

City of Mississauga  
**Corporate Report**



<p>Date: May 16, 2023</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: June 7, 2023</p>

## Subject

**Animation in City of Mississauga Parks**

## Recommendation

That the Corporate Report entitled “Animating City of Mississauga Parks” dated May 16, 2023 from the Commissioner of Community Services be received for information.

## Executive Summary

- This report provides an overview of initiatives planned and/or underway to animate City of Mississauga parks in 2023.
- Parks are equipped with various amenities including trails and pathways, beautiful gardens and natural areas, playgrounds, spray pads, outdoor fitness equipment, multi-use sport courts and picnic areas for residents of all ages to enjoy at their leisure. City-led initiatives promote stewardship, foster environmental awareness and engage residents and community groups.
- Picnic permits are available at 30 picnic sites in 12 locations through the Customer Service Centre. Large picnic areas with shelters are popular with residents and community groups and book quickly.
- A pilot initiative will be introduced to add new small capacity bookable picnic areas to Community Common Park, Lake Aquitaine and J.C. Saddington Parks to provide more opportunities for residents to enjoy a backyard-type experience in parks.
- Approximately 90 community-led celebrations and events scheduled to take place in parks across the City between May and October 2023.
- Celebration Square is a unique and notable example of an animated year-round outdoor public space. It's a backyard for the thousands of residents who live in the surrounding condos as well as a destination event venue featuring more than 38 events over 94 event days. Staff will continue to explore opportunities for additional animation amenities

including the amphitheatre and the patio adjacent to City Hall (C Café) in partnership with the community.

- Implementation of activities to advance the City's Music Strategy such as the Live Music Grant Program, Summer Concert Series expansion to a new location at Cooksville Four Corners, and Busk Stops will bring additional animation to parks across the City. Staff are also working to designate park locations that can accommodate increased demand and streamline approvals for larger, licensed, ticketed live music events. For 2023, Lakeside Park, Totoredaca Park and Erindale Park have been identified as pilot locations.
- Opportunities for residents to get engaged in parks are communicated through a range of tactics including the City web site, social media and other digital channels. Event or activity specific communications are also implemented by community event organizers.
- Recognizing that jurisdictions across Canada including Vancouver, Langley, Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto are implementing initiatives to allow for personal alcohol consumption in designated public spaces and parks, staff will conduct further assessment and advise on how this may be addressed by the City of Mississauga in future years.
- Planning for the next cycle of Future Directions Strategic Plans for community services is underway and will present opportunities for more in-depth review of current practice and additional community engagement to guide the future provision of amenities, programs and services as well as policy development related to animation of City of Mississauga Parks.

## Background

There are over 500 parks in the City of Mississauga. From small green spaces to large destination parks, each park offers a unique outdoor experience for residents and visitors.

The demand and use of City parks has evolved over the past number of years notably as a result of the pandemic. Residents and community groups are looking for ways to be active and re-engage with their communities. Residents living in more densely populated areas with limited personal or private outdoor space are looking for ways to gather and socialize. Small businesses are looking for creative ways to re-engage customers and grow their revenue.

While the City provides leadership for some programs that act as a catalyst for use and animation of parks throughout the year, community-led initiatives, are essential to providing a variety and choice of activities to animate parks and engage Mississauga's large and diverse population in a meaningful way.

This report provides an overview of initiatives planned and/or underway to animate City of Mississauga parks in 2023.

## Comments

A range of tactics are used to facilitate and support animation of City parks. Parks are equipped with various amenities including trails and pathways, beautiful gardens and natural areas, playgrounds, spray pads, outdoor fitness equipment, multi-use sport courts and picnic areas for residents of all ages to enjoy at their leisure.

The City also offers a number of initiatives to promote stewardship, foster environmental awareness and engage residents and community groups including litter pick-ups, tree plantings, natural ice rinks, and the Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Trail programs.

By-law 0197-2020 describes the rules surrounding park use in the City of Mississauga including those activities with are only authorized by a permit.

Opportunities for residents to get engaged in parks are communicated through a range of tactics including the City web site, social media and digital channels. Event or activity specific communications are also implemented by community event organizers.

### **Community-led permitted activities in parks**

For gatherings with groups over 25 people, permits are required and available through the Customer Service Centre at 30 picnic sites in the following 12 park locations:

- Erindale Park
- Huron Park
- Jack Darling Memorial Park
- J.C. Saddington Park
- Lakefront Promenade
- Lakeside Park
- Meadowvale Conservation Area
- Mississauga Valley
- Port Credit Memorial Park
- Richard's Memorial Park
- Streetsville Memorial Park
- Paul Coffey Park

Capacities for picnic areas range from 30 to close to 400. Larger areas with shelters are popular with residents and community groups and book quickly.

For 2023, a pilot initiative will be introduced to add new small capacity bookable picnic areas to Community Common Park, Lake Aquitaine and J.C. Saddington parks to provide more opportunities for residents to enjoy a backyard-type experience in parks. These locations were selected based on proximity to more densely populated neighbourhoods, the availability of washroom facilities and ease of access for maintenance services. As with all picnic areas, if

they are not booked, other residents can access them on a first come first served basis. All existing bylaws, policies and rates and fees remain in effect.

Permits for all parks can be requested by individuals, resident groups, community organizations and businesses to deliver activities including community or charitable walking or running events, fitness and instructional classes, live music, artistic performances and other smaller-scale celebrations and events including those where food and alcohol are served. Support is available to non-profit community event organizers through the City's Community Group Registry Program which provides benefits such as discounted rental rates, access to Commercial General Liability Coverage through the City's Affiliated Insurance Program, promotional opportunities such as permission to place mobile signs on City Road Allowances, and more. Funding is available through the City's Culture and Community Grants Programs. Community Development staff are available to provide guidance to permit holders and event organizers to navigate and obtain required approvals and host safe and successful activities in parks. Event organizers should aim to submit requests a minimum of 6 weeks prior to their proposed event date. Depending on the complexity of the event, longer lead time may be required. Information and resources about hosting a Community Event is available on the City web site.

There are approximately 90 community-led celebrations and events scheduled to take place at parks across the City between May and October 2023. These events include a number of large annual festivals such as the Streetsville Founders' Bread and Honey Festival and Southside Shuffle Blues & Jazz Festival which received recognition from Festival & Events Ontario as a Top 100 Festival, cultural and seasonal celebrations, cause-related events, and neighbourhood gatherings.

### **Mississauga Celebration Square**

Celebration Square is an outdoor public space and event venue located in the heart of the downtown that is a unique and notable example of an animated park in the City. It's a backyard for the thousands of residents who live in the surrounding condos as well as a place to gather and celebrate at more than 38 events of 94 event days.

Throughout the summer months, visitors can enjoy the fountain, food trucks, public art, and patio areas, as well as celebrating at free events and festivals. Weekly events include movie nights, fitness classes, amphitheatre shows and farmers' markets. Special events include a National Indigenous Peoples Day and Canada Day celebrations, and a wide variety of independently produced festivals that showcase the arts, cultural diversity and talent Mississauga has to offer.

Celebration Square's 300-seat amphitheatre offers additional opportunities for animation outside of large events. Current offerings include open mic nights, musical performances and story-time. Staff will continue to explore opportunities for additional animation of the amphitheatre and additional amenities on the Square such as the patio adjacent to City Hall (C Café) in partnership with the community.

### **Music Strategy actions and increased animation of parks**

The City's Music Strategy was approved by Council in June 2022 to help spur long-term growth for the music sector, as well as economic recovery for musicians and businesses emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementation of the Music Strategy will also contribute to increased animation in City of Mississauga parks. Some notable updates are included below:

- **Live Music Grant Program.** The City is investing up to \$90,000 to increase the number of concerts in Mississauga in 2023 and 2024. Funding supports concerts in both private and public venues. Applications for the grant's 2023 spring intake session are currently under review. Depending on the outcome of staff review, this funding could support more than 20 additional free, public concerts in City parks in 2023. Demand for live music locations is expected to continue to increase into 2024 as a result of this funding. Staff are also working to designate park locations that can accommodate increased demand and streamline approvals for larger, licensed, ticketed live music events. For 2023, Lakeside Park, Totoredaca Park and Erindale Park have been identified as pilot locations, primarily because of their ability to hose amplified sound with minimal disturbance to nearby residents and other regular site users.
- **Summer Concert Series.** Mississauga-based musicians performing in all genres were invited to apply to perform as part of the 2023 Concert Series. Applications were evaluated by a Selection Committee made up of community members based on artistic merit and potential for wide audience appeal. In 2023 a new location at Cooksville Four Corners has been added and will feature four afternoon concerts in addition to 16 concerts to be held at Port Credit Memorial Park and Streetsville Village Square. The full 2023 Summer Concert Series lineup will be announce in early June.
- **Sauga Busks.** For 2023, a total of 50 Sauga Busks licenses have been awarded to artists to perform on a first come first serve basis with a two hour limit at approved Sauga Busks locations throughout the City from May to October between 11:00 am and 9:00 pm.

### **Alcohol consumption in parks**

According to the City of Mississauga Parks Bylaw 0197-2020, no person shall possess, consume, serve or sell alcoholic beverages unless authorized by a permit. As outlined in the City's Municipal Alcohol Policy (Serving Alcohol in City Facilities Policy 05-01-03) alcohol is permitted only at locations which have been designated by the Commissioner of Community Services. Issuance of a permit is conditional on the applicant complying with the conditions for serving alcohol outlines in the City's policy, obtaining a Special Occasion Permit from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) and providing proof of insurance.

Jurisdictions across Canada including Vancouver, Langley, Calgary and Edmonton are implementing initiatives to allow for personal alcohol consumption in designated public spaces and parks. These initiatives included extensive public engagement to initiate as well as ongoing

monitoring and evaluation to inform future implementation. Within Ontario, municipalities, such as Toronto, are also exploring options to implement similar types of initiatives.

A number of factors must be taken in consideration including compliance with the current provincial legislation (e.g. Liquor License and Control Act), public health and safety requirements, cultural considerations, equity, and resident support. Staff will conduct further assessment related to personal alcohol consumption in parks and advise on how this may be addressed by the City of Mississauga in future years.

### **Future Directions**

Planning for the next cycle of Future Directions Strategic Plans for Community Services is underway and will present opportunities for more in-depth review of current practice and additional community engagement to guide the future provision of amenities, programs and services as well as policy development related to animation of City of Mississauga Parks.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact associated with this report. The activities outlined in this report will be accommodated within existing operating budgets.

### **Conclusion**

Mississauga parks support a diverse range of recreation, leisure and cultural activities and contribute to the well-being of residents and a vibrant public realm. Relationships and collaboration with community stakeholders are essential to animating the City's parks and to realize the City's Vision for the Future as a place where people choose to be.



Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

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