

City eyes parking ticket cour

DON PEAT, TORONTO SUN

FIRST POSTED: TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2011 08:49 PM EDT



City officials have proposed hitting motorists with a \$12.75 charge if they fight a parking ticket in court and lose. (TORONTO SUN file photo)

Toronto drivers are about to get stung if they go to court to fig

City officials have proposed hitting errant motorists who plead charge of \$12.75 on top the regular fine.

Councillors on Toronto's government management committee designed to eliminate the possibility of a justice of the peace court.

Officials argue the changes will reduce trial requests from those issued them the ticket will fail to show up to court.

"It is definitely not a cash grab," insisted Anthony Fabrizi, the city's chief legal officer. "It's about leveling the playing field."

Trial requests were filed for about 11% of the nearly 2.8 million parking tickets issued last year, but only 40% of those trial ended up with convictions.

Noting that trial requests have jumped from just 2.5% in 2004 to 11% now, the committee is looking at ways to reduce the number of parking tickets with parking tickets.

Court time should be used to hear legitimate disputes, he argued.

Given the fact only 40% show up at their trial date, "that says it's not a cash grab," he said.

He said the city isn't expected to bring in more revenue with the changes.

Councillor Paul Ainslie, chairman of the government management committee, said.

"If you're committing a crime, whether it is a parking ticket or a tax evasion, it's a crime. It's not a crime because you're a taxpayer?" Ainslie said.

He questioned why the city doesn't charge the full cost of the trial.

"I'd like to certainly have that discussion," he said.

Municipal officials also recommend lowering the fine for parking tickets. A \$300 fine is a sufficient deterrent "without being over the top," he said.

Committee member Councillor Pam McConnell called the red spaces "a necessary evil" for those who need it.

"Those spaces are very much sought after," she said. "It should be a necessary evil. It should be reduced." "It should be reduced."

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