



Staff Report for Budget Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: June 28, 2022

Report Number: SRCS.22.14

Department: Community Services

Division: Community Standards

Subject: Monitoring of Lake Wilcox Park Pay Parking

Purpose:

To report back to Council on the effectiveness of the current pay parking rates at Lake Wilcox Park and whether the rates should be increased.

Recommendations:

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.22.14 regarding monitoring of the pay parking system at Lake Wilcox Park be received.

Contact Person:

Melinda Fartsalas, Acting Director of Community Standards

Don Guy, Manager of By-law Education and Enforcement

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Tracey Steele, Acting Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, Interim City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

On May 27, 2020 Council received the Lake Wilcox Parking Study (IBI Group, 2020) and approved the implementation of pay parking at Lake Wilcox Park through the enactment of a series of by-law amendments presented in association with staff report SRCS.20.13. One of the by-law amendments required to implement the pay parking system was an amendment to the Tariff of Fees By-law to include \$4 per hour (north gravel lot and community centre lots) and \$5 per hour (main/splash pad lot) rates for parking at Lake Wilcox Park. These rates have been in effect in the Lake Wilcox parking lots from April 1 to September 30 since the pay parking system was activated in July of 2020.

The Lake Wilcox Parking Study recommended monitoring of the pay parking rates as follows:

In an effort to try to limit the peak off-street parking occupancy to 90%, it is recommended that the City conduct annual parking utilization surveys to determine whether the existing parking prices are effectively managing park demand. The surveys do not need to be as comprehensive as the surveys completed for this study, but could be spot checks completed two or three times during typical peak periods (afternoons during weekends/long weekends with good weather). If it is found that the lots are more than 90% utilized, the price for next season could be increased by \$0.25 or \$0.50, or the price could be lowered by \$0.25 or \$0.50 if utilization is less than 60%. This is standard practice in dynamic pricing systems established throughout North America.

The spot check surveys should also note how many vehicles are owned by residents compared to non-residents. If the surveys find that the utilization remains the same, but there are fewer non-residents visiting and more spaces are filled by residents, the City may want to consider charging residents for parking at a reduced rate. Many of the survey responses noted that residents actively avoid visiting Lake Wilcox during weekends since it is too busy and difficult to find a spot, but that may change if paid parking deters some number of non-residents from visiting.

During the 2021 season, monitoring was not undertaken as the operation of Lake Wilcox Park was significantly impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. In particular, the Oak Ridges Community Centre was not open or operating at full capacity for the majority of the summer season so monitoring parking would not have yielded results that would be applicable in 2022.

On April 13, 2022 a Council Member Motion (Attachment 1) suggested that the pay parking rates at Lake Wilcox Park be increased. The Member Motion was referred to staff “for a report back to Council on the impacts of the implementation of the existing paid parking at Lake Wilcox, and the implications of the proposed parking rates in the motion.”

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Discussion:

Monitoring of the parking lots at Lake Wilcox Park was undertaken in May and June 2022 to determine:

1. Peak parking occupancy rates

Peak parking utilization at Lake Wilcox Park typically occurs on weekend days between noon and 4:00 pm, when the weather is sunny and warm. When monitoring for the Lake Wilcox Parking Study was undertaken in 2019, and there was no pay parking in place, all four parking lots at Lake Wilcox Park were operating well above 90% capacity during peak conditions, with only 10 to 25 of the 478 existing parking spaces unoccupied.

2. Richmond Hill resident vehicles versus out-of-City visitor vehicles

In order to make recommendations for adjustment of the parking rates that will move occupancy closer to 90%, it is necessary to understand the proportion of visitor vehicles belonging to Richmond Hill residents. As Richmond Hill residents can obtain free parking permits, an increase in parking rates would not be expected to deter their attendance at the park. As noted in the Lake Wilcox Parking Study, an increase in parking rates is anticipated to deter non-resident attendance, thereby opening up parking availability for Richmond Hill residents.

2022 Monitoring Results

Monitoring was conducted on Wednesday, May 4, Saturday, June 4 and Sunday, June 19 from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. The May date was used as a trial run to refine monitoring processes. Both June days saw temperatures above 20 degrees Celcius with clear, sunny skies. The weather on monitoring days, however, was not particularly hot and therefore it is questionable whether peak park visitation levels were reached. This season, we have yet to experience the very hot, sunny and humid conditions that typically generate peak visitation to Lake Wilcox Park on weekends.

Monitoring data collected so far in 2022 indicates:

1. The Main/Splash Pad Lot experiences over 90% parking utilization rates even when the park on a whole is experiencing below peak visitor attendance.
2. Parking utilization in the North/Gravel and Community Centre parking lots did not exceed a 65% parking utilization rate on either of the monitoring dates.
3. During periods of low to moderate park visitation, there is typically a higher proportion of residents than non-residents parking at the site. As the number of park visitors increases, so too does the proportion of out-of-city visitors.

The monitoring results suggest that the current parking rates at Lake Wilcox Park have been effective so far this season for the North/Gravel and Community Centre parking lots, but not for the Main/Splash Pad lot. Staff are therefore recommending that the Splash Pad/Main lot hourly parking rate be increased to \$7 per hour and that the current \$4 rate in the other three lots remain. It is recommended that this rate change take place following approval of the Tariff of Fees staff report (SRCFS.22.018), which

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includes this proposed fee change and is also being considered at this Budget Committee of the Whole meeting. The vendor for the parking management system at Lake Wilcox Park has indicated that it will take approximately 10 business days to effect the rate change once approval is received and a purchase order is issued. Once the rate change is in effect, Staff will continue to monitor the pay parking and recommend adjustments to the parking rates through the annual Tariff of Fees By-law process.

Staff note that efforts have also been underway to address the high demand on the Main/Splash Pad lot by contacting both Google Maps and Wayz, to ensure that these wayfinding applications are advising visitors of all four parking lots at Lake Wilcox Park and not just the Main/Splash Pad lot (as was previously the case).

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

Implementing a change to the parking rates charged through the parking management system at Lake Wilcox Park costs approximately \$4 000 (this is the vendor charge to re-program the meter SD-Cards and Parkedin Mobile App, and attend the site to install new SD-Cards). This amount can be funded from the existing Community Standards Division operating expense account for Lake Wilcox Pay Parking.

In 2021, the Lake Wilcox pay parking system generated approximately \$425,000 in net revenue. It is not expected that the increased hourly rate for the Splash Pad/Main lot will significantly impact revenue as it is intended to cause out-of-City vehicle owners to choose to park in one of the other lots, reduce traffic in this lot, and increase parking availability in this lot for residents (who park for free).

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Monitoring and refining the pay parking system at Lake Wilcox Park is consistent with the Council priorities of Getting Around the City and Fiscal Responsibility. The pay parking system was intended to increase availability of parking at Lake Wilcox Park for City residents. In terms of fiscal responsibility, the pay parking system was intended to ensure that out-of-City visitors, who do not contribute to park operations and maintenance through taxes, make a contribution to park operational costs through parking payment.

Conclusion:

Since the pay parking system was implemented at Lake Wilcox Park in July of 2020, the cost for non-resident visitor parking has been \$4 in the North/Gravel and Community Centre parking lots, and \$5 per hour in the Main/Splash Pad lot from April 1 to September 30 annually.

Monitoring conducted so far in 2022 suggests that the current parking rates at Lake Wilcox Park are effective for the North/Gravel and Community Centre parking lots, but not for the Main/Splash Pad lot. Staff are therefore recommending that the Splash

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Pad/Main lot hourly parking rate be increased to \$7 per hour and that the current \$4 rate in the other three lots remain.

Implementing a change to the parking rates at Lake Wilcox Park costs approximately \$4000 and can be funded from the existing Community Standards Division operating expense account for Lake Wilcox Pay Parking.

Staff will continue to monitor the pay parking and will recommend adjustments to the parking rates through the annual Tariff of Fees process accordingly.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment 1 – April 13, 2022 Council Members Motion regarding Lake Wilcox Parking

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.22.14 Monitoring of Lake Wilcox Park Pay Parking.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 20, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Melinda Fartsalas - Jun 20, 2022 - 1:42 PM

Tracey Steele - Jun 20, 2022 - 2:15 PM

Darlene Joslin - Jun 20, 2022 - 3:40 PM