

Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan

Date: March 30, 2026

To: Executive Committee

From: City Manager, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, and Interim Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto has experienced increasing safety risks, compliance challenges, and public concern related to the use of Personal Watercraft (PWCs) along the waterfront, particularly in near-shore and high-use areas. Unsafe operation of PWCs can conflict with swimmers and paddlers, and unpermitted commercial PWC rental activity in City parks and beaches have highlighted the need for a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional response that takes into account the various roles and responsibilities of the City, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) Marine Unit, and external partners such as the Toronto Port Authority and Transport Canada.

PWC is the regulatory and industry term for a vessel less than four metres in length that uses an internal combustion engine powering a water-jet pump as its primary source of propulsion, and that is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel rather than inside it. Common brands of PWCs include Jet Skis, Sea-Doos, and WaveRunners. PWCs do not refer to non-motorized, human powered pleasure craft such as canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards.

This report presents Toronto's Personal Watercraft Safety Plan for Council's consideration. The Plan provides an integrated strategy to improve safety, reduce risk, and strengthen compliance related to PWC activity along Toronto's waterfront. It responds to City Council direction ([2025.MM32.16](#) and [2025.MM33.20](#)) and has been developed collaboratively with key partners noted above as well as through engagement with waterfront stakeholders.

The Plan focuses on actions within the City's control, while coordinating with federal authorities responsible for on-water regulation. Key components include enhanced land- and water-based enforcement, targeted public education and signage, and continued collaboration with federal partners on exclusion zones for motorized watercraft. The Plan also proposes exploring and identifying potential sites for compliant PWC rental operations to launch, subject to Council direction and applicable approvals.

Collectively, the actions outlined in the Plan aim to reduce the risk of incidents, deter unpermitted commercial activity on City property, improve public awareness and voluntary compliance, and strengthen coordination across agencies. The plan supports safe and equitable access to the waterfront while protecting swimmers, boaters, and Toronto's natural environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, and Interim Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommend that:

1. City Council adopt the Personal Watercraft Safety Plan as described in Attachment 1.
2. City Council thank Toronto Port Authority for the implementation of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone bylaws at Hanlan's Point Beach, Humber Bay Shores, and Woodbine Beach for the 2026 season, and request the Toronto Port Authority to continue implementation of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone bylaws at Hanlan's Point Beach, Humber Bay Shores, and Woodbine Beach for the 2027 and future summer seasons.
3. City Council request the Director, Waterfront Secretariat, in consultation with the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Toronto Police Service Marine Unit and other City officials as required, to finalize requested boundaries and submit an application to Transport Canada to establish a Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations which prohibit power driven vessels and vessels driven by electric propulsion in the waters off of Marie Curtis Park, Humber Bay Park, and Bluffer's Park Beach.
4. City Council request to the Toronto Police Service Board to request the Chief of Police to further enhance boating and water-safety enforcement through a multi-year strategy that reflects city-wide policing needs.
5. City Council request the Director, Waterfront Secretariat, in consultation with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, General Manager, Parks and Recreation as well as Toronto Port Authority, Waterfront Toronto, CreateTO, and Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, to explore potential sites that could be feasible for use by compliant Personal Watercraft rental companies and report back to the appropriate committee in 2027 with an assessment of feasible site options.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Toronto Port Authority (TPA) has approved the implementation of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs) for areas within their jurisdiction, in the waters off Humber Bay Shores, Hanlan's Point Beach and Woodbine Beach for the 2026 season by amending its bylaws and communicating changes through existing digital maps. The TPA will facilitate the development of electronic navigational charts with federal partners

for use by boaters. The City will communicate about the MWEZs through a planned public education campaign and signage.

To support officer safety, enforcement efficiency, and align with City-led water safety initiatives, the Toronto Police Services (TPS) Marine Unit requires the installation of three (3) computers on its vessels. The estimated cost for this equipment is approximately \$40,000 to \$45,000, which is not included in the TPS operating budget. However, TPS has indicated that these costs can be accommodated within its existing operating resources.

Enforcement, communications and operational activities undertaken by City divisions and agencies in support of the PWC Safety Plan will be delivered within existing approved operating budgets and resources.

Physical Buoys Demarcations:

Should Council request installation of physical buoys to demarcate the established MWEZs, the City will be expected to bear the full cost of the buoys. The recommended large marker buoys are estimated to cost approximately \$54,500 each, with a minimum of two buoys placed at each of the three locations: The buoys could be installed off the waters of Humber Bay Shores (2 buoys), Hanlan's Point Beach (2 buoys), and Woodbine Beach (2 buoys).

The estimated cost of \$54,500 per buoy includes the capital cost to procure the required buoys (\$11,000 per buoy) and each buoy's weight and chain assembly (\$8,500 per buoy), as well as costs associated with buoy installation, removal at the end of 2026 summer season, and storage (\$35,000 per buoy). The total estimated costs for six buoys in 2026 is \$327,000.

Should the Toronto Port Authority indicate its intention to maintain the established MWEZs beyond 2026, the ongoing costs to the City is estimated at \$210,000 annually for installation and removal, storage and maintenance of six buoys each season.

Funding to support these costs is not available within the 2026 budget and could be included for consideration along with other priorities in 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

At its meeting of March 25 and 26, 2026, City Council authorized the City staff to enter into a lease or sublease agreement with tenants at 24 boat clubs on leased City premises. As part of the terms and conditions of these leases, personal watercraft rentals are not permitted. [Agenda Item History - 2026.GG27.14](#).

At its meeting on February 10, 2026, City Council approved amendments to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks to include provisions to provide that a director or

officer of a corporation who knowingly concurs in the contravention of the chapter by the corporation is guilty of an offence and increase the maximum fine to \$100,000 for both persons and officers/directors of corporations, effective September 1, 2026. This offence can apply to conducting PWC rental businesses in a City park or beach.

[Agenda Item History – 2026.CC38.1](#)

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 and broaden the scope of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee identified in 2025.MM32.16 to consider all of the Toronto's supervised swimming beaches. [Agenda Item History - 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 (MWEZ) by-law by June 2026 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. In addition, Council requested ongoing seasonal implementation plans, additional public education and signage, convening of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee to consult on the details of the MWEZ at Woodbine Beach, and to assess the implementation of the MWEZ by-law at Hanlan's Point Beach. City Council also requested the Toronto Police Service Board to request the Chief of Police to consider opportunities for enhanced enforcement action on unsafe use of personal watercraft and illegal leasing and storage of personal watercraft on public property. [Agenda Item History - 2025.MM32.16](#)

At its meeting of July 23 and 24, 2025, City Council approved amendments to Chapter 545, Licensing, which included removing the business license class for boats-for-hire operators. The City previously issued business licenses for boats-for-hire operators but recommended removing it as of January 1, 2026, in part because the regulations were duplicative of permitting rules administered by Toronto Port Authority and Parks and Recreation. [Agenda Item History - 2025EC22.7](#)

At its meeting of July 24 and 25, 2024, City Council requested Toronto Port Authority to implement a Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone by-law off Hanlan's Beach in 2024 and to develop an ongoing seasonal implementation plan in coordination with the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation. [Agenda Item History - 2024.IE15.2](#)

In 2020, the City along with Waterfront Toronto, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Toronto Port Authority updated the Marine Use Strategy that emphasizes the need to retain vital shipping and commercial uses, and also co-ordinates and activates year-round management and use of the waterfront, in Toronto's Inner Harbour. A Marine Coordination Committee was established in 2022 with staff representatives from the City, Waterfront Toronto, CreateTO, TRCA, Toronto Port Authority and Harbourfront Centre to advance priorities that were identified in the 2020 Marine Use Strategy. [Waterfront Toronto 2020 Marine Use Strategy](#). At its meeting of

December 17 and 18, 2024, City Council approved a \$5 million contribution towards the implementation of the Marine Use Strategy. [Agenda Item History - 2024.EX19.2](#)

COMMENTS

1. Context

Key Issues

Toronto has experienced escalating safety and compliance challenges associated with Personal Watercraft (PWCs) along the waterfront. While PWCs are a legal and commonly used recreational vessel when operated responsibly and in appropriate locations, recent conditions in Toronto have created a set of interrelated problems that require a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional response. Key issues include:

- **Unpermitted PWC rental activity on City parkland:** PWC rental companies have been operating out of City parks and beaches which is an unpermitted business activity. Under Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks, no person shall carry on, engage in, or solicit any business activity in a park except under the authority of a valid permit issued by the City.
- **Limited locations for PWC rental activity along Toronto's waterfront:** PWC rental operators are able to operate from private property. PWC rental operators are not permitted to conduct business in a City park or beach. The City's leases with boat clubs – membership-based boating facilities – includes terms and conditions prohibiting the rental of PWCs. Additionally, many marinas – pay-for-use boating facilities – also prohibit PWC rental activity on their property. The lack of waterfront property options from which to operate a PWC rental business is a contributing factor to businesses operating in City parks and beaches.
- **Unsafe PWC use in nearshore and high use areas:** Reports from City divisions, partner agencies, and waterfront users point to repeated instances of excessive speed, erratic operation, and close quarters manoeuvring near swimmers, paddlers, and other non-motorized vessels. These behaviours are particularly concerning in congested nearshore areas and during peak summer periods.
- **Serious incidents and risk of loss of life:** A fatal incident during the previous season involving a PWC underscores the potential consequences of unsafe operation. This incident heightened public concern and reinforced the need for timely action to reduce risk and prevent future tragedies.
- **Complex regulatory and enforcement landscape:** Responsibility for regulating and enforcing PWC rental companies is distributed across City divisions, the Toronto Police, Toronto Port Authority, and Transport Canada. While each authority has a defined role, the absence of a single controlling body for all aspects of PWC activity requires enhanced coordination across agencies.

Jurisdictional Summary

Jurisdiction	Role
Transport Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sets the overarching rules and regulations for boat use and safety in Canada• Oversight for boat rental agencies• Authority to restrict watercraft outside of the Toronto Harbour through use of Interim Orders and Vessel Operation Regulation Requirements (VORRs)
Toronto Port Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sets local rules and regulations within the Toronto Harbour• Authority to restrict watercraft inside the Toronto Harbour through use of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone (MWEZ) Bylaws
Toronto Police Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TPS Marine Unit conducts water-related enforcement• TPS Field Command conducts land-based enforcement
City of Toronto	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes and enforces City bylaws on land, including for waterfront parks and beaches• Issues permits for non-motorized watercraft rental operators to operate in City parks and beaches. Does not issue such permits for motorized watercraft rental operators.• Holds leases for boat clubs and some marinas• Does not issue business licences for watercraft rental businesses

Federal Regulatory Framework

The federal regulatory framework establishes baseline requirements for watercraft vessel licensing and classifications, operator competency, rental practices and safe operation on the water.

The operation of a PWC, for both personal and commercial purposes, is governed by the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and associated federal regulations. This framework establishes baseline safety and operational requirements that apply nationally. Federal navigational and safety rules include speed restrictions, notably a maximum speed of 5 knots (about 9 km/h) within 150 metres of shore along all of Toronto's waterfront, operating the vessel in a safe, controlled manner, as well as compliance with posted restrictions, designated exclusion zones, and local navigational controls. Operators are also required to carry all mandatory safety equipment on board, as prescribed under federal regulations.

Operating a private-owned PWC in Toronto

An individual who owns a PWC may operate their PWC when in compliance with federal boating safety requirements, including proof of competency such as a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC). In addition, any power vessels -- including PWCs -- operating in the Toronto Harbour must have a Power Vessel Operator's Permit (PVOP) which is issued by the Toronto Port Authority. The Toronto Harbour is bounded by the

Humber River and R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant, encompassing the Toronto Islands.

Individuals may launch their PWCs from public boat launches as well as private property and marinas, subject to permission from the property owner. Individual PWC operators may not use City parks or beaches to store or launch their PWC, with the exception of the use of the public boat launches located within a City park: Bluffer’s Park, Ashbridges Bay Park, Marie Curtis Park, Humber Bay Park West and King’s Mill Park. PWCs, like other vessels such as motorized boats, commercially operated boats, canoes, kayaks and paddleboards, are permitted to temporarily beach or moor on shorelines and dock walls for up to two-hours – as stipulated in Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks, Section 45 – so long as the location is outside of designated swimming zones and restricted zones established by Transport Canada or Toronto Port Authority. Chapter 608 also prohibits a person from driving or riding watercraft, including PWC, in a park in any area where there is a specified restriction posted.

Renting a PWC in Toronto

PWC renters and rental agencies may operate legally on the Toronto waterfront when:

- They comply with federal boating safety requirements, including proof of competency for renters such as a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC), a Rental Boat Safety Checklist (RBSC), or equivalent.
- Renters meet Toronto Port Authority requirements when operating in the Toronto Harbour, including a valid Powered Vessel Operator’s Permit (PVOP).
- Rental agencies that issue an RBSC are registered as a rental business. If the rental agency is not registered, their clients must have a PCOC or equivalent.

PWC rental agencies are permitted to conduct business from private property. PWC rental agencies are not permitted to use City parks or beaches to store, launch or stage PWCs. This prohibition in use also extends to boat clubs operating under a lease with the City of Toronto.

Permissible Locations to Launch a PWC

	City Park or Beach	City/Public Boat Launch	Boat Club (leased on City land)	Private Property*	Marina*
PWC Private User	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PWC Rental Company	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

* Subject to property owner or lease holder authorization.

Federal Regulatory Requirements Summary

	Proof of Competency*	If operating in the Toronto Harbour*
PWC Private User	Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC)	+ Power Vessel Operator's Permit (PVOP)
PWC Rental User	Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC) OR Rental Boat Safety Checklist (RBSC)	+ Power Vessel Operator's Permit (PVOP)

* As well as all other federal boating safety requirements

Map of Toronto Harbour



Please refer to Attachment 2, Regulatory, Enforcement, Permitting and Licensing Framework, for more details.

2. PWC Safety Plan Development

To support the development of the PWC Safety Plan, staff undertook a number of key actions.

Multi Jurisdictional Work Group

To respond to Council's direction and ensure collaboration among relevant authorities who have jurisdiction, a working group was convened in 2025. The PWC Safety Plan Multi-Jurisdictional Working Group consists of representatives from the Toronto Port Authority, Transport Canada, Toronto Police Service Marine Unit, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and City Divisions including Parks & Recreation, Municipal Licensing & Standards, Communications and the City Manager's Office.

All partners have been supportive and collaborative in the development of the City's PWC Safety Plan actions and their implementation. Further, working group discussions involving Toronto Port Authority and Transport Canada helped City staff shape the

stakeholder engagement process to provide relevant data for the consideration of exclusion zones.

Stakeholder Engagement

The PWC Safety Plan was developed through a structured, multi-phase engagement process with a range of relevant stakeholders with roles or interests in waterfront safety, navigation, enforcement, and park use. They included boat clubs and associations, community groups, resident associations, non-motorized watercraft rental agencies, PWC users, PWC rental agencies and waterfront users from beaches and locations all along the waterfront. Input was gathered in three phases: an online survey, an in-person stakeholder advisory forum and a virtual feedback session. The process combined public participation, stakeholder dialogue, and technical expertise to ensure potential actions reflect community perspectives as well as regulatory and operational realities. In total, over 1,200 individuals were consulted on PWC safety issues.

The results of the stakeholder engagement helped inform the identification of key issues, jurisdictional considerations, and potential approaches to improving safety and compliance along Toronto's waterfront. A summary of the engagement undertaken and stakeholder feedback received has been shared with Transport Canada, Toronto Ports Authority and Toronto Police Service Marine Unit for consideration and is provided in Attachment 5.

In addition to the engagement process described above, stakeholder feedback on the implementation of the 2025 MWEZ at Hanlan's Point Beach was collected and compiled, used to inform the development of the PWC Safety Plan and shared with Toronto Port Authority and Toronto Police Service Marine Unit for consideration. A summary of stakeholder feedback can be viewed on the [City's webpage for the PWC Safety Plan](#).

Focus on City Actions Coordinated with Relevant Authorities

PWC regulation and enforcement is the responsibility of multiple authorities. Water-based regulation is federal jurisdiction and land-based regulation is Provincial and municipal jurisdiction. The PWC Safety Plan focuses on actions that can be taken by the City of Toronto directly to improve safety related to PWC use along Toronto's waterfront. The plan also includes actions that the Toronto Police Marine Unit and Toronto Port Authority have agreed to advance.

3. Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan

The Personal Watercraft Safety Plan forms Attachment 1 to this report.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan

Attachment 2: Regulatory, Enforcement, Permitting and Licensing Framework

Attachment 3: Letter dated April 1, 2026 from the Toronto Port Authority

Attachment 4: Letter dated March 17, 2026 from the Ontario Region of Transport Canada

Attachment 5: Executive Summary of Stakeholder Input to Inform the Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan

Attachment 1: Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan

1. Guiding Principles and Objectives

Principles were developed to guide the development, evaluation, and communication of the proposed PWC Safety Plan actions. The principles are framed to ensure clarity, neutrality, and fairness and to ensure the plan is actionable, operationally realistic, and grounded in jurisdictional authorities. The PWC Safety Plan is guided by the following principles:

- Life safety of all waterfront users is the first priority.
- All responsible waterfront users should be able to enjoy the public waterfront.
- Toronto’s natural environment and ecologically sensitive flora and fauna must be protected.
- Actions should be effective and an efficient use of limited resources.
- Actions should be grounded in advice from waterfront stakeholders, including evolving use of the waterfront.
- Actions should be coordinated and respect existing jurisdiction and authorities of relevant agencies.

Consistent with City Council directions, the objectives and desired outcomes of the safety plan are:

Objectives	Desired Outcomes
1. Reduce the risk of incidents involving PWCs in near-shore and high-use areas	Improved safety for swimmers, paddlers, boaters, PWC operators, and shoreline users; fewer high-risk interactions between PWCs and other water users; improved protection of flora and fauna.
2. Deter and reduce unpermitted PWC rental activity in City parks and beaches	Decreased presence of unpermitted commercial PWC rental operations on City property; clearer expectations for operators and the public.
3. Improve public awareness and voluntary compliance related to safe and lawful PWC use	Increased understanding among residents and visitors of safe PWC operation and Federal regulations and City bylaw restrictions; improved voluntary compliance.
4. Strengthen coordination across City divisions and partner agencies	More consistent, timely, and effective enforcement and response to PWC-related issues across land and water.

2. PWC Safety Plan Actions

The following actions are proposed to be implemented by City divisions, in coordination with the Toronto Police Service Marine Unit and the Toronto Port Authority, to improve safety along Toronto's waterfront.

Integrated Strategy

The PWC Safety Plan adopts an integrated strategy to address safety risks associated with PWC activity along Toronto's waterfront, grounded in clear jurisdictional roles and coordinated action among partners. The Plan prioritizes land-based enforcement measures within the City's authority, with a specific focus on addressing unpermitted PWC rental activity occurring on City-owned property. The increase in unpermitted rental operations has been identified as a significant contributing factor to unsafe PWC use, including the growth of inexperienced operators and related navigation, compliance, and safety concerns.

The plan advances public education and communications initiatives to support voluntary compliance, improve awareness of applicable regulations and safe operating practices, and promote responsible behaviour among PWC users. The Plan also recognizes the critical role of water-based enforcement in reinforcing land-based actions related to unpermitted PWC rental operations, and deterring unsafe activity on the water.

In this context, the potential implementation of exclusion zones by federal authorities is a complementary tool to enhance safety outcomes.

The table below provides a summary of the PWC Safety Plan Actions. Each Action is described in more detail in the subsequent sections.

Summary of PWC Safety Plan Actions

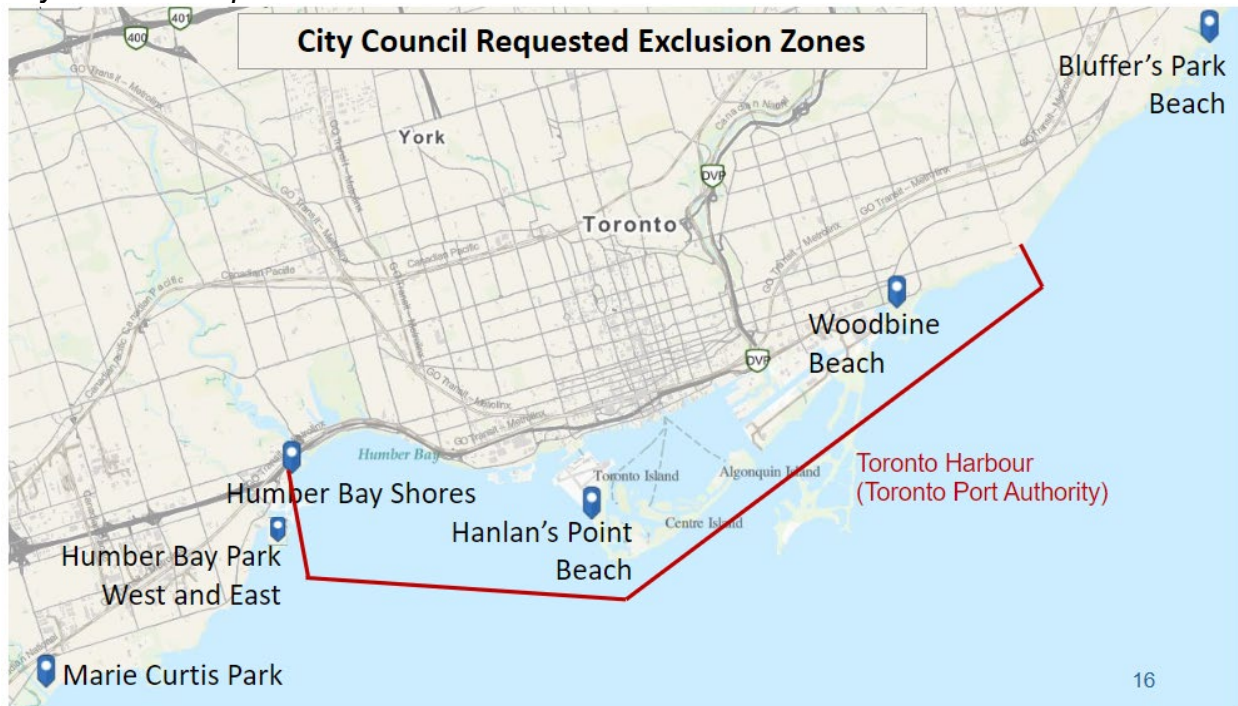
Category	Actions
Exclusion Zones and Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support implementation of exclusion zones within the Toronto Harbour• Apply for exclusion zones outside of the Toronto Harbour
Enforcement and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced land-based enforcement• Enhanced water-based enforcement
Public Education and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive, informative public education across multiple channels• Signage at problematic locations
Legal Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore feasible, designated sites for the launching of compliant PWC rental operators
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of measures in place for 2026 season

2.1 Exclusion Zones and Restrictions

City Council requested exclusion zones for motorized watercraft -- designated areas where any vessel with a motor would not be able to enter -- in the waters off Hanlan's Point Beach, Marie Curtis Park, Humber Bay Park East and West, Humber Bay Shores, Woodbine Beach, and Bluffer's Park Beach. These requests were made to the Toronto Port Authority and Transport Canada for the locations within their respective jurisdictions. The authority to implement these exclusion zones sits with these federal bodies. Within the Toronto Harbour, an exclusion zone would be implemented through a Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone (MWEZ) bylaw under Toronto Port Authority jurisdiction. An MWEZ prohibits all motorized watercraft, including motorized boats and PWCs from entering the MWEZ. Outside the Toronto Harbour, an exclusion zone could be implemented through a Vessel Operation Restriction Regulation (VORR) or, in absence of a VORR, and Interim Order by the Federal Minister of Transport in the case of an emergency.

Exclusion zones can build upon existing federal regulations, such as speed limits, and support land- and water-based enforcement by providing greater clarity, predictability, and enforceability for dangerous PWC behaviour.

City Council Requested Exclusion Zones



* The blue icons indicate a location where City Council requested an exclusion zone for motorized watercraft.

* The red line indicates the boundaries of the Toronto Harbour, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Toronto Port Authority. The remaining waterfront falls under the jurisdiction of Transport Canada.

Exclusion Zones Within the Toronto Harbour

In 2025, at the request of City Council, the Toronto Port Authority piloted an MWEZ at Hanlan's Point Beach. This pilot initiative was developed in response to community feedback received through the Toronto Island Master Plan process and reflects the

City's ongoing efforts to be responsive to the needs and priorities of island users. The MWEZ was designed to enhance safety and improve the experience for all water users, providing a safe area for non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards, while helping boaters navigate more safely in a high-traffic area.

As outlined in the letter in Attachment 2, the Toronto Port Authority has confirmed that it will implement MWEZ bylaws in the waters off Humber Bay Shores, Hanlan's Point Beach, Woodbine Beach for the 2026 season, and that it will revisit the decision to continue these MWEZs for the 2027 and future seasons. As the granting authority, the Toronto Port Authority designs the configuration of MWEZ based on a number of factors including safety, navigation pathways, environmental preservation, impact and enforceability.

The letter states that the Toronto Port Authority will implement the MWEZs through electronic charts and maps, which is a common and cost-effective method. The TPA will facilitate the development of electronic navigational charts with federal partners which will be available to boaters. The City will communicate the MWEZs through its public education campaign and signage. The letter also notes that as an additional consideration, and at the request of Council, the Toronto Port Authority could physically mark the MWEZs through the use of large marker buoys, with the cost being fully borne by the City. The buoys would be installed in the waters off Humber Bay Shores (2 buoys), Hanlan's Point Beach (2 buoys) and Woodbine Beach (2 buoys). The estimated cost is \$54,500 per buoy and includes the capital cost to procure the required buoys (\$11,000 per buoy) and each buoy's weight and chain assembly (\$8,500 per buoy), as well as costs associated with buoy installation, removal at the end of 2026 summer season, and storage (\$35,000 per buoy). The total estimated costs for six buoys in 2026 is \$327,000. Funding to support these costs is not available within the 2026 budget and could be included for consideration along with other priorities in future budget processes.

The Toronto Port Authority will review the impact of the MWEZs, as well as other actions that are part of this Plan, at the end of the 2026 summer season. Should the TPA decide to continue the MWEZs beyond the 2026 season and, if Council chooses to physically mark their boundaries with buoys, an estimated \$210,000 would be required annually for buoy installation and removal, maintenance and storage every season.

Exclusion Zones Outside the Toronto Harbour

As outlined in the letter in Attachment 4, Transport Canada has not approved restrictions to motorized watercraft for 2026 in the waters off Marie Curtis Park, Humber Bay Park and Bluffer's Park Beach, but has encouraged the City to apply for a watercraft restriction at these locations for 2027.

City staff have engaged with Transport Canada to advance Council's request from July 2025 for exclusion zones at these locations. Within Transport Canada regulated waterways, the mechanism used to restrict motorized watercraft -- or to establish other navigational limitations -- is a Vessel Operation Restriction Regulation (VORR). Applications from a municipality for a VORR must be submitted to Transport Canada by

November of a given year to be considered for implementation in the following year. A VORR submission must include:

- Scientific evidence, expert analysis or studies that establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the problem and existing navigation permissions
- Consultation with water users who may be impacted, including any Indigenous peoples whose rights may be affected and a duty to consult triggered
- Demonstration that alternative measures that might solve the problem have been implemented
- An assessment of potential positive and negative impacts of the restriction
- Cost benefit analysis over a five-year period

Given the requirements for a submission, it was not feasible for the City to prepare and submit a VORR application by November 2025 to enable restrictions for the 2026 season.

In the absence of an approved VORR, the Minister of Transport has the authority to issue an Interim Order to restrict navigation on a waterway. City staff requested that Transport Canada issue Interim Orders for these locations for the 2026 season. Transport Canada did not approve this request.

Transport Canada has encouraged the City to pursue restrictions through a VORR application. City staff have initiated the necessary steps to prepare VORR applications, including stakeholder engagement as outlined in this report. This report recommends City Council request staff, in consultation with the Toronto Police Service Marine Unit, to finalize requested boundaries and submit an application as described above. Should the requested VORRs be approved, the City will inform stakeholders of the restriction, install and maintain any required signage and request the Toronto Police Service to enforce the restrictions.

2.3 Enforcement and Compliance

Enhanced Land-Based Enforcement

The City's Bylaw Enforcement Officers (BEOs) in Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) enforce Chapter 608, Parks, including provisions related to unpermitted business activity in City parks and beaches, and mooring of boats. BEOs respond to service requests (complaints) submitted through 311 and conduct proactive patrols of all City parks. BEOs conduct land-side enforcement only, and work in partnership with the Toronto Police Service (TPS) when needed. Generally, BEOs take an education-first approach to gain compliance with City bylaws. If non-compliance persists, BEOs may lay charges in relation to the violation, including a Part 1 set fine ticket, and/or a Part 3 summons to court under the Provincial Offences Act.

Through [2026.CC38.1, Budget Implementation Including Property Tax Rates, User Fees and Related Matters](#), City Council approved amendments to Chapter 608, Parks to increase the maximum Part 3 fines for an offence for both persons and officers/directors of corporations from \$5,000 to the City of Toronto Act maximum of \$100,000. The change is scheduled to come into effect on September 1, 2026.

In 2025, MLS received 17 service requests (complaints) for unpermitted business activity occurring in a City park related to PWC rentals, and 10 service requests for non-compliant PWC mooring. Last year, MLS conducted five proactive PWC enforcement deployments. For example, from July 10 to 12, 2025, the TPS Marine Unit and MLS worked in partnership to conduct a joint enforcement initiative (Project Sea-Doo Awareness & Response) against unpermitted PWC rental companies and dangerous PWC use at Woodbine Beach / Ashbridges Bay Park. Over this weekend, two arrests were made, 53 Provincial Offence Notices, 20 by-law charges, and four parking infractions were issued, and 14 PWCs, a 'jet car', four vehicles and a trailer were towed. These results demonstrate the scale of non-compliance and confirm the effectiveness of coordinated land and water-based enforcement.

In 2026, the City will undertake a similar enhanced enforcement strategy that prioritizes land-based enforcement against unpermitted PWC rental activity. The coordinated, public safety-focused model will aim to disrupt repeat unpermitted operations, prevent re-establishment of unpermitted PWC rental agencies, and leverage authorities from the Toronto Police Service appropriately. This will be achieved by identifying unpermitted commercial activity on parkland, issuing applicable charges under the Municipal Code, and issuing Trespass to Property notices where required. The City will observe, investigate and facilitate the removal of repeat offenders and their property from City parks and beaches.

This approach will be taken across all waterfront parks where unpermitted PWC rental activity is identified or anticipated. Deployment will be risk and intelligence-driven, allowing MLS to prioritize known problem locations. Enforcement will be initiated in late-May or as soon as seasonally appropriate and will continue throughout the summer months.

Beyond PWCs, where vessels dock, moor, beach, or otherwise come to land within parkland or City-controlled shoreline, enforcement under Chapter 608, Parks may be applied. Officers will observe the activity, engage the operator, and take appropriate action based on the circumstances, including education, issuance of notices, and enforcement through charges where warranted. This approach applies to all bylaw infractions encountered in the field, including those involving vessels such as charter or "party boat" operations when they are connected to parkland or shoreline access points.

Enhanced Water-Based Enforcement

The Toronto Police Service Marine Unit has experienced a significant increase in PWC activity including unsafe operation, excessive speed near shorelines, entry into marked swim zones, conflicts with swimmers, paddlers and lifeguards, and unpermitted rental operations on City property. Many PWCs are being operated by individuals with little to no operating experience. In numerous enforcement interactions, the TPS Marine Unit has found that operators demonstrated limited knowledge of vessel handling, safety requirements, or navigation rules. While PWC rental companies are required to conduct safety briefings pursuant to federal requirements, in many 2025 PWC stops by the TPS Marine Unit these obligations were either weakly fulfilled or not fulfilled at all.

The TPS Marine Unit is committed to working with City partners to improve safety and compliance on Toronto's waterfront in 2026. Through proactive education, coordinated enforcement, and targeted disruption of unpermitted PWC rental operations, TPS Marine Unit aims to significantly reduce unsafe PWC activity and enhance public safety for all waterfront users. In 2026, the Marine Unit will conduct proactive beach patrols which will include education-focused engagement and early intervention to prevent unsafe behaviour, targeted enforcement of speeding and unsafe operations and swim zone incursions, and enforcement of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs).

The TPS Marine Unit has a broad patrol area covering all of Toronto's waterfront. Emergency calls for service take precedence over proactive enforcement initiatives. TPS Marine remains committed to dedicating enforcement resources towards addressing PWC-related risks. In recognition of the increased number of boaters and activity on the water and associated demand on the TPS Marine Unit, this report recommends that the Toronto Police Service Board requests the Chief of the Toronto Police Service to develop a multi-year strategy to further enhance enforcement of boating and water safety. Given the many demands on policing across Toronto, City staff understand that any potential enhancements to the Marine Unit would be made in alignment with city-wide needs.

2.4 Public Education and Communication

Public Education Campaign

The City provides public education and communications related to waterfront safety, including swimming safety and compliance with applicable bylaws. For the 2026 boating season, the City will deliver a targeted public education and communications campaign to improve awareness and encourage compliance of PWC safety requirements. Public education efforts will begin as early as late May and continue until the Labour Day long weekend. The City will coordinate and align communications with the Toronto Police Marine Unit and the Toronto Port Authority.

The campaign will focus on increasing public awareness of key safety rules and regulatory requirements, including information that is not well known, such as the maximum speed limit of 5 knots (approximately 9-10 km/h) within 150 metres of shore, direction for vessels to remain outside designated swimming areas, and expectations for responsible boating behaviour. The campaign will also inform park and beach users that unpermitted PWC rentals are not allowed in City parks and beaches and will highlight the safety risks associated with renting from unpermitted operators. The overall objective of the campaign is to support voluntary compliance with applicable bylaws and regulations and to reinforce safe use of Toronto's waterfront.

Campaign materials will be targeted to PWC users, including through potential partnerships with PWC repair shops, marinas, fuel docks, and other locations where PWC users are likely to congregate. The campaign will also be directed to swimmers, beachgoers, paddlers, and other waterfront users. Multiple communication channels will be used, including digital and social media, web content, and on-site signage.

Communications will also provide information on the Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones implemented by the Toronto Port Authority at Humber Bay Shores, Hanlan's Point Beach, and Woodbine Beach.

Signage

In 2026, the City will install signage at City beaches, waterfront parks, and boat launches that have experienced, or have the potential for, unpermitted PWC rental activity and dangerous PWC use. Signs will be installed in May. These locations include Humber Bay Park, Humber Bay Shores, Woodbine Beach and Ashbridges Bay, Bluffer's Park, and Hanlan's Point Beach.

The signage will clearly indicate that PWC rental activity is not permitted at City beaches, parks and boat launches and will provide key safety information to promote compliance with applicable regulations, such as the maximum speed limits on the water. Consistent, well posted signage will support voluntary compliance and enforcement efforts.

2.5 Legal Alternatives

Explore potential sites that could be feasible for compliant PWC rental operators

PWC rental companies are not permitted to operate from City parks and beaches, as well as boat clubs operating on City land under lease agreements. There are limited opportunities to operate from private or public waterfront properties in Toronto where landowner authorization has been obtained.

At the same time, there is demonstrated demand for PWC rental activity along Toronto's waterfront. In the absence of permitted locations, some operators have increasingly used City parks and beaches as access points without authorization.

PWC rental activity may have the potential to operate as a safe and regulated recreational use when appropriately sited and when all federal boating safety and navigational requirements are met. PWC rentals also represent a recreational amenity valued by residents and visitors and can support local economic activity, with many operators being small, owner-operated businesses.

Stakeholders -- including both PWC rental companies as well as non-motorized watercraft rental companies, boat clubs and other stakeholders -- have recommended the City identify locations where PWC rentals can occur safely.

Subject to Council adoption of this plan, City staff will explore whether there may be appropriate locations along Toronto's waterfront where compliant PWC rental operators could be permitted to launch for summer 2027 and beyond. This exploration would include the consideration of potential locations that are physically suitable and located away from designated swimming beaches and areas predominantly used by small sailboats, canoes, kayaks and paddleboards. Site type may include dock walls or other public or private waterfront infrastructure, subject to applicable authorities and approvals.

2.6 Evaluation

The City, in partnership with the Toronto Police Service Marine Unit, and the Toronto Port Authority, will evaluate the effectiveness of actions implemented during the 2026 boating season to inform continuous improvement of PWC safety measures. This evaluation will draw on available data and partner input, including enforcement activity, observed compliance trends, incident information, and stakeholder feedback, to assess whether actions are achieving intended safety outcomes. Findings from the 2026 season will be used to identify opportunities to refine, adjust, or expand actions for the 2027 boating season and future years, recognizing the need for an adaptive and evidence-informed approach. Ongoing collaboration across jurisdictions will support shared learning, coordinated decision-making, and timely adjustments to ensure that PWC safety measures remain effective, proportionate, and responsive to emerging risks and operational experience.

3. Ongoing Governance and Implementation

The following City divisions will lead implementation of the PWC Safety Plan:

- Municipal Licensing and Standards will continue to lead enforcement of Chapter 608, Parks to address unpermitted PWC rental operators from conducting business in City parks and beaches.
- Parks Recreation will continue to lead park operations related to promoting safe use of parks, such as installation of signage in City parks and public boat launches in City parks. P&R will also liaise to support seasonal implementation plans of water-side exclusion zones, including coordination with Toronto Port Authority as needed.
- Communications Division will lead the communications campaign to improve public education around PWC safety.
- Waterfront Secretariat will lead an application to Transport Canada for Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations at beaches within Transport Canada's jurisdiction: Marie Curtis Park, Humber Bay Park, and Bluffer's Park Beach in consultation with Parks and Recreation, Municipal Licencing and Standards and Toronto Police Service Marine Unit.
- Waterfront Secretariat will explore designated sites which could be feasible for compliant PWC rental operators, working in close partnership with divisions and agencies that manage property along the waterfront including Corporate Real Estate Management, Parks and Recreation, Toronto Port Authority, Waterfront Toronto, Toronto Region Conservation Authority and CreateTO.

City staff will coordinate across divisions and with partners as needed. City staff will bring forward items requiring multi-jurisdiction input to the Toronto Harbour Liaison Committee, which is chaired by Toronto Port Authority and has representation from Toronto Police Marine Unit, Transport Canada, as well as City divisions.

Attachment 2: Regulatory, Enforcement, Permitting and Licensing Framework

1. Regulatory Framework

All PWC Requirements

Key regulations for PWC users are already in place, including:

- All PWCs must have a valid Pleasure Craft License -- issued by Transport Canada -- and a copy of the license carried on board.
- All PWC users must carry proof of competency such as a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC), a Rental Boat Safety Checklist (RBSC), or equivalent.
- In addition, a Power Vessel Operator's Permit (PVOP), issued by the Toronto Port Authority, is required to use a motorized vessel within the Toronto Harbour and a copy must be carried on board.
- Federal navigational and safety rules include speed restrictions - notably a maximum speed of 5 knots (about 9 km/h) within 150 metres of shore along Toronto's waterfront for all watercraft. This is implemented through Toronto Port Authority within the Toronto Harbour, and through a Vessel Operation Restriction Regulation (VORR) outside of the Harbour.
- Within the Toronto Harbour, past 150 metres from shore there is a maximum speed of 10 knots (approximately 19 km/h), subject to additional localized restrictions (such as the exclusion zone around the Billy Bishop Airport) and designated navigation controls.
- Vessels are prohibited from producing a wake within the Toronto Island lagoons and in the area between the shoreline and the Western Breakwater.
- Compliance with posted restrictions, designated exclusion zones, and local navigational controls by all watercraft is required.
- Operators are required to carry all mandatory safety equipment on board, including a properly fitting lifejacket for each person on board.
- Operators must be at least 16 years old to legally operate a PWC.
- Operators are not permitted to operate motorized watercraft under the influence of alcohol or substances.
- Charges can be laid under federal laws for careless operation and unsafe operation if operators of vessels are knowingly or unknowingly operating in a way that will cause harm or has the potential to cause harm.

Toronto Harbour and VORRs



PWC Rental Requirements

PWC rental operations are regulated federally. A PWC can be rented to an individual who holds a Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC), or, if the individual does not hold a PCOC, a legally operating PWC rental operator must administer the [Rental Boat Safety Checklist \(RBSC\)](#). In order to administer the checklist, the PWC rental company must be registered as a rental business. The City of Toronto does not issue business licenses for boats-for-hire, in Toronto, and so to administer the Rental Boat Safety Checklist the rental company must be registered with the Government of Ontario.

A Rental Boat Safety Checklist acts as temporary proof of competency during the rental period. It must be signed by the operator -- the individual operating the PWC during the rental period -- and rental agency and the original carried on board by the operator. A safety briefing must be given to every operator of the PWC prior to operating the vessel. Elements of the RBSC include:

- Verification of renter identity and competency
- Confirmation of mandatory safety briefing, including vessel operation and the vessel's unique handling characteristics
- Review of alcohol prohibitions
- Review of applicable boating safety rules, including speed limits, navigation (rules of the road such as giving way or overtaking), exclusion zones, local hazards and restrictions and what to do in an emergency
- Confirmation the PWC user will remain clear of swimmers and avoid creating any hazards
- Confirmation of safety equipment including a properly fitting lifejacket for each person on board.

If the PWC is being rented within the Toronto Harbour, all PWC renters must have a valid Powered Vessels Operator Permit (PVOP) which is obtained from the Toronto Port Authority.

In addition, PWC rental agencies are not permitted to use City parks or beaches to store, launch or stage PWCs, nor are they permitted to use boat clubs operating under a lease with the City of Toronto.

2. Enforcement Framework

Land-side Enforcement

City of Toronto Bylaw Enforcement Officers (BEOs) enforce municipal bylaws on land, including provisions in Chapter 608, Parks prohibiting unpermitted business activities from operating in City parks and beaches. Generally, BEOs take an education-first approach to gain compliance with City bylaws, including when a PWC rental operator conducts business within park boundaries. If non-compliance persists, BEOs may take enforcement action, including lay charges in relation to the violation where appropriate. Toronto Police Services (TPS) also has authority to issue notices and enact removal where necessary under the Trespass to Property Act. BEOs and TPS undertake education and enforcement activities independently or in coordination, where appropriate.

Water-side Enforcement

In Toronto, Transport Canada and Toronto Port Authority marine compliance is enforced through proactive patrols conducted by the Toronto Police Service Marine Unit. The TPS Marine Unit is a specialized law enforcement unit responsible for year-round marine operations including search and rescue, emergency response, and public safety policing across more than 460 square kilometres of Lake Ontario. In addition to responding to all 911 emergencies on the water and supporting Toronto Police field units with investigations and evidence gathering, the unit plays a critical enforcement role. Members enforce the Criminal Code of Canada, provincial and municipal statutes, and -- through designation by Transport Canada and the Toronto Port Authority -- the Canada Shipping Act and the Canada Marine Act within Lake Ontario and Toronto Port Authority boundaries, ensuring safety, compliance, and accountability on Toronto's waterways.

3. City of Toronto Permitting, Business Licensing, and Boat Club Leases

City permitting

Under Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks, no person shall carry on, engage in, or solicit any business activity in a park except under the authority of a valid permit issued by the City. This requirement applies to all watercraft rental operations conducted from City parks or beaches.

The City issues permits for designated non-motorized personal watercraft rentals -- such as canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards -- in approved park locations as per City Council direction to support non-motorized watercraft storage and launch locations to facilitate a paddle-friendly city ([2021.IE20.10, Non-Motorized Water Craft Storage and Launch Locations](#), [2021.IE22.2, Non-Motorized Watercraft Storage and Launch](#)

[Locations, 2017.PE17.1, Encouraging a Paddling and Fishing Friendly City](#)). The City does not issue permits for PWC rental operations to operate from parks or beaches because doing so conflicts with the City's objective of being a paddle friendly city and introduces safety risks, as motorized vessels do not mix well with swimmers and non-motorized users.

Any PWC rental company operating in a City park or beach is not permitted to do so and may be subject to enforcement.

Business licensing

Municipal business licensing is separate and distinct from park permitting. The City does not issue municipal business licences for any boats-for-hire operators.

The City previously issued business licences for boats-for-hire operators under Chapter 545, Licensing. This licensing class was removed as of January 1, 2026, following City Council's approval of [Item EC22.7, Business Licence and Permit Applications Action Plan: Chapter 545, Licensing \(2025 to 2029\)](#). Staff recommended removing this business licence class as regulations were duplicative of permitting rules administered by Toronto Port Authority and Parks and Recreation. In 2024, the City did not issue any boats for hire licences, and only two service requests were received by the City between 2018 and 2024, with one charge issued in 2018. Ottawa, Mississauga, Hamilton, London, Vaughan, Brampton, Oshawa, Markham do not license boats for hire.

Boat Club Leases

The City renewed its lease and sublease agreements with 24 individual boat clubs operating on City land. These boat clubs are non-profit, volunteer-run sailing, boating, rowing, and yachting clubs. The lease agreements include terms and conditions that require the premises to be used to operate and maintain a not-for-profit boating and yachting club and ancillary uses. Permitted ancillary uses include rental activities for events, provided this ancillary activity is incidental to the operations of the boat club and in compliance with its non-profit objectives. However, PWC rentals are not permitted.

An individual may store and launch a PWC at a boat club operating on leased City land if the individual boat club's policies permit its use.