

Large Multi-Passenger Pedalled Vehicles (Quadracycles) Pilot

Date: March 14, 2024

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services; and Executive Director, Municipal Licensing & Standards

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In 2022, City Council adopted recommendations to opt-in to a Province of Ontario pilot project under the Highway Traffic Act, which allowed the operation of large quadracycles in Toronto under specific conditions. Among the conditions approved by City Council were the requirements that large quadracycle operators must have a valid pedicab licence, and that all routes must be approved by the General Manager, Transportation Services prior to commencing operations. Since 2022, a single company has operated a tour service using large quadracycles on a seasonal basis (May to October). The two operating seasons in 2022 and 2023 have provided valuable learning opportunities for both City staff and large quadracycle operators. This report serves as an update on the Large Quadracycle Pilot Project and provides a summary of feedback from internal and external stakeholders as well as local residents.

It is recommended that the City continue to opt-in to the Province of Ontario's Large Quadracycle Pilot Project. This recommendation is based on findings that conclude large quadracycles did not have identifiable impacts on traffic congestion, transit operations, or public safety in the first two years of the pilot. Input received from local businesses confirms that large quadracycle tours present a small but visible economic development opportunity and support tourism. Further, results from a public survey found that the majority of Toronto resident respondents (77%) support the continued use of large quadracycles in Toronto.

Many of the conditions under which large quadracycles were permitted to operate were key to the success of this pilot project in 2022-2023. Therefore, this report recommends that the same roadway restrictions continue to apply to large quadracycles, in addition to the requirement that operators submit proposed routes for approval prior to commencing operations. In addition to these requirements, staff recommend that the General Manager, Transportation Services, or their designate, be granted the authority to establish new route approval conditions for large quadracycles.

Finally, this report recommends that the limit on the number of licences that may be issued to large quadricycles be lifted but that the City prohibit at all times the use of large quadricycles that are not licensed as pedicabs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services and Executive Director, Municipal Licensing & Standards, recommend that:

1. City Council continue to opt-in to the pilot of large quadricycles under O.Reg. 411/22: Pilot Project - Large Quadricycles made under the Highway Traffic Act, which is scheduled to end in 2032;
2. City Council give authority to the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards or his or her designate, to issue any number of licences, renewable on an annual basis, for pedicabs that are large quadricycles, and any number of licences for any single operating company.
3. City Council amend City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 545, Licensing, as follows:
 - a. by adding to the end of Section 545-27 the following sentence, "Where a pedicab is a large quadricycle, the number of passengers shall not exceed the number of passenger seats available."
 - b. by adding to the beginning of Section 545-27A, "Except where a pedicab is a large quadricycle," before "No owner or driver shall permit more than two persons to be passengers in a pedicab at any time without the consent of the Executive Director or his or her designate."
 - c. to delete Section 545-29.3, which requires the approval of route maps for large quadricycles.
 - d. to authorize the General Manager, Transportation Services, or their designate to create and amend a list of roadways on which large quadricycles are prohibited from operating, based on the General Manager's opinion of whether the operation of large quadricycles might cause or contribute to traffic management problems, and to post such list publicly.
 - e. to require the operators of large quadricycles to submit proposed route maps as part of applying for a licence or its renewal and at least 10 business days prior to modifying or adding a route, to the General Manager, Transportation Services, or their designate, for verification that the route complies with the list of prohibited roadways for large quadricycles and that, in the opinion of the General Manager, the proposed routes will not cause or contribute to potential traffic management problems, and must notify Municipal Licensing and Standards no less than five

business days upon verification of any changes or additions to their operating routes.

f. the General Manager, Transportation Services shall not verify proposed routes for large quadricycles that do not comply with the following restrictions:

1. Any road with a designated speed limit greater than 40km/h per Chapter 950 Schedule XXXV;
2. No more than one consecutive block of travel on Yonge Street;
3. No more than one consecutive block of travel on Bloor Street or Danforth Avenue;
4. No lefthand turns at unsignalized intersections where at least one of the roads is an arterial road; and
5. No straight-through movements at unsignalized intersections where the road that the large quadricycle is crossing is an arterial road.

g. to authorize the General Manager, Transportation Services, or their designate, to immediately revoke verification of an existing route on the basis of a change in the list of prohibited roadways for large quadricycles or traffic management conditions.

h. by adding to the beginning of Section 545-33 the following, "Except where a pedicab is a large quadricycle," before "No owner and no driver shall calculate fares on any basis other than time, and the number of passengers shall not be used in any way to calculate any rates, fares or payments."

4. City Council amend City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking by adding a new section 950-204A, which states, "No person shall operate a large quadricycle or similar vehicle on a roadway unless operating licensed as a pedicab owner or driver under Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 545, Licensing."

5. City Council amend City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking by adding a new section 950-204B, which states, "No person shall operate, park, store or leave a large quadricycle on a sidewalk under any conditions."

6. City Council directs the General Manager, Transportation Services to report back at the end of the Provincial Pilot Project - Large Quadricycles (in 2032) or sooner as requested, in collaboration with Municipal Licensing and Standards, Economic Development and Culture and other divisions, as appropriate, to the appropriate Committee(s) about the impacts of large quadricycles on city streets and any recommended by-law changes, based on consultation with relevant stakeholders, including emergency services, the Toronto Transit Commission, business improvement associations, and the public, and in concurrence with any changes to related Provincial regulations as they emerge.

7. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary bills to give effect to City Council's decision and City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make any necessary clarifications, refinements, minor modifications, technical amendments, or by-law amendments as may be identified by the City Solicitor, Executive Director,

Municipal Licensing and Standards, or General Manager, Transportation Services, in order to give effect to the adopted recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no current or known future year financial impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of June 15 and 16, 2022, City Council adopted 2022GL31.9, Large Multi-Passenger Pedalled Vehicles (Quadricycles) Pilot, confirming Council's decision to opt-in to O.Reg. 411/22: Pilot Project - Large Quadricycles made under the Highway Traffic Act; making amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking, to recognize large quadricycles as a type of vehicle; and making amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 545, Licencing, to create conditions for large quadricycles to be licensed as pedicabs. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.GL31.9>

COMMENTS

Background - Large Quadricycle Definition and Application

Large quadricycles are four-wheeled pedalled vehicles seating 12 or more people, where each person contributes to pedalling, with a single individual being in control of steering and braking. Some have electric motors to assist.

Large quadricycles are frequently used as tour vehicles, carrying a pre-booked group of individuals between destinations such as pubs or cafés. They are also used for events such as charity rides and parades. These businesses typically operate seasonally, with tours running in Spring, Summer and Fall.

There are well-established large quadricycle operations in US cities such as Nashville and Boston and in Canadian locations such as Calgary, Saskatoon, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Vancouver and Ottawa. In Toronto, experience from a two-year pilot (2022-2023) suggests these vehicles present a small but visible economic development opportunity, providing a unique tour experience for locals and tourists. According to data provided by Pedal Pub Toronto, the only licensed quadricycle operator in 2022 and 2023, nearly 50% of customers came from outside Toronto, indicating that this type of service has a role in supporting tourism.

Province of Ontario Large Quadricycle Pilot Project

In April 2022, the Province of Ontario announced a pilot project for large quadricycles as a method to bring consistency to the definition and use of this type of vehicle. Under the Highway Traffic Act, O.Reg. 411/22: Pilot Project - Large Quadricycles defines large quadricycles as four-wheeled vehicles seating 12 or more people. Steering and braking is controlled by a single person who is required to have a driver's licence. The quadricycles must comply with various safety requirements including having lights, turn signals, a horn, and a slow-moving vehicle sign; and they are not permitted to travel faster than 16km/h. All laws applicable to motor vehicles apply to large quadricycles, including stopping, standing, and parking restrictions, and the requirement to stop 2m behind a stopped streetcar. The pilot regulation prohibits the use of large quadricycles on roads with a posted speed limit of 80km/h or greater. No alcohol is permitted to be consumed on board.

Municipalities must opt-in to the pilot for large quadricycles to operate within their boundaries. The regulation allows municipalities to further restrict how and where these vehicles can be operated, including but not limited to restricting their use to specific roads or roads with lower speed limits. Companion guidelines produced by the Ministry of Transportation for municipalities recommend adding expectations and requirements around such things as contracts, business licences, and operating agreements.

City of Toronto's Opt-In to Highway Traffic Act Pilot Project for Large Quadricycles (2022)

At its meeting of June 15 and 16, 2022, City Council adopted recommendations to opt-in to O.Reg. 411/22: Pilot Project - Large Quadricycles. Specific by-law changes were approved as part of this opt-in. These included i) adding Large Quadricycles as a vehicle type in Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking; ii) amending Municipal Code Chapter 545, Licensing to require that large quadricycles and their operators be licensed as pedicabs; and iii) adding insurance and route approval requirements for pedicabs that are large quadricycles.

Following these changes to Chapter 545, large quadricycles were subject to the same restrictions as other licensed pedicabs in that they cannot operate on weekdays (excluding statutory holidays) between 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., and cannot operate on specified sections of King Street, Queen Street, Front Street, or Gerrard Street. All pedicabs, including large quadricycles, must be operated by a person who holds a valid driver's licence; the vehicle must be in a state of good repair; and licence identification for both the vehicle and the driver must be displayed.

Additional requirements that apply only to pedicabs that are large quadricycles are that they must each have \$2 million liability insurance (instead of the \$1 million required for standard pedicabs) and that the route(s) on which they will operate must be pre-defined by the operator and pre-approved by the General Manager, Transportation Services.

Council further directed that there would be a maximum of two companies licensed to operate large quadricycles in Toronto, each operating a maximum of four vehicles.

The amendments to Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking, added large quadricycles as a class of vehicle, and effectively allowed the use of large quadricycles for non-

commercial purposes, without requiring a pedicab licence. In such situations, they would be subject to the same rules as any other slow-moving vehicle.

Large Quadricycle Experience in Toronto, 2022-2023

In 2022, Municipal Licensing and Standards issued two pedicab licences for large quadricycles; these two were renewed and a further two licences were issued in 2023, all to a single operating company. No further licence applications for large quadricycles were made. As per the by-law requirement, the routes used by this operator received prior written approval by the General Manager, Transportation Services.

In both operating seasons, the large quadricycle operator ran trips between 11:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. with breaks (per by-law requirements) on weekdays between 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At the operator's choice, the tour operations were entirely within Spadina-Fork York (Ward 10) boundaries. As the operator gained experience and added new businesses as destinations, they made periodic requests for route amendments, which were reviewed and approved. In some cases, Transportation Services required route changes to avoid routes that were deemed unsafe or to reinforce parking and standing restrictions. In one case, the operator proactively altered the route to reduce presence on residential streets.

In spring 2022, before any large quadricycles were operating, some business improvement associations expressed apprehension about their potential traffic impact. Following the first season of operations, these same stakeholders confirmed their support, as there seemed to be no traffic impact attributable to the large quadricycles, and there was a positive impact on businesses that served as destinations.

There was no identifiable impact on speeds of general traffic based on the 2022 and 2023 operating routes. Municipal Licensing and Standards monitored complaints arriving through 311 and found no complaints about noise or traffic arising from the large quadricycles. City staff were made aware of two resident comments related to noise, which were forwarded from the Spadina-Fort York Councillor's office. Toronto Police, Fire and Paramedic Services were consulted in 2022 and 2023 and none reported any challenges or concerns.

The TTC did not identify any specific concerns from the large quadricycle operations over the two-year pilot. However, it should be noted that the large quadricycle routes only interacted with streetcars on small sections of Bathurst and Spadina where there is little or no on-street parking and no curb lane cafes. TTC remains concerned that the slow speed of the quadricycles, coupled with the vehicle width, may result in conflict with streetcars if they were to operate more extensively on routes where streetcars operate in mixed traffic.

Staff collected public input through an online survey between January 29 and February 23, 2024. A total of 778 survey responses were submitted, including 649 (83%) from respondents who identified as Toronto residents. Of the survey respondents who identified as Toronto residents, 43% indicated they support the continuation of the large quadricycles pilot while imposing restrictions only that relate to clear safety hazards; a further 27% support "some expansion" in the number of vehicles and routes, and 7%

support no more vehicles than what were operating in 2023. In other words, 70% of Toronto resident respondents support some level of pilot expansion. A smaller portion (16%) of Toronto resident respondents support a complete ban on large quadricycles anywhere in the city and 7% have no preference or opinion.

More details about the results of this survey and other consultation activities are included in Attachment 1.

The consultation findings indicate general support for the continued operation of large quadricycles in Toronto. However, input from both internal and external parties underscores the need to balance the benefits of large quadricycles with their potential impacts on traffic congestion and public safety.

Proposed Conditions for Pilot Continuation in 2024 and Beyond

The 2022-2023 large quadricycle pilot was a learning experience for both City staff and the large quadricycle operator. Several considerations arose that have informed recommendations for how the pilot should operate going forward.

A. Oversight of Restrictions

In the locations where large quadricycles operated during the pilot, there was no demonstrable impact on traffic speed or public safety. This suggests that the restrictions applied through Chapter 545 and the route review process sufficiently mitigated congestion impacts and safety risks. Recognizing the types of route amendments required by staff during the review process, we believe a risk would remain if the route review safeguard was removed. It is also recommended that pre-existing Chapter 545 restrictions for locations and times which apply to all pedicabs, be maintained to continue the mitigation of any risks and to maintain consistency with conventional pedicabs.

B. Clarity of Restrictions

Providing a clear list of restrictions, approved by the General Manager, Transportation Services or their designate, will give large quadricycle operators more certainty and ability to plan, and will streamline route approval processes by City staff.

For clarity, Chapter 545 prohibits all pedicabs (including those that are large quadricycles) from operating on:

- a) Any roadway between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays;
- b) King Street between Spadina Avenue and Jarvis Street;
- c) Queen Street between Spadina Avenue and Jarvis Street;
- d) Gerrard Street between Yonge Street and Bay Street;
- e) Front Street between Spadina Avenue and Jarvis Street; and
- f) Any route without prior approval from the General Manager, Transportation Services or their designate.

Further restrictions are recommended which would apply exclusively to pedicabs that are large quadricycles. Staff recommend that the General Manager, Transportation Services, or their designate be delegated the authority to establish and amend from

time to time this list of further restrictions. The option to amend these restrictions will allow the City to respond better to emerging transportation conditions such as construction, street events, and the expected impacts of the FIFA World Cup and would apply equally to all large quadricycle operators. The list of restrictions will be published in a publicly accessible platform (such as the [Large Quadricycle Pilot Project](#) webpage), to which operators may refer before submitting their route maps for approval.

The proposed list of restrictions is below, developed based on discussion with stakeholders including Traffic Operations, TTC, and Emergency Services. These restrictions would prohibit large quadricycles from operating on routes that include the following roadways and movements:

- a) Any road with a designated speed limit greater than 40km/h per Chapter 950 Schedule XXXV;
- b) No more than one consecutive block of travel on Yonge Street;
- c) No more than one consecutive block of travel on Bloor Street or Danforth Avenue;
- d) No lefthand turns at unsignalized intersections where at least one of the roads is an arterial road; and
- e) No straight-through movements at unsignalized intersections where the road that the large quadricycle is crossing is an arterial road.

These provisions will streamline the route approval process while retaining the right to limit the location of use at the General Manager's discretion. Further, it is anticipated that large quadricycle tour operators will naturally limit their route selection to focus on streets with lower average speeds and lower traffic volumes.

C. Operating Route Approval Process

The route approval requirement helped this pilot succeed, but there are opportunities to make this process more transparent and efficient for staff and large quadricycle owners. To improve this process, staff recommend large quadricycle operators be required to submit route maps, including updated maps if there are ongoing routing changes, no later than 10 business days before commencing operations. The requirement for 10 days notice will ensure that staff have adequate time and capacity to review the proposed routes and to consult with impacted groups as needed.

D. Number of Large Quadricycles Permitted

The number of pedicab licences that may be issued to large quadricycles is currently capped at eight, and no more than four licences may be issued to a single operator. No such fleet limitation exists for 'standard' pedicabs, even though the operations (e.g. only used for commercial purposes, require an operator, etc.) and roadway restrictions for large quadricycles and pedicabs are similar. In addition, the total number of vehicles operating in an area is expected to be self-limiting due to a modest overall market for this type of entertainment.

For these reasons, and because of the additional roadway restrictions and route approval requirements that apply to large quadricycles, it is reasonable to assume that allowing any number of licences to be issued will not result in an unmanageable volume of large quadricycles operating in the city. Staff therefore recommend that the limit on the number of large quadricycles be lifted. However, it is recommended that large

quadricycles that are not licensed as pedicabs (i.e. vehicles operated for personal, recreational, and non-commercial uses) be prohibited from all roadways at all times as such large quadricycles would not be subject to a route approval process.

Next Steps

Together these changes would reduce the staff time required for route review and provide greater flexibility for businesses engaging in large quadricycle operations, while incorporating appropriate safeguards to prevent undue impact on the City's transportation network.

The Provincial Pilot Project under the Highway Traffic Act has a 10-year timeframe, ending in 2032. For the remainder of this pilot period, it is recommended that the large quadricycle pilot continue in the City of Toronto, with a combination of by-law amendments and delegated authority to the General Manager, Transportation Services related to prohibiting the use of large quadricycles on certain streets and/or at certain times.

The General Manager, Transportation Services will report back at the end of the ten-year Provincial Pilot Project (in 2032) or sooner as requested, in collaboration with Municipal Licensing and Standards, Economic Development and Culture and other divisions, as appropriate, to the appropriate Committee(s) about the impacts of large quadricycles on city streets and any recommended regulatory changes, based on consultation with relevant stakeholders, including emergency services, the Toronto Transit Commission, business improvement associations, and the public, and in concurrence with any changes to related Provincial regulations as they emerge.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Large Quadricycle Pilot Project Consultation Findings