

Policy Statement 25 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Fees and Charges Policy

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Purpose

To adopt an official policy to establish a set of fees for charges that are fair and equitable for the use of facilities and equipment and the participation in programs sponsored by the Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

The Department's mission is to serve, educate, and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Cary. Our professional staff plans and provides a variety of enjoyable and cost effective recreation, sports, environmental, historical, and cultural arts programs and services. We acquire, develop, beautify, conserve, and maintain a system of parks, greenways, and recreation facilities which will assure quality leisure opportunities for all Cary residents.

Coverage

This policy, upon adoption by the Town Council, shall be applicable to all individuals for the use of facilities and equipment and the participation in programs conducted by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department until such time as it is altered, modified, or rescinded by the Town Council.

Policy

The Cary Town Council hereby establishes the following Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource fees and charges policy:

- I. **Statement of Need:** Due to the demand for services, operating and capital cost, and the amount of available tax revenues, meeting the level of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Services requested by Cary citizens is a continuing challenge. Therefore, it is necessary for the Town to develop a sound and consistent policy of fees and charges for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources services that are both fair and equitable. This policy will enable the Town of Cary to continue to provide quality recreation programs and make necessary program expansions which would not otherwise be possible.
- II. **Statement of Philosophy:** A sound policy provides the guiding principles for managing fees and charges while maintaining flexibility to accommodate with new programs, changing demographics and circumstances. The following guiding principles provide the foundation for the Town's philosophy for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Fees and Charges:
 - A. To efficiently manage operations in order to provide affordable and diversified services to ensure all Cary citizens equal opportunities.
 - B. To enhance the quality of life for each individual through recreation opportunities.
 - C. To provide and maintain facilities for use by the general public.
 - D. To provide trained and qualified personnel for supervision and instruction in programs and activities.
 - E. To welcome and actively seek public input in planning and evaluating programs, activities, and facilities.
 - F. To provide the opportunity for all Cary citizens to participate in a variety of programs and activities and to fully utilize the facilities of the department.
 - G. To ensure that Cary citizens receive the benefit of lower fees and priority registration.
 - H. To establish revenue recovery rates that consider market conditions and the cost of providing programs and services.
 - I. To supplement fees and charges with tax dollars, grants, donations, sponsorships, scholarships, etc.

III. Service Level Definitions

- A. **Basic Services:** Basic Services tend to preserve and promote physical and mental well-being of the community, provide patron safety, and offer an opportunity for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources services, facilities, greenways, and open space to be used by the general public. Typically basic services are available to all Cary citizens on an equal basis and there is little consumptive use of services. Basic services and facilities shall be offered to Town residents at minimal or no charge.
- i. Basic Services provide general use of parks and outdoor areas such as basketball slabs, open play areas, ball fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, greenways, comfort stations, and satellite tennis courts.
 - ii. Basic services provide for indoor facilities and amenities to include but not limited to community centers, senior, nature, arts, and history facilities.
 - iii. Basic services include but are not limited to town-wide special events and celebrations, program and facility information, community assistance, program planning, public art access and administrative support.
 - iv. Cost of basic services and facilities shall be primarily borne by the general tax base.

Criteria for Establishing Fees and Charges for Basic Services

- i. Charging a fee aids in the provision of activities of a special interest nature that extends beyond the normal operation. Basic services will continue to support citizen's need with none or minimal charges and not on the propensity to generate revenue for services provided.
 - ii. When basic services are used, any fees charged for the use of the public recreation facility shall be viewed as a method to continue to provide basic services.
 - iii. Charging an entry or admission fee to a special event allows for revenues collected to be used in expanding or enhancing the special event.
 - iv. Charging fees may also serve as an independent function to ration limited activities and aid in discipline or control.
- B. **Supplemental Services:** Supplemental Services provide traditional parks and recreation activities that benefit the individual and the community as a whole. Supplemental services are available to Cary citizens on an equitable basis; however, participation is limited based on program and space availability. Supplemental services provide an extended level of benefit for users.

- i. Supplemental Services require facilities, supplies, equipment, and/or considerable staff planning and supervision specific to the service. These types of services benefit both the participant and the community due to their educational, cultural, or physical value.
- ii. Some examples of Supplemental Services include but are not limited to instructional programs, summer day camp, senior programs, teen programs, concerts, open gym, performances, and youth/adult athletics programs.
- iii. The user shall share in the cost of providing supplemental services to offset tax dollar support.

Criteria for Establishing Fees and Charges for Supplemental Services

- i. The determination to assign a fee for a supplemental service shall be based upon one or more of the following conditions.
 - a. The cost per user hour of the service is higher than basic service.
 - b. The service uses consumable materials.
 - c. The service requires added preparation or clean-up.

- d. The service requires contracted services or instruction at an additional cost.
 - e. A fee supports the provision of activities of a special interest nature that extends beyond the normal basic service.
 - f. Fees shall be charged to recover supply costs directly related to the supplemental services.
- ii. Use of the service tends to be limited to a relatively few individuals or special interest groups of a private nature. Whenever the benefit to the general citizen population is limited, a fee may be assessed
- C. **Special Services and Facilities:** Special Services and Facilities are beyond the scope of traditional leisure services. They primarily provide exclusive benefit to individuals based on public demand and population served.
- i. Special services include but are not limited to organized tournaments, trips, private group programs and retail operations.
 - ii. Special facilities include but are not limited to reserved areas, lighted ball fields, Tennis Center, picnic shelters, Skate Park, ropes course, soccer/ball field complexes, amphitheater, and specialized reserved equipment.
 - iii. Fees and charges are often established based on local market demand.
 - iv. Special services and facilities shall recover costs through policies that minimize public tax dollar support.

Criteria for Establishing Fees and Charges for Special Services and Facilities

- i. The fee charged for use of public recreation facilities shall be comparable to the market rates and current fees being charged for like services in the local area.
- ii. Identify staffing requirements, costs of material, supplies, contracted services, other Town of Cary departmental support and facility operational expenses.
- iii. Identify any incremental revenues that the Special Service or Special Facility generates beyond normal daily operating revenues and expenses.
- iv. License Agreement: Special Services and Facilities which are organized, promoted and conducted by an individual, agency, or any other entity shall require a written Agreement outlining the specific services and the responsibilities of the Town and Licensee. The License Agreement will contain fees and charges estimated to recover all direct costs and a portion of the estimated indirect costs.
- v. Town's Co-Sponsored Event: Services that are organized, promoted and conducted in part by an outside agency, organization, or individual(s) and are the negotiated responsibilities of both parties as defined by a written Agreement. Any fees assessed to the outside group for facility use shall be established to recover the Town's direct cost at minimum.
- vi. Economic Impact: Facilities and special services attracting events that generate visitor spending and/or media exposure, or both such as tournaments and championships is a benefit to both the Town and local economy.
- vii. SAS Soccer Park, Cary Tennis Center and Other Special Facilities- SAS Soccer Park and Cary Tennis Center recognized as Special Facilities, under this policy have developed fees and charges specific to these facilities. Facilities which are classified as special facilities will develop and formulate fees and charges policies relative to the special facility. Agreements entered into by the Town for operation of any special facility for management by a private sector entity will specifically address fees and charges within the management agreement.
- viii. Fees and charges shall support other resources available to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, not replace them or be used to reduce the Town's responsibility to provide public open space and leisure opportunities. They provide a means to continue, and expand as necessary, and the ability to offer, basic, special services and special facilities to Cary citizens. Any surplus revenue from one program may be utilized to offset costs for other programs or activities within the.

IV. **Rental Fees and Usage**

- A. Special Facilities (i.e. SAS Soccer Park, Cary Tennis Center, Koka Booth Amphitheatre) when not in use for department sponsored or Town co-sponsored activities, may be reserved by organizations and the general public in accordance with established policies and procedures, specific to each Special Facility.
- B. When not in use for department sponsored or Town co-sponsored activities, designated areas, facilities and equipment may be reserved by organizations and the general public in accordance with established policies and procedures.
 - i. Area and facility reservation rates will be computed by compiling the applicable personnel costs, hourly utility cost, and any other related cost for the facility being reserved. The fee charged for use of public recreation facilities shall be comparable to commercial or market rates.
 - ii. Equipment reservation rates will be based upon the fair market value reservation rates as established within the local area. As defined in the annual budget ordinance, equipment reservation rates are in addition to the facility rental rates.
- C. Charitable Organizations (Non-Town Sponsored Events)
 - i. Charitable, non-profit IRS 501C(3) recognized organizations, Cary based, community serving organizations who conduct an event on Town property for the purpose of raising funds must pay the established reservation fee calculated to cover the costs to the Town for use of said facility. Reduction in the reservation fee may be discounted as outlined in the adopted Town of Cary Annual Operating Budget.
 - ii. The charitable organization must provide evidence of comprehensive general liability insurance sufficient to protect the Town against risk. Such evidence must name the Town as an additional insured under the organizations policy.
- D. Charitable Organizations (Town Sponsored Events)
 - i. Charitable, non-profit (IRS 501C (3) recognized organizations, Cary based, community serving organizations who are participating in Town sponsored events with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, may be exempt from facility reservation policies when determined in the best interest of the Town.
 - ii. Recognized charitable organizations participating in Town sponsored events may be exempt from liability insurance requirements.
- E. Commercial Activities: Profit making commercial entities will not be permitted in any public facility or upon park lands with the exception of SAS Soccer Park, Cary Tennis Center, Koka Booth Amphitheatre and other specialized facilities unless approved in writing by the Director, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.
- F. School and Town-Owned Facilities
 - i. As agreed in Town of Cary and Wake County Public School Systems no charges are assessed by either party for use of outdoor areas, fields or courts. Availability of all facilities is based upon the primary owner having priority use and the secondary user requesting access during available periods. Request for use of outdoor areas and facilities must be in written form and approved prior to secondary user authorized access.
 - ii. Town of Cary and Wake County Public School Systems will require payment of established reservation fees for indoor facilities by secondary users unless defined otherwise in the joint use agreement(s).

V. **Special Consideration for Fees and Charges Variances**

- A. Established fees and charges may be waived or reduced by the Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources if in the Director's judgment it would be in the best interest of the individual(s) or specific program.
- B. Persons with disabilities: A system of reduced rates shall be available to residents who by virtue of a permanent disability are financially disabled or restricted in wage earning ability. These reduced user fees shall be established on a case by case basis by the Director of Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources or their designated representative.

- C. Senior citizens: Special rates shall be determined for the Department's facilities for residents 55 years and older. Rates shall be determined as defined in the Town Operational Policy for Cary Senior Center, Programs Registration and Fees subsection.
- D. Entities or individuals shall not be permitted to use park facilities for financial gain or profit except by waiver or approval in writing of the Director, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources. Park facilities are designed to serve the general public on a non-profit basis.
- E. Special interest groups or individuals shall be granted no special consideration in the form of reduced rates or free services with the exception of those groups who are affiliated with the Department.
- F. Participants may be granted volume discounts for multiple purchases of services or when temporary price adjustments may be beneficial to stimulate and encourage activity.
- G. Non-residents shall pay an additional non-resident fee for participating in most programs and the reservation of facilities. These fees shall be assessed to those non-resident individuals who use Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource services, but make no tax contribution to offset the cost of programs or facilities.
- H. Consistent with the Town's philosophy of ensuring all citizens equal opportunity to participate in recreation, this policy recognizes that paying fees may result in inequities for certain individuals, groups, or situations. Therefore, the Department's policy will be flexible and will be implemented according to the following guidelines:
 - i. Financial relief will be available for Town residents who are restricted in wage earning power. Residents must be able to substantiate to the Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Director or designee, proof of financial need.
 - ii. All information provided will be confidential and used only for the purpose of establishing eligibility for any fee reductions.
 - iii. PRCR Scholarship Programs: The Town provides citizens the opportunity to apply for scholarships and/or reduction of fees for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources' programs. In order for a citizen to be considered for a scholarship and /or reduction of fees, a Fee Waiver request form must be completed for review. There are three options for consideration in the PRCR Scholarship Program.
 - a. PRCR Scholarships may be awarded for full costs and all fees waived.
 - b. PRCR Scholarships may be awarded with a reduction of fees with the citizen paying a portion and the remaining balance paid from the Scholarship fund.
 - c. A payment plan agreed upon between the citizen and the PRCR Department may be implemented.

VI. **Customer Satisfaction**

- A. Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department continually strives to provide quality programs. We offer a satisfaction guarantee policy for programs in which customers participate.
- B. In the event that the customer is not satisfied, the Town shall offer three options for the customer.
 - (i) Repeat the program at no charge, or;
 - (ii) Receive a credit that can be applied to any other program, or;
 - (iii) Receive a refund (processing takes approximately 2 weeks)
- C. This satisfaction guarantee is based on our goal of providing quality programs. To obtain a Satisfaction Guarantee request form, contact any Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources facility. You will be asked to share the reason for your request. Requests must be made in writing no later than 10 days after the completion of the program. We encourage you to contact us with your suggestions and comments:

Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department
P.O. Box 8005

Cary, NC 27512-8005
(919) 469-4061

- D. Adult sport leagues, trips, consumable program supplies, retail sales, daily admissions, facility memberships, facility rentals, special events or tickets to entertainment or sporting events are exempt from the Satisfaction Guarantee. The Town of Cary reserves the right to limit use of this Guarantee by an individual or group on a case-by-case basis after thorough review of circumstances and/or history.

VII. Retail Sales of Merchandise

- A. The Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department provides items for sale to the general public for a variety of reasons. Three types of resale operations have been identified currently within the department:
- i. Retail Sales Operations
 - ii. Concessions Operation
 - iii. Sale of retail items at cost as a Programs Service
- B. Retail Sales Operation are purchased wholesale and priced accordingly to comparable market prices within the local area. For the purpose of retail sales operations, sales are available as a customer convenience and not for the sole purpose of being competitive with local merchants and retailers.
- C. Concessions Operations are purchased at wholesale and sold at retail prices established as comparable market prices within the local area. In arrangements through Concession Agreement with vendors, prices are set by vendors and approved by the Town.
- D. For various programs offered by the Department, program supplies are purchased at retail and sold to the program participant at the same retail price. When items are typically purchased in bulk by the Town at retail price such as clay for use in classes, product price may be increased to recover studio usage such as wheels, firing, and glazes.

VIII. Alternative Sources of Revenue

A. Grants

- i. Employees of the Department or Town are encouraged to investigate the possibilities of securing a grant or sources of outside funding for departmental facilities and programs.
- ii. The Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources or their designated representative(s) shall act as the initial contact for all grants and funding sources relative to Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.
- iii. All grant applications, donations or alternative funding sources must be approved by the Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource, Town Manager, Town Finance Department and Cary Town Council as required.

B. Unrealized Revenue for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

- i. With proper authorization, solicitations, sponsorships, sales, benefits, donations or gifts, may be received in, during, or as a part of Town sponsored programs.
- ii. Receipt of any non-programmed or unrealized revenue must be previously approved by the Director.
- iii. Funds collected in any manner during a Town sponsored program or event shall be handled in accordance with established Town or Department policies and procedures. A clear and definite audit trail for handling all funds must be maintained according to policy and procedure.

IX: **Computation of Fees and Charges:** For parks, recreation and cultural activities offered by the Town on a fee basis, fees computed on a percentage basis shall be rounded downward to the nearest dollar when the result ends in .01-.49 and upward to the nearest dollar when the result ends in .50-.99.

X: **Evaluation of Policy and Fees:** In January of each year, or at intervals deemed appropriate by the Director,

administrative fees and charges for the various programs and related fee schedules shall be reviewed. All recommendations for policy changes or fee adjustments shall be approved by the Town Council prior to implementation.

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