# Report to Council

**Date:** June 14, 2021

**To:** Council

**From:** City Manager

**Subject:** Review and Options for Shared E-Scooters in Kelowna

**Department:** Integrated Transportation

---

**Recommendation:**

THAT Council receive, for information, the report from Integrated Transportation dated June 14th with regard to the Review and Options for Shared E-Scooters in Kelowna;

AND THAT Council support the implementation of current and proposed new actions outlined in Attachment # 1 to the report from Integrated Transportation dated June 14, 2021;

AND THAT Council direct staff to continue to actively monitor the program and report back promptly if the program is not delivering on its core objectives;

AND THAT Council direct staff not to issue any further permits for shared e-scooters in 2021 under the Bikeshare (Micromobility) Permit Program.

**Purpose:**

To provide Council with an information report on the e-scooter program, its challenges and wins since program launch, and options moving forward.

**Background:**

On March 23, 2021 the province announced the E-mobility pilot project. Council subsequently updated Kelowna's Traffic Bylaw on April 19th enabling e-scooters to be used city-wide.

| Resolution | Date |
|---|---|
| THAT Council direct staff to provide an information report on the scooter program; its challenges and wins over the first month of operation and details regarding the permitting process, conditions and limitations. | May 31, 2021 |

**Discussion:**
The e-scooter program is intended to advance Council's priorities that "emerging technologies are making it easier to get around", "greenhouse gas emissions are decreasing", and "travel times are optimized". As part of the City's work on the 2040 Official Community Plan and 2040 Transportation Master Plan, the community envisions major growth in density and travel within the Core Area over the next 20 years. For example, within central Kelowna (roughly the triangle formed by Downtown, Pandosy Urban Centre, and Capri-Landmark) the amount of travel is expected to double. This increased travel demand cannot be met by single-occupancy vehicles and will require alternative transportation modes, such as transit, bicycling and walking to help move more people through our existing road space. As a space-efficient, low-carbon transportation option, e-scooters are seen as a viable and cost-effective option in this mix. E-scooters are in active use in many communities worldwide; in some cases, for a number of years.

To evaluate the e-scooter pilot against the original objectives of the program, it is important to ensure the program is safe, is being used as a transportation option (i.e. helping take cars off the road), and is cost-effective. Attachment #1 provides a summary of how the e-scooter program is performing against these three core objectives. To be successful, it is critical that the program deliver on these core objectives. Staff are committed to monitoring the program and tracking the data necessary for Council to determine whether the pilot program is a success.

As a new alternative for personal transportation in Kelowna, the e-scooter pilot program has come with both positive and concerning aspects. As a new technology for many, e-scooters have raised issues that staff and the e-scooter companies are vigilantly addressing. Common issues include improper parking and unsafe / illegal riding behaviors. In response to the concerns, staff have already implemented approximately 55 amendments to how shared e-scooter service is delivered, over the first 45 days of the program. As detailed in Attachment #1, numerous measures are being taken and will continue to be implemented to address the issues raised, which are helping to reduce the number of concerns over time.

Recently, concerns were raised related to injuries as a result of e-scooters. The safety of the e-scooter program is a top priority, as well as ensuring no undue burdens are placed on our health care system or enforcement partners (i.e., police and bylaw). As described in Attachment #1, statistics indicate that across the world, as well as in Canada, e-scooter injury and fatality rates are in line with bicycles. Also attached is a letter from the Central Okanagan Medical Health Officer, Dr. Silvina Mema, and Director of Healthy Communities, Dr. Heather Deegan, clarifying the position of Interior Health regarding e-scooters (Attachment #3). The letter highlights the standing partnership that the City and Interior Health have in supporting healthy environments and notes the role of e-scooters in supporting vibrant, healthy communities. The letter also explains that while local injury statistics related to shared e-scooters are not yet available, work is underway to help collect and analyze this data moving forward. In the interim, the letter notes several strategies to mitigate health impacts, which staff have reviewed and incorporated into the current and recommended actions described in Attachment #1.

Since program launch, approximately 77,000 e-scooter trips have occurred (an average of 1,700 trips per day). As detailed in Attachment #1, e-scooter mode share has approached a rate similar to bikes in just

45 days, and the program uptake well exceeds the 2018 shared pedal-bike pilot program. Not surprisingly, e-scooter rider survey results indicate 72 per cent had never ridden an e-scooter before and the majority of first- or second-time rides were for fun/leisure, likely to try them out and see how they work. Riders who reported taking three or more e-scooter trips used the e-scooter 58 per cent of the time for transportation-related purposes and 40 - 56 per cent of those trips replaced driving trips. This means the e-scooter program has the potential to take approximately 274,000 km of vehicle travel off our road network each year, reducing an estimated 50 tonnes of direct vehicle emissions annually. While the high levels of ridership indicate demand for this type of service, it has also meant a big change for Kelowna in a short amount of time. Over 20,000 e-scooter customer accounts have been created, the majority of whom are new riders learning the rules of the road.

**Conclusion:**
Preliminary findings after just six weeks of implementation indicate there is strong potential for the shared e-scooter program to be a cost-effective way to help take cars off the road, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help people get around. However, a more robust survey of riders after a longer period of time would help provide a more comprehensive picture.

On the basis of the information in the attachments, staff are seeking Council's support to continue the shared e-scooter pilot, subject to the program meeting the key performance metrics. These metrics are outlined in Attachment #1, and include safety and injuries, demonstrated success at helping take cars off the road, and being cost effective. Staff will continue to monitor the program, including working with IH to track e-scooter related injuries, and report back to Council promptly if any of these three key performance metrics trend in the wrong direction. To address existing concerns, staff recommend not issuing any further permits for shared e-scooters in 2021, continuing with the actions underway described in Attachment #1, and implementing the new actions identified. A full program evaluation could be undertaken in the fall.

**Internal Circulation:**
City Clerk
Communications
Community Safety
Infrastructure
Risk Management

**Considerations applicable to this report:**
*External Agency/Public Comments: See attached letter from Interior Health (Attachment #3)*

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**
*Communications Comments:*
*Legal/Statutory Authority:*
*Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:*
*Financial/Budgetary Considerations:*
*Existing Policy:*

Submitted by: M. VanZerr, Strategic Transportation Planning Manager

**Approved for inclusion:**  J. Vos, Divisional Director, Infrastructure

Attachment 1 – Summary Report on the Challenges and Wins for Kelowna's E-Scooter Program
Attachment 2 – Presentation
Attachment 3 - E-Scooters and Health Evidence – MHO Letter