

Revised Free-Floating Car-Share Program

Date: April 18, 2024
To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
From: General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek City Council's approval to allow for the expansion of the Free-Floating Car Share Program through several Municipal Code amendments. These changes include exemptions from, the city-wide 3-hour unsigned parking rule, restricted parking prohibitions on highways with maximum permitted limits of one (1) hour or more, and from parking prohibitions, in the former North York, from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., from December 1 of one year to March 31 of the next following year on highways set out in Schedule IV to City of Toronto Municipal code Chapter 950. In addition, the report also seeks to remove the limits for the number of permits issued to one company (currently set at 1,000 permits on a first-come-first-serve basis) and the total number of permits that can be issued city-wide (currently limited to 2,000).

Given that the primary focus of the existing program is to allow parking in permit parking areas, should City Council approve Municipal Code amendments associated with these exemptions, the Free-Floating Car-Share program will become more accessible to those residents living in neighbourhoods located in the former Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke-York areas of the city, which are outside permit parking areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services, recommends that:

1. City Council approve the amendments to City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 925 Permit Parking, and City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking, to allow for an expanded free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets, generally as outlined in Attachment 1 to the report (April 18, 2024) from the General Manager, Transportation Services.
 2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary bills to give effect to City Council's decision and City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make any necessary clarifications, refinements, minor modifications, technical amendments, or by-
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law amendments as may be identified by the City Solicitor, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services in order to give effect to Recommendation 1 above.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact from the adoption of the recommendations outlined in this staff report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of November 8, 2023, while considering IE7.3 on “Free-Floating Car-Share Program - Increase Access to the Number of Permits”, amended Infrastructure and Environment Committee Recommendation 4 directing the General Manager of Transportation Services to evaluate opportunities to make free-floating car share vehicles available to people throughout the city where on-street permit parking exists, or off-street parking opportunities exist, or in legal locations established through the Community Council.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.IE7.3>

City Council, at its meeting of October 2, 3 and 4, 2017, referred Item PW23.8 on "Free Floating Car-Share Pilot and Interim Policy" to the General Manager, Transportation Services for further consideration and to report back to the January 31, February 1 and 2, 2018 City Council meeting.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PW23.8>

City Council, at its meeting of January 31 and February 1, 2018, referred Item CC36.14 on "Revised Free-Floating Car-Share Pilot and Interim Policy" to the General Manager, Transportation Services for further consideration and to report back to the April 11, 2018, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee meeting.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CC36.14>

City Council, at its meeting of April 24, 25, 26 and 27, 2018, adopted, as amended, the "Revised Free-Floating Car-Share Pilot and Interim Policy" (Item PW28.11).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PW28.11>

City Council, at its meeting of May 22, 23, and 24, 2018, through Member Motion 41.54, directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, to further consult with the free-floating car-share industry and to report back directly to City Council if any changes are recommended to improve the pilot.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.MM41.54>

City Council, at its meeting of July 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 30, 2018, adopted, as amended, the "Update on Free-Floating Car-Share Pilot and Interim Policy" (Item CC44.33). <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CC44.33>

City Council, at its meeting of June 29 and 30 2020, adopted with amendments, the "Free-Floating Car-Share Pilot - Review" (Item IE12.7). <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.IE12.7>

COMMENTS

Background

Car sharing services are a valued transportation option in the city and have been shown to result in various benefits for Toronto's transportation network, environment, and residents. These benefits include:

- reduced vehicle ownership rates;
- reduced household transportation costs;
- reduced vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT);
- reduced greenhouse gases and emissions; and
- increased walking, cycling, and transit use.

There have been many studies conducted over the last 15 to 20 years on car-share usage and each study has shown that the convenience of having a fleet of vehicles available on demand has prompted many car-sharers to get rid of second cars, put off purchasing vehicles, and in some cases forego car ownership altogether. Some estimates in these studies suggest that for every car-share vehicle on the road, 6 to 8 vehicles are eliminated.

The City of Toronto's Free-Floating Car-Share program was approved by Council, as a permanent program, in July 2020. Under the current program, individual companies are allowed to access a maximum of one thousand (1,000) free-floating car-share permits out of the total two thousand (2,000) permits made available by the City of Toronto, on a first-come-first-serve basis. The program has undergone various changes throughout its lifespan, adjusting to fit the needs of users, the participating organization/company, and to ensure a balanced program that does not negatively impact neighbourhoods with permit parking.

Currently, once a car-share company applies for a free-floating car-share permit, the car-share vehicle is allowed to be parked legally in a residential permit parking area/street in accordance with the following rules:

1. Excluded Areas

Streets and areas that are at 100 percent capacity or more for residential permit parking are excluded from the car-share company's service area via geo-fencing within the respective car-share company's trip reservation system. A list of excluded streets/areas that are at 100 percent capacity or more for residential permit parking is provided by the City at the beginning of the permit period and updated every six months.

2. Parking Limit

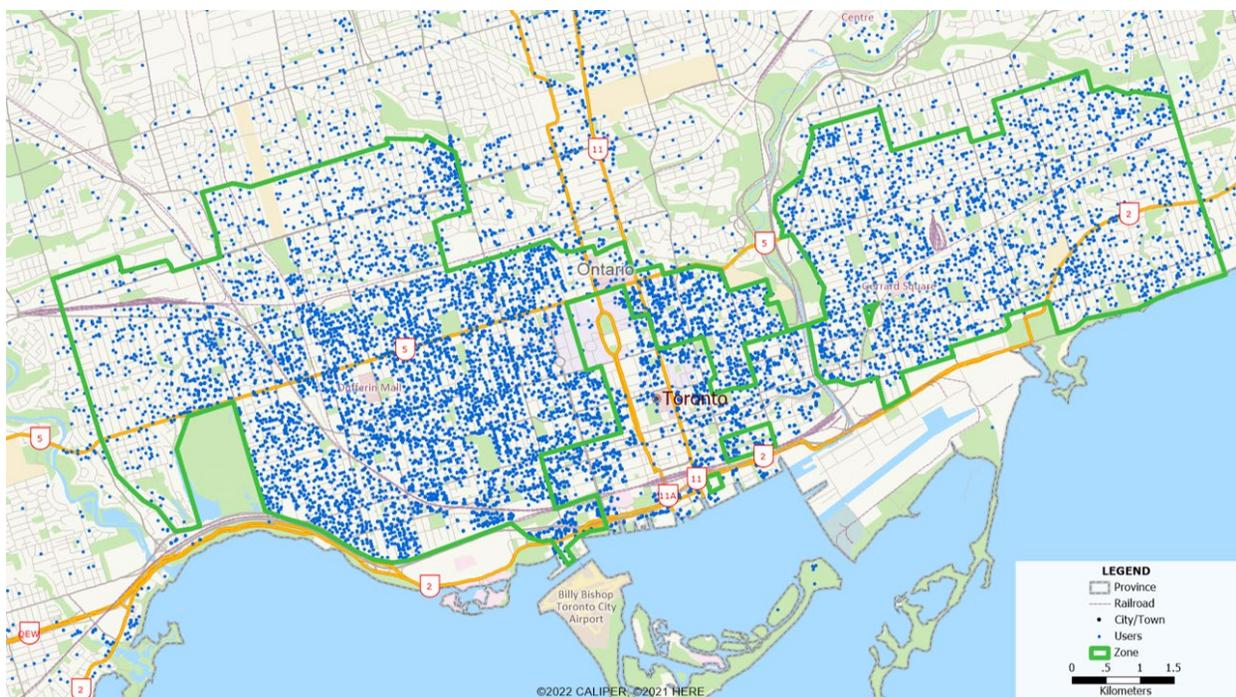
A car-share vehicle must not be parked continuously in any one place for a period exceeding seventy-two (72) consecutive hours.

3. Clustering of Car-Share Vehicles

No more than two car-share vehicles from the same company are allowed to park on a street block (i.e., a street block is defined as that physical portion of the road between two consecutive intersections). The car-share company must move its vehicle(s) within two hours of becoming aware of its car-share vehicle(s) clustering or after receiving notification from the City or a resident.

Participation in the Free-Floating Car-Share Program

To date, Communauto FLEX has been the only car-share organization to participate in the City of Toronto's Free-Floating Car Share program and their operations have been highly successful and popular among the residents of Toronto. The map below illustrates where members of the Communauto service live across Toronto. The heavily concentrated areas are primarily where permit parking exists.



Since Communauto started operations in Toronto, they have experienced year-on-year growth in membership. As of Spring 2024, the number of members is significant; approximately thirty-two thousand (32,000) residents have signed up to the service which is a 43% growth in membership over the past twelve (12) months. Many of these members use the service regularly - on average there are 670 active users per day. The number of complaints from residents regarding non-compliance with the rules, in the last few years, have been almost non-existent. The most common complaint is that the service commonly runs out of available cars, particularly on weekends.

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In order to assist free-floating car-share organizations/companies, such as Communauto, to reach more residents and be able to accommodate the high demand on the program, Transportation Services is proposing a number of city-wide changes to the Free-Floating Car Share program. These changes will allow for opportunities to expand the program outside the downtown core to neighbourhoods in the Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke-York community council areas of the city.

New Exemptions for an Expanded Free-Floating Car-Share Program

In order to allow free-floating car-share organizations/companies to meet the demands placed on their free-floating car-share offerings, Transportation Services recommends exemptions to a number of parking regulations and the removal of the current caps on the number of maximum free-floating car-share permits issued to one car-share organization/company and on the total limit of permits issued city-wide. These changes would allow for an expanded program outside of permit parking areas/streets.

Proposed Parking Exemptions

Transportation Services has considered a number of parking regulations that would be suitable exemptions for the free-floating car-share program without impacting parking availability or winter services. The exemptions would be to the following regulations:

- i) Parking on any highway for a period longer than three hours (i.e., exempt from the 3-hour city-wide unsigned parking rule);
- ii) Parking on any highway with restricted parking with maximum permitted limits of one (1) hour or more; and
- iii) Parking on former City of North York streets where the North York Winter Maintenance Parking is Prohibited (i.e., no parking on certain streets set out in Schedule IV to Chapter 950 from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., from December 1 of one year to March 31 of the next following year).

Exempting free-floating car-share vehicles from the above three (3) listed parking restrictions would ensure better coverage of the service across the city, allowing a larger number of neighbourhoods to gain access to the service. The exemptions would 'unlock' parking spaces on many local and collector roads. Arterial roads, where rush hour periods exist, will not be considered in the exemption, nor will on-street paid parking spots. These additional parking exemptions would 'unlock' just over thirty-two hundred (3,200) kilometres of curb length and approximately three-hundred and eighty-six thousand (386,000) parking spaces. Furthermore, these proposed changes would not override the current restrictions associated with free-floating car-share permits.

Although City Council requested that staff examine legal locations that could be established through Community Council, it is not being recommended by Transportation Services for the free-floating car-share program. The City currently has such a program, which is called the Car-Share Vehicle Parking Area (CVPA) program; a station-based program that allows members to pick-up and drop-off a car-share vehicle from a designated space. Currently, there are forty-one (41) CVPA locations city-wide with

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eighty-six (86) spaces. Under this program, Community Council's have the delegated authority to approve such locations that have met certain criteria.

The recommendation to exempt free-floating car share vehicles from the three (3) parking restrictions, listed above, will 'unlock' many more parking spaces, and provide greater certainty to free-floating car-share companies and customers on where vehicles can and cannot park legally, rather than having an inconsistent approach in designating legal parking spots, from ward to ward through Community Council, for free-floating car-share vehicles. It should be noted that the proposed exemptions are not creating new parking spaces and would not override the conditions associated with any free-floating car-share permit, namely the 72-hour parking limit and vehicle clustering. It should also be noted that car-share vehicles, under these proposed changes, will not be permitted on any streets which do not currently allow on-street parking.

Proposed Removal on the Limited Number of Permits that can be Issued

Should City Council approve the exemptions to the three (3) parking regulation mentioned above, there will be an increase in the demand for free-floating car-share permits from existing and future organizations wishing to enroll into the free-floating car-share program. By the Spring of 2025, Communauto will have one thousand (1,000) registered free-floating car-share vehicles servicing primarily the permit parking areas of the city and any future expansion of their program or that of any other free-floating car-share organization wishing to enroll in the program and seeking to establish a presence outside of permit parking areas would require access to more vehicle permits than the City of Toronto is currently offering under the program.

At the moment, only one thousand (1,000) permits can be issued to any one company, on a first-come-first-serve basis, with an overall city-wide cap of two thousand (2,000) permits. In order to accommodate the expected increase in demand through an expanded free-floating car-share program, the limits on the total number of vehicle permits as well as the limits on the total number to any one organization should be removed. Currently, few companies are operating under a free-floating car-share model in Canada. Any concern that the city may be over-run with car-share vehicles if the cap limits on permits is removed is not something Transportation Services expects to happen. There are many other jurisdictions with similar programs who have decided to forgo setting limits on permits. Nevertheless, staff will continue to monitor the impacts and report back should the situation change.

Conclusion and Next Steps

To ensure the Free-Floating Car Share program continues to thrive and provide a high-quality service to the maximum number of users across the City of Toronto, Transportation Services is seeking approval of the exemptions related to the: city-wide 3-hour unsigned parking rule, restricted parking prohibitions on highways with maximum permitted limits of one (1) hour or more, from parking prohibitions, in the former North York, from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., from December 1 of one year to March 31 of the next following year on highways set out in Schedule IV to City of Toronto Municipal Code

Chapter 950 and that limits on the number of permits issued to one company or city-wide total be removed.

The amendments required to City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 925, Permit Parking, and City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking, to allow for an expanded free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets is generally outlined in Attachment 1 and is appended to this report.

Transportation Services will continue to monitor existing and future car-share organizations/companies that enroll in the program, to ensure compliance with program conditions and resolve any complaints that may arise from the community.

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SIGNATURE

Barbara Gray
General Manager, Transportation Services

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Municipal Code Amendments

Attachment 1 - Municipal Code Amendments

AMENDMENTS TO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 925, PERMIT PARKING

A. Delete the definition of "Free-Floating Car-Share Parking Permit" from § 925-1B and insert the following new definitions of "Free-Floating Car-Share Parking Permit" in § 925-1B:

FREE-FLOATING CAR-SHARE PARKING PERMIT - A permit issued by the General Manager under this chapter authorizing parking of a particular car-share vehicle (a) in locations designated for permit parking under this chapter, excluding residential permit parking locations that are in a free-floating car-share waitlisted area or on a free-floating car-share waitlisted street or streets that have been otherwise excluded from parking by free-floating car-share permit holders under Schedule C to this chapter; (b) on designated highways set out in Schedule IV to Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking; or (c) on designated highways as set out in Schedule XV to Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking, with maximum period permitted of one (1) hour or more.

B. Delete Subsection (2), which reads "No more than 1000 car-share vehicles per application is permitted;", from § 925-5.1A.

C. Delete Subsection (5), which reads "The total number of free-floating car-share parking permits issued by the General Manager under this chapter per car-share organization/company shall not exceed 1000 free-floating car-share parking permits for any given time;", from § 925-5.1B.

D. Delete Subsection (6), which reads "The total number of free-floating car-share parking permits issued by the General Manager under this chapter shall not exceed 2,000 for any given time;", from § 925-5.1B.

AMENDMENTS TO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 950, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

A. Delete the definition of "Free-Floating Car-Share Parking Permit" from § 950-101B and insert the following new definitions of "Free-Floating Car-Share Parking Permit" in § 950-101B:

FREE-FLOATING CAR-SHARE PARKING PERMIT - A permit issued by the General Manager pursuant to Chapter 925, Permit Parking, authorizing parking of a particular car-share vehicle (a) in locations designated for permit parking under Chapter 925, excluding residential permit parking locations that are in a free floating car-share waitlisted area or on a free-floating car-share waitlisted street or streets that have been otherwise excluded from parking by free-floating car-share permit holders under Schedule C to Chapter 925; (b) on designated highways set out in Schedule IV to Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking; or (c) on designated highways in Schedule XV to

Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking, with maximum period permitted of one (1) hour or more.

B. Amend § 950-400D(5) by adding a new Subsection (c) as follows:

"(c) Subject to Subsection to 925-5.1F(1), Subsection D(5) does not apply to a car-share vehicle with a valid free-floating car-share parking permit parked in a location in accordance with this chapter."

C. Amend § 950-400D by adding a new Subsection (9.1) as follows:

"(9.1) Subsection D(9) does not apply to a car-share vehicle with a valid free-floating car-share parking permit. For clarity, § 950-407 supercedes this subsection (9.1)."