



Alejandra Bravo

CITY COUNCILLOR | CHAIR, ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
WARD 9 • DAVENPORT | DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

June 4, 2024

RE: Review of Standard Operating Procedure for Off-Road Vehicles in Parks

To the Chair & Members of Infrastructure and Environment Committee:

Torontonians are proud of our city's extensive urban park system and the opportunities they create for leisure, recreation, learning, discovery, and social connection. Fundamentally, parks are for people.

Increasingly, I've heard from my constituents and people from across Toronto that frequent and unpredictable vehicle usage in green areas of City parks has intruded on the enjoyment of our public parks. Motor vehicles cause damage to fields and turf, dominate pedestrian pathways that aren't designed for vehicles and can block accessible routes, and sometimes leave pedestrians and other vulnerable road users feeling unsafe.

Chapter 608 of the Toronto Municipal Code provides wide latitude to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to permit the operation of motor vehicles within City parks, including corporate vehicles, agency vehicles, contractor vehicles, and vehicles related to event permits. While recognizing that staff sometimes must operate vehicles within park areas to perform work functions that keep our parks running, I've heard from my constituents that the operation and parking of vehicles in City parks has increased in recent years for reasons that don't seem to connect to a specific work function.

The below recommendations seek to review existing standard operating procedure for when vehicles should be permitted to operate and park in areas of City parks without formal road systems. Further, I recommend that Parks, Forestry & Recreation, together with Fleet Services, explore alternative vehicle and equipment types that would support the work of park operations while reducing the use of full-size motor vehicles in parks.

Establishing this guidance for the operation of our parks will help us meet our TransformTO and Vision Zero goals. Together, let's ensure our parks remain welcoming, safe, and put people first.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation and General Manager, Fleet Services, in consultation with other City divisions that operate vehicles in parks and public spaces report to the Infrastructure & Environment Committee in Q1 2025 on a review of standard operating procedure, and any required by-law amendments, which governs the use of City vehicles, agency vehicles, and otherwise permitted vehicles under Chapter 608 of the Toronto Municipal Code in areas of City-owned parks without formal road systems, that is informed by the following considerations:
 - limiting motor vehicle usage where the vehicle is not being used to perform maintenance or repair functions, including by City contractors and where a vehicle is used to support special events and reviewing restrictions to vehicle usage where applicable.

- Alignment with Toronto's Vision Zero and TransformTO plans
 - enabling safe access of emergency vehicles for emergency purposes only
 - reducing impact on tree health from soil compaction
 - existing situational requirements for traffic control/flag people
2. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the General Manager, Fleet Services, to report to the Infrastructure & Environment Committee in Q1 2025 to provide an update on efforts to acquire and implement alternative vehicle and equipment types (such as kei trucks, golf karts, cargo bicycles, and handcarts) for work functions that occur in City parks.

Sincerely,

Alejandra Bravo
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