



REPORT FOR ACTION

Water Bottle Policy in City Parks and Facilities

Date: October 30, 2017

To: Parks and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to a request from the Parks and Environment Committee to report on the implementation of the Bottled Water Policy in Toronto parks and park facilities, and its progress installing water bottle filling stations.

Since 2013, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) has installed 68 new or replacement drinking water stations in 63 different parks across the city. In order to continue to improve access to drinking water, another 44 installations are expected to be installed in 2017 and 2018 in another 38 locations. As lease agreements for vendors in PFR parks and facilities expire, new or re-negotiated agreements are made in compliance with the water bottle ban.

Toronto Water operates two HTO To Go water trailers that are available for city-wide events, based on specific criteria, from May 1 to September 30. Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) will continue its focus to improve access to drinking water in its parks and parks facilities by replacing or installing new stations strategically and as-needed across the city.

While the City is committed to making water accessible as widely as possible through drinking water stations, there are, and will continue to be situations when the provision of bottled water may be the only practical way to ensure sufficient access to drinking water.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Parks and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact as a result of adopting the recommendation of this report.

The current cost to purchase and install a drinking water station where water service currently exists ranges from \$2,000.00 - \$3,000 for single or dual wall-mounted models and \$6,000 - 10,000 for single or dual stand-alone pedestal-mounted models. Cost includes installation of a concrete surface where required and connection to an existing water service.

Drinking water station installations are included in the Council Approved 2017-2026 Capital Budget and Plan as part of the State of Good Repair program for Parks Rehabilitation. Drinking water stations are also included as part of new park development or park revitalization projects where deemed appropriate.

Operating costs to test the water at a stand-alone water station in a park, winterize the fountain in late fall, and repair the units due to vandalism or other malfunctions are included as part of the Council Approved Operating Budget.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of December 1, 2, and 3, 2008, City Council, through PW20.1, 17 (b), (c), adopted a motion that directed various city divisions to work together to develop and implement a program that prohibits the sale and distribution of bottled water at all City facilities.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/decisions/2008-12-01-cc27-dd.pdf>

At its meeting of May 18, 2012, the Parks and Environment Committee (PE13.4) requested a report back to the Parks and Environment Committee on, among other things, a strategy to increase access to water in Toronto parks and recreation facilities in light of the City's water bottle ban.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PE13.4>

At its meeting of May 4, 2017, the Parks and Environment Committee requested a report back to the Parks and Environment Committee on the status of implementing the Bottled Water Policy in Toronto parks and park facilities, and its progress installing water bottle filling stations, as well as providing any recommendations for improving access to Toronto tap water at special events in City parks and park facilities.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PE19.5>

COMMENTS

Issue Background

Prior to the full implementation of the water bottle ban on January 1, 2012, PFR distributed a notification letter to all parks and sports field permit holders and posted information on the City's web site of PFR's guidelines encouraging the use of refillable water containers. As of the ban, the standard contract provided and adhered to by all

PFR park and recreation facility permit holders includes the bottled water ban guidelines in the terms and conditions.

In February 2013, PFR implemented a plan to install 10 water bottle filling stations in 2013 to improve access to drinking water and to reduce waste in parks and parks facilities. Since 2013, new park developments and recreation facilities and major park revitalization and recreation rehabilitation projects include, as appropriate and as budget allows, the installation of a drinking water station. Since 2013, PFR has installed 68 new or replacement drinking water stations in 63 different parks across the city. Currently, 44 installations are planned between 2017 and 2018 (subject to change and council approval) in another 38 locations.

There were locations which, at the time of the ban, were exempted. This was for a variety of reasons, including public health and safety related situations, previous lease agreements, and authorized special events in City facilities and parks.

Currently, PFR's Food and Beverage Concession Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Arenas, Community Centres and Parks, along with the Cold Drink Vending RFP includes a requirement that "Successful Proponents must adhere to the requirements of the City's policy on the Ban of the Sale of Bottled Water at City Facilities, as may be amended from time to time." Any new lease agreements negotiated since the ban are in compliance, with the exception of specific locations that qualify for exemption as deemed appropriate due to health and safety reasons.

Providing Access to Drinking Water

Water Access in Parks and Parks Facilities

In order to respond to increasing demand to improve access to drinking water in parks, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has been installing newer modern-style drinking water stations in parks and parks facilities as needed to replace aging infrastructure or to provide new and enhanced service where access to water infrastructure in the park already exists.

The type of unit installed range from single- and dual-wall mounted units that can be installed in existing park buildings such as a washrooms or fieldhouses, to single and dual-pedestal types as stand-alone units in parks where there is existing water service. Models can also vary depending on demand to include either or both a regular drinking fountain and/or bottle filler as well as the option of a pet fountain.

Criteria considered in determining locations for installation include availability of water service in the park, access to trail/pathway network, and number and type of sport and/or play amenities in the park. Installations are prioritized based on type of funding, funding available, park type and use. Where state of good repair (SGR) funds are being used to install new or replacement units, these projects must compete for funding with other state of good repair projects, including projects that address public safety issues which are prioritized over other types of asset or amenity upgrades. Where there is new

park development or park redevelopment, drinking stations are considered and installed as budget allows.

PFR will continue its long-term strategy to improve access to drinking water in its parks by replacing or installing new stations as needed, and as budget allows.

Figure 1: Drinking Fountain installed in Park with Multiple Amenities



Figure 2: Water Bottle Filler Installed at a Park Building Adjacent to Multiple Amenities



Toronto Public Health - Considerations in Providing Drinking Water Access in all City Facilities

The Medical Officer of Health works with Toronto Water to ensure access to safe drinking water in Toronto. The *Safe Drinking Water Act, Health Promotion and*

Protection Act, and the Drinking Water Protocol for the Ontario Public Health Standards regulate this access. Toronto Public Health also supports and promotes providing access to free drinking water in public spaces to promote water consumption and hydration. Toronto Public Health considers Toronto's drinking water to be the ideal and preferred source of drinking water in homes, workplaces and businesses, and in public spaces such as civic centres, recreation facilities, parks, and trails. Access to drinking water in these public spaces will become more important as climate change increases the number and length of hot weather events. Toronto Public Health is not aware of any health-based guidelines or standards on the number of potable water access points needed in outdoor public spaces.

The City requires the provision of free drinking water at specific events, such as those which serve alcohol (and take place on City property) and all-ages electronic dance music events at Exhibition Place. While Toronto Public Health supports making City water available in venues and at events, Public Health staff recognize that there are situations when the provision of bottled water may be the only practical way to ensure sufficient access to drinking water.

Toronto Water - HTO To Go Trailers

Toronto Water's outreach program includes two water trailers that are used to educate people about Toronto drinking water. They provide potable water access at public events that meet the Toronto Water event criteria. The trailers are available for events from May 1 to September 30. Staff discuss the quality of Toronto's municipal tap water and promote other Toronto Water programs and services.

The City's web pages for Toronto Water provide the process and criteria to request the water trailer and also feature a good deal of information and reference documents on tap water and water quality.

Facilities Management - Water Access at Civic Centres

In order to uphold the intent of the water bottle policy at Civic squares during public events, Facilities Management has adopted a protocol that states, "should an event be booked at a Civic Centre square that is expected to draw in excess of 5,000 people by the organizer(s) at Nathan Phillips Square or 3,000 at any other square Toronto Water will be contacted to book one of the two HTO To Go water trailers available for public events". If the HTO To Go water trailer is unavailable then water is available from fountains on the following squares:

- Nathan Phillips Square
- Mel Lastman Square
- East York Civic Centre

Additionally the following Centres have water bottle filling stations inside the building available to the public:

- City Hall
- Metro Hall

- Etobicoke Civic Centre
- East York Civic Centre
- North York Civic Centre
- Scarborough Civic Centre

Conclusion

Recognizing the waste that plastic water bottles produce, the City of Toronto ban encourages the reduction of bottled water use in its civic centres and facilities. PFR is supporting the City's broader waste diversion goals, helping to reduce litter in our parks and lowering waste disposal costs for the City by upgrading and installing new drinking water stations. In order to continue to improve access to drinking water, another 44 installations are expected to be installed by the end of 2018.

As part of its outreach program, Toronto Water operates two HTO To Go trailers that provide potable water access at public events that meet the Toronto Water event criteria. There are a variety of other public squares and civic centres which also provide access to drinking water to the public.

While the City is committed to making water accessible as widely as possible through drinking water stations, there are, and will continue to be situations when the provision of bottled water may be the only practical way to ensure sufficient access to drinking water.

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SIGNATURE

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