

REPORT

Engineering Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: January 22, 2024

From: Lisa Leblanc
Director of Engineering Services
File: 05.1035.10
(EDMS Doc #2429690)

Item #: 2024-23

Subject: **E-Bike Share Implementation Plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council endorse the implementation plan for an e-bike share system, as presented in Attachment #2 to this report.

THAT Council direct staff to initiate the procurement of an e-bike share operator, as outlined in the implementation plan.

THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council on the recommended e-bike share operator.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's endorsement of the implementation plan for an e-bike share system in New Westminister and Council's direction to proceed with the procurement of an e-bike share system operator as per the implementation plan.

SUMMARY

Transportation staff, working with a consultant, have completed an E-Bike Share Feasibility Study (the 'Study'). The work included a technical feasibility assessment to assess New Westminister's readiness to launch e-bike sharing, public and interest holder engagement, a business model and financial assessment, and an implementation plan. The implementation plan attached to this report is presented for Council's consideration and endorsement. Subject to council's endorsement of the implementation plan, work can begin to procure an operator for an e-bike share system in Q1 2024. Staff would then

return to Council with a recommended operator and details of the financial and resource requirements of the shared system for both the operator and the City.

BACKGROUND

E-bike share is a form of shared micro-mobility service where a fleet of motor-assisted cycles (electric bicycles) is made available in the public realm to be rented for a period of time, ridden, and then returned to a designated parking area. Access to the system is primarily through a proprietary smartphone application developed by the operator.

In 2021, Council directed Staff to complete an e-bike share feasibility study. Further, the 2022 Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP) identified e-bike share as a key support initiative for the ATNP, and the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) amendments, adopted by Council in 2022, identified the completion of an e-bike share feasibility study as a short-term action. The MTP also recognizes the need for equity and universal accessibility considerations for any shared micro-mobility service.

DISCUSSION

Transportation staff retained a consultant in February 2023 to commence work on the e-bike share feasibility study. The Study included:

- Reviews of City plans and policies,
- A best practices review,
- A peer cities analysis,
- A local context analysis,
- A public survey hosted on the Be Heard New West site,
- Workshops with City Staff, TransLink, and local business interests,
- Presentations to the Sustainable Transportation Task Force and the Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee,
- A business model and financial assessment, and
- An implementation plan.

Technical Feasibility Assessment:

The key findings of the technical feasibility assessment (Attachment #1) were:

- E-bike share is a city priority:
 - The MTP and the ATNP identify the need for an e-bike share feasibility study, noting the advantages of leveraging infrastructure investments and increasing the potential for active transportation mode shift amongst the City's residents and visitors.
- Local and Provincial policies support shared micro-mobility:
 - The City has developed a policy environment that supports active transportation. Metro Vancouver and provincial policies also support including shared micro-mobility in initiatives and programs that encourage

mode shift towards active transportation, increased mobility/access for underserved populations, and reduced emissions.

- There are potential partners in the region:
 - TransLink's 2050 Regional Transportation Strategy identifies the potential for a region-wide shared micro-mobility program, including the need to develop standards for safety, data collection and management, space and curbside allocation, fleet and operational requirements, and supporting infrastructure.
 - The current regional shared micro-mobility program timeline is unknown and likely several years away. The City should monitor the development of any potential region-wide shared micro-mobility system and peer city programs and identify opportunities for collaboration and interoperability across Metro Vancouver.
- A shared micro-mobility program should provide equitable access:
 - Transportation equity is a key policy focus in local and provincial policies.
 - An e-bike share program should serve all areas of the City and include all residents, including people of all ages, abilities, identities, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- E-scooters may be considered as a future shared micro-mobility option:
 - E-scooters are currently legal in communities that have opted into the Provincial electric kick-scooter pilot project. New Westminster is not one of the pilot communities. If New Westminster opts into the pilot and legalizes e-scooters, shared scooters could be added to an e-bike share program.

The technical feasibility assessment found that New Westminster is a well-suited market for an e-bike share program operated by a third party. The local and provincial policy environment, the city's population density, the well-connected grid network, and opportunities for transit connections make New Westminster a desirable location to operate.

Implementation Plan:

The implementation plan (Attachment #2) is organized into three phases and stems from the completed technical feasibility assessment, engagement, and financial analysis. The implementation plan includes:

- Phase 1: Regulatory Updates & Program Requirements:
 - Updates to the Street and Traffic Bylaw (Bylaw No. 7664, 2015) and Engineering Fees and Rates Bylaw (Bylaw No. 7553, 2013)
 - Recommended e-bike share program requirements, including:
 - Minimum fleet size
 - Service area requirements
 - Mandatory device specifications
 - Operational requirements
 - Safety requirements
 - Educational requirements

- Equitable access requirements
 - Insurance and indemnification requirements
 - Licensing requirements
 - Data sharing requirements, and
 - Penalties for permit violations.
- Phase 2: Procurement and Pre-Launch:
 - Designated parking area siting recommendations, and
 - Key items to be considered in the evaluation criteria.
- Phase 3: Launch & Evaluation:
 - Promotional considerations for the system launch, and
 - Performance metrics to evaluate the operations, productivity, compliance, equity, engagement, and sustainability of the system.

E-Bike Share System Operator and Preferred Business Model

The Study recommends that the City permit a third-party vendor to install and operate the e-bike share system, using an approach similar to that of Richmond, Coquitlam and the North Shore municipalities. The operator would be responsible for adhering to all required safety and device specification standards. They would similarly be responsible for proposing and carrying out education and engagement around e-bike share regulations, safety and etiquette, and proposing a plan for their operations and maintenance.

The suggested program requirements include a recommended permit length of one year, with an option to extend for an additional year. A one-year permit timeframe allows Staff adequate time to collect data, evaluate the successes and challenges of the program, while securing a potential second year of operations if program requirements are met.

The implementation plan and evaluation criteria have been structured to reflect interest holders' and Council's priorities and concerns. Operators bidding on this opportunity will propose measures to meet the operational and program requirements established by the City, rather than the City strictly prescribing how they must be met. This will allow potential operators a chance to showcase their strengths and highlight their devices and programs, while allowing Staff to determine which provider best aligns with the City's needs.

In conjunction with the data sharing requirements, the required performance metrics, outlined in Phase 3 of the implementation plan, will provide City Staff with benchmarks to monitor and evaluate program progress and adherence to the requirements set by the City. This monitoring will inform future decisions regarding contract extensions or returning to the market to secure a new operator.

A privately-owned and operated, municipally permitted system minimizes cost and risk to the City. The procurement of e-bikes, their operations (charging, rebalancing, and maintenance etc.), responses to complaints, the education regarding safe e-bike usage, public engagement surrounding the program, data collection, and data reporting are all undertaken by the operator. Depending on the specifics in the proposals from the operators, the costs to the City would include staff time in administering the program,

creating and maintaining designated parking areas, and working with the operator to address complaints regarding public safety and devices impeding the right-of-way. Staff will return to Council with further details regarding resource implications for the program when proposals have been evaluated, and the full costs are known.

Council's Strategic Priorities Plan

Implementing an e-bike share program aligns with the 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan in the following ways:

- 1. Community Belonging and Connecting**
 - An e-bike share program will facilitate connections between people, groups, organizations, and places, offering a new sustainable way to access spaces, opportunities, and connections.
- 2. Homes and Housing Options**
 - An e-bike share program will support mobility and increase transportation options for people across housing types. This is especially important when considering recent amendments to the Local Government Act which will restrict the City's ability to require on-site vehicle parking in new developments located within 800m of SkyTrain stations.
- 3. People-Centered Economy**
 - An e-bike share program will support active, vibrant commercial areas by offering convenient and accessible transportation throughout New Westminster to our commercial areas.
- 4. Safe Movement of People**
 - A privately-operated e-bike share system will broaden access to one of the City's priority transportation modes with limited implications for the City's capital and operating resources.
 - The education and outreach performed by the e-bike share operator will help raise awareness of cycling safety and injury prevention. Education and outreach will also be aimed at motorists, to ensure safe operation of a motor vehicle in spaces shared with people on bicycles, in addition to being aimed at those riding the e-bikes.
- 5. Asset Management and Infrastructure**
 - The infrastructure investment required on the part of the City would be minimal. The minimized public investment into the service will allow the City to deliver this program without affecting our ability to deliver on other City transportation commitments and programs.
 - This minimized cost to the City provides a sustainable means to support this program, provided that operators continue to want to operate in New Westminster.

Foundations and Lenses

- 1. Climate Action and Environment**

- An e-bike share program supports a car-light community, facilitating access to e-bikes and low-carbon trips for the safe movement of people, supporting homes and housing options, community connecting, and a people-centered economy.

2. Organizational Effectiveness

- A privately operated e-bike share program supports organizational effectiveness by minimizing the costs and resources required to facilitate a mobility service like e-bike share.
- It is anticipated that staff time will be required to address inquiries and complaints. There is sufficient capacity within the Transportation Division to address this.

3. DEIAR (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anit-racism)

- An e-bike share program will serve all areas of the City and include all residents of all ages, abilities, identities, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

NEXT STEPS

With Council's endorsement of the implementation plan and direction to move forward, the Transportation Division will work with the Purchasing team, in accordance with the City's procurement policies and requirements, to develop a procurement strategy to procure an e-bike share system operator.

Staff would commence the procurement process in winter 2024, with the objective to select a recommended operator during spring 2024. Staff will return to Council with the recommendation of an operator and further details of the financial and resource implications of the program. Operators typically need 60-90 days from contract award to commence operations, putting a targeted launch date in summer 2024.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Shared micro-mobility systems provide sustainable mobility opportunities, facilitating a mode shift away from automobiles towards cycling. The provision of an e-bike share service works in support of the City's mode share target of 60% of all trips made by sustainable transportation mode by 2030 (*Bold Step #2*).

Many designated e-bike share parking areas will likely be located within existing road rights-of-way, potentially reallocating curbside space from private vehicle parking to sustainable transportation use (*Bold Step #7*).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff propose to collect an application fee and a per-trip fee from the e-bike share operator, which will be used to offset costs incurred by the city.

Costs to the City will include staff time and potential capital costs to allocate e-bike share parking zones. As some operators will make contributions towards the costs associated with deploying e-bike share parking zones, the full cost implications will be determined through the procurement process and the solicitation of an e-bike share operator.

There are sufficient resources within the Transportation Division to undertake the first year of this program. Staff will assess whether additional resources are required for program administration and operations through the duration of the one-year permit.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

During the engagement phase in June 2023, an interdepartmental workshop was held with Staff from Engineering Operations, the Office of the CAO, Climate Action, Planning, and Development, and Parks and Recreation. Transportation Staff met with Engineering Operations Staff to discuss operational impacts and implications. Transportation Staff met with Purchasing Staff to engage on the procurement process for Transportation Staff met with the New West Police Department to discuss safety, operations, and enforcement, with no concerns identified. Finance staff have reviewed this report.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That Council endorse the implementation plan for an e-bike share system, as presented in Attachment #2 to this report.
2. That Council direct staff to initiate the procurement of an e-bike share operator, as outlined in the implementation plan.
3. That Council direct staff to report back to Council on the recommended e-bike share operator.
4. That Council provide Staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Options #1, #2, and #3.

CONCLUSION

A feasibility study for an e-bike share system in New Westminster is complete and the implementation plan is being presented to Council. Endorsement of the implementation plan will allow Staff to proceed with procurement of an operator for an e-bike share service.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 – New Westminster Electric Bike Share Technical Feasibility Assessment

Attachment #2 – New Westminster E-Bike Share Implementation Plan

APPROVALS

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