



# REPORT

**To:** Mayor Cote and Members of Council      **Date:** November 1, 2021

**From:** Lisa Leblanc  
Director of Engineering Services

**File:** 05.1035.10

**Item #:** 2021-471

**Subject: Electric Bikeshare Program – Motion from Sustainable Transportation Task Force**

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council direct staff to develop a business plan for an electric bikeshare program for the City of New Westminster.

## PURPOSE

To seek Council's endorsement to advance a business plan for implementation of an electric bikeshare program in the City of New Westminster.

## SUMMARY

At its meeting on September 20, 2021, the Sustainable Transportation Task Force (STTF) received a presentation from staff of North Shore municipalities on the implementation and early results of a pilot electric bikeshare program jointly supported by the three North Shore municipalities. STTF passed a motion requesting staff to prepare a report to Council outlining a plan to develop an electric bikeshare program for the City of New Westminster.

## BACKGROUND

The three North Shore municipalities – City of North Vancouver (CNV) and Districts of North Vancouver (DNV) and West Vancouver (DWV) – have recently initiated a joint electric bikeshare pilot program operated by a third-party vendor. Staff from CNV and DNV attended the September 20, 2021 meeting of the STTF to discuss implementation of the pilot program and initial results. Although the system has only been in operation since mid-summer 2021 and all aspects of the system are not yet operational, early

indications are that the pilot program has been successful. The presentation slides are provided in Attachment #1.

After the presentation and discussion, STTF passed the following motion:

**MOVED and SECONDED**

THAT the Task Force on Sustainable Transportation requests staff to prepare a report (with the North Shore E-Bike Share presentation appended) to Council outlining a plan to explore an electric bikeshare program with potential launch in 2023.

**CARRIED**

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

**EXISTING POLICY AND PRACTICE**

The implementation of an electric bikeshare program is identified as a secondary action in Council's *2019-2022 Strategic Plan*.

**ANALYSIS**

Modern bikeshare programs have been operating in various forms around the world for approximately 15 years, and in the City of Vancouver since 2016. Bikeshare programs offer a fleet of bicycles for public use within a defined geographic area, typically through an app-based subscription service. They offer a relatively affordable, healthy, and sustainable transportation option to subscribers who benefit from having access to a bicycle to make shorter trips within the service area without the issues of maintenance, storage, and security. Bikeshare programs may operate as a "docked" system, whereby bicycles are parked in secure parking stands distributed around the service area, or as a "dockless" system, whereby bicycles may be parked anywhere in the service area (within specified parameters).

Electric-assist bicycles have more recently become viable for use in bikeshare systems and are being introduced by various vendors. Because shared bicycles tend to be heavier, electric-assist bicycles make bikeshare more viable in hilly communities such as New Westminster and the North Shore municipalities. The operator manages battery supply and charging on an ongoing basis.

The three North Shore municipalities have partnered to initiate a pilot electric bikeshare system and have recently launched with a third-party vendor/operator. The operator is responsible for all aspects of the system, including managing bicycles, charging batteries, app development and deployment, payment processing, promotion and education, and accessibility and equity programs. The municipalities provide business licensing and permitting, and have made some designated street space available for larger parking

areas. The municipalities are also providing staff resources to coordinate the program internally, but have otherwise committed no additional financial resources to the service.

Although the North Shore program took several years from conceptualization to implementation, it is anticipated that a business plan for New Westminster could be developed over the course of less than one year (2022), benefiting from the experience of our North Shore colleagues, and potentially supporting implementation of an e-bike share system in 2023.

The business plan would consider:

- Business licensing
- Permitting requirements
- Legal requirements
- Market opportunity, including service area
- Potential partnership opportunities with adjacent municipalities
- Resource needs (staff, capital, operating)
- Accessibility and equity considerations

Following retention of a consultant, it is anticipated that a business plan will take 6-8 months to prepare. Based on that plan, Council may choose to proceed toward development of a Request for Proposals, which will likely require several months. Barring any unforeseen challenges, this could enable launch of an electric bikeshare system in early summer 2023.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Implementation of an electric bikeshare program would expand affordable, healthy, and sustainable transportation options in New Westminster and help move us toward the City's long-term sustainable transportation goals and targets, particularly a greater shift toward sustainable modes, as outlined in the Master Transportation Plan and the City's Bold Steps toward Climate Action.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

With Council direction, staff will engage a consultant in 2022 to undertake a business plan for implementation of electric bikeshare in New Westminster. This work will be carried out within the Council-approved 2022 capital budget.

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Staff from Engineering Services liaised with staff from the Climate Action, Planning & Development Department in the preparation of this report.

### **OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. THAT Council direct staff to develop a business plan for an electric bikeshare program for the City of New Westminster;
2. THAT Council provide staff with alternate direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

### **CONCLUSION**

Implementation of an electric bikeshare program will be an important step to provide more affordable, healthy, and sustainable transportation options to New Westminster residents and visitors. The preparation of a business plan will be the first concrete step toward the introduction of this service.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment #1 - North Shore municipalities' presentation slides from Sustainable Transportation Task Force meeting, September 20, 2021

This report was prepared by:  
Mike Anderson, Acting Manager, Transportation

This report was approved by:  
Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering Services  
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer