



City of Kingston
Report to Environment, Infrastructure & Transportation Policies Committee
Report Number EITP-24-021

To: Chair and Members of the Environment, Infrastructure & Transportation Policies Committee

From: Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services

Resource Staff: Julie Salter-Keane, Manager, Climate Leadership

Date of Meeting: October 8, 2024

Subject: Recommendations for a Comprehensive Car-sharing Pilot Program

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 2. Lead Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Goal: 2.2 Support climate action and sustainability for residents, businesses and partners.

Executive Summary:

Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan includes a commitment to explore and encourage a comprehensive car-sharing program (2.2.4.B). This report provides background and analysis on a comprehensive car-sharing program and recommends that the City enters into an agreement with Communauto, for an expanded car-share pilot program for a period of up to 18 months, starting in Q2 of 2025.

Since 2012, Communauto Inc. (previously Virtue Transportation Systems Incorporated) has been operating in Kingston, with a licensing agreement with the City, for the leasing of two dedicated parking spots in the Springer Memorial Lot, located at 140 Queen Street. The proposed agreement for an expanded car-share pilot will include criteria such as an increase in the number of station-based vehicles and a minimum of one full electric vehicle in the pilot, as a station-based vehicle, ensuring convenient access to charging infrastructure for users.

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Recommendation:

That Council approve a budget amendment for \$20,000 funded from the monies collected from the Cash-in-Lieu of Parking levies to support an expanded car-share pilot program; and

That Council authorize the Manager, Licensing, Parking Operations and Policy, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, to enter into an agreement with Communauto Inc. for the provision of an expanded car-share pilot program for a period of up to 18 months, starting in Q2 2025.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Paige Agnew, Commissioner,
Growth & Development Services**

p.p. ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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Options/Discussion:

Background

To support the Strategic Priority of Council, 2.2.4B explore and encourage a comprehensive car-sharing program, research and analysis was conducted, to evaluate the effectiveness of approaches of other car-share programs in comparable cities across Ontario and beyond. A brief background is provided, highlighting key considerations for the expansion car-sharing in Kingston.

Based on previous analysis including in the Power of Parking: A New Parking Paradigm for Kingston?, each car share vehicle is estimated to replace 5-10 privately-owned vehicles, with other studies suggesting up to 13 or more privately-owned vehicles, with an estimated 30% less GHG emissions than the average personal vehicle. While car-sharing uptake grows, there are numerous additional benefits such as reduced household transportation costs due to reduced vehicles ownership among car-share program members, reduced vehicle kilometres travelled and increased active transportation mode share.

A review of Kingston's own car-share programs was conducted, as well as reviews or consultation with Guelph, Hamilton, London, Toronto, Waterloo, Halifax and Vancouver. Research of other programs included their geographic scope, duration, program modality, and business requirements. Market research of other car-share operators in Ontario was also conducted, although the space is limited, with only a couple competitors.

Since 2012, Communauto Inc. (previously Virtue Transportation Systems Incorporated) has been operating in Kingston, with a licensing agreement with the City, pertaining to the leasing of two dedicated parking spots in the Springer Memorial Lot, located at 140 Queen Street. The license fee for dedicated parking spaces is based on the monthly permit rate of \$112.50 per month, per space, as outlined in the Fees and Charges By-Law Number 2005-10.

It is estimated that in 2024 there are more than 215 members listed in Kingston using Communauto. There are currently 8 Communauto vehicles in Kingston, with 5 traditional gas vehicles, and 3 hybrid vehicles. Communauto has expressed their intention to expand their Kingston fleet in the future. Communauto also leases parking spaces on private property, including commercial and residential spaces. Despite this, Kingston still lacks a truly robust car-sharing market compared to other cities in Ontario.

The current market landscape in Ontario is very limited, with only one other company (Zipcar) operating widely in Ontario, exclusively in the greater Toronto area. The City of Kingston remains open to other proponents entering the market and welcomes car-share providers to reach out if interested. However, from the research conducted, it is resoundingly clear that Communauto has both program flexibility and is operating in the most Cities across Ontario and Canada. This includes numerous comparable small-medium sized cities (Waterloo, Hamilton, Guelph and London). Given their presence in Kingston, their interest in expanding, and overall

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trend of operational growth across the province, working directly with Communauto is the most direct path forward to expand the car-share program in Kingston.

Analysis & Rationale

Car-share program models can be broken down into two primary categories, being one-way and two-way car-share, also referred to as free-floating and station-based. The one-way or free-floating model allows for the flexibility of picking up a vehicle from a designated space, or larger designated parking zone, and utilizing the vehicle in a one-way trip, allowing for drop-off of the vehicle in second designated space or larger designated parking zone. This allows for enhanced flexibility, and autonomy of users, but requires greater availability of vehicles in a network for the user to have convenient access. The two-way or station-based model requires round-trips, with the start and end in the same fixed location, being either an individual spot or pooling station.

To date, in Kingston, Communauto has only offered two-way or station-based car-share, which is more likely to be utilized for more pre-planned trips. While both models have advantages and disadvantages, it is ideal to offer both options to maximize the uptake and utilization a car-sharing program in Kingston. Both models may have different use cases, and with greater scale and flexibility, usership will likely grow.

While Communauto only operates two-way car-sharing in Kingston, Communauto does operate one-way car-sharing (Communauto FLEX) in other Cities including Hamilton, Toronto, and Montreal. Communauto has indicated that other cities offering one-way car-share have greater market growth. This is also validated by the City of Toronto, showing a trend of year over year demand growth and high utilization since the introduction of free-floating car share. Toronto has worked to increase the number of free-floating vehicles to meet demand. Furthermore, as the scale of the free-floating program has grown, vehicles utilization has increased, with significant reductions in time between use for of free-floating vehicles, averaging less than 10 hours as of April 2023.

While some hybrid vehicles are being used as part of Communauto's current Kingston's car-share fleet, most vehicles are gas vehicles. Other jurisdictions, including Montreal and Toronto also offer electric vehicles (EVs), for both free-floating and station-based streams. While EVs do pose some more logistical challenges compared to gas vehicles or hybrids, due to charging infrastructure availability, and general familiarity with gas vehicles among the driving population, in order to minimize the environmental impact of the program, staff will work with Communauto to include the introduction of at least one EV in a pilot program as a station-based electric vehicle, with a spot reserved that is adjacent to charging station in order to guarantee the vehicle can be readily charged and accessed.

Post-secondary students who are less likely to own a personal vehicle and require less regular access are great candidates for car-sharing programs. Queen's University already has two Communauto vehicles on campus, operating as station-based at the Tindall Field Parking Lot,

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and Queen's University has indicated interest in both expanding the number of vehicles and reserving a space for an EV adjacent to a level 2 charger. St Lawrence College does not have any car-share vehicles on campus but has indicated early interest in dedicating some parking spaces to offer this service on their campus.

While growth of car-sharing has clear environmental benefits, it is imperative for the service to be complementary to the City's existing Transit service. In consultation with Kingston Transit, any pilot program will be designed to integrate and complement existing transit coverage. The [Transit application](#) already allows users to view where available Communauto vehicles are located, with future opportunities for cross-platform integration, allowing car-share vehicles to be reserved. Additional opportunities exist to create bundling of Kingston Transit fares and Communauto services, allowing for a comprehensive transit and transportation solution on a single platform.

All Communauto vehicles, regardless of being parked on public or private lands, are available to any user on the platform, pending reservations and subscription options. This open model lends itself to greater availability and flexibility. Car-share companies need access to numerous public and privately owned parking spaces on many properties in numerous and distributed locations to be viable and to be considered an attractive alternative to vehicle ownership. Communauto's model should enable this access for Kingston residents over time.

Pilot Program Recommendations

Staff have initiated discussions with Communauto; however, no formal agreement has been presented pending Council authorization, and these recommendations should be seen as an initial pilot program scope and are subject to change.

For the pilot, it is proposed that there is an increase in the number of station-based vehicles. Communauto has communicated their intent to increase their station-based fleet in Kingston, before introducing the free-floating model. A free-floating car-share model remains desirable for the City and remains a future goal, with more information to be brought forward to Council when available.

The upper limit of 20 vehicles is proposed for the pilot. The potential to expand outside of the downtown core to the East and West ends will be examined during the pilot. Ongoing monitoring and analysis will take place, with specific business requirements to be included in the agreement with Communauto to ensure issues such as vehicles being left unutilized, as well as a minimum response times in the event of any public complaints received, and detailed usership data (anonymized) being shared with the City, similarly to provisions shared by other cities in Ontario.

Car-share programs usership and fleet availability expand and contract seasonally, with the greatest usership starting in the spring, and spanning until early winter each year. Based on findings from other Ontario cities, an 18-month pilot program is advised, starting in Q2 of 2025,

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to allow Communauto time to procure vehicles, and to launch the program in line with seasonal utilization., The 18-month pilot program will allow for two annual cycles of program operation to allow for updates and improvements to be made throughout.

It is proposed to include a minimum of one full electric vehicle in the pilot, as a station-based vehicle, ensuring convenient access to charging infrastructure for users. Pending availability from Communauto, and operational considerations, more electric vehicles may be introduced during the pilot, as well as the examination of minimum requirements for hybrid vehicles.

Promotion and Program Uptake

To create the most impactful pilot program, it is proposed that the City will provide support at no-cost to Communauto, to inform and promote the comprehensive care-sharing pilot to the public, within existing operating budgets. This will enable the greatest program uptake, and potentially lead to the demand required to stimulate ongoing growth for the program. The launch of a communications campaign focused on the program will align with the Q2 2025 pilot launch, with ongoing collaboration between the City and Communauto to ensure accurate information is shared.

The City's Cash-in Lieu of Parking By-Law (By-Law Number 2022-63 A By-Law to Establish Criteria for Exempting an Owner from Providing Parking Required by the Kingston Zoning By-Law), requires an \$8,000.00 annual per space fee for each Standard Parking Space exempted under requirements in the Kingston Zoning By-Law Number 2022-62). The funds collected under the Cash-in Lieu of Parking By-Law are permitted to be used to support the implementation and operation of car-sharing services or other alternative transportation services that reduce reliance on the private automobile in the City of Kingston and shall only be recommended by the City's Commissioner of Growth and Development Services or their designate through budget approval.

To develop the most comprehensive program, will require significant up-front investment from Communauto, required license fees for Municipal parking spaces may be covered internally during the pilot, utilizing the Cash in Lieu of Parking fund, to incentivise Communauto to invest in the long-term scaleup of Kingston operations. For the pilot, the approximate cost of \$1,476.00 for each station-based vehicle utilizing municipal parking spaces will be internally transferred to offset lost revenues from these spaces, totalling up to \$20,000.00.

Public Engagement

No public engagement was completed to date for this initiative, however a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the program will be examined prior to the conclusion of the pilot in Q4 2026.

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Climate Risk Considerations

With an increase in the number of available car-share vehicles, numerous environmental benefits can be expected including reduced vehicle kilometres travelled, resulting reduced GHG emissions, and increased active transportation mode share. As one car-share vehicle has the potential to reduce between 5-10 personal vehicles, a reduction in community transportation emissions will result as the program scales.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

The expansion of car-sharing will improve access to vehicles for those populations who cannot or choose not to own a personal vehicle.

Existing Policy/By-Law

By-Law Number 2010-128 “A By-Law to Regulate Parking”.

By-Law Number 2022-63 “A By-Law to Establish Criteria for Exempting an Owner from Providing Parking Required by the Kingston Zoning By-Law”.

By-Law Number 2005-10, “A By-Law to Establish Fees And Charges to Be Collected By the Corporation Of The City Of Kingston”

There will be consideration of future updates to, including the potential creation of a new parking permit category car-share vehicles, and other potential updates to designated parking zones and parking violations.

Financial Considerations

The monies collected from the Cash-in-Lieu of Parking levies will be utilized to offset the City's parking revenues, enabling the City to forgo fees associated with the proponent leasing parking spaces within Municipal parking lots during the pilot program, with a total value of up to \$20,000.00. No payments will be made to any proponent.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Laird Leggo, Manager, Licensing, Parking Operations and Policy, Licensing & Enforcement Services

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Lana Foulds, Director, Financial Services

Christopher Norris, General Manager, Transit Services

Exhibits Attached:

None