

Council Meeting

May 25, 2021

Comments Received Regarding Item 7.2 -
Waterfront Parks Paid Parking, By-law 2021-080, By-law 2021-081 and By-law 2021-082

(Distributed to Council on May 26, 2021)

From: Sue Bell

Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 4:12 PM

To: Town Clerk; _Members of Council; Mayor Rob Burton;
effie.triantafilopoulos@pc.ola.org; stephen.crawfordco@pc.ola.org

Subject: Parking and Access to Oakville Lakefront Parks

Dear Sir/Madam:

The following are suggested principles & practices to address the matter of unsafe social distancing and vehicle traffic at Oakville lakeside parks.

COVID public health measures in one form or another will be with us for the foreseeable future and there are many months ahead where families, having few places to go, will want to visit Oakville lakeside parks. Any measures established to control traffic (be it people or vehicles) in order to keep the parks and surrounding areas safe, should be done in a manner that is fair and equitable to all citizens and that allows for the greatest use of parks by all.

Principles:

1. Parking restrictions, if any, are to support COVID public health objectives (e.g., social distancing, discourage inter-regional travel) and therefore should have specific expiry dates and be extended only as COVID conditions require.
2. Measures are not intended to make lakeside parks the exclusive domain of those living in the immediate area. If parks become crowded, lakeside residents too can walk to the many other parks and tree-lined neighborhoods in the area or book a time at Conservation Halton (as recommended by Oakville Town officials).
3. Waterfront parks are there for the enjoyments of all. Tens of \$millions, if not hundreds of \$millions, of taxpayer dollars have been spent in recent years to upgrade and expand Oakville waterfront parks. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that families living in multi-tenant buildings and other high-density areas, such as north Oakville, need access to lakeside parks more than anyone.
4. Paid parking and reducing parking on residential streets near lakefront parks is discriminatory pitting south Oakville against north Oakville. Parking rates high enough to keep people away will make parking prohibitive for some families. If anyone pays, all should pay (like Conservation Halton).

5. Match the “right” solution” to the “right” problem.

a) If parking is the problem then fix the parking (or transportation) problem (e.g., more parking; shuttle buses).

b) If crowds/social distancing is the problem, then control access to lakeside parks by people irrespective of how they get there (e.g., whether by car, transit, or bicycle or on foot). (Note: some Town officials have cited Conservation Halton methods to control crowds. It should be noted that Conservation Halton controls “people” not “vehicles.” They don’t care how you get there.)

c) If cross-regional visitors are the problem, then take action to restrict cross-regional access (e.g., Town of Ajax measures to discourage out-of-town visits to Ajax lakeside parks).

6. Special access and/or exemptions should not be granted to visitors of residents/businesses near lakeside parks. Parking measures should apply equally whether visitors are visiting lakeside parks or for other reasons since:

a) These are COVID parking restrictions.

b) Oakville Town staff is telling north Oakville residents they should come to waterfront parks by public transit or bicycle. If this is good enough for visitors to lakeside parks, this is good enough for visitors coming to the area for other reasons.

Possible practices

7. Implement and strictly enforce 2-hour parking limits on streets and in municipal parking lots near lakeside parks 7-days a week from early morning until late night. This will encourage turnover of vehicles so more people can access lakeside parks and prevent people from staying all day and/or evening.

8. Implement tow-away zones in no-parking areas where illegal parking could impede safety and access by emergency vehicles.

9. Adopt timed entry/exit to parks (like Conservation Halton) during peak periods. (Note: Municipalities are accustomed to taking measures to restrict access to public parks for special events. This practice could be adopted for lakeside parks during COVID.)

10. Allow users to access and display (free) time-limited vehicle parking permits and/or park entry passes.

Regards,
Sue Brant
Oakville, ON