

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: March 3, 2026</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: March 25, 2026</p>

Subject

Mobile Food Vendors in Public Spaces Pilot Program Results and Next Steps

Recommendation

1. That the Mobile Food Vendors in Public Spaces Pilot Program be extended, with modifications, for the period of May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027, as outlined in the Corporate Report entitled “Mobile Food Vendors in Public Spaces Pilot Program Results and Next Steps,” dated March 3, 2026, from the Commissioner of Community Services.
2. That the following By-laws be amended to support the extension of the Mobile Food Vendors in Public Spaces Pilot Program, with modifications, as outlined in this corporate report, effective May 1, 2026:
 - a) Ice Cream Truck Vendors By-law 0523-2004, as amended;
 - b) Parks By-law 0197-2020, as amended;
 - c) Prohibit Sale of Goods on Highways By-law 0127-1995, as amended;
 - d) Traffic By-law 0555-2000, as amended;
 - e) Vehicle Licensing By-law 0520-2004, as amended;
 - f) Vendors' By-law 0522-2004, as amended.
3. That the Licensing Administrative Penalty By-law 0135-2014, as amended, be further amended, effective May 1, 2026, to designate the Parks By-law 0197-2020, as amended, and Vehicle Licensing By-law 0520-2004, as amended, and to introduce administrative penalties, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this corporate report, for contraventions of these by-laws.
4. That the Administrative Penalty By-law 0282-2013, as amended, be further amended, effective May 1, 2026, to introduce administrative penalties for contraventions of the Traffic By-law 0555-2000, as outlined in Appendix 2 of this corporate report.
5. That all other necessary by-laws be enacted.

Executive Summary

- On October 2, 2024, staff received direction from Council to review the mobile food vendor permitting process for parks and public spaces.
- On March 19, 2025, Council passed Resolution 0054-2025 approving the implementation of a one-year pilot program (“Pilot Program”) starting May 1, 2025, to permit food vendors with a valid mobile vendor licence to vend in designated paid on-street parking areas and designated park locations.
- A survey was sent to participants to gather feedback on the Pilot Program. Out of 69 vendors, 24 responded (35%), of which 10 completed the full survey.
- Vendor feedback was largely positive, with recurring themes focused on enforcement and clearer program parameters, and additional suggestions aimed at expanding vending opportunities and improving operational support.
- Staff feedback was mixed; Parks and Municipal Parking noted no issues, while Enforcement and Venue & Events flagged compliance concerns and recommended targeted adjustments.
- Staff recommends extending the Pilot Program for the period of May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027, with modifications, including additional measures to deter future violations and the removal of the on-street parking locations near Celebration Square.

Background

Following a deputation at the June 5, 2024, General Committee meeting about the ice cream truck and refreshment cycle vending process, staff committed to reviewing the mobile food vendor bidding and permitting process in municipal parks to improve fairness and transparency. After a separate deputation at the October 2, 2024, General Committee meeting regarding food and refreshment carts on City property, staff also committed to exploring a pilot program for mobile food vendors across the City to support entrepreneurs and small businesses.

On March 19, 2025, Council approved through resolution 0054-2025 the Pilot Program recommended by staff in a corporate report entitled “Mobile Food Vendors in Public Spaces Pilot Program”.

The Pilot Program began on May 1, 2025, and streamlined the vendor bid and permitting process by eliminating the existing lottery selection process and the park vendor permit. Vendors were only required to have a valid mobile vendor licence to vend. The mobile licences included in this Pilot Program were:

- Refreshment Vehicles (Food Trucks)
- Ice Cream Vehicles (Ice Cream Trucks)
- Refreshment Carts/Portable Display Units (Food Carts); and
- Refreshment Cycles (Ice Cream Cycles)

The Pilot Program has two streams:

1. Vending on Streets and Roadway: this was applicable to food trucks and allowed them to operate at designated on-street paid parking locations, up to five hours at a given time.
2. Vending in Parks: this was applicable to ice cream trucks, ice cream carts, food trucks, food carts and allowed them to operate at designated municipal parks on a first-come-basis between 10 am until park closing.

Comments

Feedback from vendors and staff on the pilot program is summarized below.

Vendor Feedback:

An online survey was conducted from September 23 to October 24, 2025, to gather feedback from Pilot Program participants. Two reminders were sent to the vendors to encourage better participation in the survey. Of the 69 vendors invited, 24 responded (35%), with 10 completing the full survey (14%).

Most of the feedback received was from Food Truck and Ice Cream Truck vendors (38% each), followed by Food Carts (21%). No ice cream cycle vendors responded. Among respondents, 67% operated in City parks and 38% used paid on-street parking. Popular Park locations included Lakefront Promenade (6 vendors), J.C. Saddington, Jack Darling, and Erindale (5 each).

Overall, the vendor feedback was positive. Most respondents rated park accessibility and space favourably. A few comments noted challenges with the first-come-first-serve policy, preference for the old lottery system and clarity on vending times/locations. Other feedback included expanding permitted vending locations, allowing food carts in additional areas (e.g., downtown), and opportunities to improve signage.

Parks Feedback:

Parks staff reported that the Pilot Program was a success, with no complaints or negative feedback from Park Supervisors or operations teams. Dedicated parking spots helped guide vendors, and there was no noticeable increase in litter. While most vendors adapted well, some experienced challenges adjusting to the lack of permanent parking spots. Looking ahead, expanding park locations and adding additional signage are being considered, though excessive signage may be redundant.

Municipal Parking Feedback:

Municipal Parking reported no complaints or issues during the Pilot Program. They observed that few food trucks utilized on-street vending opportunities, indicating limited engagement with this option.

Enforcement Feedback

Enforcement staff observed repeated compliance issues in parks, particularly involving vendors parking at designated locations the night before the parks opened, and in some cases, remaining on park property overnight and sleeping in their trucks. These actions directly contravene the City's by-laws and undermine fair competition by giving non-compliant vendors an advantage over those who follow established rules.

Although Municipal By-law Enforcement Officers (MBEOs) have issued Notices in response to these violations, staff have concluded that the existing penalty framework has not been effective in achieving compliance. The relatively low penalty amounts have not acted as an effective deterrent, resulting in repeat violations. This persistent non-compliance demonstrates the need for a more robust and clearly structured enforcement approach, up to and including removal of the mobile vehicle.

To address these concerns and enable greater enforceability, staff propose the introduction of new, clearly defined administrative penalties, with a focus on targeting overnight parking on park property. Under this approach, penalty amounts would also be increased and where appropriate, applied on a graduated or escalated basis with administrative penalty amounts of \$500, \$750 or \$1,000 depending on the frequency of the contravention. This escalation is intended to reflect the impact of repeat contraventions and reinforce the expectation to comply with the Pilot Program rules and associated by-laws.

In addition to enhanced administrative penalties, vendors may be subject to licensing implications under the City's licensing by-laws. Repeated violations of the Pilot Program requirements may result in progressive licensing consequences. Under the applicable licensing by-laws, the Licence Manager has the authority to impose terms and conditions on a licence, refuse to issue or renew a licence, or cancel, revoke or suspend a licence. For example, the Licence Manager has the authority to impose conditions on a licence, such as restricting a vendor from operating at a specific location. Vendors may also be subject to a suspension of their licence following two documented contraventions related to the Pilot Program, with continued non-compliance resulting in licence revocation after a third contravention. This tiered or escalatory disciplinary model establishes a clear, transparent process for addressing ongoing violations and ensures that the most serious or persistent cases face meaningful consequences and possible removal of the vehicle or cart in violation.

Together, these measures would provide staff with stronger tools to take decisive action against repeat offenders, enhance fairness for compliant vendors, and protect the integrity of the Pilot Program.

Venue and Events Services Feedback:

Venue and Events Services staff recommended removing the parking locations on the north side of Burnhamthorpe Road West—between 37 metres east of Living Arts Drive and 113 metres further east—and the north and south sides of City Centre Drive, between Living Arts

Drive and Confederation Parkway, from the Mobile Food Vendors Pilot on-street parking list, as these areas create conflicts with vendors operating at Celebration Square.

Currently, vendors on Celebration Square must go through an RFP process, commit to fixed vending hours (even during low traffic), and adhere to blackout dates for major events. For these major events, they can also pay organizers for permission to vend. In contrast, vendors using the designated parking area out of Celebration Square can operate at lower costs, serve event guests without restrictions, and leave if the foot traffic is low.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend that the Pilot Program be extended for the period of May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027, with the following modifications:

1. Introduce new contraventions and escalating administrative penalty amounts, including wording to address vendors remaining on-site overnight or occupying designated location outside of permitted hours and/or removal of the vehicle or mobile cart. Amendments to be made to the Parks and related By-Laws as applicable and required.
2. Implement an escalated administrative penalty structure for certain contraventions or habitual offenders, with administrative penalty amounts of \$500, \$750 or \$1,000 based on the frequency of contravention, as outlined in Appendix 1 and update the general provisions of the Licensing Administrative Penalty By-law 0135-2014, as amended, to allow for escalating administrative penalties.
3. Reinstate the requirement for vendors to acknowledge understanding of the rules as part of their licence application as a means of reinforcing expectations around compliance and vendor accountability. Requiring vendors to formally acknowledge the rules reduces ambiguity, ensures they are aware of their obligations and are essentially accepting of the same rules.
4. Introduce a new section under the Traffic By-law 0555-2000, amended, that prohibits park vendor vehicles from stopping or parking outside of permitted times, and also introduce escalating penalties for this new contravention under the Administrative Penalty By-law 0282-2013, as amended, as outlined in Appendix 2.
5. Remove certain locations, as set out in this report, from the list of Mobile Food Vendor Designated Paid On-Street Parking Locations. The list of Mobile Food Vendor Designated Paid On-Street Parking Locations for the Pilot Program during the extended period of May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027 is attached as Appendix 3.

These recommendations are designed not only to improve operational efficiency and compliance but to uphold the program's integrity, promote fairness and deter conduct that circumvents program rules as a means of obtaining undue advantage.

To support improvement and compliance, the Pilot Program will be refined through the review of trends and analysis of operational data and input, as well as feedback collected through a

vendor survey. The results of these reviews will help identify compliance risks and guide enhancements to ensure the program remains effective and responsive and its integrity, intact.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with extending the Mobile Food Vendors in Public Spaces Pilot Program for the period of May 1, 2026, to April 30, 2027.

The Pilot Program continues to operate within existing approved operating budgets and existing staffing resources, and the recommended implementation of escalated administrative penalties is intended to improve compliance, any impacts on revenue generated is unpredictable at this time.

Conclusion

Staff recommend extending the Pilot Program for one year with modifications, effective May 1, 2026. Vendor survey responses indicated generally favourable views on park accessibility and available space; however, staff noted concerns regarding adherence to program rules and the lack of meaningful consequences for non-compliance. To address this, proposed modifications include stricter penalties, measures to reinforce vendor accountability, and the removal of the on-street parking locations near Celebration Square.

Attachments

- Appendix 1: Licensing Administrative Penalty By-law 0135-2014 Amendments
- Appendix 2: Administrative Penalty By-law 0282-2013 Amendments
- Appendix 3: Mobile Food Vendor Designated Paid On-Street Parking Locations



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