

City Council

(Deferred from March 29, 2023 - 2023.MM5.46)

DM6.5	ACTION			Ward: All
-------	--------	--	--	-----------

Update on Alcohol in Parks Pilot - by Councillor Shelley Carroll, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise

Recommendations

Councillor Shelley Carroll, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise, recommend that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consult City Councillors on their interest in hosting a pilot in their wards and to work with interested Councillors to confirm an appropriate pilot for responsible personal alcohol consumption in their respective wards.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, the City Solicitor and the Medical Officer of Health:
 - a. to report to the May 31, 2023 Economic and Community Development Committee meeting with a recommended approach, including necessary bylaw amendments, for allowing responsible personal consumption of alcohol in Toronto parks on a pilot program basis, running from July 1, 2023 to October 9, 2023; and
 - b. to take the appropriate research and consultation steps to ensure that the pilot is informed by relevant experiences and best practices of other Canadian jurisdictions and reflects public health, public safety, enforcement, operational and cost considerations.

Summary

Across the country, major cities are piloting various programs to allow alcohol consumption in public parks. In Toronto, alcohol in parks is illegal but largely unenforced: No tickets were issued in 2022.

Following the lead of these cities and acknowledging the desire for options to drink in public parks, this Motion directs staff to undertake an opt-in pilot program this summer, in line with the best practices of other Canadian cities.

Throughout implementation, City staff shall engage with City Councillors, local neighbourhoods, and equity-deserving communities across the city as they evaluate the pilot's suitability for the Toronto context. This pilot needs to centre a public health and harm-reduction approach, and the evaluation should enumerate the full needs of the program including access to washrooms, waste receptacles, and necessary clean-up efforts.

Reason for urgency: staff need direction now in order to implement bylaw changes this summer.