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06/14/2011

### Councilors postpone discussion of Fort Williams tour bus fees to fall workshop

The Town Council will consider recommendations for charging fees for tour buses and trolleys at Fort Williams Park at a fall workshop.

At their meeting June 13, 2011, the council voted to refer to workshop a recommendation from the Fort Williams Advisory Commission that the Town, beginning in the 2012 season, charge \$40 for each tour bus; and, \$1,500 per season from companies that send sight-seeing trolleys into the park.

"Assuming last year's total of 784 buses, we would generate gross income of \$31,360 from buses and \$4,500 from trolleys, for a total of \$35,860," according to an email to Town Manager Michael McGovern from commission chairman Bill Nickerson.

The recommendation however does not consider costs associated with fee collection, which was the main reason councilors opted to refer it to a future workshop. "I think there is more information that we need," said Councilor Anne Swift-Kayatta.

Speakers at the June 13 meeting said the impacts of the fees, including the cost of collecting them, the potential for reduced sales at the Portland Head Light museum, and possible impacts on the pilot food vendor program at the park, could wind up costing more revenue than they generate. Two speakers represented tour companies in Portland.

Other speakers reminded the council of the **2010 referendum** where voters rejected a pay/display system for collecting fees from passenger vehicles. "I was one of the people who voted 'No Fees'," said Spurwink Avenue resident Bill Enman. "I think that is what the citizens meant."

In June 2010, following the referendum, the Town Council voted to rescind the pay/display system it had authorized four months earlier. While the defeated referendum did not apply to tour buses, many councilors at the time said they would not support charging buses and trolleys without also charging passenger cars.

Councilors at the time did, however, say they would consider fees for buses along with a broader revenue-generation plan for Fort Williams Park.

The commission's recommendation does not apply to camp and recreation program buses, or small buses and vans that may be operated by eldercare facilities.

The commission's recommendation calls for implementation in the 2012 season, but McGovern said that would not be possible if the workshop is held in the fall.



### Related Links

- [Fort Williams Advisory Commission](#)
- [Fort Williams Park](#)
- [Fort Williams Advisory Commission Bus Proposal \(06/01/2011\)](#)
- News: [Votes reverse parking fees for cars, tour buses at Fort Williams \(06/15/2010\)](#)

From the Fort Williams Advisory Commission

Hi Mike,

At the FWAC meeting last Thursday, we arrived at a final recommendation regarding fees for tour buses and trolleys.

We determined that all tour buses, whether related to a cruise ship or arriving randomly, should be charged \$40.00. We also determined the trolley company should be assessed a seasonal charge of \$1,500 for each trolley. In the past we understand there have been 3 trolleys which made runs to Fort Williams from Commercial Street. Assuming last year's total of 784 buses, we would generate gross income of \$31,360 from buses and \$4,500 from trolleys, for a total of \$35,860.

We further determined that we would not assess a charge for camp and recreation program buses. Since municipal rec. programs are not for profit operations, commission members felt we should not institute a fee for such visits. We also agreed not to charge the small buses and vans which may be operated by elderly care facilities such as Village Crossings, Piper Shores or the South Portland Housing Authority.

E-Mail from Commission Chair Bill Nickerson