

Subject: Amendment to the ATV, ORV and Snowmobile By-law to Expand ATV Systems in South Ottawa

File Number: ACS2025-PDB-PS-0011

**Report to Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on 3 April 2025
and Council 16 April 2025**

**Submitted on February 27, 2025 by Derrick Moodie, Director, Planning Services,
Planning, Development, and Building Department**

Contact Person: Ryan Thompson, Planner II, Rural Affairs Office

(613) 797-4521, Ryan.Thompson@ottawa.ca

Ward: West Carleton-March (5) Osgoode (20) Rideau-Jock (21)

**Objet : Modification du Règlement municipal sur les véhicules tout terrain,
les véhicules hors route et les motoneiges afin d'agrandir les
réseaux de sentiers pour les véhicules tout terrain dans le sud
d'Ottawa**

Dossier : ACS2025-PDB-PS-0011

Rapport au Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales

le 3 avril 2025

et au Conseil le 16 avril 2025

**Soumis le 27 février 2025 par Derrick Moodie, Directeur, Services de la
planification, Direction générale des services de la planification, de
l'aménagement et du bâtiment**

Personne ressource : Ryan Thompson, Urbaniste II, Bureau des affaires rurales

(613) 797-4521, Ryan.Thompson@ottawa.ca

Quartier : West Carleton-March (5) Osgoode (20) Rideau-Jock (21)

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee recommend City Council approve the ATV trail network expansion as a pilot for a period of two years in Osgoode Ward, Rideau-Jock Ward, and West Carleton-March Ward, through adoption of the recommended by-law amendment, attached as Document 2 and Document 3 to this report.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales recommande au Conseil municipal d'approuver l'agrandissement des réseaux de sentiers de véhicules tout terrain (VTT) en tant que projet pilote d'une durée de deux ans dans les quartiers Osgoode, Rideau-Jock et West Carleton-March, en adoptant la modification recommandée au règlement municipal ci-jointe (documents 2 et 3 du présent rapport).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is being brought to Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, per the September 5, 2024, Committee's direction to review the ATV Clubs' trail network expansion proposal and return with recommendations in Q1 of 2025.

The permitted use of all-terrain vehicles (ATV) in the City of Ottawa on City-owned lands has been allowed since 2013. Initially this began as a pilot project through the inception of an ATV By-law that established a set of trails for ATV use in Osgoode Ward. In 2019, the trails were formalized with the introduction of the [ATV, ORV and Snowmobile By-law No 2019-421](#). Based on conversation with the local ATV clubs, staff understand that since 2019, the region has seen an increase in ATV activities. As such, three ATV clubs in the region are now requesting expansion of their trail networks similar to the Osgoode Ward pilot.

The expansion proposal spans wards 4, 5, 20, and 21. The proposal has been reviewed internally and has received public input as well.

A public information session was held on December 17, 2024, where 43 participants attended and an online survey was available to residents from December 4, 2024 until January 10, 2025, and had 714 respondents. Comments and feedback are taken into consideration when forming staff recommendations.

Based on the feedback from staff, residents, ATV clubs and Councillors, staff

recommended the expansion of trails in wards 5, 20 and 21. Staff do not recommend the expansion of trails in Ward 4.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce rapport est présenté au Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales, conformément à la directive du comité d'examiner la proposition d'agrandissement des réseaux de sentiers des clubs de véhicules tout terrain (VTT) et d'offrir des recommandations au premier trimestre 2025. Cette directive a été donnée lors de la réunion du 5 septembre 2024 du Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales.

Les VTT sont autorisés sur les terrains appartenant à la Ville depuis 2013, d'abord dans le cadre d'un projet pilote avec l'adoption d'un règlement municipal sur les VTT qui a permis d'établir un ensemble de sentiers dans le quartier Osgoode. En 2019, les sentiers ont été officialisés par l'introduction du [Règlement sur les véhicules tout terrain, les véhicules hors route et les motoneiges \(n° 2019-421\)](#). D'après les conversations avec les clubs de VTT locaux, le personnel comprend que, depuis l'adoption du Règlement n° 2019-421, la région a constaté une augmentation des activités liées aux VTT. Ainsi, trois clubs de VTT de la région demandent aujourd'hui l'agrandissement de leurs réseaux de sentiers.

La proposition couvre quatre quartiers : le quartier 4, le quartier 5, le quartier 20 et le quartier 21. La proposition a fait l'objet d'un examen interne et a également été soumise à l'avis du public. La proposition est soutenue de façon générale, mais quelques préoccupations ont été formulées, notamment en ce qui concerne le désir de la communauté contre des VTT dans la région de Kanata-Nord, les répercussions sur l'environnement dans des zones humides et forestières importantes ainsi que sur les espèces en danger à proximité du sentier Carp Barrens.

La consultation publique s'est déroulée en deux temps : une séance d'information publique le 17 décembre 2024, à laquelle 43 participants ont assisté, et un sondage en ligne à l'intention des résidents qui s'est tenu du 4 décembre 2024 au 10 janvier 2025, et qui a compté 714 répondants. Les rétroactions sont prises en considération lors de l'élaboration des recommandations du personnel.

BACKGROUND

The ATV network was introduced through the adoption of the ATV By-law in 2013. The project was initiated as per the direction from the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee (ARAC) in 2012. The ATV network was introduced in Ward 20 – Osgoode as a two-year pilot project to allow staff to review the implementation of the By-law and

identify any operation issues. The pilot was subsequently extended in 2015 to continue to review the impact of the ATV network.

In 2019, at the direction of ARAC, the ATV network was formalized through the adoption of [ATV, ORV and Snowmobile By-law No 2019-421](#). The intention of this by-law is to regulate all ATV, ORV, and snowmobile activities on City-owned properties within the City of Ottawa. Activities on private lands and ATV trails in adjacent municipalities are not within the scope of this By-law. Currently, ATV activities are only permitted on city owned lands in Ward 20 from September to December on the Forest Access Road within Marlborough Forest as per Schedule C and Schedule D of the By-law, respectively.

Since the adoption of this by-law, Ottawa and surrounding region have seen increased interest in ATV. ATV clubs operating within Ottawa have requested permission expansion to ride on city land, including access to local points of interests (restaurant, gas station, rest stop, etc.) and connecting ATV networks within adjacent municipalities.

A direction at the September 5, 2024 ARAC for staff to formally initiate a review of the ATV clubs' expansion proposal and bring recommendations back to ARAC in Q1 2025. The proposal contains trail expansion requests in the City's Rural Areas, in Ward 5, 20, 21 and a small extension into the urban boundary in Ward 4.

Both internal and external consultation were conducted as part of the review.

DISCUSSION

The Proposed Trails

The proposed trail network expansions are in various parts of the of the rural wards of the City. The proposed expansion will see changes to the ATV network in south and west Ottawa. The original proposal from the ATV clubs requested adding approximately 274 kilometres of new routes to the network, including 161 kilometres in Ward 5, 50 kilometres in Ward 21, and 63 kilometres in Ward 20. The proposals can be seen in Document 1 and are briefly summarized below.

In Ward 20, there are two sections, the village of Vars and Osgoode Village. The proposal near the village of Vars connects the village to the Larose Forest. The other region near Osgoode Village has three sections: the detour around the Wood Duck swamp, Osgoode Village, and connecting to the ATV Club of Eastern Ontario.

In Ward 21, there are two sections. The area around and to the south of the village of

North Gower and the area to the south and southwest of the Marlborough Forest.

In Ward 5 and Ward 4, the proposal spans across the whole ward, and includes the Beachburg Subdivision, from Morris Island Drive to Sandhill Road in Ward 4, Kanata-North Ward. The trails cover the ward from the City limit on the west, to the Ottawa River on the east; from the Ottawa River on the north close to Ward 21 in the south.

Staffs Review and Public Feedback

The qualitative data, along with the internal comments received from staff, were used to guide the recommendations, and provide a rationale for decisions made in the recommendations. After review, staff are recommending the approval of approximately 242 total kilometres of new routes to the network, which is a reduction of 32 kilometres from the original request from the ATV clubs. This includes 132 kilometres in Ward 5 (a reduction of 29 kilometres), 47 kilometres in Ward 21 (a reduction of three kilometres) and 63 kilometres in Ward 20. The recommendations and modifications to the proposed trails are further detailed in the maps in Document 3.

Staff circulated the proposal to Natural Systems, Forestry, Parks and Maintenance, Rural Roads, Real Estate, Right of Way, Active Transportation, Police, and Traffic to review. The internal comments can be found in Document 4.

Part of the management of the expansion will be through a License of Occupation. Through this agreement, the General Manager will have the delegated authority with respect to trails and use within the City of Ottawa.

Should the Committee approve the staff recommendations, a by-law amendment will appear before Council for consideration on April 9, 2025. Staff will implement the by-law amendment and update the route maps and the City of Ottawa website to reflect the new changes. Staff will coordinate the development of the new License of Occupation once approved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to the City as the ATV Club is responsible to maintain their portion of the trails. There were concerns in internal circulations of wear and tear from Parks and Maintenance and Forestry. To address these concerns a License of Occupation between the City and the ATV clubs that outlines what the ATV clubs will be responsible for and what the consequences for not abiding by the agreement would be is an important tool in the process of the proposed ATV trail

network expansion.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to implementing the report recommendation.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

All Rural Councillors and the Councillor for Ward 4 have been made aware of the proposals and additional discussion with affected Councillors occurred prior to the launch of the public engagement and survey.

CONSULTATION

Engage/Participons Ottawa

Public consultation was a staff-led endeavour, completed through a survey on Engage Ottawa, a virtual public meeting and a project email address was created for the public provide comments and/or questions.

The survey was live from December 4, 2024, until January 10, 2025, with 714 respondents with 709 in English (709) and 5 in French (5). A further breakdown of responses can be found in Document 5 and Document 6. Through the survey, a yes/no/no opinion question was posed concerning the desire for trails in particular areas. When subdivided by postal codes, this provided an approximation for those who lived near the trails and chose to participate. Overall, there was support for the trail expansions, with the exception of Kanata-North segment of Beachburg Subdivision who does not support the expansion. It should be noted that not all respondents left comments, out of a potential 1428 comments (1 specific and 1 general per respondent), there were 319 total.

Virtual Public Information Session

City staff led a virtual public information session that was held on December 17, 2024. There were 80 registrants, and 43 participants in attendance. A detailed breakdown of questions and answers can be found in Document 7.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The City of Ottawa is committed to ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and older adults. The recommendations regarding the expansion of ATV systems outlined in this report, including all associated administrative actions, are guided by a legislated accessibility framework that includes the City's Accessibility Policy, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and *the Integrated Accessibility*

Standards Regulation, O.Reg. 191/11, as well as adherence to the City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards to the greatest extent possible.

The majority of the proposed ATV route expansions are on roads, and have no impacts to the pedestrian realm. Within rural villages, the ATV speed limit is set at 20kph, and these vehicles are not permitted to ride on sidewalks. Additionally, where ATVs are permitted to use shared recreational pathways, they must be driven on the far side of the path, off the stone dust, again limiting their potential conflict with pedestrians also using the space.

ATVs can often be used by people with disabilities as these vehicles can be modified to suit their specific needs. ATVs also provide access to outdoor recreational spaces that would otherwise be inaccessible for many people with disabilities.

Additionally, outdoor recreational activities, such as riding ATVs, improves both mental and physical health in many ways for people with disabilities, including reducing stress and anxiety, boosting self-esteem, and even improving sleep. There are also numerous social benefits to this recreational activity, including promoting a sense of inclusivity within a community setting and reducing social isolation.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no Asset Management Implications resulting from recommendations of this report.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

The Climate Implications for the ATV trail network expansion would be negligible, with the potential for a small increase in GHG emissions associated with additional users utilizing ATVs for personal recreation. Currently, there are one of two situations occurring, either the ATVs are being driven illegally on the roads in the place, or they are being trailered to the locations where they can ride by trucks. While expanding the ATV network has the potential to reduce the number of ATVs being trailered between trailheads, the additional connectivity of the trail network closer to residential homes may increase the number of ATV users in rural wards.

As off-road vehicle use is not a major contributor to Ottawa's community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions (based on Energy Evolution analysis), updates to the ATV bylaw are unlikely to contribute a significant difference to Ottawa's overall community GHG emissions. The lack of accurate and ongoing survey work to determine the number of

off-road vehicle users and the impact of these bylaw changes on use patterns will also make it difficult to track any potential GHG emission impacts.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The Economic Implications for the ATV trail network expansion would be positive in nature. With ATVs using the trails for recreation, there would be increased opportunities for local businesses to engage in retail with the ATV riders. Primarily, this would be in the food, beverage and gasoline sectors. This increase in purchase from local businesses would help the rural economies, and be potentially further improved by providing access to these businesses from riders located outside the City limits.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the internal circulation process, City's environmental staff reviewed the proposal and have identified several areas where improvements and/or alterations can be made to ensure minimal environmental impacts. Further, mitigation measures were also identified to ensure the implementation of this expansion would have minimal impact to the surroundings. These comments have been taken into consideration when forming the staff recommendation outlined in Document 2 and Document 3 of this report and are included as part of Document 4.

It is worth noting that the recommended trail expansion makes use of existing road and pathway infrastructure, and no new road surface will be created. There will be some tree trimming involved with setting up two routes, for safety, but there will be no tree clearing. No triggers for any required environmental studies have been identified.

INDIGENOUS GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Indigenous Policy Considerations

Several local Indigenous communities including: Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, First Nation Kitigan, Zibi First Nation, Algonquin Nation Secrétariat, Anishinabeg Algonquin Nation Tribal Council, and Algonquins of Ontario were notified with information regarding the proposal and will have an opportunity to comment over the two-year pilot.

Gender and Equity Implications

Equity implications refer to the implications for all equity deserving groups, including racialized people, those who identify as women, those who identify as gender diverse, those who identify as LGBTQI2S, children and youth, older adults, and immigrants. Report writers should describe all considerations and actions taken by staff to assess

potential equity impacts on the proposed City policies and projects. Any consultations on equity matters should be recorded in the Consultation section of this report.

The *Before you Begin* tool will help you identify key steps, research, and consultation to be completed in the initial stages of project planning to incorporate Indigenous, gender, race, and equity considerations into the project from the outset. The [Indigenous, Gender, and Equity Implications Checklist](#) has been designed as a reference tool for staff to ensure that Indigenous, gender, race, and equity goals are included in all decision-making and to assess potential Indigenous policy considerations, as well as gender, race, and equity implications of proposed policies and projects.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

ATV users, through the requirements set out by the Highway Traffic Act, are required to keep their ATVs insured in order to legally drive them. Additionally, the City requires ATV clubs to carry group insurance that indemnifies the City in case of accident. Signage, and law enforcement will be used to educate users of the proper etiquette and safety around all trail users. Maintenance of the right of way from damage potentially done by ATVs will be identified and repaired by the ATV clubs, as will be outlined in the License of Occupation.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation in this report will clarify the rules regarding ATV access to rural roads in Ward 5, Ward 20, and Ward 21, reducing potential confusion among users about where ATVs are allowed to be driven in the City, by providing trails for the ATVs to connect to their network. The recommendation will also enhance the ATV club's ability to self-police the trail network and enforce the by-law provisions. This will coincide with the Ottawa Police specialized Marine Dive and Trails unit that patrols the routes on ATVs and enforces the City's by-law. The recommendation will also make staff better able to coordinate resolutions to issues that may arise with ATV use that is reported to the City.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This supports the City's [2023-2026 Term of Council Priorities](#), Strategic Priority: to create a city that is more connected with reliable, safe and accessible mobility options.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Proposed ATV Trail Network Expansion

Document 2 – Amending By-law

Document 3 – ATV Trail Maps – Schedule C1-C7

Document 4 – Internal Circulation

Document 5 – Quantitative Data summary from the Survey

Document 6 – Qualitative Data Summary from the Survey

Document 7 – What we Learned Report – Public Engagement

DISPOSITION

If the recommendation is approved, the Rural Affairs Office, in consultation with Legal Services, will prepare and submit the amending By-law for approval and enactment.