
TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: INVESTIGATION OF IMPLEMENTING A BIKE AND/OR SCOOTER SHARE PILOT PROGRAM

WARD: ALL

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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That staff in the Development Services Department monitor similar sized municipalities operating bike and/or scooter share programs that have successfully demonstrated financial (revenue neutral or near revenue neutral) multi-year program viability in mid-sized Canadian cities and report back to General Committee.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

2. On November 29, 2019, City Council adopted motion 19-G-333 regarding the investigation of implementing a bike and/or scooter share pilot program as follows:

“That staff investigate the feasibility of implementing a bike and/or scooter share pilot program, including, but not limited to, docked or dockless, and privately or publicly operated systems and report back to General Committee.”

ANALYSIS

3. A bike share program allows bicycles (either nonelectric or electric pedal assist) to be rented for various durations and can be operated as a docked, dockless or hybrid model (which refers to how the bicycles are parked). A docked model has designated parking locations where bicycles are picked-up and returned to. A dockless model has no designated parking locations; bicycles are left within the municipal right-of-way in a manner that does not impede pedestrians or motorists. A hybrid model combines both elements.
4. A scooter share program uses a kick style electric scooter. A scooter share program would operate similarly to a bike share program.
5. Bike/scooter share programs are generally operated in larger urban centres including Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary and Hamilton. There are programs in mid-size municipalities, but they tend to be either of limited duration or scope (e.g. a specific geographical area within the City).

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6. Bike share programs are operated as either a municipally owned fleet or a private sector fleet. Fleets in Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton are municipally owned (or non-profit) with the municipality typically responsible for operating losses. Fleets in Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna and Kingston are privately operated.
 7. E-scooter share programs are generally operated as a private sector fleet.
 8. In 2020, several large scooter share providers (Lime, Bird, Wheels, Jump) withdrew their services in many major Cities worldwide due to increasingly precarious financial positions. In March 2020, Lime announced it was “winding down or pausing” operations in all markets but South Korea.
 9. In 2020, Kelowna and Kingston both had their private bike share operator cease operations citing little demand for bike rentals and the COVID-19 pandemic, respectively. Kelowna City Staff noted a need to provide an annual subsidy of \$1,000,000 per year to attract a new operator.
 10. The City of Hamilton’s bike share program recently ceased operations on June 1, 2020 as the private program operator chose to terminate their contract early. The program was out of service for one month as City Council debated funding alternatives. Ultimately, a local not-for-profit that previously operated the City’s bike share program was able to raise the necessary funds (\$400,000) through charitable donations and crowdfunding to maintain operations until the end of the year. As the original program was not intended to be subsidized by the general tax levy, it is unclear if the City will continue with the program beyond 2020.
 11. When Staff researched the viability of a scooter program, a large private sector scooter operator noted that it would be challenging to operate a program without a loss in a mid-size City due to insufficient population size and density (which directly impacts ridership and revenue). This challenge would be further exacerbated by the City of Barrie’s relatively short fair-weather season.
 12. Based on the research by City Staff, the investment in a bike/scooter share program is not anticipated to measurably advance active transportation objectives when compared to investing in active transportation infrastructure (e.g. the construction of bicycle lanes or multi-use paths). If Council wishes to invest in and operate a bike/scooter share program, there will be benefits associated with the provision of a recreational amenity that will help to encourage non-cyclists to try cycling (or an e-scooter) in a relatively low cost and low barrier manner (to the customer) and will assist to increase awareness of micromobility options (primarily e-scooters) as a solution to the first and last mile issue associated with transit.
 13. Based on a bike share program feasibility study completed for the City of Windsor, it is anticipated the City would require a fleet of approximately 300 bicycles at a cost of \$600,000-\$800,000 (\$2,000 to \$2,700 per bike) and fund an annual operating budget of \$300,000-\$900,000 (\$1,000 to \$3,000 per bike per year). Revenue generated from rentals (as well as potential advertising revenue) would help offset operational costs.
 14. If Council chooses to proceed with a pilot program, a feasibility study should first be completed to understand and set the program type (e-scooter, bike or both), model (docked, dockless or hybrid) and parameters (geographical area, fleet size, deployment phasing, etc.), provide detailed estimates for capital and operating costs as well as revenue forecasts and staff resource requirements. This study would be completed by an external consultant experienced with the establishment and operation of bike/scooter share programs. As part of this effort, Staff would prepare a by-law permitting e-scooters on municipal roads as part of MTO’s 5-year e-scooter pilot (ending January 1, 2025).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT MATTERS

15. There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

16. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 General Committee could alter the proposed recommendation by directing staff to complete the feasibility study and provide funding of \$70,000.00 for consulting services from the tax capital reserve.

FINANCIAL

17. There are no financial implications for The Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation. Should an alternative direction be taken by Council to undertake the feasibility study and/or implement a bike/scooter share program there would be costs associated with a feasibility study as well as capital and operating costs to establish and maintain a bike/scooter share program.

LINKAGE TO 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

18. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan:
- Improving the Ability to Get Around
19. The recommendation in this staff report is to monitor municipalities operating bike and/or scooter share programs that have successfully demonstrated financial (revenue neutral or near revenue neutral) / multi-year program viability in mid-sized Canadian cities and report back to General Committee. Undertaking a feasibility study or pilot program at this time is not recommended as the investment in a bike/scooter share program is not anticipated to significantly benefit the community when compared to a similar investment in active transportation infrastructure.