

[Toronto: Can scooters park on the sidewalk? An article from "Wheels", by Andrew Meeson](#)

Looking for clarity on where to leave your two-wheeler? Good luck
Andrew Meeson
Toronto Star

Aug 22, 2008

Look around downtown Toronto and you're likely to see everything from the littlest moped to the biggest motorcycle cruiser taking up space on the sidewalk, either near a bike rack or on the boulevard right by the curb.

When it comes to parking a motorized two-wheeler in Toronto, it might look like anything goes – even more so now that bikes, ebikes and scooters have become more popular as relatively cheap and easy ways of getting around the city. But there are rules – it's just that no one's really clear on what they are.

So to set the record straight, we went to the people who should know: Toronto Police Services' parking enforcement division and the head of the city's parking policy and planning division.

One thing is for sure: Since 2005, motorcycles and scooters have been able to park for free on the streets where parking is marked.

"Motorcycles and scooters are exempt from payment of parking fees at all on-street parking meters and pay-and-display machines during the times of operation," George Johnstone, operations supervisor with parking enforcement for the Toronto Police, said in an email exchange.

That doesn't mean you can park your Harley by the curb and leave it all day. It typically means up to three hours maximum – and definitely not during times when it's prohibited, such as rush hour.

When I asked if it is legal for motor scooters or motorcycles to park near bike racks or newspaper boxes, Johnstone responded by writing:

"Moped and scooter operators are permitted to chain their vehicle to poles and bicycle racks to ensure the safety of their property. Motorcycles are not permitted to do the same."

And that would certainly seem to be the case, based on anecdotal evidence from merely viewing the scene.

But the real test is to park something.

I've left all kinds of two-wheelers on downtown sidewalks – from a 125 cc sportbike to a 600 cc scooter – without getting a ticket.

Except that it isn't allowed, according to Nazzareno Capano, manager of operational planning and policy for Transportation Services.

According to Capano, only non-plated vehicles, like bikes or e-bikes, are allowed to park on the sidewalk near bicycle racks. Since 2005, even mopeds have been plated.

"Police haven't really enforced it that much," he added. "But if they're out there for other reasons, they will look at all infractions, including scooters that are plated and parked on the sidewalk, and they will be fined."

Johnstone confirmed that fact: "If a safety concern exists and/or the scooter/moped is

obstructing vehicular or pedestrian (traffic), parking enforcement officers can issue an infraction," he wrote, adding that the fine for "stopping on/over a sidewalk/footpath" is \$60.

But Johnstone would not divulge any statistics to show how many fines police had levied – if any – against two-wheelers flouting the law.

Even electric bikes that look like a scooter should think twice.

It is legal, but etiquette might suggest giving up the space to a cyclist.

Besides, Capano said, "there is plenty of room for them to park on the road."

Making it easier to park on the streets at metered spots was just one way of helping to relieve the city's transportation woes, said Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker.

De Baeremaeker, who was chair of the city's public works committee at the time, backed the free parking move along with Councillor Case Ootes.

"If we don't make it convenient for you and encourage the use of scooters or motorcycles, people will go from bicycles to cars," De Baeremaeker said.

"We'd rather have people go from a bicycle to a scooter when they're 55 or 60 years old ... than buy an SUV."

Besides, motorbikers would buy tickets at the street parking machines, only to have them blow off or get taken.

They would then fight the city over any parking ticket they received as a result, which ate up time and money on both sides.

There are rumours the city is studying the extension of parking privileges to the boulevard, that area between the sidewalk and the gutter.

It may be happening all over the place right now, but no such study is being considered.

Though the boulevards are already cluttered with newspaper boxes and trash receptacles, Capano said, boulevard parking is unlikely to ever happen because of concerns for pedestrians injuring themselves tripping over the scooter or motorcycle or hitting the "hot exhaust."

Though Capano said a change to the provincial Highway Traffic Act would be necessary to allow boulevard parking, Bob Nichols, spokesperson for Ontario's Ministry of Transport, disagrees.

"The Act does not address parking on sidewalks," he said. "When parking is restricted from a sidewalk, it is enforced through the authority of a municipal bylaw."

Enthusiastic motorcyclists and scooterists may want to temper their enthusiasm for another reason: The free parking at on-street meters does not apply to the city's Green P parking lots.

Ootes tried to get that passed along with the original law, but councillors voted the amendment down.

"They run it as a business that generates revenue," Capano said. "And there is significant parking available on the street itself at these meters."

Toronto Star
Posted to TMSB Message Board August 23rd, 2008