

**Subject: Large Quadricycle Pilot Program Report**

**File Number: ACS2026-PWD-TRF-0001**

**Report to Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on 30 March 2026**

**and Council 8 April 2026**

**Submitted on March 19, 2026 by Krista Tanaka, Director, Traffic Services, Public Works Department**

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**Ward: Citywide**

**Objet :Rapport sur le programme pilote de grands quadricycles**

**Numéro de dossier : ACS2026-PWD-TRF-0001**

**Rapport présenté au Comité des travaux publics et de l'infrastructure**

**Rapport soumis le 30 mars 2026**

**et au Conseil le 8 avril 2026**

**Soumis le 2026-03-19 par Krista Tanaka, directrice, Services de la circulation**

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**Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville**

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee recommend that Council:

1. Approve the City of Ottawa's participation in the Province of Ontario's Large Quadricycle Pilot Project under *Ontario Regulation 411/22* for the full duration of the provincial pilot project, including any extensions made by the Province, currently anticipated to extend until 2032;

2. Approve the proposed Large Quadricycle By-law, in the form attached as Document 1 and as outlined in this report;
3. Approve the Large Quadricycle Route Review Guidelines, in the form attached as Document 2 and as outlined in this report;
4. Delegate authority to the General Manager, Public Works, or their designate, in consultation with the relevant Ward Councillor, to:
  - approve, amend, or revoke route permissions and operational guidelines for large quadricycles; and
  - oversee and administer the City of Ottawa's ongoing participation in the provincial pilot program
5. Direct staff to report back to Council at the conclusion of the pilot project on outcomes, findings, and recommendations.

## **RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT**

Que le Comité de l'infrastructure et des travaux publics recommande au Conseil ce qui suit :

1. D'approuver la participation de la Ville d'Ottawa au programme pilote de grands quadricycles de la province de l'Ontario, en vertu du *Règlement de l'Ontario 411/22* pour la durée complète du programme pilote provincial, y compris toute prolongation faite par la province, qui devrait se poursuivre jusqu'en 2032 à l'heure actuelle;
2. D'approuver le règlement municipal proposé sur les grands quadricycles, dans sa forme présentée dans le document 1 ci-joint, et comme décrit dans le présent rapport;
3. D'approuver les lignes directrices sur l'examen des circuits des grands quadricycles, dans sa forme présentée dans le document 2 ci-joint, et comme décrites dans le présent rapport;
4. De déléguer le pouvoir au directeur général des Travaux publics, ou à son représentant, en consultation avec le conseiller de quartier pertinent, pour :
  - approuver, modifier ou révoquer les permissions de circuits et les lignes directrices opérationnelles pour les grands quadricycles; et

superviser et administrer la participation en cours de la Ville d'Ottawa au programme pilote provincial;5. De demander au personnel de faire rapport au Conseil à la fin du programme pilote sur les résultats, les constatations et les recommandations.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In April 2022, the Province of Ontario established a 10-year pilot program under the *Highway Traffic Act* to evaluate the use of large quadricycles on municipal roads. Large quadricycles, often referred to as “pedal pubs”, are multi-passenger, pedal-powered or electric-assist vehicles capable of carrying 12 or more riders. They are typically used for guided tours, social outings, and private events, with planned stops at pubs, cafés, or local businesses.

Municipal participation in the provincial pilot program is optional. Cities that choose to opt in must adopt related by-laws and meet provincial reporting and information sharing requirements.

In July 2025, changes to the *Liquor License and Control Act* allowed alcohol to be sold and consumed on large quadricycle tours. Municipalities may decide whether alcohol is permitted in their community. Municipalities that choose not to allow alcohol, must pass a resolution and notify the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. This decision may be revisited at any time during the pilot.

In Ottawa, one operator has been offering large quadricycle tours since 2019, regulated through the City's former Special Events on City Streets By-law. These operations currently occur outside the provincial pilot framework and are no longer covered through the City's updated Special Events By-laws, which came into effect in January 2026, creating a regulatory gap.

Staff recommend that the City opt into the provincial pilot and adopt a Large Quadricycle By-law to provide clear rules for these operations. Aligning with the default provincial approach, including permitting alcohol sales and consumption, will allow the City to manage large quadricycles in a consistent and coordinated way, while monitoring impacts on safety, traffic operations, transit, and surrounding communities.

## RÉSUMÉ

### BACKGROUND

#### Provincial Pilot Program

In April 2022, the Province launched the [Large Quadricycle Pilot Project](#) under *Ontario Regulation 411/22*. Municipalities choosing to participate must:

- pass a municipal by-law permitting the use of large quadricycles;
- notify the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) of participation;
- provide annual updates to the Ministry; and
- ensure collisions involving injury or property damage are reported to police.

The regulation sets out basic vehicle and safety requirements, including limits on passenger capacity, the use of slow-moving vehicle signage, and helmet requirements for passengers under 18 years of age. Only fully licensed drivers may operate a large quadricycle. Large quadricycles are not permitted on roads with posted speed limits above 80 km/h and must not be capable of exceeding 17 kilometres per hour.

Municipalities may establish additional requirements, including approved routes, safety conditions, equipment standards, and operating hours.

#### Alcohol Sales and Consumption

As part of the provincial pilot program, alcohol sales and consumption on large quadricycle tours are permitted under the *Liquor License and Control Act*, subject to applicable provincial licensing requirements. Municipalities participating in the pilot retain authority to determine whether alcohol is permitted within their jurisdiction.

Provincial regulations place strict conditions on alcohol service. Alcohol must be sold in non-glass, single-serving containers and may only be sold prior to the departure of the vehicle. Consumption is limited to seated passengers while the vehicle is in motion and must be supervised by both a licensed driver and a dedicated attendant. Alcohol is not accessible during stops, and no passengers under the age of 19 are permitted when alcohol is served. Operators must also provide written safety messaging related to impaired operation and applicable *Criminal Code* offences.

Municipalities that choose not to permit alcohol are required to pass a resolution and notify the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. Municipalities may revisit this decision at any time during the pilot.

## **Large Quadricycles in Ottawa**

Since 2019, a single operator in Ottawa has offered seasonal large quadricycle tours in Ottawa, primarily within the Hintonburg and Glebe neighbourhoods. Tours typically operate outside peak travel periods, with weekday operations focused on the early evening, and multiple departures offered on weekends. These tours were previously regulated under the City's former *Special Events on City Streets By-law*. That by-law has since been repealed and replaced by the *Highway Events By-law*, which no longer provides a regulatory framework for these operations.

To date, Service Ottawa has not received public complaints relating to large quadricycle operations, and OC Transpo has not identified any specific incidents of concern, though some impacts to travel times have been noted. The proposed by-law and route review guidelines are intended to mitigate potential impacts on transit operations and the broader road network.

## **Municipal Scan**

Large quadricycles operate in a few Ontario municipalities, including Toronto, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Windsor. In each of these municipalities, operations are currently limited in scale, with one or two companies offering large quadricycle tours. Feedback from these cities has been generally positive. In Toronto, following two years of participation in the provincial pilot program, staff reported no measurable impacts on traffic congestion, transit operations, or public safety. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, early noise concerns were identified and addressed through route adjustments and operating conditions, resulting in improved compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods.

According to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, no Ontario municipality has formally opted out of permitting liquor licenses for large quadricycles to date.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Participation in the Provincial Pilot**

Large quadricycle tours support local tourism by offering a unique, low-speed way to experience neighbourhoods and commercial areas. While the sector is small, it contributes to economic activity by promoting small businesses and encouraging participants to explore areas beyond traditional tourism destinations.

Participation in the provincial pilot would allow the City to establish a clear regulatory framework to oversee large quadricycle operations in a controlled and measured way. Participation enables innovative, tourism-focused activities that can animate streets,

contribute to neighbourhood vibrancy, and benefit local businesses.

Through participation, staff would be able to monitor operations, evaluate impacts, and make adjustments over time, responding as needed to operational or community concerns.

### **Alcohol – Local Approach**

Staff recommend aligning with the provincial default framework by permitting alcohol sales and consumption, allowing the City to monitor impacts and adjust requirements, if concerns arise.

Operators must ensure that all eligible alcohol containers are either returned through an applicable deposit-return program or recycled in accordance with provincial requirements. Waste generated as a result of alcohol service, or any related activity, must be properly collected and managed in accordance with the City's Yellow Bag Program requirements or through a commercial waste collection agreement. Disposal shall be limited to residual waste that cannot be returned or recycled.

### **Strategic Alignment**

Large quadricycles support the City's strategic priority for connected, safe, and accessible mobility by providing a low-speed, low-emission shared transportation option. Through controlled routing and operational oversight, quadricycles advance climate objectives while enabling the City to test innovative transportation models within a regulated pilot framework.

The pilot also aligns with the City's strategic priority of a diversified and prosperous economy. Quadricycles contribute to tourism, small business growth, downtown revitalization, and economic diversification by supporting entrepreneurial opportunities and enhancing Ottawa's attractiveness as a destination to visit, invest, and do business.

### **Proposed Regulatory Framework**

To support participation in the pilot, staff propose a regulatory framework consisting of:

1. a new Large Quadricycle By-law;
2. a City-led route approval process; and
3. Business licensing requirements for owners and operators that will be further clarified through upcoming updates to the *Business Licensing By-law*, anticipated to be brought forward for Council consideration in 2026.

Together, these tools provide clear expectations for owners and operators while allowing the City to manage safety, traffic impacts, and neighbourhood compatibility.

## **Large Quadricycle By-law**

The proposed Large Quadricycle By-law, as found in Document 1, sets out clear rules for where, when, and how large quadricycles can operate in Ottawa during the provincial pilot project. The By-law applies to large quadricycles operating on City streets and City-owned property. It works alongside applicable provincial legislation, the *Criminal Code*, and existing municipal by-laws.

The By-law would remain in effect for the duration of the provincial pilot project, including any extensions made by the Province, and would automatically expire when the pilot formally concludes. As the Provincial Pilot Project is currently scheduled to run until 2032, the By-law would remain in force until at least that date. Notwithstanding this timeline, Council retains the authority to repeal the By-law at any time.

Key elements include:

- a two-tier licensing system for owners and operators to be implemented through proposed updates to the *Businesses Licensing By-law*;
- defined vehicle safety and passenger requirements
- operating restrictions related to speed, time of day, and roadway classification
- formal route approval, amendment and revocation process
- enforcement mechanisms, including fines and business license suspension or revocation.

All *Highway Traffic Act* rules of the road apply to large quadricycles under the pilot program. In addition, federal penalties for impaired driving under the *Criminal Code* apply.

### **Safety and Operating Requirements**

- Compliance with provincial vehicle standards under *Ontario Regulation 411/22*
- Driver licensing and business licensing requirements
- Passengers are limited to the number of seats available, with passengers under the age of 18 required to wear a helmet
- Visibility and safety equipment requirements (i.e. Lighting and slow-moving vehicle signage)
- Restrictions intended to minimize interference with pedestrian movement, traffic flow, and transit operations
- Sets the maximum operating speed of 17 kilometers per hour

These provisions create a framework for safe operation and align with local

requirements for the provincial pilot framework.

### **Location and Time-of-Use Restrictions**

- Prohibits operation on sidewalks, trails, cycling facilities, transitways, reserved bus lanes, and parkland
- Limits operation to roads with posted speed limits of 50 km/h or less
- Operations would be restricted during weekday peak travel periods (7:00 am – 9:00 am and 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm) and during the winter season (December 1 to March 31) to minimize potential impacts to traffic flow, transit operations, and winter maintenance activities. These parameters provide a baseline framework while allowing the General Manager of Public Works the discretion to approve exceptions where operational conditions permit.

This approach allows the City to regulate large quadricycles during the pilot, while reviewing impacts and adjusting the approach, as needed, based on experience and evidence.

### **Route Approval**

Owners and Operators of large quadricycles would be required to obtain written route approval for their proposed routes prior to operation. Approval would be granted by the General Manager of Public Works, or their designate in accordance with the proposed Large Quadricycle Route Review Guidelines. This ensures that staff can review each proposed route in advance to confirm that large quadricycles can operate safely and with minimal disruption to traffic, transit, and surrounding communities. The review process would also include consultation with the affected Ward Councillor.

Route Review Considerations:

- Road classification and speed limits
- Potential impacts on emergency services
- Potential impacts on transit operations
- Effects on traffic flow and congestion, particularly on two-lane roads
- Safety considerations at intersections
- Conflicts with planned events or construction projects
- Proposed passenger loading and unloading zones, and parking locations

Approved routes would exclude:

- Roadways with speed limits greater than 50 km/h
- Certain left-turn or straight-through movements at uncontrolled intersections involving arterial or major collector roads

The City would retain authority to amend, suspend, or revoke route approval where safety or operational concerns are identified, including taking immediate action where public safety is at risk or where there is a pattern of non-compliance with respect to the operation of large quadricycles.

Details on Large Quadricycle Route Review Guidelines are available in Document 2.

### **Enforcement and Oversight**

The By-law provides clear enforcement authority to City staff and police, including:

- The ability to issue fines for non-compliance
- Authority to remove and impound vehicles operating contrary to the by-law
- Escalation tools for repeated or serious offences

These measures ensure that compliance can be addressed quickly and proportionately.

### **Business Licensing**

Large Quadricycle operations will be subject to licensing requirements under the City of Ottawa's *Businesses Licensing By-law*. At present, commercial large quadricycle operations are captured under Rickshaws – Schedule No. 13 of the by-law.

A review and update to the *Businesses Licensing By-law* is currently underway and is expected to introduce specific requirements with respect to the operation of large quadricycles, providing a clear and tailored licensing framework aligned with the provincial pilot project.

Under the licensing framework both owners and operators will be required to obtain a valid City-issued business license, and licensees will be required to maintain commercial general liability insurance in the amount of \$2,000,000.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Should Council approve the recommendations, staff will notify the Ministry of Transportation of Ottawa's participation and will submit annual program updates as required.

Traffic Services will continue to work closely with large quadricycle operators, enforcement partners, and operational partners, including OC Transpo, the Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO), and emergency response services to monitor program performance, identify operational issues, and implement adjustments as required.

City staff will coordinate with Service Ottawa to ensure that community feedback and complaints are consistently logged, tracked, and directed to the appropriate staff for follow-up. Traffic Services staff will also collaborate with By-law and Regulatory Services to address operational concerns as they arise, including modifying approved tour routes where necessary in response to safety, traffic, or community impacts

As part of the Province's Large Quadricycle Pilot Project, the City will collect and report data related to the program's administration, operational impacts, and overall outcomes to support ongoing evaluation.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed regulatory framework allows the City of Ottawa to participate in the provincial Large Quadricycle Pilot Project in a controlled and evidence-based manner, balancing public safety, accountability, and risk management with support for local business and tourism.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments associated with Committee and Council's approval of the recommendations of this report.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Internal Partners**

Staff engaged key internal partners, including By-law and Regulatory Services, Emergency Protective Services, OC Transpo, Solid Waste Services and Service Ottawa, to assess current operations of large quadricycle tours and review the proposed framework. Partners indicated that large quadricycle tours operating in Ottawa to date have not resulted in known operational, safety, or service impacts. The proposed By-law and Route Selection strategy were shared and no concerns with the planned approach were identified.

### Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA)

A brief survey was developed and circulated to The Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA), with responses received from the Westboro Village BIA, Kanata Central BIA, and Barrhaven BIA. All three BIAs expressed support for continuing to permit large quadricycle tours in Ottawa. Respondents emphasized the importance of careful route selection, particularly in areas already experiencing high traffic volumes or construction-related pressures.

Two BIAs provided feedback on whether alcohol should be permitted for sale and consumption on large quadricycle tours. One respondent supported aligning with the provincial framework and permitting alcohol, noting that doing so could position Ottawa as a leader as one of Ontario's largest municipalities. The other respondent emphasized that directing tours to local businesses strengthens the business case for expansion and supports local economic activity.

### Local Operator

Staff met with the owner of the Thursty Pedaler, the Ottawa-based operator that has offered large quadricycle tours since 2019. The operator described several operational practices that support safety and neighbourhood compatibility, including limiting tours to off-peak travel periods, discontinuing late-evening operations, and yielding to motor vehicle traffic where appropriate.

The operator expressed support for a formal route review process and indicated interest in exploring the option of permitting alcohol sales on the quadricycle, should Council choose to allow it within the regulatory framework.

The operator noted that permitting alcohol could increase bookings and referenced Toronto's approach, where drink tickets are purchased at the time of booking and limits are placed on the number of beverages per participant to support safe and controlled operations. She noted that allowing this option could help the business remain competitive and attractive, particularly as nearby jurisdictions such as Toronto and Montreal offer similar experiences.

### Nightlife Commissioner's Office

Staff met with the Nightlife Commissioner who expressed strong support for Ottawa's participation in the provincial pilot. The Commissioner noted that similar programs in other cities contribute to cultural vibrancy, tourism, and positive city branding, and identified clear alignment with the Nightlife Economy Action Plan and downtown revitalization efforts.

The Commissioner highlighted opportunities to activate areas such as the ByWard Market, Little Italy, Chinatown, and Wellington Village, while also exploring interest beyond the downtown core. He noted that key operational considerations are likely to include traffic congestion, curbside space constraints, and the availability of designated loading areas, particularly in the ByWard market. While acknowledging the need for reasonable operational boundaries, the Commissioner advised that an overly restrictive approach to alcohol could undermine tour viability and diverge from successful models in other cities. The Nightlife Commissioner's Office confirmed its willingness to support the pilot through communication and activation efforts.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

As per the *Accessibility Policy*, the City of Ottawa is committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods, and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity and that is equitable in relation to the broader public. This commitment extends to residents, visitors, and employees with visible and non-visible, and permanent or temporary disabilities.

The proposed Large Quadricycle By-law has been developed with consideration for potential accessibility impacts, including both the ways in which large quadricycle operations may introduce barriers and the measures proposed to mitigate those impacts.

- All large quadricycles will be equipped with a horn to alert pedestrians and cyclists of their approach.
- The proposed by-law prohibits large quadricycles from operating or parking on sidewalks, trails, multi-use pathways, and on parkland, ensuring that accessible pedestrian infrastructure remains unobstructed.
- Large quadricycles are prohibited from stopping or parking in any "No Stopping", "No Parking", accessible parking space, or at a bus stop.
- Operators are required to keep a safe distance from pedestrians and other road users and shall yield to pedestrians including within crosswalks and pedestrian crossovers.
- Restricting operations during weekday peak travel periods, when pedestrian and transit activity is highest.

Accessibility-related concerns raised through Service Ottawa will be tracked and reviewed as part of the City's monitoring and evaluation framework. Where accessibility

issues are identified, staff will take corrective action, including adjustments to approved routes or, where necessary, suspension or revocation of route approvals.

Through these measures, the proposed by-law seeks to balance tourism and economic activity with the City's commitment to maintain an accessible and inclusive transportation network. Staff will continue to monitor impacts over the duration of the provincial pilot project and will use feedback and operational data to inform any future recommendations to Council.

### **CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

The City's Climate Change Master Plan sets short, mid, and long-term targets to reduce community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 100 per cent by 2050 and corporate emissions by 100 per cent by 2040. The large quadricycle pilot program supports the City's climate objectives by promoting low-emission, human-powered or electric-assisted transportation for tourism and recreational purposes. While small in scale, the program provides an alternative to conventional motorized vehicles and has the potential to reduce localized gas emissions, noise, and fuel consumption. Route approval, time-of-day restrictions, and operating conditions further help minimize congestion and idling. The pilot represents a modest but positive contribution toward sustainable mobility.

### **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS**

Authority will be delegated to the General Manager of Public Works, or their designate, to:

- Approve, amend, or revoke route permissions and operational guidelines for large quadricycle operations within the City of Ottawa.
- Administer and manage the City's participation in the provincial pilot program, ensuring compliance with applicable regulations and alignment with Council-approved objectives.

This delegation provides flexibility for operational adjustments throughout the pilot period without requiring Council approvals, enabling timely responses to safety, accessibility, and community feedback.

### **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

While the overall economic impact of large quadricycles is not expected to be significant in scale, these activities can provide meaningful, localized benefits that support

Ottawa's tourism, economic development, and night-time economy objectives. Large quadricycle tours encourage visitation to entertainment districts and commercial areas and tend to support small, locally owned businesses.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Large quadricycle tours have been operating in Ottawa since 2019, with no significant issues identified to date. Building on this operational experience, the proposed pilot incorporates a risk-management framework to identify, mitigate, and monitor potential safety, operational, legal, and reputational risks.

Key risks include road safety impacts, interactions with other road users, compliance with operating requirements, and potential liability exposure. These risks are mitigated through the establishment of clear vehicle standards, operating rules, route approval processes, insurance requirements, and enforcement provisions aligned with the provincial regulatory framework.

Operational risks are managed through defined roles and responsibilities, data collection and reporting requirements, and the ability to make adjustments based on observed conditions, community feedback, and emerging issues. as required based on observed conditions and emerging issues. Legal and liability risks are further mitigated through mandatory commercial insurance, compliance with the provincial regulations, and the City's authority to suspend or revoke operating permissions where public safety concerns are identified.

Overall, the pilot structure enables risks to be actively managed while retaining Council oversight for any substantive policy, financial, or regulatory decisions.

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report has city-wide implications. At this time, there are no large quadricycle operators offering tours within rural villages. Should interest in operating within rural areas emerge in the future, any proposed routes would be subject to the same by-law requirements, and route approval process.

## **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The recommendations in this report align with the following 2023-2026 Term of Council Strategic Priorities:

- A city that is more connected with reliable, safe and accessible mobility options
- A city that is green and resilient
- A city with a diversified and prosperous

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 – Large Quadricycle By-law

Document 2 – Route Review Guidelines

## **DISPOSITION**

Following Council's approval of the report recommendations, staff from Traffic Services will work with Legal Services to prepare the by-law for enactment and will confirm the City's participation in the pilot with the Ministry of Transportation and share a copy of the Large Quadricycle By-law. Staff will administer the program, including monitoring and evaluating operations.

Should Council not approve the permitting of alcohol sales and consumption, staff will submit a Council resolution requesting that no liquor sales licenses for large quadricycles be issued within the City of Ottawa and forward the resolution to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

By-law and Regulatory Services will respond to Service Requests, monitor operator performance, and undertake enforcement activities as necessary.