



REPORT

2022 Budget Committee

Meeting Date: December 14, 2021

FROM: Municipal Enforcement Services Department

DATE: November 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Park Enforcement Pilot Program

LOCATION: Town-wide

WARD: Town-wide

Page 1

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report from Municipal Enforcement Services dated November 8, 2021 titled Park Enforcement Pilot Program be received.
2. That a two-year Park Enforcement Pilot Program (2022 and 2023) funded through the tax rate stabilization reserve be approved, specifically for:
 - a. Approval of a maximum of \$900,000 for staffing, equipment, vehicles and technology costs annually over the period of the pilot, to create a unit of seasonal and part-time employees to address the seasonality of park enforcement
 - b. Approval of a service level standard of:
 - i. A patrol methodology – whereby officers will not be stationed at parks
 - ii. A minimum 70 weekly spring and summer park patrols and 10 weekly off-season park patrols
 - iii. Participation in Police on Parks Patrol weekly (Friday and Saturday night) with an extra patrol on the Sunday of long-weekends, from Victoria Day to Labour Day
 - iv. A park enforcement priority matrix which drives patrols so that focus is placed on parks with the highest complaint/incident level
 - v. Continued adherence to the town's established progressive enforcement model
3. That staff be directed to provide updates on the effectiveness of the Park Enforcement Pilot Program in 2022 and 2023 to the Budget Committee.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

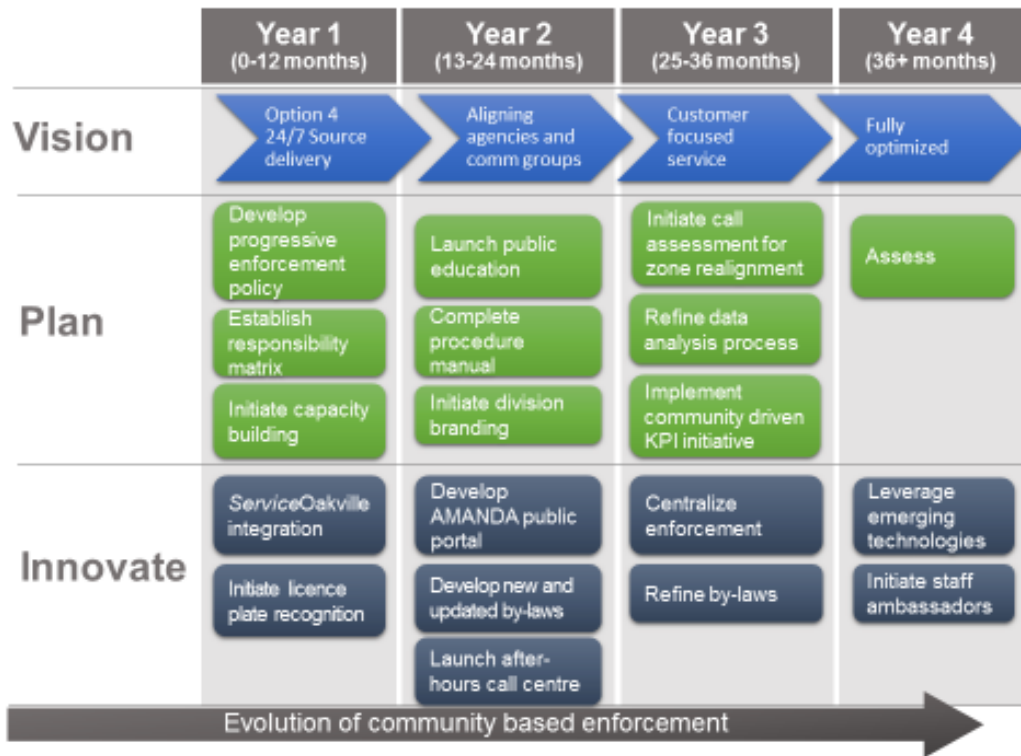
- In 2016, Council approved the Municipal Enforcement Strategy – with a goal of centralizing enforcement to provide more effective customer through creating economies of scale in enforcement activities
- Prior to the pandemic, enforcement-related consolidation reviews were completed with the Transportation and Engineering and Development Engineering departments and several improvements were implemented
- A review of parks enforcement was planned following the completion of these reviews, however, the COVID-19 pandemic required staff to shift plans and resourcing so the review was not started. To ensure the safety of our community and ensure all regional and provincial regulations were met, Municipal Enforcement Services began providing park enforcement in early 2020
- Currently, park enforcement is unfunded and requires budget approval in order to continue to provide the service
- To address this, staff has developed a Park Enforcement Pilot Program for Council's consideration, which will see park enforcement continue over a two-year period. This will allow staff to assess future needs and provide recommendations for ongoing enforcement at the conclusion of the pilot

BACKGROUND:

In 2016, Council approved the Municipal Enforcement Strategy, which identified its main goal was to create a centre of excellence through centralizing enforcement activity from multiple departments into one, thus achieving economies of scale.

One of the pillars of the strategy was to advance Municipal Enforcement Services (MES) into a community-based enforcement department that is able to respond to issues on-demand (see Figure 1 below). The strategy has proven to be largely effective and was put through a stress-test with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1 Municipal Enforcement Evolution



Through the pandemic, one significant gap that has been identified is parks enforcement; this service was identified for consolidation in the municipal enforcement strategy but not consolidated. The MES response to park related enforcement has provided insights into service level demands and required staffing levels that if addressed would allow MES to continue to respond to park related community needs going forward.

This report provides an overview of a recommended park enforcement pilot program and the projected service levels and associated staffing needed for the pilot program.

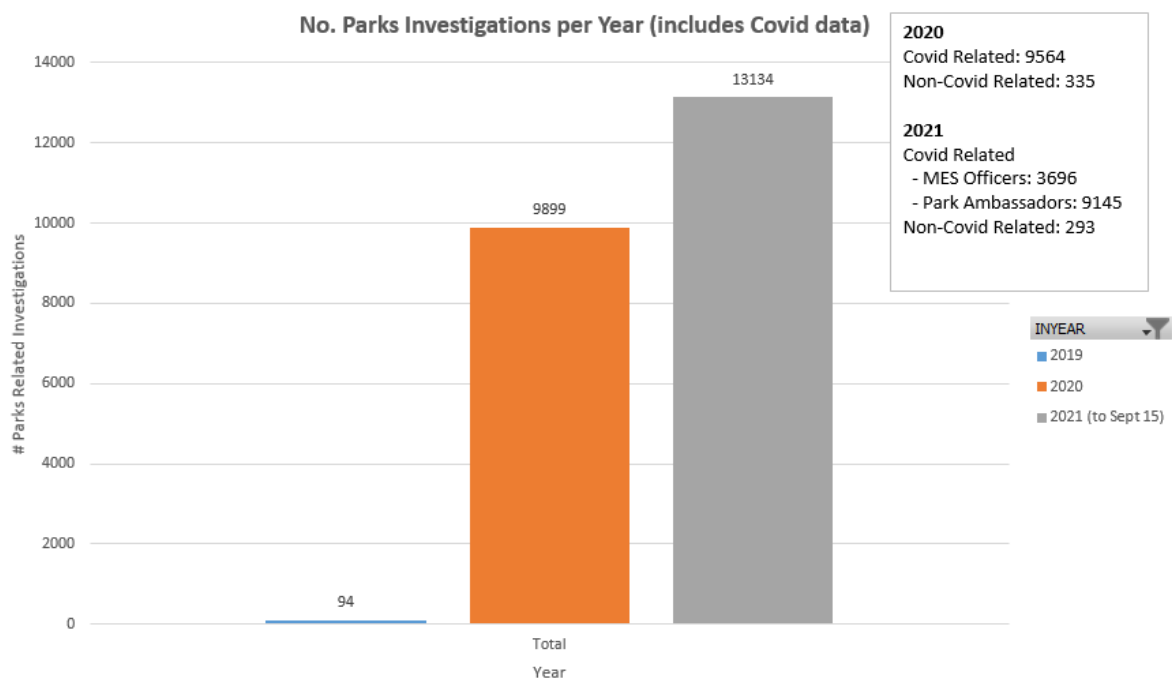
COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Prior to March 2020 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was very limited enforcement provided in town parks. If there was a park enforcement issue, residents were directed to call Halton Police, who would respond based on availability. To ensure the safety of our community and ensure all regional and provincial regulations were met, Municipal Enforcement Services began providing park enforcement in early 2020. As we have seen over the last two years, park enforcement includes a broad spectrum of enforcement types with the most

common issues being use of premium/closed fields without a permit, smoking, drinking, barbecuing where prohibited, bonfires, noise and dogs off-leash. This level of service was temporarily funded over 2020 and 2021 using COVID-19 funding. This service is not sustainable on a go-forward basis without additional resources and a budget approved funding source.

Figure 2 below outlines MES park enforcement activity from 2019 to September 15, 2021.

Figure 2 COVID-19 Park Enforcement



The pandemic has brought significant numbers of new park users to our greenspaces, and with this, significant levels of enforcement-related activity and complaints that staff believe will necessitate ongoing park enforcement. Staff do not anticipate the levels will continue at the rate seen during the pandemic

Figure 3 below outlines the staff recommendation for a two-year pilot program to address park enforcement demands as we move out of the pandemic. The program provides a scalable level of enforcement that can be adjusted based on changing needs. This flexibility will be particularly important as we establish new patterns of park usage and determine new enforcement needs. Approval of this program will provide the following service levels:

- Minimum of 70 weekly patrols during spring/summer months and a minimum 10 weekly patrols off-season.
- The park enforcement unit will participate in Friday and Saturday evening Police on Park Patrol (POPP) patrols weekly from Victoria Day to Labour Day. The unit will also provide an extra weekend POPP patrol on Sunday's of long-weekends over this period.
- Officers will patrol on a rotation, guided by call/complaint data (i.e. high complaint parks will receive increased patrols). Officers will not be stationed (static) at parks.
- Officers will respond to calls based on the nature of the call, with life safety issues taking first priority, property damage second and regulatory complaints last (i.e. parking). The parks unit will use our progressive enforcement methodology, except in the case of serious violations resulting in damage/injury or regulatory type offences like parking.

It is recommended that this program be funded using the tax rate stabilization reserve for the duration of the pilot. Staff will provide annual monitoring to Council and bring a final assessment of the program's effectiveness to the 2024 Budget Committee, including details of ongoing funding requirements.

Figure 3 Park Enforcement Unit		
Supervisor	Two-year contract (term of pilot program)	
MCO – Parks officer	May 1 – September 30	Maximum of 12 (temporary full-time seasonal staff)
	October 1 – April 30	Maximum of 4 (part-time, 24 hours/week staff)
Service Levels		
Patrols/Week (May 1 – September 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 70 per week • MES POPP patrols provided weekly (Friday and Saturday) between Victoria Day and Labour Day. Additional Sunday patrol added on long-weekends • Parking enforcement in and around parks • Special events as needed 	
Patrols/Week (October 1 – April 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 10 per week (including storm ponds) • Parking enforcement in and around parks • Special events as needed 	

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

This review identifies the service and staffing levels required to continue to respond to public concerns related to parks enforcement.

(B) FINANCIAL

It is recommended that the Park Enforcement Pilot Program will be funded from the Tax Stabilization reserve up to a maximum of \$900,000 annually for 2022 and 2023. The 2023 Budget Committee will be provided an update on the effectiveness of the Parks Enforcement Pilot Program and a final assessment of the program, including ongoing financial requirements, will be provided to the 2024 Budget Committee.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

The provision of a park enforcement program assists parks and open space to address park user concerns that would otherwise be difficult to address.

(D) CORPORATE STRATEGIC GOALS

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal(s) to:
This report addresses the corporate strategic goal of Accountable Government by addressing staffing levels to ensure the town continues to be responsive to community needs in a timely fashion.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

Providing park enforcement staff will allow ongoing enforcement of climate sensitive regulations related to smoking, burning, parking and anti-idling.

Prepared and Recommended by:
Jim Barry, Director of Municipal Enforcement

Submitted by:
Neil Garbe, Commissioner of Community Development