

**Region of Waterloo****Transportation and Environmental Services****Transit Services**

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**To:** Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

**Meeting Date:** April 12, 2022

**Report Title:** Micromobility – Shared Program Implementation Plan

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**1. Recommendation:**

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo;

- a) Approves the Shared Micromobility Implementation Plan in principle;
- b) Authorize staff to issue a request for proposals, in coordination with the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, for a shared micromobility operator; and
- c) Authorize the Commissioner of TES to execute a memorandum of agreement with the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, in a form satisfactory to the Region Solicitor; to formalize their respective roles and other agreements in relation to the Shared Micromobility Program;

Pursuant to Report TES-TRS-22-07, dated April 12, 2022.

**2. Purpose / Issue:**

This report informs the Planning and Works Committee of the implementation planning for the establishment of commercial bike share and e-scooter share operations. It is a companion to Report TES-TRS-22-06 that recommends amendments to the Region's Traffic and Parking By-law to permit e-scooters as part of the Ministry of Transportation's e-scooter pilot program.

Subject to the approval of this report, the Project Team (comprised of Region and City staff) will finalize the required Procurement documents, inform municipal Councils, then initiate a joint Request for Proposals to select a commercial shared micromobility operator in relation to the Regional and municipal lands in the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo.

**3. Strategic Plan:**

Supporting the introduction of low energy micromobility options and programs that can be integrated with the Region's transit network aligns with Focus Area 2 (Sustainable

Transportation) of the Region's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. This work is also a Strategic Action of the TransformWR plan (Action 1.3.1: Launch Micromobility Systems), and supports Strategy 5 of the Region's 2018 Transportation Master Plan (Position the Region for New Mobility).

#### **4. Key Considerations:**

On May 5, 2020, Transportation Demand Management staff presented a micromobility update report to Regional Council (TES-TRS-20-14). The report provided an overview of recommended actions received from Alta Planning + Design for implementing shared micromobility solutions throughout the Region.

Since the spring of 2020, TDM staff have continued their work with the Shared Micromobility Project Team (comprising of transportation staff representatives from the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo) to develop a shared micromobility implementation plan based on the study's recommendations for bike share and e-scooter providers. Staff also retained the consulting services of Alta Planning + Design on a follow-up assignment to support the development of the micromobility program implementation plan based on their work for the 2020 Shared Micromobility Feasibility Study.

This report outlines the implementation plan for the program, specifically the initiation of the Procurement process for the establishment of commercial bike and e-scooter operations. Staff plan to lead a joint Request for Proposal (RFP) competitive process with municipal partners to allow commercial shared micromobility operators to submit their business plans and compete to be the single provider in the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo.

##### **A) Pre-Launch Considerations**

With support from the Project Team, consultants from Alta Planning have finalized an RFP Framework document that will be included in the Region's Procurement package. It will outline the operating requirements and expected system features (see Appendix A for a summary of the key RFP Framework attributes).

The RFP evaluation team will include the members of the Project Team, as well as a consultant from Alta Planning + Design. The RFP Framework will be evaluated using an RFP scorecard, developed by Alta Planning. The Project Team intends to invite up to three respondents to demonstrate their vehicles and technology to the evaluation team.

In the event that the evaluation team determines no proposals meet the requirements outlined in the RFP Framework, staff will report back to Council to discuss alternative approaches to implementing a shared micromobility system.

Once the preferred provider is selected, it is expected to take two months of planning until a system would be ready to launch. This estimate is based on feedback received

during an industry workshop hosted by consultants from Alta Planning this fall. Based on these estimates, a 2022 launch is achievable.

However, there are factors that could delay the launch timeline. For instance, there is potential for decreased availability of vehicles due to ongoing supply chain issues, and that global shortages of both electronics and bicycles could continue to pose challenges for the sourcing of shared micromobility vehicles. There may also be delays in the finalization of the agreements as both Regional and municipal partners will be part of the review process.

Staff will prioritize working with their preferred operator and deploying vehicles equipped with leading monitoring technologies, as well as ensuring the required pre-launch planning and coordination has occurred, over ensuring a system launch for 2022. The Project Team believes that allowing sufficient time for the pre-launch planning process is critical to the success of the program.

If the program launch is delayed into late summer, the Project Team will discuss postponing the launch to 2023 with the operator. Staff would provide an update to Regional Council at this time. Otherwise, there will be public communication about the service launch, including information on how to use the system.

With the intention of expediting the negotiation process and system launch, a draft of the operator licence agreement will be included in the RFP package. The Project Team has also been working with both Region and municipal groups to develop the Procurement and legal documents for the program to identify any discrepancies before the review process.

## **B) Post-Launch Considerations**

Staff will report to Regional Council after the first riding season on the operator's performance and progress towards the overall program goals. This report will also include any recommendations to improve the program in subsequent years.

The approved 2022 Regional budget includes funding under the TransformWR Climate Action Plan for one additional staff position to support the shared micromobility program. This new position will work closely with the shared micromobility system operator and Project Team to support the accelerated delivery of enhancements to the shared micromobility program as well as day-to-day operation of the program and several other low energy transportation initiatives from the TransformWR Climate Action Plan. The Project Team will continue to provide support with strategic planning and coordination with staff groups from their respective organizations.

## **5. Background:**

This report builds upon the previous micromobility program updates submitted to Regional Council, which include the 2018/2019 bike share pilot with Drop Mobility (TES-3846870

TRS-18-11), 2019/2020 Micromobility Feasibility Study with Alta Planning + Design (TES-TRS-20-14), and 2021 e-scooter public consultation plan (TES-TRS-21-01).

## **6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:**

Transportation staff from the Region of Waterloo and Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo comprise the core Project Team that coordinated the Drop Mobility bike share pilot, development of the micromobility feasibility study, e-scooter public consultation, and the recommended Traffic and Parking By-law amendments described in Report TES-TRS-22-06.

The Project Team has formed an expanded Region and Municipal Staff Shared Micromobility Working Group to address pre and post launch issues that will touch various staff groups. Through the Working Group, staff have been working collaboratively to plan for the launch of a shared micromobility program, and will continue to support the program's ongoing activities. The Working Group is comprised of various sub-groups, which currently include Communications, Data, Enforcement and Safety, Contract Management, Member Services, Station Siting and Operations.

City staff representatives on the Project Team will be providing a similar update to their Councils over the spring.

Regional and Area Municipal staff have been regularly updated on the micromobility program through the Traffic Coordinating Committee, Intermunicipal Partnership for Active Transportation, and leadership updates.

## **7. Financial Implications:**

The Region's Approved 2022 Grand River Transit Operating Budget includes a provision of \$85,000 for Micromobility Integration. The budget also includes a provision of \$85,000 for fees collected by the Region from the operator. Staff plan to monitor the budget for any variance from the zero net impact, as well as any financial impacts associated with the operation, and maintenance of roads, active transportation facilities, or the shared micromobility system through future micromobility program update reports to Regional Council.

## **8. Conclusions / Next Steps:**

If approved, staff will initiate a Request for Proposals to select a commercial shared micromobility operator. Once the preferred provider is selected, staff would seek to enter into a licence agreement with the operator, in addition to a Memorandum of Agreement with municipal partners to formalize the Region and Cities' respective roles and other agreements in relation to the Shared Micromobility Program, both to the satisfaction of the Region Solicitor.

Public and media releases will occur at key milestones towards launch. Staff will report

to Regional Council after the first riding season on the operator's performance and progress towards achieving the overall program goals. However, if there are no successful candidates identified through the RFP process, staff will report back to Council to discuss alternatives approaches to implementing a shared micromobility system.

**9. Attachments / Links:**

**Appendix A:** RFP Framework Summary (3996122)

**Appendix B:** Map of Proposed Service Areas from 2020 Shared Micromobility Feasibility Study (3996122)

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**Reviewed By:** Neil Malcolm, Acting Director, Transit Services

**Approved By:** Thomas Schmidt, Commissioner, Transportation and Engineering Services

## Appendix A: RFP Framework Summary

The key attributes of the RFP Framework include:

- **Single Operator.** Region is seeking a single operator in relation to Regional and municipal lands in the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo.
  - Based on the costs and benefits prepared by Alta Planning, exclusivity would be considered more attractive to operators. Single operator systems were also identified as requiring less Regional/municipal staff time to manage, and considered to lend themselves more to multi-year partnerships.
- **Service Areas in Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo.** Service areas define where there will be docking stations, and where both bikes and e-scooter users are permitted to start/end trips, on Regional and municipal lands. Bikes and e-scooters can still be ridden outside of the service area.
  - Recommended service areas were identified for the three urban municipalities in the 2020 Feasibility Study (see Appendix B), however the services areas will be finalized with the selected operator.
  - The Feasibility Study also recommended the operator provide 200 program-specific parking corrals, and that the Region and Cities add an additional 200 general use parking corrals.
- **Number of Vehicles.** For the initial proposed service area, 850 bicycles and 425 e-scooters were identified as an appropriate number of vehicles to meet guidance requirements for the service area size and population.
  - Final vehicle counts to be determined with selected operator.
  - The Project Team will consider allowing the operator to include electric-assist vehicles (e-bikes) as part of the bicycle fleet once direction is received from the Ministry of Ontario regarding e-bike reclassification.
    - The provincial government announced a redefinition of e-bikes into three classes (bicycle-style, moped, and motorcycle-style) under the 2021 Moving Ontarians More Safely Act. Staff anticipate that a separate public consultation program will be required to prepare Traffic and Parking By-law recommendations to integrate certain types of e-bikes and cargo e-bikes into a shared micromobility system.
- **Vehicle Requirements.**
  - Bicycles will be required to meet Provincial safety requirements, and come equipped with adjustable seat posts/handlebar heights, front and rear automatic lights, a bell, all-weather tires, and front/rear fenders.
  - As per the Province's E-Scooter pilot framework, e-scooters (if permitted) will be required to have a horn or bell, front and rear lights, two wheels and two breaks, and no seat or pedals.
- **Hybrid Lock-To System.** Vehicles can be parked at a station or not (the system does not require that every trip start/end at a docking station). The "lock-to" element would mean that a locking mechanism on the vehicle allows it to be locked to a bike rack

(rather than simply self-locking).

- In the 2020 Feasibility Study, it is recommended that the operator provide 200 parking corrals and that the Region and municipalities should also add another 200 general use bike parking corrals in the first year of the program.
- **Prioritize Bikes.** To align with the goals set in the Feasibility Study and Region/City Strategic and Active Transportation Plans (e.g. positively impacts public health, is environmentally friendly...), the RFP documents will be structured to incentivize the provision of bikes over e-scooters.
- **Revenue Neutral.** The system will be run by a private operator. Fees will be collected from the operator by the Region to offset costs incurred by the Region and Cities. Any remaining funds will be used to make improvements to the program and/or address unforeseen financial impacts to operations and maintenance procedures.
- **Length of Agreement.** The Region is interested in signing a one-year contract with the successful operator, with opportunity for a direct renewal for subsequent years. This approach will allow the Project Team to assess the operator's performance and make changes to the agreement, if required, but also supports a longer-term arrangement with the operator.
  - The first year of the program will be seasonal. Staff will consider winter service in later years of the program.
- **Insurance/Liability.** The operator will maintain general liability insurance. Coverage shall consist of a comprehensive policy of public liability and property damage insurance. The Region and Cities are indemnified against all claims, demands, loss, costs, damages, actions, suits, adjusters fees, or other proceedings.
- **Helmet Use.** The minimum age to use the service will be determined by the selected operator. In compliance with Provincial regulations, cyclists under the age of 18 years of age will be required to wear a helmet while riding, with all e-scooter users required to wear a helmet as per the recommended Traffic and Parking By-law amendment in Report TES-TRS-22-06.
  - As part of their proposals, applicants will be required to describe how they will encourage helmet use.
- **Transit Integration.** Proponents will be asked about how they will integrate their shared micromobility system with Grand River Transit (GRT) service, including the ION LRT.
- **Compatible with Mobility Manager Dashboard.** Staff have purchased a subscription to Populus, a mobility manager service. The online dashboard brings together datasets from disparate sources together into a unified view, and will enable the management/administration and monitoring of operator data by multiple partners. Prior to the development of this type of service, the Region and Cities used operator dashboards to monitor performance. The Populus service has additional features that are not included in most private operator dashboards. The selected operator will be required to be compatible and share data with Populus. Key Populus features include:
  - Mobility operator data validation, anonymization, and secure storage
  - Live map for real-time vehicle monitoring

- Creation and digital communication of new policies to mobility operators
- Monitoring of preferred/restricted parking areas, equity zones, and vehicle caps
- Route (GPS trip trace) analysis for planning
- **Controls through Geofencing.** Staff can set vehicle restrictions using virtual perimeters through Populus (see above). Region and City staff are finalizing the slow, no ride, and no parking zones, based on recommended best practices and feedback from Region and municipal advisory committees (Report TES-TRS 22-06 Appendix D). The geofenced zones can be adjusted throughout the program. Due to the GPS accuracy in most shared micromobility vehicles, geofences are more effective in setting vehicle restrictions in larger areas such as shared use paths or parks than smaller footprints such as sidewalks. As a result, how the proponents plan on preventing sidewalk riding as described in their Safety Plan will be an important consideration of the RFP evaluation team.
  - **Slow zones** will be used to moderate e-scooter speed within areas permitted within the Traffic and Parking Bylaw update. An example of a slow zone includes multi-use trails with high pedestrian volume, such as the Iron Horse and Spur Line trails. This is intended to prevent high-speed collisions between riders and pedestrians, a concern identified through consultation with Region and municipal advisory committees.
  - **No ride zones** could be applied to both bikes and e-scooters. An example of a no ride zones includes the ION corridor. Further discussion with the selected operator is required to determine how both bikes and e-scooters can safely transition from regular speed to stopping.
- **Operator Performance Monitoring.** Staff worked with the consultants to prepare a monitoring plan that will verify whether the operator is meeting the performance requirements set in the RFP. Key areas of focus of the monitoring plan will include customer service and communications, safety and compliance, maintenance and repair, fleet rebalancing, etc...
  - The RFP Framework will include detailed data requirements for the operator based on the monitoring plan. The operator will also be asked to describe the data procedures and confirm their alignment with the requirements.
  - In order to incentivize compliance, the operator will be charged a refundable deposit. Liquidated damages will be withdrawn from the deposit.
    - For example, the operator will be charged a flat rate any time City or Region staff are dispatched to remove an improperly parked vehicle. Where relocated vehicles will be parked by Region/City staff will be determined with the selected operator.
  - Staff will have the capacity to set-up policy compliance notifications through Populus, which will facilitate monitoring and prompt withdrawals from the operator's refundable deposit, as appropriate.
    - Staff will follow-up with the operator if key indicators are not meeting the performance targets. Broader changes to the program would also be

considered, if appropriate.

- **Overall Program Evaluation.** Indicators related to the overall goals of the program will be monitored throughout the riding season to support staff on evaluating how the system is performing, and to identify where improvements may be made to support accomplishing the program goals and improve the system. Key goals include monitoring overall system use, community impact, equity, cost, and safety.
  - The Project Team is committed to working with the operator and partners (e.g. Waterloo Region Police Services, Grand River Hospital...) to monitor rates of reported critical incidents, and ongoing coordination, in line with guidance from the Southwest Injury Prevention Network.
- **Parking Management and Enforcement.** Potential system operators will be asked to demonstrate to the Project Team that they are equipped to manage vehicle parking and enforce user compliance.
  - Operator will be required to educate users on proper parking procedures, such as not blocking the sidewalk clearway path of travel, obstructing features such as utility accesses, garbage bins, or doorways, or curbside zones reserved for uses such as buses, taxis or loading.
  - Staff can elect to establish permanent and temporary no parking zones, as well as set-up parking policy compliance notifications through Populus.
  - Having vehicles with locking mechanism, instead of self-locking vehicles, is expected to help with parking management and reducing obstructions in the pedestrian right-of-way.
- **Customer Service/Communications.** The Region/Cities communication strategy will focus on imparting to residents how to contact the operator. The operator will be required to share a Communications Plan before launch.
  - As much as possible, comments and complaints received from residents will be forwarded to the operator. This approach is to clarify ownership of shared vehicles and to reduce impact on staff time.
  - Vehicles will be required to be branded with operator contact info.
- **Marketing.** The Region/Cities will focus on amplifying the operator's marketing initiatives. The operator will be required to share a Marketing Plan before launch.
  - The Project Team may explore opportunities to raise awareness of the program and its potential benefits.
- **Pilot Opportunities.** The Project Team will work with the operator to launch pilot initiatives that will aim to achieve the goals of the program that may be outside of the operator's scope of work. These types of initiatives will be an opportunity to reinvest any remaining operator fees into improving the program. Potential pilots include:
  - **Expansion into Townships.** Expansion of the service area to key destinations in consultation with Township staff.
  - **Transit Integration.** App and/or fare integration with Grand River Transit.
  - **Equity.** Availability of income-based discounted payment plans and/or integration of adaptive bikes such as tricycles and hand bikes.

Appendix B. Map of Proposed Service Areas from 2020 Shared Micromobility Feasibility Study

