

Report to Council



Date: September 25, 2023
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program
Department: Integrated Transportation

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Integrated Transportation dated September 25, 2023, with regards to a new program, the Kelowna Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program.

Purpose:

To present recommendations for a Kelowna Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program that will improve traffic flow and reduce emissions.

Background:

The 2040 Transportation Master Plan included a recommendation to develop an Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program to improve traffic flow and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – in alignment with Council’s Priorities. Commute trip reduction programs can help reduce congestion during the mornings and afternoons by supporting employers in offering flexible work hours, work from home, or encouraging commutes by bike, walk and transit (when appropriate). This is referred to as Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Commute trip reduction programs are used in cities around the world as a cost-effective way to improve traffic flow, reduce emissions, and improve mobility options for residents.

The City hired a consultant, Alta Planning and Design, to assist with developing a program tailored to Kelowna. By meeting with major employers, reviewing local data, and drawing from best practices around the world, Alta has made recommendations for a Kelowna Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program that is ready for the next steps of development and implementation.

Discussion:

In early 2023 the project team underwent the following project steps:

- Step 1 - Data Analysis and Research
- Step 2 - Development of Program Elements
- Step 3 - Development of Core Strategies

Step 1 – Data Analysis and Research:

This step included reviewing current and past Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs at the City, analyzing commute patterns, reviewing policies, and conducting interviews with large employers. The interviews sought input from large employers with a high potential to shift modes and represented a variety of industries and locations in Kelowna. Nine large employers were interviewed, including:

- Kelowna General Hospital
- Interior Health
- Okanagan College
- UBC Okanagan
- City of Kelowna - City Hall employees
- City of Kelowna – Yards employees
- Kelowna International Airport
- Orchard Park Mall
- Landmark buildings (Stober Group)

Step 2 – Development of Program Elements

This step included developing a long list of potential program elements and narrowing to a short list. The list was informed by findings from the project's research phase and the project team's professional experience in program implementation. The list was then narrowed in collaboration with City of Kelowna staff based on past program experience, local knowledge, and budget and staffing considerations.

Step 3 – Development of Core Strategies:

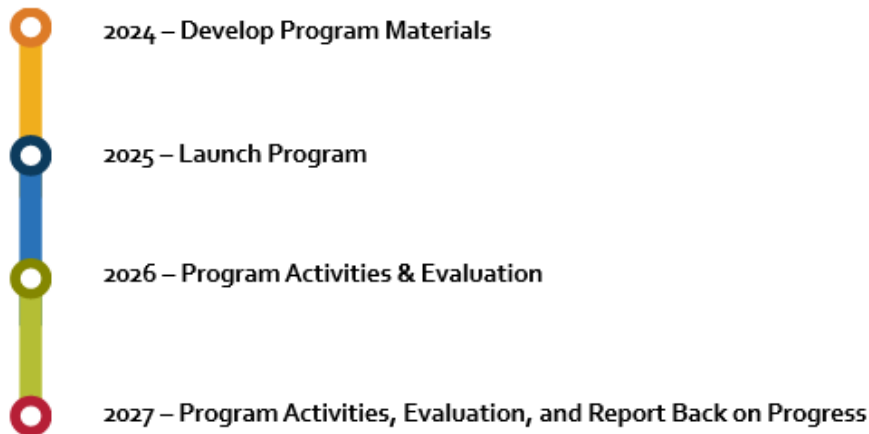
The program recommendations include five core strategies that will assist employers in delivering commute trip reduction program offerings that support employees and help improve traffic flow and reduce emissions, including:

1. **Upgrades to Existing Programs:** This strategy seeks to expand and enhance current City and BC Transit programs designed to connect commuters with biking, transit, and carshare options.
2. **Commute Toolkits and Guidebooks:** This strategy aims to develop resources for employers to raise awareness of commute options for employees and lower barriers to implementing them.
3. **Direct Employer Support:** This strategy aims to provide direct support to employers in planning and implementing site-specific commute-trip reduction programs.
4. **Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) Network:** This strategy seeks to establish, support and maintain a list of ETCs at Kelowna employers, and lead by example by designating an ETC for the City of Kelowna.
5. **Education & Marketing Initiatives:** This strategy aims to provide broad education and awareness of sustainable commute options with materials for employers and the general public.

Additional information on each core strategy is provided in the attached presentation.

Key Outcomes:

The Kelowna Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program is recommended to be introduced over the next few years, focusing on five core strategies. This period allows for the development of program materials, working with local employers to implement the five core strategies, and evaluating the program’s effectiveness as shown in the figure below. It also allows for time to improve and refine the program, before being implemented on an on-going basis.



Next Steps:

Funding for the development and implementation of the Kelowna Commute Trip Reduction Program has not yet been identified, but requests will be included in future budget cycles, as appropriate.

Internal Circulation:

- Climate Action and Environment
- Communications
- Financial Planning
- Integrated Transportation
- Infrastructure Operations
- Parking Services
- Policy and Planning

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy

- TMP Policy 1.25 - Focus on reducing peak hour vehicle travel from suburban neighbourhoods through policies and programs that encourage people to work from home, share rides, or drive at other times.
- TMP Policy 7.1 - Encourage major employers to explore Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies such as remote working for their employees.
- TMP Policy 7.4 – Work with major employers and post-secondary institutions to expand transit passes to their employees or students.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Financial/Budgetary Considerations
External Agency/Public Comments
Communications Comments

Submitted by: J. Hostland, Transportation Planner

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Approved for inclusion: M. Logan, Infrastructure General Manager

Attachment 1: Employer Commute Trip Reduction Program Presentation

cc: Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services
Divisional Director, Financial Services
Divisional Director, Partnership & Investments
Divisional Director, Planning & Development Services