

Implementation Update: Consolidated and Updated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks

Date: November 20, 2025

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks and Recreation, and General Manager, Fleet Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In response to City Council direction ([2025.IE22.5](#)), this report provides an implementation update on the Council adopted *Updated and Consolidated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks* (henceforth, referred to as the *Guidance*).

The majority of implementation activities are complete with some ongoing roll-out into 2026. The new *Guidance* is now included in new third-party permits, contracts, and agreements that include authorization to operate a vehicle in a City park. The *Guidance* has been shared with all City divisions, agencies, and corporations that operate City fleet vehicles, and a staff training module is now available to all staff with mandatory completion required for City fleet operators by March 2026. Public and staff education efforts are under development, including a staff poster campaign at park service yards for Spring 2026, and social media posts showing the appropriate use of vehicles in parks. The City website has also been updated to reinforce the *Guidance*. Turf damage in City parks caused by vehicles can be now reported to 311. Lastly, this report outlines the factors that impact the timeline for turf repairs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks and Recreation and the General Manager, Fleet Services recommend that:

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

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 26, 2025, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee received a report, responding to an information request by City Council on the number of solid waste trucks used in parks, where the trucks are required to drive on the turf to pick up waste in parks, and the estimated costs from the Parks and Recreation budget to repair turf.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.IE24.8>

At its meeting on June 26, 2025, City Council directed the General Manager, Parks and Recreation and the General Manager, Fleet Services, working with other relevant Division Heads, to implement Updated and Consolidated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks by: (1) Updating template terms and conditions for future third-party agreements; (2) Developing public communications about vehicle operation in parks; (3) Identifying opportunities for enhanced reporting of damage caused by vehicles in parks through the Parks/311 integration; (4) Developing and rolling out an enhanced training module for City Fleet operators and a staff education campaign on vehicle operation in parks; and (5) to report to Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the fourth quarter 2025 on implementation progress and standard timelines for repairing damage caused by vehicles in parks. City Council also directed the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to report to the September 26, 2025 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee with information on the number of solid waste trucks used in parks, where the trucks are required to drive on the turf to pick up waste in parks, and the estimated costs from the Parks and Recreation budget to repair these turfs.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.IE22.5>

At its meeting on July 24 and 25, 2024, City Council requested the General Manager, Parks and Recreation (formerly Parks, Forestry and Recreation) and the General Manager, Fleet Services Division, in consultation with other relevant City divisions and the Toronto Police Service, to report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the first quarter 2025 on a review of standard operating procedure that governs the use of permitted vehicles under Chapter 608 of the Toronto Municipal Code in areas of City-owned parks without formal road systems, and 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.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.IE15.7>

At its meeting on June 10, 2014, City Council adopted criteria to determine when special event permits may allow for temporary parking in areas within parks that are not designated for parking and authorized the General Manager of Parks and Recreation to apply criteria. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2014.PE27.3>

COMMENTS

In response to City Council direction and public concerns in relation to the authorized use of vehicles in City parks, Parks and Recreation Division and Fleet Services Division staff reviewed the City's vehicle-use policy, procedures, and training requirements. At its

June 2025 meeting, City Council considered the resulting, Consolidated and Updated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks (the *Guidance*) and directed staff to include the *Guidance* in any new third-party permits, contracts, and agreements that include authorization to operate a vehicle in a City park, and to develop and deploy a staff training module and education campaigns for staff and the public. City Council also directed staff to explore opportunities for enhanced reporting through the integration of Parks Service Requests in 311 and report on timelines for turf repairs.

All implementation activities are on schedule for implementation, with 80% completed to date. Some activities have launched in 2025 with continued roll-out into 2026.

The following sections provide additional information on how the *Guidance* has been applied.

Fleet Services Division

The City of Toronto's fleet is comprised of vehicles and fleet equipment owned, leased, or rented by the City and used to deliver a range of City services, by City employees. Fleet Services Division (FSD) is responsible for procuring and maintaining these assets, as well as providing the relevant training to operators of these vehicles and equipment.

To ensure that staff operating City vehicles are aware of the updated *Guidance* required for operating vehicles in City parks, Fleet Services has undertaken the following activities:

- Updated policies and operating procedures to align with the updated *Guidance*.
- Launched a focused training module, in October 2025, for existing City fleet operators to complete before the 2026 spring/summer season. The module focuses on understanding park regulations (including speed limits and turf/tree root protection), safety awareness (for both City operators and pedestrians/cyclists), and promoting responsible driving that contributes to the enjoyment of all park visitors. City operators will be required to complete this module by the end of March 2026. Thereafter, this module will be integrated into regular onboarding and refresher training for City staff operating Fleet vehicles and equipment.
- Sent a memo in October 2025 to all City divisions, agencies, and corporations that operate Fleet vehicles, to:
 - Highlight the updated *Guidance* for operating vehicles in City parks, emphasizing the need to operate safely and minimize damage to turf and trees.
 - Inform them of the requirement for fleet operators to complete the training module by the end of March 2026,
 - Advise them to update their standard operating procedures to align with the *Guidance*, and to distribute the *Guidance* to all relevant staff.

Parks and Recreation Division

To ensure adherence to the *Guidance* by authorized division staff and third-party vehicle operators in parks and to improve public awareness, Parks and Recreation has undertaken the following activities:

- Updated third-party permits, contracts, and agreements to include the *Guidance*, if authorization to operate a vehicle in a City park is required.

- As part of staff education, sent a memo in November 2025 to all division staff to inform them of the *Guidance*. In addition, P&R is developing and will be rolling out an information poster campaign to be posted at all parks service yards by Spring 2026 and updating staff operating manuals to include the *Guidance*.
- Updated the City website to reinforce the *Guidance*, including only driving on roadways and parking in designated areas.
- Leveraging existing divisional social media public education efforts to show the appropriate use of vehicles in parks (e.g. using flashers and a guide when backing up) starting by the end of 2025.

Lastly, as of September 2025, Parks Service Requests have been integrated into 311. Damaged turf can now be reported to 311 along with photos of the damaged area and other details. The 311 data will be reviewed on a regular basis to understand issues by location and identify any required follow-up.

Turf Repairs in City Parks

As reported to City Council in September 2025 (IE24.8), the majority of turf damage from vehicles in parks is minor to medium in scale. Minor and medium sized repairs have slightly different associated costs:

- A minor turf repair (200 square feet or less) is approximately \$500 to repair including staff, materials and equipment.
- A medium turf repair (500 square feet or less) is approximately \$1,000 to repair including staff, materials and equipment.
- A large turf repair is approximately \$2500 or higher, depending on size and scope of the repair required.

Standard timelines for repairing turf damage can vary. Turf repair is a seasonal and weather-dependent operation, which impacts when and how rapidly a repair can be implemented. For instance, turf repairs cannot take place in winter or if the damaged area is water-logged from localized flooding. Spring and Fall are the best times for grass seeding as weather conditions are generally more favourable to establish grass that will allow for normal use.

Turf repairs are typically scheduled and completed in bulk by Parks staff to maximize the efficiency of available labour and resources. As turf repair is a seasonal activity, repair work is typically coordinated once multiple damaged areas have been identified. Crews are then deployed to address multiple impacted locations.

To maximize the efficiency of available labour and resources, turf repairs will continue to be managed under the operating procedures described above. If repairs cannot begin immediately, damaged areas are often marked with safety pylons and/or paint to reduce risk to park visitors and prevent further turf damage. The integration of Parks Service Requests into 311 will assist with the coordination and tracking of turf repairs.

Outcomes

The interdivisional table established by Parks and Recreation and Fleet Services to develop and distribute the updated *Guidance* will continue to meet on a regular basis

throughout 2026 to monitor the outcomes and impacts of these activities and to introduce adjustments to vehicle operator education as needed.

In addition, staff will use information from the recent 311 integration with Parks and Recreation division to establish baseline data on the volume and location of Service Requests related to the use of vehicles in parks, including damage to turf. On a seasonal basis (Spring and Fall), this data will be reviewed to identify areas in the City that may be appropriate to target for staff and third-party education related to safe and appropriate vehicle use in parks.

Conclusion

City Council's adoption of the Consolidated and Updated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks closed an operational gap by requiring that everyone who is driving a vehicle in a park for an authorized purpose is subject to consistent, rigorous standards to protect staff, park visitors, and parklands. The implementation of the activities outlined in this report is expected to improve awareness of park regulations and safety considerations and the responsible use of vehicles in parks. Ongoing monitoring to identify opportunities for adjustment and reinforcement of the guidance will be supported through the cooperation of Parks and Recreation and Fleet Services.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Consolidated and Updated Guidance on Vehicle Operation in Parks