

## **Update on 2026 Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones**

**Date:** May 20, 2026  
**To:** City Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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This report responds to City Council's requests in consideration of 2026.EX30.2 to report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee and City Council to provide an update on the implementation of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs) for the 2026 summer season, and funding for large buoys to mark the MWEZs requested by City Council offshore of Humber Bay Shores, Hanlan's Point Beach, Woodbine Beach and Cherry Beach.

In April 2026, City Council requested large marker buoys to communicate boundaries of the MWEZs to be established in 2026. The estimated cost for ten of these marker buoys, including procurement, installation, maintenance, removal and storage is \$545,500. Through negotiations with the Toronto Port Authority (TPA) and City staff, the TPA has committed to contributing \$235,000 towards the costs of these marker buoys. The remainder of the costs, comprising \$310,500, will be funded through transferring funding from identified capital projects in the Waterfront Secretariat's 2026-2035 Capital Budget and Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council request that the Director of Waterfront Secretariat transfer \$310,500 for planned 2026 capital work from the Wider Waterfront and Marine Strategy project as part of the next phase of Waterfront Revitalization Initiative within the Waterfront Secretariat's 2026-2035 Capital Budget and Plan and apply the funds towards the purchase and installation of marker buoys for Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones in 2026.
2. City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the Toronto Port Authority for the purchase and operation of marker buoys for

Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones in 2026, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the Director of Waterfront Secretariat, and in a form approved by the City Solicitor, and flow funds to the Toronto Port Authority governed by the agreement.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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For 2026, the total operating and capital cost for the ten (10) marker buoys is estimated to be \$545,500. This includes \$445,500 in capital cost to procure the buoys and the weight and chain assembly, as well as first year installation costs. Operating costs of \$100,000 include removal of the buoys after the 2026 season and winter maintenance and storage. As the TPA has agreed to provide one-time funding of \$235,000 towards this purpose, the City would be responsible for funding \$310,500 of the total cost in 2026. The TPA would be responsible for all activities related to procuring, locating, installing, maintaining, removing and storing the buoys. City funds would be transferred to the TPA for this purpose under an agreement with clear conditions for its use.

To fund the purchase and initial installation of ten marker buoys to communicate proposed MWEZ boundaries, \$310,500 in planned capital work for 2026 from the Wider Waterfront and Marine Strategy project for the next phase of Waterfront Revitalization Initiative in the Waterfront Secretariat's 2026-2035 Capital Budget and Plan would be transferred. The Waterfront Revitalization Initiative is a tri-government partnership adopted by City Council with funding commitments from the City, Province and Federal government to jointly deliver a set of priority projects including vital public infrastructure that enable the future development of housing, parks and public realm, and to advance planning for new destinations and attractions on the waterfront. Planned work will divert from the original scope of projects tabled as part of the next phase of the waterfront partnership. This work, which will now start in later years, would include:

- Reduction of \$150,000 for the Island Access Study to explore options to improve public access to the Toronto Islands, including a fixed link.
- Reduction and deferral of \$160,500 from the Regional Mobility Study to explore the development of Marine Hubs, intended as sites for the rental of personal watercraft.

Beyond 2026, the annual operating cost to install, remove, store and maintain the buoys for the MWEZs established in 2026 is estimated at \$350,000 in 2027 and \$360,500 in 2028. These operating costs will increase the City's opening operating pressure in 2027 and 2028 and will need to be considered along with other priorities through the 2027 and 2028 budget processes.

<i>Estimated City Portion of Capital and Operating Costs for Ten Marker Buoys for MWEZs Established in 2026</i>			
	2026	2027 Outlook	2028 Outlook
Capital Cost	445,500		
Operating Cost	100,000	350,000	360,500

<i>Estimated City Portion of Capital and Operating Costs for Ten Marker Buoys for MWEZs Established in 2026</i>			
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>545,500</b>	<b>350,000</b>	<b>360,500</b>
TPA Funding	(235,000)		
<b>Cost to City</b>	<b>310,500</b>	<b>350,000</b>	<b>360,500</b>

Further, the number of exclusion zones may increase in 2027 and beyond, as Council has requested new MWEZs and new Vessel Operating Restriction Regulations offshore in distinct areas along the Toronto waterfront. Subject to approvals by TPA and Transport Canada, and should Council consider marker buoys for these new exclusion zones a priority, the City would be required to fund all costs of the buoys through capital and operating budgets. These costs would be included for consideration along with other priorities through future budget processes.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting of April 20, 21 and 22, City Council adopted the Toronto PWC Safety Plan and requested the Toronto Port Authority establish an additional Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone offshore of Cherry Beach and in the Outer Harbour, additional protections for non-motorized watercraft in the Eastern Gap, and specific MWEZ boundaries for Hanlan's Point Beach. Council requested the TPA absorb the full cost of marker buoys to communicate MWEZ boundaries on an ongoing basis, and if required, requested City staff to provide recommendations for alternate or supplemental funding sources to fund the large buoys for the 2026 summer season. In addition, Council requested City staff to establish stakeholder advisory committees to advise on MWEZs at Cherry Beach and the Outer Harbour and Woodbine Beach, and report to Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the implementation of MWEZs and City Council on funding of marker buoys for MWEZs.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.EX30.2>.

At its meeting of October 8 and 9, 2025, City Council re-opened and amended Item 2025.MM32.16 to request a review of the roles and responsibilities for motorized watercraft, including Personal Watercraft, and make recommendations on how to strengthen enforcement in summer 2026, establish a multi-party working group to develop an overall integrated strategy to address dangerous motorized watercraft use.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MM33.20>

At its meeting of July 23 and 24, 2025, City Council requested Ports Toronto (now Toronto Port Authority) to implement a Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone by-law from Woodbine Beach to the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant and off recreational beaches at Bluffer's Park to address public safety concerns, and to explore

opportunities for MWEZs at Marie Curtis Park, Humber Bay Shores Park, Humber Bay Park West and Humber Bay Park East. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MM32.16>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Update on Requests for Additional MWEZs and MWEZ Boundaries**

Council's requests to the Toronto Port Authority from its April 2026 meeting for an additional MWEZ and protections for non-motorized watercraft and MWEZ boundaries have been formally communicated to the TPA on May 1, 2026. These requests include an additional MWEZ offshore of Cherry Beach and in the Outer Harbour and additional protections for non-motorized watercraft in the Eastern Gap.

TPA, in consultation with Toronto Police Services Marine Unit are considering Council's requests and are currently assessing the safety risks at potential MWEZ locations and boundaries for the 2026 summer season. City staff anticipate TPA will communicate their final decisions regarding the locations of the marker buoys within the next month.

### **Funding for Marker Buoys**

As noted in correspondence to the City Manager dated April 1, 2026 (Attachment 1 of this report), the Toronto Port Authority was prepared to supply marker buoys to communicate boundaries of MWEZs that they establish, subject to all associated costs being borne by the City. The marker buoys must be installed, maintained, removed and stored over the winter on annual basis as they could be moved by strong currents, and potentially damaged or destroyed by ice, if they were left in the water all year round.

In its meeting of April 21 and 22, 2026, in consideration of 2026.EX30.2, Council requested the TPA absorb the full cost of marker buoys to communicate MWEZ boundaries on an ongoing basis.

In response to Council's latest request for funding, the TPA has offered to share the costs of the marker buoys in 2026, contributing \$23,500 to the cost of each buoy, up to a maximum of ten marker buoys. Should Council approve funding recommended in this report, TPA's total contribution would equal \$235,000.

For the 2026 summer season, this report recommends a funding strategy for ten marker buoys, the maximum number that the TPA is prepared to cost-share. As noted, TPA are still determining final MWEZ areas and boundaries for 2026. Should Council approve funding for the City's share of marker buoy costs, TPA will determine their placement to demarcate MWEZ boundaries, in consultation with TPS Marine Unit, to facilitate effective enforcement.

### **Next Steps**

As communicated in their letter of April 1, 2026, to the City Manager (forming Attachment 1), the TPA has approved MWEZs requested by Council as a pilot project

for 2026. They have required the City to evaluate the effectiveness of the MWEZs and the marker buoys used to communicate the MWEZ boundaries. City staff, in partnership with the Toronto Police Service Marine Unit and in consultation with waterfront stakeholders, will collect data and evaluate the MWEZ implementation for the 2026 summer season, and share it with the TPA. City staff will report back through the 2027 budget process to outline the results of the pilot project and provide recommendations on next steps.

## **CONTACT**

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Jean Abou Saab, Chief of Staff, City Manager's Office  
[jean.abousaab@toronto.ca](mailto:jean.abousaab@toronto.ca); 416-392-3922

Annely Zonena, Director, Waterfront Secretariat, City Planning Division,  
[Annely.Zonena@toronto.ca](mailto:Annely.Zonena@toronto.ca); 416-396-4431

## **SIGNATURE**

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Paul Johnson  
City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Letter dated April 1, 2026 from the Toronto Port Authority