

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM29.8	ACTION			Ward: All
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Time for Outdated Park Rules to Touch Grass - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Rachel Chernos Lin

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Rachel Chernos Lin, recommends that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to review Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks, and report in the fourth quarter of 2025 with recommendations to remove any provisions that are archaic, burdensome, or unnecessary.
2. City Council request the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to report in the fourth quarter of 2025 with options to provide more food and beverage offerings in parks, where appropriate, including an assessment of physical structures and operating models.

Summary

Toronto's parks are some of the most used and cherished public spaces residents have to enjoy. They are places that we use to participate in sports, go for a walk, or just sit with friends and family at a picnic table. For the increasing number of Torontonians that live in highrise buildings, the local park is their backyard. Parks are where we come together. That's why the City needs to adapt to the changing way parks are being used by residents.

Many of Toronto's park by-laws are archaic, burdensome, unnecessary, and sometimes even absurd. One sign in a Midtown park prohibits ball playing, kite flying, frisbee throwing, large picnics and, ironically, posting signs. There are also by-laws in place against landing hot air balloons and cursing. This motion requests Staff to review the Parks By-law to remove measures that unfairly restrict residents from the full enjoyment of our parks.

This motion also requests Staff to enable more food and beverage offerings in parks. Cities around the world establish kiosks and small cafes that provide enjoyable meeting places for residents to congregate. These could be tailored to the size and use of the parks; from small huts serving hot chocolate and coffee adjacent to outdoor rinks to kiosks serving sandwiches surrounded by picnic tables. There is inspiration from around the world that Toronto can draw on to offer a more enjoyable experience in our parks.

Background Information (City Council)

