

Revised Free-Floating Car-Share Program

Date: September 12, 2025

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

At its meeting of June 26 and 27, 2024, City Council considered item IE13.4 titled, “Revised Free-Floating Car-Share Program” which was referred to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee for further consideration with the Parking Strategy, along with a request to report on the following:

- a. the impact of allowing an expanded free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets in the development of the Parking Strategy;
- b. the impact of allowing an expanded free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets on winter maintenance operations;
- c. the possibility to continue to enforce parking regulations when car-share vehicles are in use;
- d. the options for free-floating car-share vehicles dropping off and picking up off-street parking arrangements, rather than solely in public locations designated for permit parking under Municipal Code Chapter 925; and
- e. the development of a communications strategy on the expansion of the free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets.

In addition, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee at its meeting of June 11, 2025 also requested that staff identify high-demand areas for free-floating car-sharing in the City.

This report addresses the requests above and given the growth of the program seeks City Council's approval to allow for the expansion of the Free-Floating Car-Share Program through several Municipal Code amendments within defined free-floating car-share service area(s) requiring endorsement from the local Ward Councillor(s) and approved by the appropriate Community Council before the area(s) are put into operation. 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
- 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 (a seasonal bylaw).

These exemptions would proceed through a process where the free-floating car-share company would identify and map a pre-defined service area, outside of permit parking areas, which would be submitted to the General Manager, Transportation Services who would then seek the local councillor's endorsement.

Should the local councillor endorse the proposed expansion area, Transportation Services would then submit a staff report requesting the appropriate Community Council's approval of the free-floating car-share service area. Once the area is approved and put into operation, customers of the free-floating car-share program can legally park and end their trips only within the defined area(s) at the termination of their reservations and only on those streets where the exemptions apply.

The report also seeks to remove the limit for the number of permits issued to one company which is currently set at 1,000 permits on a first-come, first-serve basis out of a total 2,000 available permits. At this time there is only one company that provides free-floating car-share in the City, but in the future, others may also have an interest in participating.

Should City Council approve Municipal Code amendments associated with these exemptions, conditions and process, the Free-Floating Car-Share program will become more accessible to those residents living in neighbourhoods where demand for the service is on the rise and provide a more equitable service across the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the designation of free-floating car-share service areas outside permit parking areas, and delegate final decision to Community Council on the establishment of free-floating car-share service areas and authorize the necessary amendments to Chapter 27, Council Procedures to give effect.
2. 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 (September 12, 2025) from the General Manager, Transportation Services.

3. 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-law amendments as may be identified by the City Solicitor, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services in order to give effect to Recommendations 1 and 2 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

The Infrastructure and Environment Committee, at its meeting of June 11, 2025 deferred Item IE22.3-Revised Free-Floating Car-Share Program, and directed the General Manager, Transportation Service, to report to the September 26, 2025 Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting on the findings of the consultations including any possible solutions for identified high-demand areas.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.IE22.3>

City Council, at its meeting of June 26 and 27, 2024, referred Item IE13.4 to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee for further consideration with the Parking Strategy in the first quarter of 2025, and requested the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with other appropriate City Divisions, to report on the following:

- a. the impact of allowing an expanded free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets in the development of the Parking Strategy;
- b. the impact of allowing an expanded free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets on winter maintenance operations;
- c. the possibility to continue to enforce parking regulations when car-share vehicles are in use;
- d. the options for free-floating car-share vehicles dropping off and picking up off-street parking arrangements, rather than solely in public locations designated for permit parking under Municipal Code Chapter 925; and
- e. the development of a communications strategy on the expansion of the free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.IE13.4>

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 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>

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 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>

COMMENTS

Background

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, during or at the end of a reservation, 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 free-floating 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 free-floating 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.

Proposed 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, along with a condition that car-share organizations/companies must comply with respect to these exemptions. These changes would allow for an expanded program outside of permit parking areas/streets.

Proposed Parking Exemptions and Conditions

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, and anticipating areas of the City that are prime for expansion based on information supplied by the car-share industry. 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).

These exemptions would follow a process in which the free-floating car-share company provides a digital map of the defined service area(s) of operation, outside of permit parking areas, to the General Manager, Transportation Services. The General Manager, Transportation Services, would consult the local Ward Councillor(s) in which the defined area(s) are located prior to seeking the appropriate Community Council approval through a staff report.

Once the free-floating car-share service area is approved by Community Council, as a condition of the free-floating car-share permit, the free-floating car-share company will be required to geo-fence their new operating service area within the company's trip reservation system. This would limit the new exemptions to the geo-fenced service area and more specifically the streets with those specific exemptions. This will ensure customers of the free-floating program end their trips within the defined area at the termination of their reservation. The maps of the geo-fenced areas, outside of permit parking areas, will be shared by Transportation Services with Toronto Police Service's Enforcement unit to help them with the enforcement of these new provisions and would be included within the City of Toronto's Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking for reference.

Exempting free-floating car-share vehicles from the above three (3) listed parking restrictions would ensure better coverage of the service across certain areas of the city, where there is growing demand, thereby allowing more 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 could 'unlock' just over thirty-two hundred (3,200) kilometres of curb length and approximately three-hundred and eighty-six thousand (386,000) parking spaces across the city, although they would be limited to those locations only with Community Council approval.

The recommendation to exempt free-floating car-share vehicles from the three (3) parking restrictions, listed above, in the Community Council approved areas will provide greater certainty to free-floating car-share companies and customers on where vehicles can and cannot park legally within a defined service area. 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 that 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 regulations mentioned above, there will be an increase in the demand for free-floating car-share permits from existing and potential future organizations wishing to enroll in the free-floating car-share 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. To accommodate the expected increase in demand through an expanded free-floating car-share program, Transportation Services recommends that the limit on the total number of vehicle permits for any one organization be removed.

By the end of 2025, Communauto, the sole provider of the free-floating car-share service at this time, will have approximately eight hundred (800) registered free-floating car-share vehicles servicing primarily the permit parking areas of the city. 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 to a single company under the program. We have been informed by Communauto that they expect to need more than one thousand (1,000) permits by the end of 2026. Staff are not proposing an increase in the overall city-wide cap of two thousand (2,000) permits.

Council Motion of June 26 and 27, 2024 - Request for Additional Information

What we heard during the development of the Strategic Parking Framework

During consultation sessions with various stakeholder groups, both internal and external, car-sharing was an emerging topic which was well supported and the City encouraged to advance beyond what is currently available to residents of the City and visitors (*i.e., through the free-floating program and car-share vehicle area program*).

Some key messages heard included:

- 'Provide sustainable mobility services like car-sharing';
- 'Expand opportunities for car-share, which can encourage a reduction in private vehicle ownership';
- 'Make car-share parking readily available';
- 'Provide more dedicated car-share parking in off-street lots';
- 'Phase-in the expansion of free-floating car-share parking outside of permit parking areas'; and
- 'Dedicate a share of on-street parking spaces for car-share vehicles, where there is a demonstrated demand'.

Impact on Winter Operations

To date the free-floating car-share program has not impacted Transportation Services' winter operation. Communauto has implemented a number of winter measures to

ensure that their vehicles are not impeding winter plowing or snow removal during snow emergencies including:

- Advising customers when adverse weather conditions are about to occur and/or snow removal operations are announced or are still underway. Communauto sends out alerts to their customers and offer vehicles for free use during those periods or at reduced rates to incentivize customers to move the vehicles.
- Communauto also advises its customers that when snow removal operations have been announced that they respect the temporary signage alerting motorists not to park their vehicles where snow operations will be taking place.

Parking Enforcement

Free-floating car-share vehicles are subject to all applicable parking rules and regulations under the Municipal Code Chapter 950 (Traffic and Parking). Since its inception in 2020, enforcement of free-floating car-share vehicles has not been an issue for Toronto Police Service's Enforcement unit and in the last four (4) years only one (1) parking violation notice has been issued. Communauto, and to our knowledge its customers have strictly complied with all the conditions and parking requirements of the program. An expanded program outside permit parking areas will be an incremental expansion and will be manageable to carry out targeted enforcement.

Off-Street Options for Car-Sharing

To complement their free-floating car-share program Communauto, along with other car-share companies like Enterprise CarShare and Zipcar, offer off-street options for their customers. These companies have partnered with many private off-street parking lots, Green P lots, residential complexes, malls and businesses to provide car-sharing services to areas of the city where on-street opportunities are limited due to low demand or underlying parking regulations. At this time, Communauto has almost four hundred (400) car-share vehicles that start and end their trips in off-street facilities. The car-share companies have come to understand that to meet the demand of their customers a balanced program of car-sharing that offers both on-street and off-street availability is critical.

Communication Strategy on the Expanded Free-floating Car-share Program

Should Council support this proposal, Transportation Services will be working with the Strategic Public & Employee Communication group to develop a communication plan on the expansion of the free-floating car-share program outside of permit parking areas/streets, which will include how the Free-floating Car-share Program has changed, and the revised rules of the program. This information will also be included in the Councillor's Update, which could be incorporated into the councillors' newsletters to their residents and communicated through various social media channels. In addition, Transportation Services will be updating its internet website with the changes should City Council approve this proposal.

Future Expansion Areas for Free-floating Car-Share

The demand for free-floating car-share service continues to grow across the city. Communauto, the sole provider of the on-street free-floating car-share service at the moment, has provided a valued service to residents of Toronto. To ensure that the City continues to provide options to reduce vehicle ownership, household transportation costs, vehicle-kilometres travelled, and reduce greenhouse gases and emissions, it is important to make the necessary adjustments to the free-floating car-share program to ensure the service is extended to other areas of the city, outside of permit parking areas, where there is pent-up demand.

The map shown in Attachment 2, appended to this report, illustrates where members of the free-floating car-share service live across Toronto. As shown, the areas of the downtown core have the highest memberships given that the program was first launched in 2020 in permit parking areas. Since 2020, the membership has grown from 6,000 to over 51,000 users. To meet the current and future demand for the free-floating car-share service, different areas of the city have been identified, with proposed expansion phased over time (i.e., 0 - 3 years, 3 - 5 years and beyond 5 years) as illustrated on the map. The precise service areas for expansion would be more accurately defined and shared with the local Ward Councillor(s) for endorsement before seeking Community Council approval.

Clearly, the free-floating car-share service has been embraced by residents of Toronto and increasing the service to other areas of the city in a phased approach will ensure the program's continued success.

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 following exemptions, limited to those areas approved by Community Council: 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 and that car-share companies provide digital maps defining their expected free-floating service area(s) outside of permit parking areas as a condition of the permit.

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 are generally outlined in Attachment 1 and are 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.

CONTACT

Elyse Parker
Director, Policy, Data & Strategic initiatives
Transportation Services
Tel: 416-338-2432
Elyse.Parker@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Barbara Gray
General Manager, Transportation Services

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Municipal Code Amendments
Attachment 2: Future Expansion Areas for Free-floating Car-Share Outside Permit
Parking Areas

Attachment 1 - Municipal Code Amendments

AMENDMENTS TO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 925, PERMIT PARKING

1. 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.

2. Amend by deleting the phrase "No more than 1000 car-share vehicles per application is permitted;", from § 925-5.1A(2) and replacing it with "No more than 2000 car-share vehicles per application is permitted;".
3. Amend by deleting the phrase "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(5) and replacing it with "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 2000 free-floating car-share parking permits for any given time;".
4. Addition to § 925-5.1A by adding a new Subsection A1(5), a car-share organization/company who wish to provide free-floating car-share service outside of permit parking areas/streets shall submit to the General Manager a digital map of the defined service area(s) of operation, and the General Manager, Transportation Services is to consult the Ward Councillor(s) for the Ward(s) in which the defined service area(s) are located prior to seeking the appropriate Community Council approval of the defined service area(s).

AMENDMENTS TO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 950, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

1. 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."

2. Insert a new definition of "FREE-FLOATING SERVICE AREA" in § 950-101B in alphabetical order as follows:

"FREE-FLOATING SERVICE AREA – Areas where free-floating car-share vehicles with an authorized free-floating car-share permit issued by the General Manager, Transportation Services pursuant to Chapter 925, Permit Parking are authorized to park outside permit parking areas as defined in § 950-400D."

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

"(c) Subsection D(5) does not apply to a car-share vehicle with a valid free-floating car-share parking permit parked in free-floating service area(s) as set out in Schedule XLVIII (Part 1) in § 950-1347."

4. Amend § 950-400D by adding a new Subsection (11) as follows:

"(11) Subsection D(9) does not apply to a car-share vehicle with a valid free-floating car-share parking permit in free-floating service areas as set out in Schedule XLVIII (Part 1) in § 950-1347."

5. A. By inserting a new § 950-400D (11) as follows:

"§ 950-400D (11) Free-floating Service Areas

- A. The areas listed in Column 1 of Schedule XLVIII (Part 1) in § 950-1347 and shown on the corresponding maps in Schedule XLVIII (Part 2) in § 950-1347.

- B. By inserting in Article IV in numerical order the following:

"§ 950-1347, Schedule XLVIII (Part 1): Free-floating Service Areas"

"§ 950-1347, Schedule XLVIII (Part 2): Free-floating Service Areas - Maps"

- C. By creating and inserting a new Schedule XLVIII (Part 1): Free-floating Service Areas as follows:

TORONTO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 950

§ 950-1347. Schedule XLVIII (Part 1): Free-floating Service Areas (see § 950-400)

(Column 1) Free-floating Service Area	(Column 2) East Limit/West Limit of Free- floating Service Area	(Column 3) North Limit/South Limit of Free- floating Service Area	(Column 4) Free-floating Service Area Map

- D. By creating and inserting a new Schedule XLVIII (Part 2): Free-floating Service Areas - Maps as follows:

TORONTO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 950

§ 950-1347. Schedule XLVIII (Part 2): Free-floating Service Areas - Maps (see § 950-400)

Attachment 2 - Future Expansion Areas for Free-floating Car-Share Outside Permit Parking Areas

