates.

The schedule was approved at the Town's administration and planning meeting Monday, and will go before council for final approval this Monday.

The new schedule doesn't represent a full review of user fee rates, but rather a continuation of a prior council direction to roughly match

fee increases with the rate of inflation.

A full review is slated for later this year and will be reflected in the 2002 rates.

Though the new fees reflect council's direction, a concern was raised that the Town could price itself out of reach in the future.

"Our intent originally was to bring the structure up to where the private sector is. Are we at the point where the public is saying we can bear this," asked Councillor John Challinor. "There is also a process of market demand and nowhere in the report do I see any reductions."

But decreasing fees would be tough without undergoing a complete review to track where the demand is, said Town Treasurer Jim McQueen.

A review would also compare Milton's fees with that of other municipalities and invite feedback from user groups.

"We are really being conservative, I guess, in not wanting to show reductions until we do a complete analysis," said Mr. McQueen. "We did take a conservative approach in not reducing rates."

Mayor Gord Krantz voted in favour of the report, citing market conditions.

"All we're doing is almost keeping up with the pace of inflation," he said. "They're certainly not exorbitant."

But he did express reservations about future hikes.

"My concern is in regards to the possibility we're pricing ourselves out of the market," he said.

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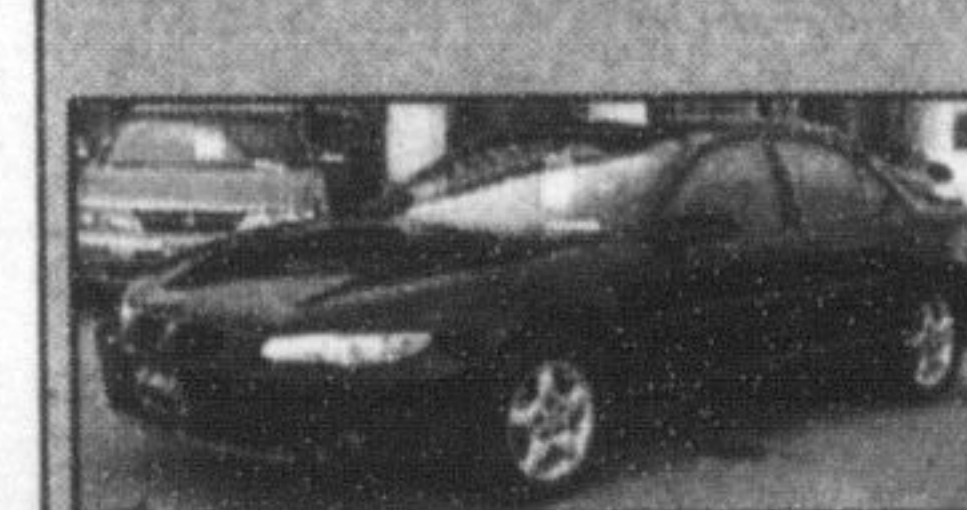
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