

Ottawa tunnel study to explore banning trucks from core

Environmental assessment will also explore toll option, council decides

By Kate Porter, [CBC News](#)

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The preferred route for a tunnel under Ottawa's downtown would see traffic go underground in front of the RCMP at Vanier Parkway and emerge on King Edward Avenue at the Ottawa side of the Macdonald-Cartier bridge. (City of Ottawa)

The City of Ottawa will look at the feasibility of banning virtually all truck traffic from the downtown core if a new tunnel gets the green light.

Ottawa city council directed the mayor Wednesday to approach the province to help fund an environmental assessment of the tunnel, which would stretch from the Vanier Parkway exit of Highway 417, under Sandy Hill and Lowertown, to King Edward Avenue near the MacDonal-Cartier Bridge.

In August, the 3.4-kilometre tunnel was deemed technically feasible, and early estimates put the cost of construction in the range of \$1.7 billion to \$2 billion.

On Wednesday council also approved a motion by Coun. Allan Hubley directing city staff to "explore the feasibility of banning all trucks from the core, with the exception of those making a delivery inside the core" if the tunnel is constructed.

The motion also requests that the scope of any environmental assessment for the tunnel explore the possibility of making the tunnel a toll road.

Few alternatives, mayor says

Watson supports the tunnel option, and has asked councillors who opposed the funding request to offer up alternatives, since few options seem to exist.

"It's not a gondola. It's not attaching wings on trucks. It's a bridge or a tunnel," said Watson.

"And we've said 'no' time and time again to the bridge," said Watson, referring to the various studies exploring possible bridge routes that never gained traction, partly because of the many levels of government involved.

Only councillors Riley Brockington and Michael Qaqish voted against the funding request.

Brockington said he wants to be sure there aren't better options to deal with the truck traffic, including a new interprovincial bridge, while Qaqish has concerns about the engineering and cost.

"Sandy Hill is called Sandy Hill for a reason," Qaqish said.