



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee
From: Paul de Greeff, Manager of Park Planning and Development
Date: 01/16/2023
Subject: Food Trucks In Parks – Recommendations for 2023

RECOMMENDATION

That PTR endorse the following:

1. That Saanich continue to accommodate food trucks at Saanich-sponsored events and at select parks consistent with results from the Food Trucks in Parks Pilot Program; and, that Temporary Use Permits be renewed to allow this to happen in the short term, and
2. That Saanich Parks undertake the necessary approvals process to allow food trucks to operate as desired in Saanich in the long term.

PURPOSE

To present the results of the 2021 - 2022 Food Trucks in Parks Pilot Program, to renew Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) for the short term, and to recommend working toward accommodating food trucks in the long term.

DISCUSSION

Background

The idea to invite food trucks to operate in select Saanich parks was proposed in 2019. Council supported exploring the idea via the the Food Trucks in Parks Pilot Program on March 16, 2020, however its launch was delayed until 2021 because of COVID-19.

Food Trucks in Parks Pilot Program 2021 - 2022

In 2021, Council approved three (3) locations for the pilot:

- Beckwith Park
- Cadboro-Gyro Park
- Gorge Waterway Park

Eight (8) vendors were chosen by lottery to participate for ten (10) weeks from July 1st to September 8th, 2021. No fees were charged. General requirements included:

- Operate between 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. and leave the park by 10:00 p.m.
- Be self-sufficient for water and power
- Use generators that comply with the Noise Bylaw
- Provide their own garbage, recycling, and compost bins
- Provide standard licenses, insurance, and permits (including business license and fire safety inspection)
- Pilot locations were chosen according to community support, the potential customer volume, and the availability of suitable site conditions and washrooms.

Generally, the Pilot was well received, though inconsistent attendance by vendors, and the inability to provide an accurate schedule due to last minute schedule changes (and the posting delay on the Saanich website) were significant drawbacks. Gorge Waterway Park proved to be unsuccessful due to the unreliable number of potential customers and limitations imposed by the physical space.

On February 7, 2022 Council approved two (2) locations for the 2022 pilot season:

- Beckwith Park (up to two (2) vendors)
- Cadboro-Gyro Park (up to two (2) vendors)

Six (6) vendors participated from July 1 – September 9. In an effort to address shortcomings identified in the 2021 program, vendors were asked to commit to two (2) weeks at each location (for a total of 4 weeks) and to advertise their schedule on the 'Victoria Food Trucks' site, independent of the Saanich website. Vendors were also required to pay for their Business Licenses.

Only Cadboro-Gyro Park consistently had food trucks as all but two (2) vendors withdrew from the program during the course of the summer. Vendors cited the desire to attend more lucrative opportunities elsewhere as the main reason for limited participation.

Food Trucks in Parks Pilot Program 2021 – 2022 Results

Vendors were interviewed at the close of each year and offered the following feedback:

- The program was appreciated and important to vendors in 2021 when there were very few opportunities due to COVID -19. Easing restrictions in 2022 greatly

increased opportunities across the region, enabling vendors to choose locations most likely to be lucrative.

- In 2022, staffing issues forced some vendors to operate fewer vehicles and/or on fewer days, and increased the need to go to the most profitable locations to stay in business.
- Vendors offering savoury and/or full meals had little business. Vendors offering sweets and/or snacks were busiest.
- Beckwith Park was generally not busy enough to be profitable, other than during special events.
- Cadboro-Gyro Park is by far the busiest and best location, but even here only vendors selling sweets/snacks were consistently busy.
- When asked if they would participate in the program again in 2023, only those offering sweets were interested, and only at Cadboro-Gyro Park.

Temporary Use Permits (TUPs)

Formally inviting food trucks to parks and events is not straightforward because food vendors are not clearly permitted to conduct business in Saanich. This prevents vendors from obtaining the Business License and Saanich Fire Safety Inspection that are needed to operate.

Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) are a mechanism that, if approved by Council, can be registered on a property to allow a particular use to take place on that property. In 2020 Parks registered TUPs on each of the parcels proposed to participate in the Pilot Program to allow food vendors to legally operate there. Parks also registered TUPs on the parcels used to host long standing Saanich-sponsored events (like Music in The Park) so that food vendors could legally participate in those events. The TUPs specified how and where food vendors could operate and were valid for 2020, 2021, and 2022. TUPs may be renewed for only one additional three (3) year term (2023, 2024 and 2025); Parks recommends renewing the TUPs in order to continue to facilitate food trucks in select parks and events in the short term, as outlined below.

Food Trucks in Parks for 2023

The pilot program is now complete. Food truck owners identified Cadboro-Gyro Park as the only Saanich park currently busy enough to support food vendors on a day-to-day basis. Beckwith Park was found to be lucrative during special events, and vendors are invited to participate in these events by the District.

The 2023 Food Trucks in Parks program is recommended to operate under the same general conditions it did in 2022, but be limited to Cadboro-Gyro Park where vendor attendance is reliable. It is likely that most of the participating vendors will offer snack-type food.

Food Trucks at Saanich-sponsored Events

Saanich invites food trucks to several special events:

- Music in The Park (at Beckwith, Brydon, Hyacinth, Majestic, Rudd, and Rutledge Parks)
- Earth Day Festival (at Saanich Municipal Hall)
- Gorge Canada Day Picnic (at Gorge Waterway Park)
- Cadboro Bay Festival (at Cadboro-Gyro Park)
- Family Arts Festival (at Cedar Hill Park)
- Autumn Lantern Festival (formerly Moon Festival, at Gordon Head Recreation Centre)

The TUPs that were registered to bring food trucks into compliance at these events in 2020 – 2022 need to be renewed to continue their compliance in 2023 – 2025.

Food Trucks in The Long Term

Parks is working with the Planning Department to determine how best to allow food trucks to operate after the renewed TUPs expire in 2026. Amendments to relevant Saanich documents may be required.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Renew the TUP at Cadboro-Gyro Park to allow it to continue to participate in Parks' Food Trucks in Parks program (recommended).
2. Do not renew the TUP at Cadboro-Gyro Park and discontinue the Food Trucks in Parks program.
3. Renew the TUPs associated with Saanich-sponsored events (recommended).
4. Do not renew the TUPs associated with Saanich-sponsored events and do not invite food vendors to attend the events.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If a small-scale Food Trucks in Parks program proceeds it will require only modest support from Parks staff and can be funded through Parks' 2023 operating budget.

Food truck owners are not charged a fee to attend special events and are not a significant source of revenue.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Having food vendors in parks and at special events helps to employ locals, enliven spaces, and offers a service to Saanich residents. They support 2 of the 3 core themes identified in the Strategic Plan, 2019 – 2023: Social Well-being and Economic Vibrancy.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Food truck owners should be treated consistently and all vendors operating in Saanich should have to meet the same requirements. At this time this is not possible without having TUPs registered on the properties involved.

CONCLUSIONS

Food Trucks In Parks

Going forward the Food Trucks in Parks program should be limited to Cadboro-Gyro Park, and its Temporary Use Permit is recommended for renewal for an additional 3-year term.

Food Trucks at Saanich-sponsored Events

The availability of food enriches events and food vendors would be missed by the community if they were not there. The Temporary Use Permits associated with the events are recommended for renewal for an additional 3-year term.

Food Trucks in The Long Term

The District should identify and pursue the process to allow food trucks to operate as desired in Saanich in the long term.

Report prepared by: 
Becky Goodall, Park Planner + Designer

Report reviewed by: 
Paul de Greeff, Manager of Park Planning and Development

Report approved by: 
Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks