

Staff Report



To **Committee of the Whole**
Service Area Public Services
Date Monday, November 1, 2021
Subject **Bylaw Regulations Related to the Parking of Trailers and Recreational Vehicles**

Recommendation

1. That staff be directed to create an exemption process to allow for, under certain conditions, the short-term parking of recreational trailers and recreational vehicles within residential driveways.
2. That City Council direct staff to bring back a report outlining an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw related to trailer parking regulations.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To respond to Council’s direction for staff to report on possible amendments to the Traffic Bylaw and Zoning Bylaw, with respect to the parking of trailers on city streets and private land.

Key Findings

Residents want to give priority to community safety and the enjoyment of residential neighbourhoods, while allowing trailer owners to park temporarily within their driveways. Residents consider enforcement as key to ensure compliance to any regulation changes.

Complexities of trailer parking has led staff to agree that (a) it is difficult to support a change in on-street parking at this time, and (b) staff should focus mainly on the parking of trailers within private driveways and, whether short-term exemptions to allow for cleaning, loading/unloading should be given.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with this report; the cost for inspections and enforcement, along with any registration requirements will be funded through the Operations Department’s existing budget.

Report

Current status

Currently, while there are several bylaws that regulate parking and storing of recreational vehicles, boats, and trailers, the two main bylaws are the City’s Zoning Bylaw ((1995) – 14864, General Provisions Section 4) and the City’s Traffic Bylaw

((2002)-17017). (Other Bylaws include the City's Accessible Parking Bylaw, Private Parking Bylaw, Fire Route Bylaw, Property Standards Bylaw. and Parking in City Parks Bylaw.)

In summary, the current regulations specific to trailers and recreational vehicles are:

- Boats, trailers, campers, and other recreational vehicles are permitted to be stored in a garage, side yard, or rear yard.
- Using or living in a parked or stored recreational vehicle is not permitted.
- Recreational vehicles parked or stored in a side yard, must be at least 1 metre away from the side lot line on a paved portion of the property.
- Recreational vehicles must not occupy or obstruct any access to or from the required off-street parking space.
- Every utility trailer, boat trailer, and unmounted camper top shall be parked or stored behind the front wall of the main building, or in a garage or carport.
- Under the Traffic Bylaw, trailers are considered as regular vehicles on the road and therefore are regulated as such.
- If you are found non-compliant with the Zoning Bylaw, you will receive a warning and have 30 days to comply.

Feedback from the community

Staff consulted the community using a survey that ran from July 22, 2021 to August 12, 2021. The goal of this survey was to hear from trailer owners and users, as well as residents without trailers, to find a solution that responds to the needs of the people of Guelph, whether it is the need to load or use a trailer or the need to get around our streets safely and enjoy our neighborhoods.

The trailer parking consultation was intended to generate directional and indicative feedback from respondents with respect to short-term trailer parking, as opposed to permanent trailer storage. The City did not list an option to lift restrictions altogether, because permanent storage of trailers in driveways was not a part of the project's scope of work. The survey explored community response to any adjustments that might go above and beyond the existing bylaw while still recognizing the need for residents and businesses to have short-term access to their trailer.

Throughout the survey, unless otherwise specified, the term 'trailer' was used to include any and all of the following:

- recreational vehicle (RV)
- camper
- vehicle with an attached trailer
- detached trailer of various types including but not limited to boats, personal watercraft, and snowmobile trailers with or without load attached
- utility or contractor trailer (any portable unit so constructed as to be suitable for attachment to a motor vehicle and capable of being used for the transportation of goods and/or equipment).

There were 1,831 valid responses. Respondents represented the wards evenly, in proportion to population. Also, respondents who own or rent trailers represented 51.8% and respondents that do not own or rent trailers represented the remaining

48.2%. The summarized survey results are attached (Attachment A) and can be found in this link: [\(link to survey results\)](#).

The results of the survey are divided into two opposing groups. In short, those who own a trailer would like to be able to park on their driveways and the street and those who don't own a trailer, are hesitant to allow parking on driveways and on the street.

As part of the survey, staff included a comment section, with a total of 973 comments received; staff carefully reviewed every comment. Given the significant number of comments, staff considers it important to summarize the points of greatest convergence. Of greatest note:

- Owners of trailers want allowances to park, at least temporarily, on their driveways. (449 total comments)
- Residents want safe roads and sidewalks. (380 total comments)

Other comments included:

- Residents are concerned that allowing parking on driveways will lead to increased congestion of streets, especially on narrow ones, because owners will then park their vehicles on the street in order to create space to park their trailer on the driveway.
- Enforcement should ensure that residents adhere to both existing and new regulations. Residents widely commented that enforcing the bylaws must improve because the system is currently being abused by some trailer owners and, if more allowances are to happen, a solid enforcement system will be necessary.
- Allow only temporary parking to reduce eye-sore/aesthetic harm that some feel is created by parking trailers on driveways and roads.
- A need to differentiate regulations for commercial purposes from those used for recreational purposes.
- Find alternative ways to improve access to temporary parking for trailers and recreational vehicles, in portions of City parking lots of recreational centers, as long as it is liable and safe.

Comparator municipalities

Comparator municipalities regulate storage and parking of trailers (recreational and commercial) and recreational vehicles in different manners. Some of them are very detailed regarding weight, height, and length of trailers and recreational vehicles, while others are more general. Some of them have stand-alone bylaws and some are included in other bylaws. Likewise, some allow on-street parking and some do not. In the conversations staff had with other municipalities, it was frequently highlighted that there must be a solid enforcement system to ensure compliance.

Recommendations

Considering the opinions captured in the survey, the varied bylaws, and feedback from other municipalities along with internal staff discussions, it is evident that the issue of regulating on-street trailer parking is not simple.

Just some the complexities of this topic are: size and weight of the trailer, commercial or recreational use; characteristics of the transport (i.e. recreational

vehicle, transformed bus, campervan, utility trailers, recreational trailer); impact of other vehicles being displaced into the road; number of vehicles owned versus the capacity of one's driveway; variation of width of streets and driveways; enforcement ability and capacity; and the length and frequency of temporary parking allowances.

Given such complexities and the divided feedback from the public, staff has agreed that it is difficult to support additional restrictions in the on-street parking of trailers and recreational vehicles at this time, but that staff will revisit this topic from a safety perspective as future reviews of the City's Traffic Bylaw are conducted.

Staff is therefore recommending creating a process that can, under certain conditions, exempt the short-term parking of recreational trailers within residential driveways (off-street). Specifically, the process would allow exemptions for temporary parking for trailers and recreational vehicles in private driveways within residential zones. Each property would be granted six exemptions per year with each exemption being valid for 48 consecutive hours.¹ In addition, the exemption would only be valid if the parking of the trailer or recreational vehicle does not violate any other parking or bylaw restriction, and that the parking of the vehicle does not obstruct the ability to access or egress from neighbouring driveways.

This proposed process would require an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to modify or remove the regulations that pertain to the storage of trailers on private properties. Given the comments received through the Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review related to off-street parking, staff note that the proposed process would provide for temporary exemptions and not permit long-term storage of trailers on residential driveways. Should Council approve the recommendation of this report, staff would require Council direction to initiate the zoning amendment.

If Council approves the recommendation, based on feedback from other municipalities, staff will also to work on a solid legal and enforcement solution that will be implemented prior to commencement. This solution will see Bylaw staff actively enforcing violations. If approved, staff will implement the exemption program and proactive enforcement in 2022 following approval of the zoning amendment.

Additionally, in response to public feedback, staff will continue to explore opportunities to provide temporary parking for trailers and recreational vehicles within portions of parking lots at City facilities. As per all reviews, staff will update Council one year after implementation regarding the success or challenges of the off-street exemption program.

Compliance

The City's Bylaw Compliance Officers will be the primary staff responsible for compliance of the parking of trailers and recreational vehicles on private land and City streets. Trailers and recreational vehicles parked for extended periods within a private driveway without an exemption and in violation of existing parking restrictions will be proactively ticketed.

¹ Based on the feedback from the survey, the average need is 6 times a year. Suggestions from the comments indicate that temporary parking is fine up to 48 hours each time, but no more than 72 hours. All the feedback is from owners or renters of trailers who responded to the survey.

Set Fines/Summonses

Enforcement of parking violations related to trailers and parking will be conducted using existing set fines. The existing set fines for parking a trailer or recreational vehicle within a private driveway is \$135; on-street violations vary based on the violation.

As with other violations, for continued violations, or where circumstances warrant, Bylaw Compliance Officers have the option of summoning the defendant before the Provincial Offence Court where upon conviction, the Justice of the Peace may impose a higher fine.

Cost for Implementation

The cost to implement an exemption process will be absorbed within the Operations Department budget. It is expected to be nominal as staff will utilize the existing overnight parking exemption program to support this initiative.

Fees and Revenues

Staff are recommending that no fees be associated with the exemption process. Staff will review this matter after one year of implementation.

Follow up

As with any new bylaw restriction or initiative, staff will review after one year of implementation has lapsed to determine the effectiveness of the program.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with this report; the cost for inspections and enforcement, along with any registration requirements will be funded through the Operations Department's existing budget.

Consultations

Pat Sheehy, Program Manager, Zoning

David Gooch, Program Manager, Bylaw Compliance Security

Melissa Aldunate, Manager, Policy Planning Urban Design

Paul Hutchinson, Supervisor, Traffic Engineering

Steve Anderson, Manager, Transportation Engineering

Terry Gayman, General Manager, Engineering and Transportation Services

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Katie Duncan, Communications Officer

Tracy Suerich, Community Engagement Coordinator

Tara Sprigg, General Manager, Corporate Communications and Customer Service

Strategic Plan Alignment

The report ties to the "Navigating Our Future" pillar, and improving the safety, efficiency, and connectivity of the whole transportation system.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Survey results

Departmental Approval

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