



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Vehicle Parking in Non-Designated Areas in City Parks –
Exemption Criteria**

Date:	April 30, 2014
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2014\Cluster A\PFR\ PE 27-052014- AFS #19194

SUMMARY

City Council at its meeting on July 16, 2013, directed the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back on the feasibility of a criteria-based exemption by permit, from the requirements of Section 27 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks to allow temporary permitted parking in areas within parks that are not designated for parking. This report provides a list of criteria to determine possible exemptions as part of the special event permit guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council authorize the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to apply the criteria, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report, to determine when special event permits may allow for temporary parking in areas within parks that are not designated for parking.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts arising from this report.

Temporary permitted parking in areas within parks that are not designated for parking could incur costs related to turf, trees or plant material, fencing and pathway damages which will be recovered from event organizers through mandatory damage deposit fees.

In the event that damages exceed the deposit, additional fees would be invoiced back to the permit holder at the discretion of the site supervisor based on the actual damage incurred. Parking revenues generated from these special events are negligible as most events do not charge for parking.

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on July 16, 2013 directed the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back on the feasibility of a criteria-based exemption by permit from the requirements of Section 27 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks to allow temporary permitted parking in areas within parks that are not designated for parking.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PE21.6>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto, through Parks, Forestry and Recreation, has occasionally allowed temporary parking on turf in City parks during certain annual events.

In order to ensure user safety, the protection of green spaces, trees and the natural environment in all City parks, driving and parking of vehicles on or through green spaces must be limited, as it can lead to soil compaction, poor turf quality, stunted tree growth, damage to pathways, and safety risks to park users.

Soil compaction also leads to slower growth, decline, injury and death of trees. Compaction near trees or their drip lines reduces soil moisture and oxygen content, both critical for trees and turf to survive. Signs of tree degradation become slowly noticeable over time.

The repair and damage caused by vehicles is resource intensive, requiring a large amount of staff time and more significant use of specialized equipment than would otherwise be necessary. For example, in 2013, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff spent approximately \$14,000 aerating, fertilizing and overseeding to restore parkland to its original state after damages caused by temporary parking during one special event.

Maintaining Consistent Parks Policy Across the City

Section 27 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks, prohibits the parking of a vehicle in a park, except in an area designated for parking, such as signed parking lots. Chapter 608 also prohibits the use of a parking space in a park except while using the park, and for a period of more than 24 hours.

Municipal Licensing and Standards, the Toronto Parking Authority and Toronto Police Services enforce this By-Law across the City on behalf of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division.

COMMENTS

While understanding the importance of the protection of the natural environment and the impact of parking to immediate neighbourhoods during certain special events, it is also recognized that there may be occasional need for additional parking availability during special events.

The following is a list of criteria to be applied by the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation as part of a special event permit application when determining if an exemption should be granted to the Chapter 608 requirement that parking be confined to designated parking areas within parks:

1. Availability of other parking options within the event's vicinity, i.e. malls, schools, hydro fields (as authorized by those property owners).
2. Availability of street parking.
3. Options to park elsewhere and provide shuttle service to event.
4. Availability of public transit to event.
5. Impact to natural environment.
6. No vehicle parking permitted within tree protection zones determined by Urban Forestry.
7. Frequency, duration and size of special event.
8. Impact on other park activities and park usage.
9. Impact of inclement weather and options to mitigate damage.

Additional parking during certain events has occasionally been permitted on adjacent hydro fields and continues to be an option providing approval is obtained from Hydro One and subject to other site specific conditions such as park amenities, pedestrian and cyclist traffic, park user safety and adequate traffic/safety control provided by event organizers.

Event organizers will work with Parks staff to review the above criteria as part of the special event permit application process and to determine if a site is suitable for a parking exemption.

Damage deposit fees will be established as part of the process to obtain the event permit and these fees must be provided by the event organizer prior to the start of the event so that the City does not incur any negative financial impacts arising from damages to parkland due to temporary parking allowances.

Should the deposit fees be insufficient to cover the damages, additional fees will be charged to the permit holder as determined by the site supervisor based on the actual

damage incurred. The General Manager's decision as to whether an exemption will be granted shall be final.

2014 Event Exemptions

As planning for 2014 special events are in progress, proponents of the following events have met with Parks staff to confirm the following exemptions for the 2014 season:

- Rotary Club – Ribfest at Thomson Memorial Park:

Hydro fields to be used in 2014 for overflow parking of vehicles as in previous years (fencing off amenities and having parking patrol staff / volunteers to direct vehicles) subject to approval by Hydro One. Ribber trucks to be scheduled to drop off trailers with minimal impact on turf and relocate Ribber trailers away from the tree drip line.

- Rotary Club – Ribfest at Centennial Park:

Ribber trucks to be allowed to park on grass area while all other vehicles to park in designated parking lots.

- James Shaver Woodworth Homestead Foundation - Applewood Summer Concert Series at Broadacres Park:

Designated parking will be allowed in the grass area immediately adjacent to the homestead and shall be used only for these 4 scheduled concert events, to be determined in consultation with Parks staff. Parking on turf will be permissible for 3 hours during the 4 concert events (i.e. 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm). Parking in the grass area will be only for concert attendees with mobility issues and appropriate signage will be posted. In the event of rain, the concert events will be cancelled thereby avoiding vehicles parking on soft and wet grass.

- Canadian Film Centre – Windfields Park:

Vehicles will be allowed to park on turf for the annual event in predetermined locations agreed upon in 2013 for the duration of the event – approximately 4 hours.

All of the above events are subject to a special event permit application, which must be approved in consultation with Parks staff. Damage deposit fees will be established as part of the application process, and must be provided by the event organizer prior to the start of the event. The deposit will be used to offset the damages to parkland as a result of the parking exemption. The intention is to eliminate future parking in non-designated areas as much as possible.

CONCLUSION

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, has had a long standing relationship with several agencies (noted as 2014 event exemptions) to allow temporary parking on turf in City parks during their annual events. In order to prevent further disturbances to the natural environment and to protect the safety of patrons using bike paths and other areas of a park during special events, all efforts must be made to eliminate the need for vehicles to park in City parks, outside of designated areas. Accordingly, it is important to establish criteria to be considered in determining when parking will be permitted outside of designated parking areas during future special events. The City does not anticipate incurring any additional costs to allow temporary parking at special events, as damage deposit fees or supplemental fees charged to the permit holder are expected to offset the cost of damages to parkland arising from these parking exemptions.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Richard Ubbens
Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

ATTACHMENT

Appendix 1 – Vehicle Parking in Non-Designated Areas in City Parks – Exemption Criteria

**VEHICLE PARKING IN NON-DESIGNATED AREAS IN CITY
PARKS - EXEMPTION CRITERIA**

The following is a list of criteria to be applied by the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation as part of a special event permit application process when determining if an exemption should be granted to the Chapter 608 requirement that parking must be confined to designated parking areas within parks:

1. Availability of other parking options within the event's vicinity, i.e. malls, schools, hydro fields (as authorized by those property owners).
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9. Impact of inclement weather and options to mitigate damage.

The General Manager's decision as to whether an exemption will be granted shall be final.