

## **BACKGROUND: Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs)**

In September 2006, the province implemented a 5-year pilot that allowed electric low-speed vehicles (LSVs) to be used by employees at provincial/municipal parks and conservation areas on roads with a maximum posted speed limit of 40km/h.

- Note: Since 2005, Ontario's *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA) has given the ministry the authority to implement pilot projects to test the safe integration of new vehicles on Ontario's roads for up to 12 years.

In March 2009, in response to significant interest (media, stakeholders, public interest in affordable low-cost fuel efficient alternatives), MTO expanded the original pilot to allow LSVs to travel on roads in:

- Stream 1: Provincial and municipal parks and conservation areas by employees;
- Stream 2: In controlled environments defined as Pelee Island or within 50 metres of property owned or occupied by university or college; and
- Stream 3: Province-wide with speed limits of 50 km/h or less.

Each stream had escalating operator/vehicle criteria with Stream 3 imposing significant additional equipment requirements to address the safety concerns raised with LSVs interacting with larger, heavier traffic.

Since its implementation in 2006, there had been very limited interest and participation in the pilot – and therefore there was little evidence to support continuing to allow LSVs to operate on Ontario's roads. On December 31, 2014, MTO ended the LSV pilot regulation.

However, following requests by industry representatives, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is proposing to reinstate a LSV pilot.

### **Low-Speed Vehicles**

In Canada, the regulation of vehicle safety is a shared responsibility between the federal government, provinces and territories.

Transport Canada (TC) is responsible for determining whether vehicles can be imported or sold in Canada and which standards they must meet. Provinces and territories are responsible for determining whether a vehicle can be registered for on-road use and determining which rules apply to their use.

The LSV class was created by TC in July 2000 for low-speed environments (maximum speed between 32 and 40 km/h). It is important to note that LSVs are a distinct class of vehicle separate from passenger cars despite initially appearing similar in their design and features.

Additionally, while the physical design of LSVs may resemble many safety features of passenger cars (e.g., seat belts, steering wheel, and pedals); LSVs were never designed to satisfy the safety requirements of a passenger car.

## **Proposed Low-Speed Vehicle Pilot Framework**

MTO always seeks to strike the appropriate balance to maintain road safety while also ensuring that the province's regulatory environment does not create unnecessary barriers to innovation, consumer choice and individual mobility.

MTO expects that a pilot framework will provide decision-makers with meaningful evidence to make a final regulatory decision.

After researching and reviewing regulatory frameworks that other Canadian jurisdictions currently have for LSVs and considering the former LSV pilot, the following pilot framework elements are under consideration:

### **Driver Qualification**

A driver of a LSV would need to hold a valid A, B, C, D, E, F or G licence, a valid licence from another jurisdiction, or a valid international driver's permit.

### **Operating Environment**

LSVs would only be permitted to operate in defined environments such as:

- Provincial parks and provincially owned lands
- Where permitted by municipal by-law on a municipal road for which the maximum rate of speed permitted is 50 kilometres per hour.

### **Vehicle Definition & Safety Standards**

Only LSVs that meet the following criteria would be permitted to participate in the pilot:

- Meets the definition of low-speed vehicle in [subsection 2 \(1\) of the Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations](#)
- Meets the requirements for low-speed vehicles set out in [Schedule III of the Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations](#)
- Bears a federal compliance label

Additional safety standards related to vehicle equipment and occupant protection are also under consideration that include, but are not limited to:

- An odometer
- A windshield defrosting and defogging system
- An interior heating system
- Occupant compartment doors
- Occupant restraints

## **Insurance requirements**

In order to register a LSV to participate in the pilot, the owner would need to show proof of appropriate insurance coverage. Minimum coverage related to catastrophic incidents is also under consideration.

## **Pilot Duration**

The length of the pilot will be at least five years to ensure sufficient time to effectively monitor and evaluate the pilot results. This is consistent with other MTO pilot projects.

## **Registration**

For the purposes of vehicle registration, LSVs would be registered as passenger cars.

- LSVs would be required to display a slow moving vehicle sign at the back of the vehicle; and,
- A declaration form would need to be completed prior to vehicle registration that states acknowledgement of the LSV pilot operating conditions and the vehicle's safety limitations.