

Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

Legal and Legislative Services

Legislative Services



To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Brianna Coughlin, Division Leader – Legislative Services
Date: January 8, 2025
Subject: Golf Cart Pilot Project – Lighthouse Cove

Recommendation

Approve participation in the Golf Cart Pilot Project;

Direct the Clerk to read By-law 12-2025, being a by-law to authorize the use of golf carts on municipal roads in Lighthouse Cove, during the Consideration of By-laws;

Direct Administration to amend the User Fee By-law to include a Golf Cart Registration fee of \$75.00;

Direct Administration to retain a third party to assess and introduce the required signage and other roadway safety measures to support the pilot program, to be funded from the Roads Reserve; and

Request that the County of Essex adopt a by-law to authorize the use of golf carts on Tisdelle Drive, all as presented at the February 11, 2025 Council meeting.

Strategic Objectives

This report does not relate to a Strategic Objective, however it relates to a directive of Council to participate in the Golf Car Pilot Project.

Background

On June 3, 2021, the Province of Ontario introduced a ten-year pilot project to allow the use of “golf cars” on certain roads in Huron-Kinloss and on Pelee Island, subject to conditions. This pilot project required a regulation under the *Highway Traffic Act*, as well as by-laws passed by the municipalities involved.

A copy of Ontario Regulation 407/21 (Pilot Project – Golf Cars) to the *Highway Traffic Act* has been attached as Appendix A to this report.

It is noted that the regulation refers to “golf car”, however much of the information provided in the Province’s guideline (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/municipal-guidelines-golf-cart-pilot-program>) refers to the more common term “golf cart”. Both terms are used interchangeably in this report and have the same meaning.

At the November 9, 2021 meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

Resolution #386-11-2021

Direct Administration to bring a report regarding a pilot program for the use of golf carts on roads in Lighthouse Cove.

At the November 30, 2021 meeting, Council received a petition requesting the use of golf carts in Lighthouse Cove. This petition included 739 signatures, and has been included as Appendix B to this report.

And further, the following resolution was passed at the June 13, 2022 Council meeting:

Resolution # 137-04-2022

Receive the Reports for Information as listed on the agenda and bring back the report from the Ministry of Transportation relating to the golf cart pilot project when it becomes available.

In 2023, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) considered expanding regulations under the Act to include several types of “micromobility” vehicles, including golf carts, electric scooters, cargo power-assisted bicycles and large quadricycles. After a consultation period, the MTO decided not to move forward with this expansion.

In 2024, Administration held discussions with MTO staff regarding the possibility of participating in the Golf Cart Pilot Project for the Lighthouse Cove area. On January 7, 2025, Administration received confirmation that the Province of Ontario has expanded the project to include the Municipality of Lakeshore. Subject to some conditions, golf carts will now be permitted to operate on-road within “the urban area of Lighthouse Cove as described in the Municipality’s Official Plan” at the start of the riding season, which begins on April 1, 2025. A map of the area has been included as Appendix C.

Comments

In order for the Municipality to participate in the program, Council must pass a by-law authorizing the use of golf carts on the included municipal roads. By-law 12-2025 has been prepared for Council’s consideration and adoption.

Further, the Lighthouse Cove area includes Tisdelle Drive, which is a County of Essex road. In order for golf carts to be able to use or cross this road, the County of Essex must also adopt a by-law authorizing the use of the road for this purpose. It is

recommended that Council direct Administration to request that the County of Essex Council adopt such a by-law.

Once the by-laws are in place, a licensing program must be established for the registration of golf carts in the program. Golf carts cannot be operated until the licensing program is in place and a licence is duly issued to the applicant.

The current provincial guidelines require the following for a golf cart to operate in the program (see Appendix A for full pilot project requirements):

- Operated by a driver with a valid A, B, C, D, E, F or G licence.
- No drugs or alcohol permitted when operating a golf cart (consequences under the Criminal Code of Canada and/or the *Highway Traffic Act* may apply).
- Cannot carry passengers under eight years of age.
- A golf cart can be electric or gas powered and must have:
 - Two to six seats
 - Steering wheel
 - Horn
 - Rear-view mirror(s)
 - Good-quality tires
 - Daytime running lights (always on)
 - Turn signals
 - Brake lights
 - Reflectors
 - Slow-moving vehicle sign on back
 - If there are factory-installed seat belts, they must be used by driver and all passengers
 - Service brakes and parking or emergency brake
 - During the period that begins one-half hour before sunset and ends one half-hour after sunrise, vehicles are required to have adequate nighttime lighting
- A golf car must be incapable of propelling the vehicle at a rate of speed greater than 32 km/h or must be speed-modified to prevent the vehicle from attaining greater speed.

Administration also strongly recommends that applicants be required to hold liability insurance for the vehicle and execute a release of liability and indemnification agreement holding the Municipality and County harmless for any damage or injury caused by the use of the golf cart. This has been reflected in the proposed by-law.

It is noted that the proposed by-law includes the use of registered golf carts on municipal roadways only. This by-law does not allow for the use of golf carts on other municipal lands, such as parks. The municipal roadways must also have a maximum speed limit of 50 km/h.

The Operations department further recommends retaining a third party, in conjunction with the County of Essex, to assess and introduce the required signage and any additional roadway safety measures that would be required to support this pilot program, and a monitoring program to gauge the success of the program. County of Essex Administration confirmed that they are prepared to work together on this pilot program and the potential for any implementation measures that may be required to increase the safety and success of the program.

Administration also consulted with the Ontario Provincial Police – Essex County Detachment in relation to the pilot program. The following statement was provided:

The Ontario Provincial Police recognize the importance of these new market innovations as they expand mobility options for Ontarians and provide an environmentally friendly way to travel.

Members of the Ontario Provincial Police Essex Detachment are committed to ensuring public safety with the implementation of new regulations under the provincial Golf Cart Pilot Program. Our officers will actively monitor compliance to ensure these vehicles are used responsibly.

Drivers who use golf carts are advised that the rules that apply to motor vehicles on a highway also apply to golf carts driven on municipal roads. It is expected the members of the community use this convenient form of transportation in a safe and responsible manner.

The rules pertaining to the use of golf carts in the Lighthouse Cove area of Lakeshore is a requirement under law, and enforcement will be applied to those not in compliance. Those who fail to abide by *Highway Traffic Act* regulations are subject to charges and applicable fines.

Others Consulted

Ministry of Transportation

County of Essex

Ontario Provincial Police – Essex County Detachment

Financial Impacts

At this time, Administration does not have an estimate of the number of golf carts that may be registered for the pilot project. However, staff time will be required for communication of the project, the application review and registration of golf carts, as well as mandated provincial reporting. The Legislative Services division will oversee the licensing program. The application review process will include reviewing and approving

certificates of insurance, diarizing the expiry dates and contacting permittees to ensure certificates of insurance do not expire during the licensing period. Should any condition of the licence lapse during this period, Legislative Services will need to issue revocation letters.

The By-law Services division will be responsible for the enforcement of the Municipality’s golf cart licensing program which will include initiating charges for failing to comply with the requirements of the by-law. The Ontario Provincial Police will be responsible for the enforcement of the *Highway Traffic Act* and the requirements of Regulation 407/21.

It is recommended that Council direct Administration to include a \$75.00 Golf Cart Registration fee in the User Fee By-law. This is in line with the fee currently charged by the Township of Pelee.

In addition, Administration recommends retaining a third party to assess signage and other safety measures relating to the pilot program, as previously noted in this report. The estimated cost to retain a third party for the assessment is \$30,000, plus an estimated cost of \$8,000 for signage, which can be funded from the Roads Reserve.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Golf Car Pilot Project - Lighthouse Cove.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A – Regulation 407/21.pdf - Appendix B – 20211118 Petition - Use of Golf Carts on Roads within Lighthouse Cove.pdf - Appendix C – Map.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 3, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Prepared by Brianna Coughlin

Submitted by Susan Hirota

Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team