



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Strategy for Commercial and Private Special Events in City Parks

Date:	August 28th, 2013
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Jim Hart, General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Cluster A\PFR/PE22-091613-AFS#17665

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to a number of directives from City Council relevant to the strategy for special events related services and permitting processes regarding commercial and private events in City parks. This report recommends a number of initiatives which include:

- A Pilot Project to allow Commercial/Private Events in ten City parks including the Guild Park and Gardens.
- A review of proposed fees for commercial special events that would include a revenue forecast and options to use these revenues.
- An analysis of the events that took place in the summer of 2012 at the park locations that were designated for pilot projects.
- The establishment of key criteria for considering commercial special events in pilot parks.

A separate report is also being submitted by the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommending measures to streamline special events services and permitting processes focusing on strategies and standards for efficient, transparent, customer- driven services to the public.

The City Manager is also submitting a report which will establish a governance framework for Toronto's Public Squares which improves coordination and consistency in the management of these important public spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that City Council:

1. Authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to implement a pilot program for hosting commercial/private special events at the ten (10) park locations, including Guild Park and Gardens, listed in Appendix 1 to this report, for the 2014 operating season, and to report back in early 2015 on the success of the pilot program for the 2014 operating season.
2. Approve implementation of the proposed commercial permit fee rates as noted in Appendix 2 to this report.
3. Amend Municipal Code, Chapter 441, Fees and Charges to include the new Commercial Permit Fee rates, as appropriate.
4. Limit the number of commercial/private special events to a maximum of six (6) (excluding sampling) per park location per season.
5. Direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to analyze the revenues generated by the pilot project and report back in early 2015 on ways to reinvest these funds in park maintenance and on the impact of the Reduction in Permit Fees Policy for not for profit and community events held in 2014.

Financial Impact

The pilot project for commercial/private special events in City parks will have a positive revenue impact once the full implementation has occurred. It is expected that the impact of the first pilot year will be small. The division is forecasting revenues of \$60,000 in 2014 with the potential of achieving \$170,000 in future years.

The proposed fees are market based and constitute approximately 90% of full costs. Any additional costs such as clean up and equipment requests will be billed on a full cost recovery basis.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of October 2, 2012, City Council referred item EX22.5 entitled "Strategy for Special Events Related Services and Permitting Processes" to the Deputy City Manager responsible for Parks and Recreation and Special Events and Economic Development and Culture with the request that, among other things, she:

- Include the Guild Park and Gardens as a Pilot Project to allow Commercial/Private Events in City Parks:
- Report to the Parks and Environment Committee on fees for new special Commercial events, describing how much new revenue these fees would be expected to bring in: and with options to use increased revenues from larger Scale commercial events to reduce fees to community groups for events in local parks: and
- Report on an analysis on the experiences arising from events that took place in the parks designated for Pilot projects during the summer of 2012 and a framework that enables and balances public access with gated events.

Decision Document (EX22.5):

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX22.5>.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Parks, Forestry and Recreation's current policy only allows for not-for-profit and charitable organizations to obtain a permit to hold a special event in a city park.

During the past several years, staff has been approached by various Toronto-based event organizers, conventions and concert promoters regarding the availability of City parks for commercial/private events. In an effort to enhance City revenues and to be responsive to the inquiries from for-profit organizations, commercial groups, private entities and businesses to host ticketed and non-ticketed events in City parks while balancing the needs of local parks users, staff recommended that a pilot project allowing commercial/private events in city parks be conducted during the 2012 event season.

In 2012 nine park locations were selected for a pilot project based on their proximity to the downtown core and documented requests to stage commercial special events. Because of their proximity to hotels, convention centres, and relative isolation from established residential areas, these parks were identified as ideal candidates as pilot sites for testing commercial events in parks. The pilot locations were: Ashbridges Bay Park, Ferry Docks, HTO Park, Olympic Island, Olympic Park, Roundhouse Park, Sherbourne Common, Sugar Beach and Woodbine Park.

Allowing limited commercial/private use of city parks for special events would help the City to generate additional permit revenue, provide new cultural or entertainment experiences, and generate economic impact from tourism and support of local businesses.

COMMENTS

Commercial special events are defined as any special event that includes the exchange, production, purchase or sale of goods or services of any kind or nature for the purpose of making profit. These can include corporate sponsored events, festivals, performances, product promotions and sampling.

1. Commercial Special Event Revenues

As highlighted in the table on page 5, four (4) commercial categories have been developed to guide staff on the type of event being held and the corresponding fee to apply. Under the Council-adopted *User Fee Policy*, where a service benefits an individual or groups of individuals, funding for the service should be provided by user fees. As commercial special events benefit the event organizer and individuals attending rather than the public at large, the proposed permit fees for commercial special events in city parks should be based on full cost recovery. However, due to an existing market for such events, the fees recommended are market fees and constitute approximately 90% of full costs.

For the 2012 season, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff created a set of proposed fees to be charged per commercial special event, based on the type and size of the event for each of the nine (9) pilot locations. Fees were based on similar existing fees being charged for the use of Yonge-Dundas Square, and also included market research on what other cities such as New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Montreal were currently charging. The table on the following page provides the proposed detailed fee structure for these locations and event.

Subject to approval by City Council, for the 2014 operating season, a new fee structure will be in place for ten (10) proposed pilot park locations with Guild Inn Park and Gardens having the same fees as the HTO Park, Sugar Beach, Olympic Park and Sherbourne Common locations. Any additional costs associated with all event(s) such as clean up and equipment requests will be billed on a full cost recovery basis.

COMMERCIAL SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FEES TORONTO					
Sites in Toronto that Permit Commercial Special Events (Existing + Proposed)		Commercial Activity	Attendance	Ratio (x Dundas Sq Rate)	Rate
Existing Example	Dundas Square	Event	N/A	N/A	\$3,570
Proposed	HTO Park/ Sugar Beach/ Sherbourne Common Olympic Park Guild Inn Gardens	Corporate	<4,500	0.5	\$1,785
		Festival/ Performances	<4,500	1	\$3,570
		Promotions	<4,500	N/A	\$3,500
		Sampling	<4,500	N/A	\$850 Weekday \$1,000 Weekend/Holiday
	Roundhouse Park	Corporate	<4,500	1.5	\$5,355
		Festival/ Performances	<4,500	2	\$7,140
		Promotions	<4,500	N/A	\$3,500
		Sampling	<4,500	N/A	\$850 Weekday \$1,000 Weekend/Holiday
	Ashbridges Bay Park	Corporate	4,501- 10,000	1.5	\$7,140
		Festival/ Performances	4,501- 10,000	2	\$7,140
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		Sampling	4,501- 10,000	N/A	\$850 Weekday \$1,000 Weekend/Holiday
	Woodbine Park	Corporate	4,501- 10,000	2.5	\$8,925
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		Promotions	>10,000	N/A	\$3,500
		Sampling	>10,000	N/A	\$850 Weekday \$1,000 Weekend/Holiday
Ferry Docks	Promotions	<4,500	N/A	\$3,500	
	Sampling	<4,500	N/A	\$850 Weekday \$1,000 Weekend/Holiday	

The number of events, type of commercial special events and the park locations where commercial event permits are issued will determine the revenues generated under the pilot project. Based on a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of six (6) commercial special events per pilot park location the projected revenue range from the associated permit fees would be approximately \$60,000 to \$170,000.00. This range is based on the events being 'Event' commercial activity.

The additional revenue generated by the commercial special events will support the maintenance of the pilot parks being used. Portions of the fees arising from Capital maintenance will be set aside for this purpose.

2. Guild Inn Park and Gardens

The Guild Inn Park and Gardens is a unique facility encompassing several historic buildings inside a public park. Guildwood Park forms a naturalized frame around the formal Guild Inn Gardens which includes upwards of 70 architecturally significant buildings and sculptures.

Guild Inn Park and Gardens is a destination park for those individuals wanting to obtain a wedding photography and/or ceremony permit. The location and present amenities within the park are conducive to these types of permits and during 2012 there were 180 wedding photography/ceremony permits issued for the location.

Conversely, in 2012 there were only two (2) community not-for-profit special event permits issued for the park to the Guild Renaissance Group and the Guildwood Village Community Association. These events had an anticipated attendance of 2,000 and 400 persons respectively. Unlike the wedding photography/ceremony uses, these 'special event' permits had impacts on the park which included the need for multiple electrical boxes, increased public parking, security, garbage disposal and turf maintenance.

There are also restrictions regarding the usage of this park including the exclusion of picnic and sporting event permits.

Through item EX22.5, City Council requested that Parks, Forestry and Recreation include the Guild Inn Park and Gardens location as part of the 2014 pilot project. Guild Inn Park and Gardens would be considered comparable in scope, to the HTO Park, Sugar Beach and Sherbourne Common locations and based on the initial 2012 permit fee structure proposed for the nine (9) initial parks, would carry the daily rate fees listed below.

Event	Attendance	* Fee
Corporate	< 4,500	\$1,785
Festival/ Performances	< 4,500	\$3,570
Promotions	< 4,500	\$3,500
Sampling	< 4,500	\$850 Weekday \$1,000 Weekend/Holiday

**The proposed commercial fees are market based and constitute approximately 90% of full costs*

If a maximum of six (6) commercial special event permits were issued for Guild Inn Park and Gardens in 2014, depending on the type of event and day of the week scheduled, approximately \$5,100 to \$21,420 in permit fees could be generated. This amount has been included in the overall projected revenue estimate for 2014.

3. 2012 Special Events in Proposed Pilot Park Locations

There were 19 special event permits in the nine (9) parks available from January 1st, 2012 to October 31st, 2012 for the purpose of commercial event activity. During this period, permits were issued for Canada's Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Common and Roundhouse Park. The 19 events were attended by 31,000 people and generated approximately \$16,000.00 in permit fee revenue. Details related to these events are available in the table below. The \$16,000.00 in revenues generated for the 19 events was through existing 'special event' fees approved for community and not for profit groups.

Location	Date	Organization	Event	Fees
Canada's Sugar Beach	March 25 th – 26 th 2012	Corus Entertainment Inc.	Live (indoor) YTV Performance	\$979.06
Canada's Sugar Beach	May 27 th 2012	Corus Entertainment Inc.	Park Mobile Truck	\$446.84
Canada's Sugar Beach	June 6 th 2012	Carolyn Humphreys	Memorial	\$85.38
Canada's Sugar Beach	June 11 th 2012	CORUS Entertainment - 102.1 The Edge	Metric Sugar Beach Session	\$446.84
Canada's Sugar Beach	June 13 th – 17 th 2012	Power Juncture Corporation	Toronto Wine & Spirit Festival	\$3,026
Canada's Sugar Beach	June 30 th 2012	Embrace Entertainment Group	Aqua	\$2,264
Canada's Sugar Beach	July 8 th 2012	Microsoft Canada Inc	WPC Welcome Reception	\$485.14
Canada's Sugar Beach	August 20 th 2012	Environics Communications	Roxx Media Launch Event	\$850.00
Canada's Sugar Beach	August 25 th – 26 th 2012	Embrace Presents Group Inc.	Embrace Presents	\$893.68
Canada's Sugar Beach	August 28 th 2012	Cisco System Canada	GSX - Canada All Hands	\$850.00
Canada's Sugar Beach	September 4 th 2012	CORUS Entertainment - 102.1 The Edge	Sheepdogs Sugar Beach Session	\$446.84
Canada's Sugar Beach	September 22 nd 2012	Corus Entertainment Inc.	Corus Friends and Family Event	\$617.60
Canada's Sugar Beach	October 2 nd 2012	CORUS Entertainment - 102.1 The Edge	Three Days Grace Sugar Beach Session	\$446.84
Sherbourne Common	June 16 th 2012	Canadian Outback Adventures	Party in the Park	\$1,984
Sherbourne Common	March 22 nd 2012	Environment Canada	Great Lakes Sustainability Fund Conference	\$85.38
Sherbourne Common	May 28 th 2012	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Ministerial Announcement	\$85.38
Sherbourne Common	July 7 th 2012	Red Bull Canada	Red Bull King of the Rock Canada Final	\$1,016
Roundhouse Park	September 14 th 2012	Rider Enterprises Inc	Alokozay Tea Sampling	\$1,800
Roundhouse Park	June 24 th 2012	Solar Network	SSX Ontario: Solar	\$85.38

		International	Summit and Expo	
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**The above fees were all inclusive of HST*

The selection of these parks was based on their proximity to the downtown core and documented requests from organizers to stage special events in the past. Downtown Toronto has a large concentration of condominiums, businesses, institutions and arts and cultural venues. Because of their proximity to hotels, convention centres and relative isolation from established residential areas, these parks were ideal candidates as pilot sites.

Feedback provided by both the permit-holder organizations and those in attendance was extremely favourable. Parks staff received a series of concerns from one neighbourhood resident association expressing concern of the size of the events and that they were 'corporate' in nature. Noise and or waste related problems were not an issue.

4. Criteria for Considering Commercial Special Events in Pilot Parks – 2014

The pilot program to be conducted in 2014 will allow Parks, Forestry and Recreation to test the viability of allowing commercial events in city parks while ensuring impacts to other park users and local neighbourhoods are minimized.

As with all special events, commercial event organizers must abide by the policies and procedures set out in the *Special Event Guidelines for City Parklands*, and will be required to meet all requirements specific to their event set out in a "Conditional Letter of Approval" prior to permit issuance.

For all commercial special events, Parks staff will pre-determine areas within each park where the events shall take place. Only these designated areas may be fenced off in any way. At all times the remaining areas of the park will remain open to the public, ensuring that public amenities will remain open and accessible. Commercial special events will not prohibit at any time access to: playgrounds, splash pads/spray pads, dogs off-leash areas, athletic/sport fields or sports courts, skate pads, washrooms and park pathways. Fencing and barrier types will be approved by the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation or his/her designate.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation has developed a set of criteria that must also be considered before issuing a commercial special event permit that will help guide staff on the appropriateness of the event in a city park and impacts to park users and local residents. The full list of criteria can be found in Appendix 1 to this report, and relate to gating and park access; frequency of events; permit allocation; ticket fees; pre and post-event assessments. Additionally, local ward councillors will be consulted prior to the issuance of a permit for a commercial special event, and be included in the post-event assessments to help inform impacts to local park users and residents of these events. Parks, Forestry and Recreation will use these criteria in measuring the success of the pilot project and report back on the results of it.

CONCLUSION

By adopting a policy that allows commercial and private special events in pilot park locations, corporations will be engaged, city park profiles will be strengthened and additional permit revenues can be raised. As well, new cultural and entertainment experiences will be available while balancing the needs of the local parks users and residents.

After a review of other Canadian municipalities and the 30 largest cities in the United States it was found that commercial special events are permitted in the majority of their parks with guidelines and criteria in place to support these events.

The recently adopted Parks Plan includes principles of equitable access for all residents, supporting a diversity of uses and community engagement and partnerships. These principles have helped shape the policy framework, and will ensure the needs of local park users are balanced with inquiries from other event organizers and concert promoters.

Finally, it is vital to recognize the role the Ward Councillor plays in the planning and review of these events. Staff will ensure that Councillors are consulted and have input prior to the administration of any events. Councillors also provide critical, 'post event', information regarding the impact to neighbourhoods, local traffic and park users. Staff will ensure councillor involvement in this very important evaluation as well.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation will ensure that post-event evaluations are conducted after each event. Event organizers will be required to meet with the Parks Supervisor within 72 hours after the end of the event, and staff will ensure that residents, event organizers and Councillor's offices are included in event evaluations to determine if the criteria meets the needs of all stakeholders.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jim Hart
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Staff report for action on strategy for commercial and private special events in city parks

Appendix 1 – Criteria for Considering Commercial Special Events in Pilot Parks

Appendix 2 – Proposed Commercial Special Event Permit Fee Rates

Appendix 1: Criteria for Considering Commercial Special Events in Pilot Parks

The following criteria must be considered prior to Parks, Forestry and Recreation issuing a "Conditional Letter of Approval" and a special event permit for a commercial event in any of the pilot project park locations.

EVENT LOCATIONS AND CAPACITIES:

The following Parks, Forestry and Recreation locations are eligible for consideration for a commercial special event permit, as part of a pilot project:

Location:	Maximum Capacity:	Maximum Number of Events per Year:
Ashbridges Bay Park	4,501 – 10,000	6
Jack Layton Ferry Terminal*	Less than 4,500	6
Guild Park & Gardens	Less than 4,500	6
HTO Park	Less than 4,500	6
Olympic Island	More than 10,000	6
Olympic Park	Less than 4,500	6
Roundhouse Park	Less than 4,500	6
Sherbourne Common	Less than 4,500	6
Sugar Beach	Less than 4,500	6
Woodbine Park	4,501 – 10,000	6

- Each location may have permits issued for corporate sponsored events, festivals / performances, promotions and sampling events.
**The Jack Layton Ferry Terminal may only hold promotions and sampling events.*

CONDITIONS:

- Event organizers must abide by the policies and procedures set out in the *Special Event Guidelines for City Parklands*, and will be required to meet all requirements specific to their event set out in a "Conditional Letter of Approval" prior to permit issuance.
- Additionally, the following conditions apply to commercial special events:

Gating and Park Access:

- Commercial special events shall only take place in areas within each location designated by Parks staff, and only the designated areas may be fenced off.
- Events involving concerts must be fenced off.
- The remaining areas within the park shall remain open for public use.
- Public amenities shall remain open and accessible. Event spaces should not prohibit access to: playgrounds, splash pads / spray pads, dogs off-leash areas, athletic / sports fields or sports courts, skate pads, washrooms, park pathways.

- Gating types / barriers and location must be approved by the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation or his/her designate.
- All costs associated with the installation and removal of gates / barriers are the sole responsibility of the organizer.

Frequency of Events:

- Each location may host up to six commercial special events per year (excluding sampling), subject to considering each park's threshold for use.
- The General Manager may apply further restrictions.
- No more than one commercial event may take place in a park per day.

Permit Allocation:

- Commercial special events will not displace community events and/or events open to the public. Where requests for the same park space and date are received, priority will be given to requests from not-for-profit and/or charitable organizations.

Assessments:

- Prior to an event: event organizers must meet with the Parks Supervisor within 60 days before the event to review siting, event details and requirements. Event organizers must submit a site plan outlining location of gating / barriers, full emergency plan including full access by emergency vehicles, vendors, washrooms, etc., to be reviewed with Parks staff (see "Assessments", above).
 - After the event: event organizers must meet with the Parks Supervisor within 72 hours after the event ends to review and document any issues that have arisen from the event, including plans for remediation.
 - Impact to neighbouring residents must also be considered both during the planning of the event and after the event has been held. Staff will consult with the local ward Councillor during the planning of the event and during the post-event assessments which will assist Parks, Forestry and Recreation in measuring the success of the event. In considering impacts to residents, staff will review complaints received, noise levels, parking capacity and impacts, crowds/encroachments into neighbourhoods, etc.
- Where a vendor has an exclusive food and beverage or sponsorship rights contract, the event organizer must negotiate with the exclusive rights holder for the sale of food and beverage or sponsorship at their event.
 - Any event that will be more than 10 consecutive days during any calendar year will be referred to the Business Services Unit in Parks, Forestry and Recreation for a short-term Agreement.

Appendix 2: Proposed Commercial Special Event Permit Fee Rates

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