

# Tourism Advisory Committee

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

# Agenda

- Chair's Report
- Update on Tourism Management Plan
- Discussion on Revisions to the Quadricycle Ordinance
- Update on Revisions to the Horse-Drawn Carriage Ordinance

**Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)  
Meeting Summary  
September 20, 2016**

**TAC Attendees:** Sandra Baxter, Charlie Brazil, Mark Dana, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Austin Hill, David Jones, Bill Lovett, Eric Meyerhoff, DeAnne Mitchell, Michael Owens

**TAC Absence:** Jamie Caskey, Joe Marinelli, Adam Wilkins

**Guests:** Marcia Banes, Eric Curl, Samantha Meier, Mickey Minick, Natalie Woodward, Marshall Young

**City Staff:** Bridget Lidy, Marija Bumgarner, Cynthia Pelote, Jennifer Herman

**Chair's Welcome**

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Chair Vaughnette Goode-Walker opened the meeting. This was an informational meeting to update the TAC on where we are with three topics—the tourism management plan, quadricycle revisions and horse-drawn carriage revisions.

**Tourism Management Plan**

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Bridget Lidy updated the TAC and stated the City received four proposals for the tourism management plan. This included:

- The Experience Institute from Tuscon, AZ
- Resonance Consulting, LLC from New York, NY
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, Nashville, TN
- Symbioscity, Savannah, GA

She explained the City will not have TAC review the proposals due to procurement procedures. She added the TAC will be involved in the planning process to include providing feedback prior to public meetings and final recommendations to City Council.

At this time, the City is communicating with local partners who contributed funds to ensure they are comfortable with next steps on the process. It is anticipated the City will be completing the evaluation process by the end of the month. Once a recommendation is finalized, it will be forwarded to City Council for approval. Partner organizations who contributed funds include Visit Savannah, Historic Savannah Foundation, Downtown Neighborhood Association and Tourism Leadership Council.



## **Revisions to the Horse-Drawn Carriage Ordinance**

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Based on the direction from the TAC, Bridget reached out to three large animal vets in the area with no connection with the carriage industry to ask their feedback on the proposed changes to the heat policy. At this time, the City has received two comments and is waiting on one more vet to respond. Once all comments have been received and reviewed, the information will be shared with the TAC. It is anticipated this will occur by the end of the month.

## **Revisions to the Quadricycle Ordinance**

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Bridget reviewed a presentation about quadricycles and the ordinance. Please refer to the attached slide presentation. She indicated there is no definition of quadricycles in the state code. Quadricycles are viewed as vehicles. Other communities define the use and address alcohol consumption in their state code.

Austin Hill asked why so much of the residential part of downtown was included in the boundaries where quadricycles could operate. Staff explained the existing boundaries for private/chartered tours include the area south of Liberty to Gaston. Bill Lovett thought it would be easier to set a time restriction like 5:30PM instead of the 30-minutes before sunrise for the area south of Liberty Street. Mark Dana asked if there were any public safety issues. Staff explained there have been no public safety issues. Mark stated the noise issue was subjective. It was explained that noise was and has been an issue with the quadricycles since they were introduced to Savannah. Sandra asked if the size of the businesses changed over the years which may have an effect on the citation increases over the years. Samantha Meier, owner of Savannah Slowrides, stated her business grew 30% each year. Bridget also stated citations increased with the inception of the new tourism department. DeAnna Mitchell asked if tour drivers of other types of tours are also required to sign a form acknowledging the rules and regulations. She added everyone should be treated the same. City staff explained all of the tour ordinances are being revised and each will be addressed. The precedent for the form was a model used within the pedicab industry.

Sandra asked if the number of companies could be limited. Jennifer Herman, Senior Asst. City Attorney, stated that limiting the number or caps is problematic. They are anti-competitive and are difficult for the City to defend. Marshall Young, owner of Eco Pedals, pointed out that ordinances in other cities allow for the consumption of BYOB alcohol and kegs on quadricycles only while Savannah's open container law provides the consumption of alcohol to be legal.



Samantha provided information about her company and their concerns about the revisions. This information is attached. Natalie Woodward, representing Savannah Slowride, stated the City can implement changes, yet they need to be enforceable. She added unintended consequences will occur with binge drinking. The drivers will have to police what is in the patron's cup to make sure it is or is not alcohol. They proposed several alternatives to the ordinance changes. The information is attached. Natalie added that to date there have not been any alcohol related issues. Bill Lovett said that it is inaccurate to say that there have not been any issues since noise has been an ongoing issue. Natalie responded asking if there is a correlation between alcohol and noise and if that is the case, limiting the tours to 2-3 stops can solve that issue.

Michael said that the enforcement numbers show that it is difficult to enforce. He added that noise is a perceived issue then there is an issue. He asked the operators how they would solve the problem. Natalie stated that noise seems to be the driving issue and they probably would not be sitting here today if the noise was not an issue. Of the voided citations, a large portion was likely noise. Samantha added that they have not had specific guidelines to follow until now. She said that they try to keep the noise down and she reminds her drivers to control the patrons but she cannot be everywhere at all times. Marshall mentioned the attempt to use decibel levels; however that will not work because of ambient noise. He said they cannot control people hooting and hollering. Michael asked Samantha how many drivers she fired. Samantha indicated she fired around 4 to 5 drivers.

Bill asked if there was a way to allow for drinking in the commercial zone and prohibit it the other part of their operational boundaries. Staff stated it would be difficult because complaints are coming from the commercial areas—not just residential zones. Charlie Brazil mentioned compliance is the key. If residents are complaining about the noise or hearing songs played from across the squares, the company should make changes. His company responds to complaints and makes changes to ensure compliance—it's not all about enforcement.

Chair Vaughnette read Jamie Caskey's comments that were unable to be in attendance today. He stated, "I did read over the proposed quadricycle changes and have no issue with any of them. We (the TAC) need to get a handle on the noise issue downtown. I've had many residents cite that as the number one problem as it relates to our committee. No one appreciates hearing the Doppler effect of drunken bachelorettes screaming as they pedal from square to square."



Austin stated he is all for free-enterprise. However, within a historic district where you have residents, we need to recognize the impact it has on them and their quality of life. Full-time residents need to live downtown. The Savannah Historic District will not be the same place without residents.

Marshall stated adjustments have been made to operations. He mentioned his company received a ticket on Ellis Square when a live band was playing in City Market. He also stated that he wants to get together with those residents who are complaining and work through the issues. Staff explained that complaints are forwarded to impacted companies when received.

Jennifer outlined three reasons why revisions are being made: 1) For the last three years, staff has been working on revising the alcohol ordinance. As part of this process, City Council asked that consumption of alcohol and noise be addressed. The appropriate place to address this issue is in the quadricycle ordinance—not the alcohol ordinance. She gave the example of speeding in a neighborhood. We know it is a problem, but if a ticket is not issued it does not mean it is not happening. 2) To assign personal responsibility of the patrons business on the City is disingenuous. We all know what is too loud and how one should behave; it is common sense. The company has a role in managing their customers. 3) By saying that binge drinking will be encouraged, the companies are admitting that it is an alcohol fueled activity. This is not about binge drinking. It is about not allowing drinking on a quadricycle. The business model is problematic.

It was asked what other vehicles and tour services allow for alcohol with their patrons such as the horse carriage industry. Jennifer indicated that each case is being looked at on a case by case basis.

Michael recognized noise is an issue. However, he stated the City is setting a precedent with these proposed changes. The consumption of alcohol has been allowed since 2012 when the quadricycles started operating in Savannah. Their business model is based on the consumption of alcohol on quadricycles. The changes will substantially impact their business model. Jennifer responded the business is an alcohol fueled business. Michael indicated that other businesses are alcohol fueled such as bars and liquor stores. Jennifer agreed but added that all of those companies are expected to control their patrons. Michael agreed to that and continued by saying control for the quadricycles is asking your patrons to leave the tour if they are unruly—however this is not hospitable and can result in negative



ratings on the internet. Michael indicated that he does not like limitations being put on businesses that built their business on a model that was approved. Balance works both ways; businesses and residents pay taxes. The company has to take some responsibility and downtown residents have to accept that they live in the downtown area and cannot always expect for no activities “in front of my house”.

The TAC recommended staff work with the companies and explore Bill’s suggestion about differentiating between commercial and residential zones as well as time limitations south of Liberty Street.

Eric Meyerhoff stated patrons of other tour types listen to what is being said by the tour guide. The quadricycles are a different type of tour experience.

Charlie added there seem to be low hanging fruit like limiting the ambient noise by not playing loud music through the speakers allowing for more tolerance of the use. He has experience being sensitive to issues—it’s about policing yourself. There are areas in the Historic District where they do not speak, they let their patrons know that they will be back in a few minutes while they pass through residential sensitive areas. To minimize issues, companies operating in the historic district must recognize the importance of the residential quality of life and how to work with that in mind.

### **Next meeting**

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Chair Vaughnette Goode-Walker announced the next TAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 18, 8:30AM in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Media Room of City Hall.

# Quadricycles

State Code 40-1-1

Bicycle:

- Device propelled by human power upon which any person may ride, having only 2 wheels which are in tandem and either of which is more than 13 inches in diameter

Motor vehicle:

- Self propelled vehicle other than an electronic personal assistive mobility device

Vehicle:

- Every device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, excepting devices used exclusively upon stationary rails/tracks

# What is a Quadricycle?

- Non-motorized vehicle propelled entirely by human power through the use of fully operative pedals in a manner similar to a bicycle, and which has at least four load-bearing wheels
- Equipped with more than two seats for passengers who shall operate the pedals to propel but not steer the vehicle, and a separate seat or bench to be occupied by a driver who shall steer the vehicle and be able to bring the vehicle to a complete stop on level pavement



# Other Communities

- State Code
  - Define use
  - Address alcohol consumption
- Indianapolis, Cleveland, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Nashville and Milwaukee allow alcohol consumption
- Detroit, Grand Rapids and Royal Oak prohibit alcohol consumption



# Ordinance History

- Feb 9, 2012:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> reading to amend alcoholic ordinance to prohibit alcoholic beverages on commercial quadricycles; deferred to Mar 8, 2012
- Mar 8, 2012:
  - Continued to Apr 5, 2012
- May 3, 2012:
  - Tabled amendment to alcoholic ordinance
  - 1<sup>st</sup> reading of quadricycle ordinance
- May 17, 2012:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the quadricycle ordinance approved

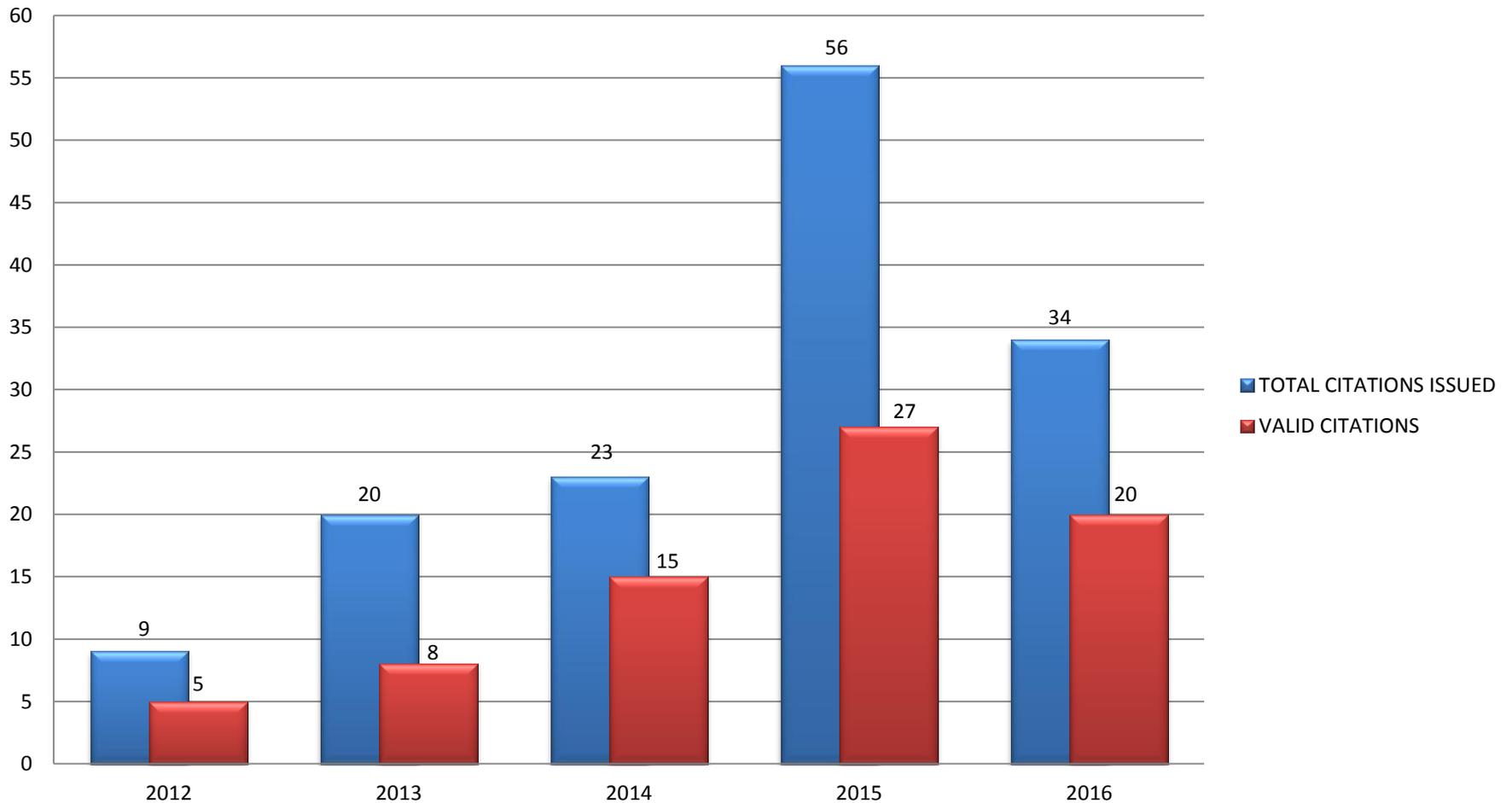


# Quadricycle Companies

- Savannah Slowride
  - 7 vehicles
  - 15 employees
  - 1,657 tours in 2015
- Eco Pedals of Savannah
  - 1 vehicle (planning on adding more)
  - 8 employees
  - 248 tours in 2015



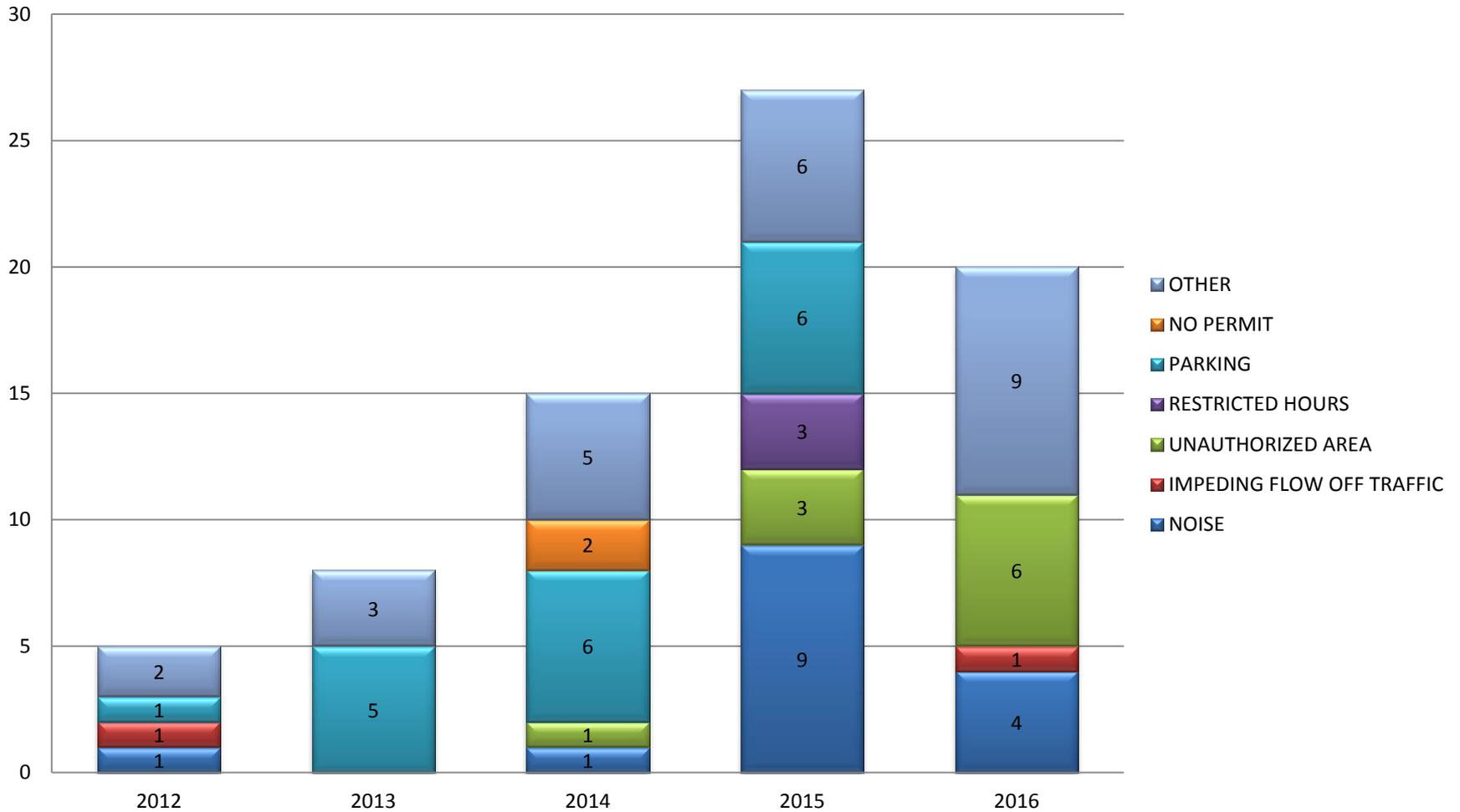
## Quadricycle Citations per Year Issued 2012 - 2016



*\*2012 – June through December*

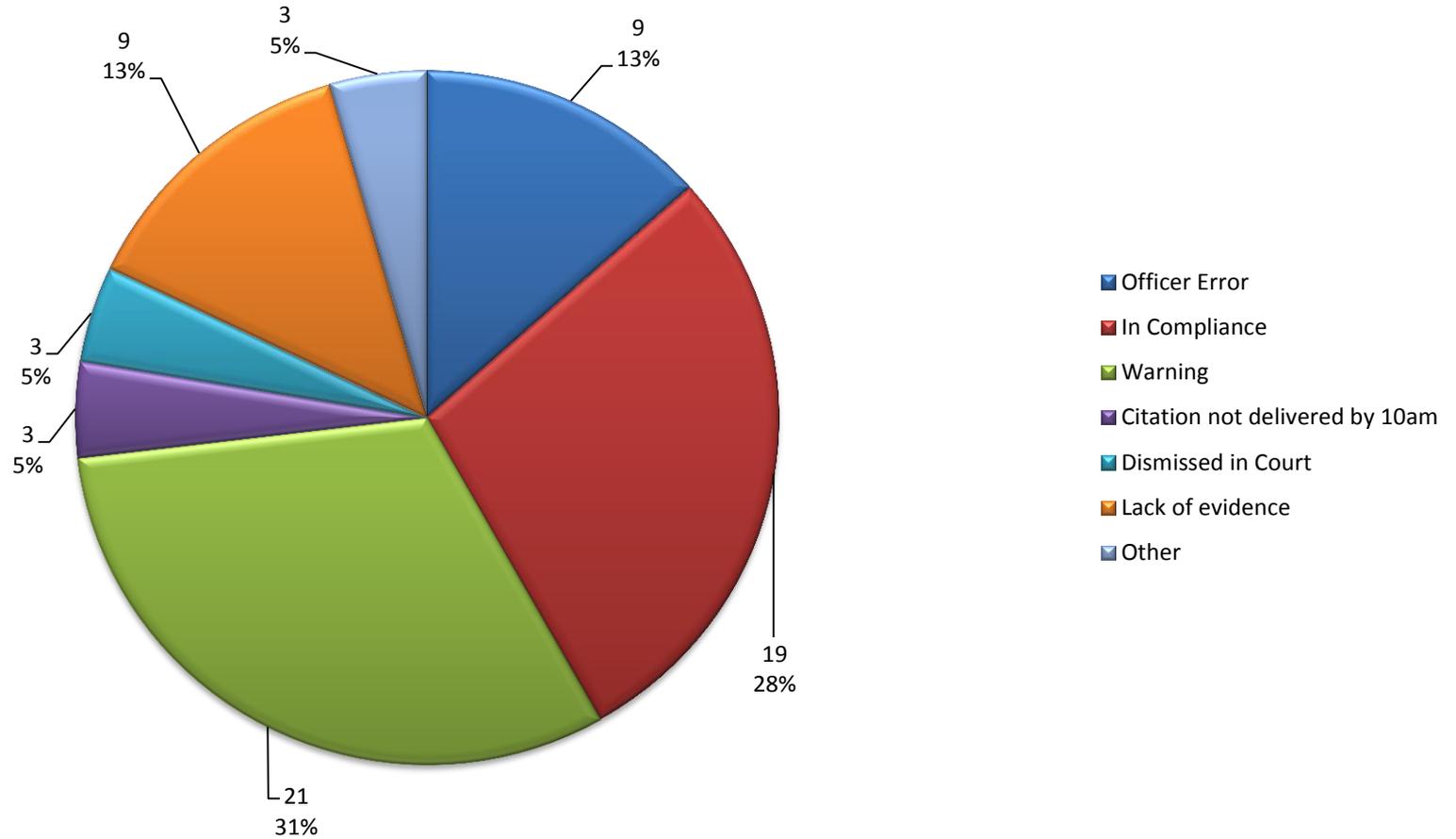
*\*2016 – January through August*

# Valid Quadricycle Citations 2012 - 2016



*Other includes stopping to narrate, underage rider, no decal, not contained within vehicle, restricted area, traffic violations, unsafe activities, and overtime.*

## Quadricycle Voiced Citation Reasons 2012 - 2016



*Other includes detour due to road closures and test location as a start up.*

# Complaints

- Noise
  - Commercial and residential areas
  - Residents, tour guides companies, businesses and visitors
  - Special events
- Parking
  - Too long at tour stands
  - Not pulling all the way to the front of tour stop

# Noise

May 2014:

- Amplified sound from stereo speakers shall not be audible from outside the quadricycles
- Drivers have 20-seconds to control noise from passengers
- If complaints continue, the 20-second rule will need to be revisited.

# Noise

April 2015

- Companies asked to remind guests to be mindful of noise
- Quadricycle tour guides, host and/or operators required to control the noise within 3-5 seconds
- Compliance with Sec. 6-1545 of the Tour Service for Hire Ordinance required



# 90-day Pilot Program

June 1 thru September 1, 2015

## **Passenger Loading Zones**

Passenger loading zones converted to 24-hour enforcement and may be utilized by quadricycles when available:

- Johnson Square: 00 block of E. Congress in front of BB&T Bank
- Ellis Square: 200 block of W. Congress in front of B&D Burger
- 9 Jefferson Street: South of Jere's Antiques entrance
- Wright Square: 00 block of E. York Street in front of Cora Bett Thomas Realty (passenger loading zone is in effect from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.)

## **Freight Zone**

An existing 8AM to 6PM freight zone on the 200 block of E. Bryan (next to Abe's on Lincoln) converted to a 24-hour enforcement passenger loading zone from 6PM to 10PM. Quadricycles may utilize the passenger loading zone from 6PM to 10PM when available.

The following will be in effect for all of these spaces:

- The use of the passenger loading zones is not exclusive;
- Quadricycles are allowed to use the five designated passenger loading zones not to exceed 15 minutes; and
- Only one vehicle at a time may utilize the stop

## **City Market**

The City Market/Jefferson Street tour stand extended to the north to accommodate one quadricycle under the following conditions:

- While traveling north on Jefferson Street, a quadricycle may park on the east side of Jefferson Street at St. Julian Street and should not impede vehicular traffic on Jefferson Street;
- Pedestrian traffic and sidewalks cannot be blocked by quadricycles;
- Pedicabs will still be permitted to use the area;
- Only one quadricycle at a time may utilize the stop; and
- A quadricycle is permitted to be at the stop for no more than 15-minutes.

## **Access to Williamson Street**

- Quadricycles will be permitted to cross at the signalized street lights on Montgomery and Jefferson streets. The quadricycles are not permitted to cross Bay at these locations between 3:30PM to 6PM—seven days a week—no exceptions.

## **Code of Conduct**

- Operator must sign and submit the Quadricycle Industry Code of Conduct by June 5, 2015.

## **Noise**

- Noise must be contained within quadricycle per Sec 6-1545.

# Proposed Ordinance Changes

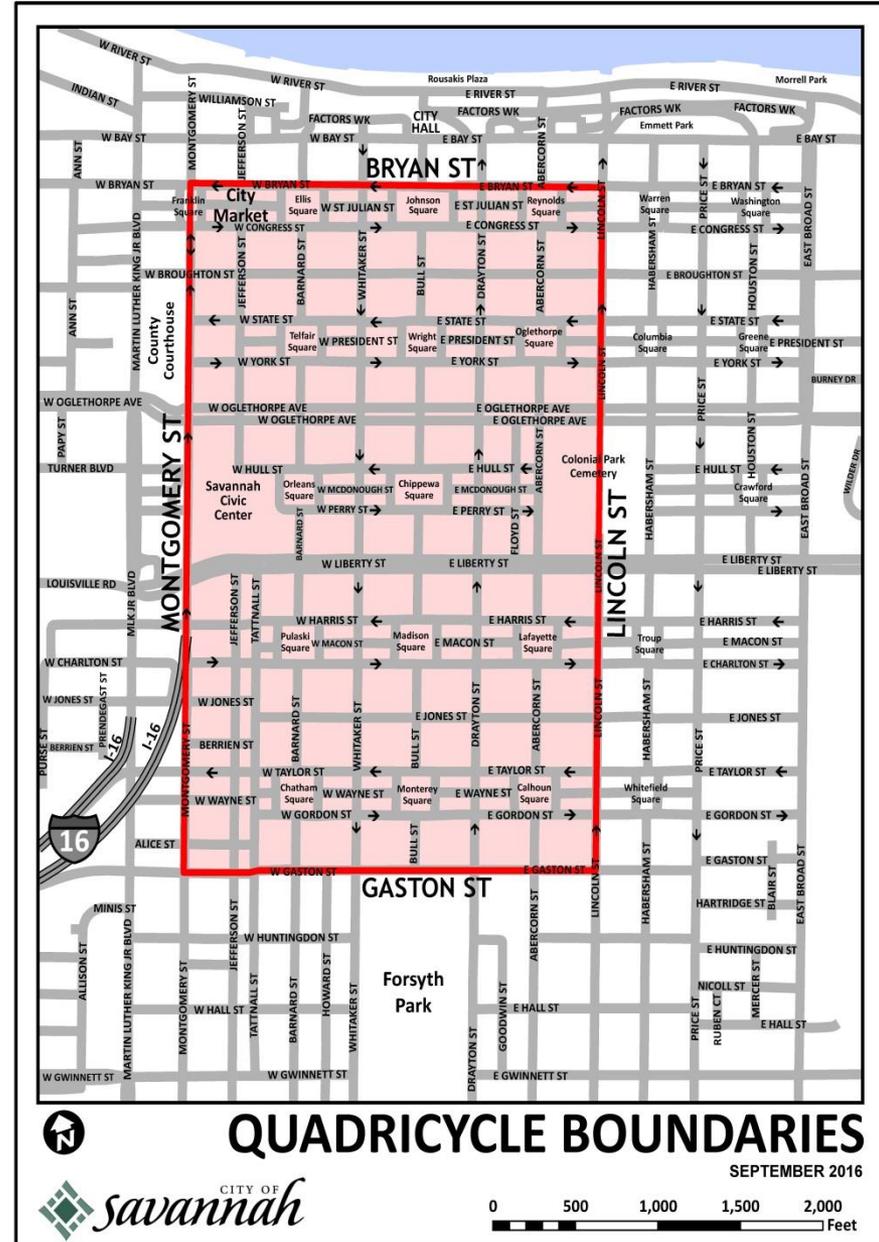
- No person may stand while the quadricycle is in motion.
- No person may consume alcohol while occupying or operating a quadricycle.



# Revised Boundaries

## All Quadricycles:

- Montgomery Street to the west
  - North side of Gaston Street to the south
  - Lincoln Street to the east
  - Bryan Street to the north
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- May cross Bay Street only at the signalized street lights on Montgomery and Jefferson streets; provided, however, that no quadricycle may cross Bay Street at any time between 3:30PM to 6PM
  - Any tour south of Liberty Street shall end 30-minutes before sunset.



# Section 7-1135 on Operations

- It shall be unlawful for any person to willfully make or continue, or cause to be made or continued any loud, unreasonable, unnecessary, or unusual noise that:
  - Disturbs the health or safety of a reasonable person of normal sensitivity within any receiving property; or
  - Creates a public nuisance;
- Additionally, it shall be unlawful for any person to willfully make or continue, or cause to be made or continued, any audible noise such that it may be heard on an adjacent property.
- It shall be unlawful for any person to use sound amplification devices while on or operating a quadricycle. (**Cross reference**— Noise control, § 6-1545, 9-2036 and 9-1002)
- Each quadricycle company shall implement a training program for tour guides outlining the regulations regarding the operation of quadricycles on the public right-of-way. Companies shall be required to have tour guides sign a form acknowledging the rules and regulations. The form must be kept on file and updated annually by the company. The training program and form shall be made available for inspection by the City.
- Violations of this article shall subject tour service companies and tour guides to punishment in accordance with Section 6-1550.