



**By Sharon Harrison**

Just ahead of the Victoria Day long weekend, the municipality shared details of how it is intending to manage an expected busy summer season in the County were shared in detail at a public information online session Tuesday evening.

The Tourism Management Plan covered six identified key problem areas: boat launches, parking and bylaws and enforcement, Wellington beach, garbage, washrooms and parks, communications and visitor services. The session also included an update from Robin Reilly, superintendent with Sandbanks Provincial Park.

The idea is the plan, developed by staff over the past seven months, will help better prepare the municipality, residents and tourists for the upcoming peak summer tourism season.

The cost to implement the plan is estimated at \$642,320.

“The majority of that cost is being covered by revenue from the Municipal Accommodations Tax,” said Rebecca Lamb, destination and development marketing coordinator. “The portion covered by the MAT that we have slated is \$390,320.”

The balance is to be covered by user fees, fines and a small amount of advertising revenue.

Lamb explained the MAT is a tax charged to visitors when they book roofed accommodations, such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rentals.

“It is not a tax on residents, it is not paid by residents; MAT is strictly regulated by provincial legislation which says it must be used for destination marketing or for

investments that support tourism development in the County, specifically. This plan does not affect the resident tax base.”

Also just launched is the County’s new Summer Hub website designed to help residents and ratepayers navigate the Tourism Management Plan. The site contains a variety of resources and information and is designed to be a one-stop shop with sections such as a ‘who to call’ section, a parking guide, a section on Wellington beach, and so on.

“We saw tourist levels reach unprecedented levels in 2020, resulting in an influx of visitors,” said Mark Kerr, communications and consultation supervisor. “We heard from residents and businesses about the challenges that this unprecedented situation created.”

Some of the more common challenges noted were excessive traffic volume, illegal parking, illegal camping, excessive garbage and littering, various safety concerns and general overcrowding.

The plan is expected to have a phased implementation where enhanced resources will be matched with the ramp-up of visitors, with full implementation for the peak tourist season.

Enhanced staff is set to begin May 21 across most areas, with staffing levels peaking in July and August.

New fees and fines will be implemented May 26, or later.

Reilly noted that at this time last year Sandbanks park was closed at the beginning of the season due to COVID-19, yet by the end of the season, the park had logged a record number of visitors.

“There was tremendous growth in July and August, and even into September and October,” said Reilly. “There were a number of traffic congestion issues around that volume of people that raised numerous problems for residents and park staff.”

Sandbanks was closed down entirely 12 times last year for a period of four-eight hours; another five times, portions of the park had to be closed due to the volume of people making it unmanageable.

Reilly says small improvements have been made at the three provincial parks in Prince Edward County (Sandbanks, North Beach and Lake on the Mountain) in anticipation of the coming busy year.

The parking lot at Lake on the Mountain has been fixed up, resurfaced and enlarged slightly. They are also looking at restoring parts of the deck; there will be increased staff, and increased cleaning at the washrooms.

“We were also, for the first time, trying to initiate a pay and display system for a low fee,” said Reilly.

There are no fees Monday to Thursday, but on weekends there will be a fee of \$3 for two hours of parking at Lake on the Mountain.

Reilly said North Beach Provincial Park saw the greatest increase in visitation last year of any park in southern Ontario.

“This year, we have increased the staff level at North Beach by about a third; we have made some improvements to the food services and the parking.”

He noted an electronic sign will be set up at the junction of Highway 33 to provide messaging when the park is full.

At Sandbanks, some fencing and gates have been installed to help control walk-in traffic, and more staff have been added.

“We have also expanded our trail system through the fall and last winter and there has been a huge increase in people hiking through the park,” Reilly said. “The intent of that is to offer other things for people to do than just the beach experience.”

Addressing Wellington beach, Julianne Snepsts, communications co-ordinator, noted a number of changes will be implemented at the beach this summer to help with crowding.

“The biggest change is there will be an admission fee for Wellington beach on Saturdays, Sunday and holidays in the summer, between the hours of 9am-5pm.”

Residents and ratepayers of the County are eligible to obtain a Wellington beach day pass which will allow access to the beach on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays at no cost. Passes are available at Shire Hall (once the lockdown lifts) as well as library branches (pick-up only during lockdown) from May 21.

Proof of residence will be required to obtain a pass, such as a driver’s licence, utility bill, rental agreement, etc.

There is no advance booking at Wellington beach, it is a first-come, first-served situation, where a maximum of 350 people will be permitted. A portion of that number will be reserved for residents.

The entry fee for the beach will be implemented starting May 29, however, capacity will be managed on the Victoria Day long weekend and the gate will be managed by staff.

“A temporary zone change will allow County-sanctioned food trucks to operate at the beach to provide more amenities, some food and drink for beach goers,” said Snepsts.

She noted also that the bulk water hauling station will be moved from the beach to the Wellington and District Community Centre to help reduce traffic and improve safety on the beach.

“The community boat launch that is located on Beach Street at the Wellington beach, the hours for that launch will be limited on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, it will be closed between 9 a.m.-5p.m.,” explained Snepsts. “You can put a boat into before nine o’clock or after five o’clock, and you can bring your boat out at anytime, but no new boats can be launched between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.”

There will be specific parking areas for boaters by the boat launch.

With boat launches generally, Karen Palmer, destination and development marketing coordinator said one change will be that boaters will now pay for parking rather than for launching, and this will be achieved through the Mackay parking pay app available on smart phones.

Palmer said two paddle docks will be installed in June to help people using canoes or kayaks at two boat launches. The Belleville Street boat launch will be closed for the 2021 season due to safety issues and traffic disruptions.

Up until May 26, launch fees are \$20 using the cash box. A season pass purchased before May 26 will cost \$85. After May 26, the system will transition to a pay to park system using the Mackay pay app. The season pass after May 26 will be \$50 for residents and \$100 non-residents. The cost to park with a trailer is \$20, and \$10 if vehicles bring in a canoe or kayak, something that doesn’t requires a trailer.

She said there will be additional help in the form of bylaw and parking enforcement this summer.

“They will be working every day of the week from May to October, from 7 a.m.-9 p.m.,” said Lamb.

She confirmed the two-hour parking limit in Wellington will be strictly enforced.

“We have expanded the seasonal no-parking zones to 12 areas across the County,” Palmer said, noting residents should watch out for them because fines are heavy at \$400.

The illegal camping bylaw fine has increased from \$80 to \$500.

There are 30 public washroom locations across the County and the cleaning of those facilities will happen up to three times a day in the busy, heavy traffic areas.

There will also be an increased number of garbage bins and garbage maintenance scheduled.

“There are no open flame or charcoal barbeques permitted in parks, propane is permitted,” said Lamb.

The municipality is working with two agencies, Alphabet Creative and Beattie Tartan, to help focus on visitor services campaign for those looking to plan a trip to Prince Edward County.

“The idea is visitors plan ahead and don’t feel disappointed about not being able to access amenities or waiting in long lines,” said Lamb.

# Popular Ontario tourist destination imposing big fines to avoid huge influx of visitors



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TORONTO -- A popular Ontario tourist destination that was completely overwhelmed with visitors last summer is imposing huge fines and will now charge out-of-towners to use the beach in order to avoid overcrowding.

Prince Edward County, located near Belleville, became a top destination for Ontarians looking for a getaway during the pandemic last summer.

But according to Todd Davis, the Director of Community Services, Programs and Initiatives for Prince Edward County, the region became so popular with tourists it became "more than they could handle."

"Tourism has been growing in Prince Edward County over the last decade but COVID really brought a sharp point to it," Davis told CTV News Toronto on Thursday.

Davis said people visiting the region last year caused massive gridlock in the county and that many people parked and camped illegally.

He said beaches were also often packed beyond capacity.

In preparation for another hectic summer, the county has approved a tourist management plan that increased fines for people who ignores the rules.

The county has increased no-parking fines from \$35 to an eye-watering \$400 in several tourist hot zones. This includes areas near Sandbanks Provincial Park and Mountain Provincial Park.

Davis said the previous \$35 fine wasn't enough to deter out-of-towners, who he said were often willing to accept the fine so they could find a parking spot.

"The whole goal for us was to raise it to a point where it would be high enough to be a deterrent for people to not park there," Davis said.

Fines for illegal camping in municipal parks and beaches will also jump from \$75 to a whopping \$500.

As of this weekend, out-of-towners will also be hit with a \$10 fee per person on weekends to access [Wellington Beach](#). It will remain free for locals.

There won't be any advanced bookings for Wellington Beach and the maximum capacity will be 350 people.

A portion of that 350 people will be reserved for county residents.

"These rules aren't to deter tourism generally, it's to manage people," Davis said.

"We're just trying to discourage over tourism."

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By Nicole King  
CTVNews.ca Barrie Producer

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BARRIE, ONT. -- With pandemic demand for waterfront parking being a hot commodity for another year, municipalities continue to lay hundreds of expensive fines aimed at reducing gatherings.

In Orillia, bylaw officers slapped 518 parking tickets for parking violations over the weekends of June 5-6 and June 12-13.

The [COVID-19 Waterfront Parking program](#) began on June 4 and runs until Sept. 12.

Under the new program, visitors without a parking pass need to pay \$50 to park at the waterfront and an additional \$50 to launch a boat.

In Barrie, bylaw officers laid 253 parking tickets between June 11 and 15 at the waterfront.

A spokesperson for the city says they are focusing on educating the public on the ongoing changes to the reopening steps and the municipal regulations.

Non-residents are charged \$10 a day to a maximum of \$50.

As of Tuesday, Barrie is prohibiting parking in 'spillover areas' near the waterfront without a Barrie Resident Parking Pass.

Bylaw officers in Innisfil laid 133 parking tickets on the weekend of June 5-6 and another 70 tickets over the weekend of June 12-13.



Parking at Innisfil Beach Park is restricted to residents only. A parking gate at the entrance of the park will be monitored seven days a week as of June 27 and ending September 6. Resident parking passes from 2020 remain valid through 2022.

In Barrie non residents are residents can find out more about parking passes [here](#).

Residents in Orillia can request a parking permit [here](#).

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# Waterfront communities implement expensive visitor parking restrictions



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BARRIE, ONT. -

Like many waterfront communities, Orillia implemented tight and expensive restrictions for out-of-towners planning to head to the beach.

What was once free parking and boat launching now costs \$50 for each.

"It is in place until Sept. 12 of this year, and it runs Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.," said Shawn Crawford, City of Orillia.

## INNISFIL PARKING

In Innisfil, police issued 250 parking tickets at \$150 over the past two weeks. The town also restricts visitors parking at the beach and all side streets within a one-kilometre radius of the park.

Barrie Vickers, Town of Innisfil, said only residents with parking permits would have access to Innisfil Beach Park. "We have a new gate to ensure that those who drive by the gate are authorized to do so."

The staff-controlled parking gate is at the park entrance to regulate access to it and the boat launch on weekends until June 27. Following that date, the town said it would be controlled seven days a week until Sept. 6.

## BARRIE PARKING

In Barrie, hundreds of parking tickets have been issued at the waterfront, but the city said visitors are welcome as long as they follow the rules.

"We do have a new [parking app](#) that visitors can download if they're coming to the waterfront and pay through the app," explained Brent Forsyth, City of Barrie.

Parking at the beach is \$10 an hour with a daily maximum of \$50.

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A sign in Orillia, Ont. details the cost of parking or launching a boat. Fri. June 18, 2021 (Rob Cooper/CTV News)

# SBP generates nearly \$1M from parking fees, fines at Sauble

Author of the article:

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South Bruce Peninsula has collected nearly \$1 million in revenue this year from parking fees, tickets and bylaw fines at Sauble Beach.

Mayor Janice Jackson said that's the highest annual amount collected to date and more than covers the roughly \$830,000 in gross operating expenses related to Sauble Beach.

"So we were able to recover those costs and have some surplus," she said Wednesday.

"I'm relieved. Our costs to operate Sauble Beach increase every year as our contracts increase yearly. So our goal always is to recover enough paid parking revenue so that our taxpayers don't have to carry that burden at all."

Jackson said the town is planning to use the estimated \$145,000 surplus towards the legal fees the town incurred to both defend itself during a judicial review of a Grey Sauble Conservation

Authority permit to cut back a section of dunes along Lakeshore Boulevard to address parking concerns and to appeal its two convictions of damaging endangered piping plover habitat.

South Bruce Peninsula council voted in the spring to increase parking fees at Sauble Beach. The hourly rate was hiked from \$3 to \$7, while the daily fee went from \$15 to \$30 and seasonal passes for non-residents went from \$50 to \$200.

Residents and qualifying Sauble Beach employees could still receive a season pass for \$50.

Jackson said, at the time, the increases were approved for several reasons, including to put the parking fees in line with those charged in other Ontario beach towns and to help the municipality recoup legal fees for actions related to Sauble Beach.

Director of legislative services/clerk Angie Cathrae said in a report to council that the town had anticipated \$887,410 in paid parking/bylaw enforcement revenue for Sauble Beach in the 2021 budget. That was to include \$637,670 from parking fees and passes, \$238,000 from tickets and bylaw offences and \$11,740 from a provincial grant for implementing cannabis regulations.

The town ended up generating \$991,596 in revenue – \$819,727 from parking fees and passes, \$160,128 from fines and bylaw offences, plus the provincial grant.

Town staff expect another \$75,000 will be received in January from fine and offence revenue paid through the courts.

Just over 5,500 parking tickets were issued in 2021, almost all in Sauble Beach. The town says 227 Provincial Offences notices were also issued at the beach.

Sixty-seven of those notices related to dogs, while 65 were issued for cooking devices on the beach, 38 were for having alcohol on the beach, 31 were for tents on the beach and 25 were for smoking in a public place.

The number of POA tickets issued in 2021 was down from 316 in 2020.