



STAFF REPORT

Prepared by: Chris Mantha, Director of Public Works **Report No.:** PW-03-2024

Agenda date: March 4, 2024

Subject: Off-Road Vehicle By-law 1597/23 – Phase 1 Review

Recommendation:

That Council provides direction to staff.

Background:

At the March 20, 2023 Council meeting, the Renfrew County ATV Club (RCATV) made a request to Council to permit off-road vehicle (ORV) access on all municipal roads in Petawawa except:

- Leeder Lane;
- Town Centre Boulevard (from Butler Boulevard to Winston Avenue);
- Water Tower Road; and
- Len Hopkins Drive.

Staff brought forward Report PW-11-2023 (Attachment #5) to the May 8, 2023 Council-In-Committee meeting in response to the RCATV request. At this meeting, Committee recommended the following:

- That Council permits ORV travel on all roads west of Highway 17;
- That Council permits ORVs to cross over Petawawa Boulevard to access amenities using the five designated intersections identified in Phase 1 of the report;
- That Council permits ORV travel along the paved portion of Petawawa Boulevard to access the gas station northwest of Renfrew Street;
- That Council permits the entire length of Black Bay Road to be included as a designated route; and
- That Council agrees to review the results of Phase 1 in its entirety at the end of the 2023 riding season.

Staff brought forward Report PW-13-2023 (Attachment #6) to the June 26, 2023 Council-In-Committee meeting to present the draft Off-Road Vehicle By-law. At this

meeting, Committee recommended that Council accept the proposed draft by-law as presented.

The Off-Road Vehicle by-law was adopted at the July 4, 2023 Council meeting and numbered By-law 1597/23 (Attachment #1).

Discussion:

Renfrew County ATV Club

On January 25, 2024 a meeting was held between Chico Traclet, Director of the Petawawa area for the RCATV, myself (Director of Public Works) and Dawn Recoskie (Public Works and Fire Services Coordinator) to discuss Phase 1 of the Off-Road Vehicle By-law and to provide input for the staff report to Council.

Following the meeting, the RCATV submitted correspondence (Attachment #2) expressing the group's goal, with Council's support, is to ultimately allow Petawawa residents access to the Algonquin Trail directly from their home without having to trailer their ORVs to the current trailhead at the end of Norman Street noting there is limited parking available at the trailhead.

Liability

Risk management continues to be an area of significant concern for staff and the Town's insurer. The Town's insurance provider continues to recommend caution toward allowing recreational vehicles to be operated on highways in built up urban areas, due to the potential for liability for the Town. Other than reviewing Black Bay Road in June 2023, a complete field review of the Town's road network, to establish a baseline for comparative purposes and to identify and mitigate any hazards, has not been completed.

Concerns from the OPP

As previously communicated, the OPP's primary concerns regarding the operation of ORVs on municipal roads are as follows:

- Under provincial regulations, ORVs cannot drive faster than 20 km/hr in a 50 km/hr zone, which means ORV operators will drive considerably slower than the flow of traffic and risk incidents.
- In an environment with curbs, sidewalks, and multi-use pathways, there is no shoulder for ORVs to pull over and allow vehicles to pass.
- ORVs are not designed for asphalt roads and can have difficulty maneuvering in a busy traffic environment.
- ORVs typically do not have access to urban centres in Ontario municipalities. Those that do, typically have an established route through some urban areas but do not allow ORVs on all roads.

Despite the concerns noted above, the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP will continue to support the decisions of Council.

Collision Statistics and Calls for Service

From 2015 to 2022, there were 6 collisions on roads within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Petawawa (excluding Highway 17) involving ORVs. In 2023 there were 0 collisions (up to and including September 30, 2023).

From 2015 to 2023 there was a total of 259 calls for service to the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP Detachment area (excluding the City of Pembroke) regarding ORVs. Some of the categories for calls for service included: speeding, motor vehicle collision, stolen vehicles/theft, traffic enforcement, impaired driving, traffic complaints, trespass to property, break and enter, and mischief among others. Below are the number of calls for service per year pertaining to ORVs for the Upper Ottawa Valley OPP Detachment area (excluding the City of Pembroke):

- 2015 – 18 calls for service;
- 2016 – 12 calls for service;
- 2017 – 22 calls for service;
- 2018 – 25 calls for service;
- 2019 – 26 calls for service;
- 2020 – 74 calls for service;
- 2021 – 27 calls for service;
- 2022 – 35 calls for service; and
- 2023 – 20 calls for service.

One can speculate the increase in calls for service regarding ORVs in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One can speculate the decrease in calls for service regarding ORVs in 2023 was due to the adoption of the Off-Road Vehicle By-law, installation of signage, community education via social media and the municipal website (Attachment #3), and public engagement by the RCATV.

Community Implications

Following the adoption of the Off-Road Vehicle By-law in July 2023, staff received very few complaints from residents.

- Staff received four (4) inquiries from residents wanting to know the new rules and the designated routes for ORVs.
- Staff received two (2) complaints from residents wanting to know why they couldn't drive their ORVs on Biesenthal Road anymore (although they were never permitted to do so before); one (1) complainant even indicated they travelled with their 3-year old child as a passenger (O.Reg. 316/03 indicates

children under 8 are not permitted to be passengers when in an ORV being operated on a highway).

- One (1) resident attended the front counter to inquire if other roads besides Black Bay Road could be driven on using an ORV. The resident indicated they lived near Norman Street and would like to drive their ORV to the Algonquin Trail rather than having to trailer it.
- Staff received a telephone call from a resident expressing their concerns that there weren't enough signs on Gutzman Road preventing ORVs from driving up and down Gutzman Road constantly. They indicated there is a problem with the plan and enforcement. The ORVs are on the roads after regular working hours and on weekends; the OPP is stretched too far (mostly in Pembroke) and not providing adequate service to the Town of Petawawa. The ORVs are affecting pedestrians and residents walking their dogs. Council should take a visit to Gutzman Road and count the number of ORVs using the road illegally.
- Staff received a telephone call from a snow removal business inquiring if they could drive their ORV with a plow on the front on the road; the current by-law does not allow for winter operation of ORVs on any municipal roads.
- The Petawawa Police Services Board received one written complaint regarding ORVs illegally driving on urban municipal roads.
- Staff received an email from a resident inquiring why they couldn't drive their dirt bike (off-road motorcycle) on the designated routes; staff explained the Town's by-law mirrors the County's Algonquin Trail by-law by restricting the use of extreme ORVs, dirt bikes, and off-road motorcycles.

Options for Consideration:

Should Council wish to expand the designated routes for the operation of ORVs on municipal roads within the Town of Petawawa, staff would initially recommend expanding ORV use on rural municipal roads without sidewalks or curbing. The Town's insurer and the OPP recommend caution, noting there is no shoulder for ORVs to pull over and allow other vehicles to pass on urban roadways with curbs, sidewalks, and multi-use pathways.

In its initial presentation to Council, the RCATV suggested ORVs will use municipal roads "to travel to approved trails and then to travel back home". As previously indicated, this language is not enforceable and does not limit someone from using their ORV on municipal roads and travelling all over the municipality "just for fun". To be enforceable, should Council wish to expand access to other municipal roads, a detailed designated ORV route should be established.

In addition to the previously approved designated routes, staff has provided a map (Attachment #4) demonstrating how the ORV routes could be expanded on rural municipal roads without sidewalks or curbing. There are five (5) rural areas highlighted

with the intent to have ORV operators use the shortest most direct route to access the Algonquin Trail; from the Algonquin Trail ORV operators can access Black Bay Road. Permission would need to be requested from the County of Renfrew to cross County owned roadways and to travel on some portions of County owned roadways.

While providing ORV users easier access to the Algonquin Trail and Black Bay Road to facilitate access to the Barron Canyon Trail System, Council also needs to take into consideration the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as the condition of our urban roadways that have sidewalks, curbs, and multi-use pathways. This is a delicate balancing act.

The majority of ORV owners have trailers. Council may wish to consider providing a larger parking area in a rural part of Petawawa to accommodate more trailer parking. Ideally this could be considered in the Black Bay Road area to provide access to both the Algonquin Trail and the Barron Canyon Trail System.

Staff is seeking direction from Council regarding the following:

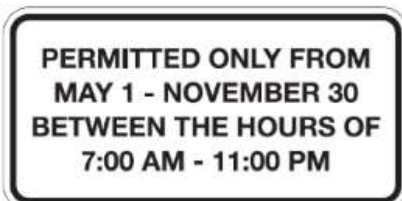
- Does Council want to expand the existing designated ORV routes?
 - If so, how should the designated ORV routes be altered/expanded?
- Does Council want to provide a larger parking area to accommodate trailer parking?

Following direction from Council, staff can prepare the necessary amendments to the ORV By-law for Council's review at a future meeting.

Financial Implication:

Following the adoption of By-law 1597/23, staff purchased and installed signage at a rate of \$4,460.15 plus HST:

- 32 green signs – ATVs permitted;
- 20 red signs – No ATVs permitted;
- 32 dates/hours tab signs;
- 15 QR code tab signs; and
- 20 directional arrows.

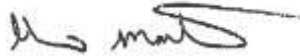


The RCATV provided a \$500.00 donation to put towards the purchase of the signage. The County of Renfrew installed signage at its own expense on Doran Road at Black Bay Road (2 red signs), Petawawa Boulevard at Limestone Trail/Town Centre Boulevard (2 green and 1 red sign), and Petawawa Boulevard at Gutzman Road/Black Bay Road (2 red signs). The County already had existing signage (red signs) on the following roads: Doran Road at Algonquin Trail, and Murphy Road at Algonquin Trail.

Depending on the direction received from Council, some signs (red signs) could be moved and other signs (green signs with appropriate tabs) would need to be purchased. The number of signs is dependent upon the direction received from Council. The QR code has been well received by the public; staff is hopeful to retain the same QR code if the designated routes are altered/expanded (a new QR code tab sign would cost approximately \$20.00 + HST per sign).

Should Council wish to provide a larger trailer parking area, this would require either purchasing or leasing land, or considering land that the Town already owns. The purchase/lease of land has not been considered in the 2024 budget.

Signature:



Date: February 27, 2024

Chris Mantha, Director of Public Works

Approved by:



Date: February 28, 2024

Scott Randolph, CAO

Attachment #1: By-law 1597/23

Attachment #2: RCATV Correspondence

Attachment #3: ORV Social Media Posts and Website
Community Education and Public Engagement

Attachment #4: Map – Suggested ORV Rural Municipal Road Designated Routes

Attachment #5: Report PW-11-2023

Attachment #6: Report PW-13-2023