



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MEMORANDUM

TO: Will Pearce, Chief Administrative Officer **FILE:** 8300-10-06

PC: Kim Flick, Director, Community Infrastructure and Development **DATE:** September 14, 2022

FROM: Anne Huisken, Active Transportation Coordinator

SUBJECT: **EXTENSION OF THE ELECTRIC KICK SCOOTER AND ELECTRIC BIKE SHARING CONTRACT WITH NEURON MOBILITY**

On January 17, 2020, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure announced a new program inviting municipalities to apply to pilot electric kick scooters in their communities.

At its Regular Meeting of January 13, 2020, Council received a letter from the Downtown Vernon Association requesting that the City initiate a request for proposals for a bicycle sharing company to operate in Vernon. Administration found that shared e-scooters were rapidly overtaking the bicycle share marketplace and were more popular and economically viable than traditional bicycle share systems and, as such, recommended to Council to consider participating in the provincial pilot, as well as pursuing a bicycle share program.

At its Regular Meeting of February 10, 2020, Council directed Administration to apply to participate in the Provincial Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program and to initiate a competitive bidding process for micromobility service providers to operate a two-year micromobility share program.

At its Regular Meeting of April 12, 2021, Council was informed that the City of Vernon was selected as one of six pilot communities to participate in the pilot. Since its initiation, the pilot program has expanded to include eight communities.

Through the competitive bidding process, Administration selected a single shared e-scooter and e-bike operator "Neuron Mobility". Neuron Mobility's e-scooter share program launched on July 29, 2021, and e-bikes were added to the fleet in spring 2022. Neuron Mobility's contract is set to expire on April 1, 2023, but as per the contract, the City has the ability to renew the program for the remainder of the provincial pilot program period, which ends April 5, 2024.

Data collected through Neuron Mobility's data tracking app indicates that shared e-scooters/e-bikes are becoming a popular mode of transportation within the City of Vernon:

- Between March and August 2022, over 26,000 riders signed up with Neuron Mobility and more than 170,000 rides were taken on their e-scooters/e-bikes.
- Since the program launched in 2021, riders have travelled over 390,000 km within the operating area saving 25 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

- Ridership patterns indicate that there is a limited fluctuation between weekday and weekend rides and users commonly use the e-scooters for commuting purposes. In a local user survey distributed by Neuron Mobility in 2021, 53% of riders indicated they used the e-scooters to commute. These ridership patterns differ from other cities where Neuron Mobility operates. In those cities there is a lower ridership during the week and a larger increase of riders on the weekend.

Moreover, data collected through Neuron Mobility's user survey in 2021 indicates:

- 40% of rides would have been taken by car if the e-scooter/e-bike share program was unavailable.
- 53% of users find Neuron an affordable mode of transportation.
- 93% of users believe that Neuron has created a positive impact in the city.

Data on e-scooter-related injury rates is limited, but data available from Neuron Mobility and RCMP indicates that incident rates are lower compared to the global average of 8-25 injuries per 100,000 trips (International Transportation Forum). Administration and Neuron Mobility continuously work together on joint education campaigns to promote safe use and respectful rider etiquette.

Neuron Mobility is the first point of contact for complaints regarding their shared fleet. Common complaints include parking, helmet compliance, and double-riding on scooters. Riders are required to follow the City's bylaws and the Motor Vehicle Act, which includes:

- Operators must be 16 years of age or older.
- Helmets are required.
- Operators must use turn signals or hand signals to indicate their movements.
- Operators must not park their device in a way that impedes the flow of traffic.
- Operators must not tow others, be towed, or carry passengers (except e-bikes can carry or tow passengers if they are designed or equipped appropriately, for example trishaws, passenger trailers, etc.).
- E-Scooters are permitted on roads, bicycle lanes, multi-use pathways, and sidewalks, and must use due care and attention to all other road users.
- E-Scooters must operate at a rate of speed that is appropriate, taking into account the ability and skill of the user, the surface being travelled upon, and other road users (note that Neuron Mobility's maximum speed for e-scooters is 24 km/h, except it is 15 km/h within low speed zones).
- E-scooters are not permitted on roads with a speed limit greater than 50 km/hr, unless there is a designated use lane that permits cycles.
- E-Bikes are permitted where bicycles are permitted (e.g. roads, bicycle lanes, and multi-use pathways) and must use due care and attention to all other road users.
- E-bikes must not be capable of providing pedal assist at speeds greater 32 km/h on level ground.

Neuron Mobility works directly with Administration to mitigate conflicts with other road users through various means, including:

- Restricting the operational area where e-scooters/e-bikes cease to function;
- Implementing low speed zones in which e-scooters/e-bikes automatically slow down;
- Incentivizing safe riding behaviours, parking compliance, and helmet use;
- Hosting over nine "Scoot-safe" events and educational campaigns to promote helmet compliance and safe riding behaviours between March and August 2022;
- Donating over 400 free helmets to people who have attended Scoot-safe events and other community events between March and August 2022;
- Providing a 10% discount to riders who submit a selfie of themselves wearing a helmet at the start of their ride;
- Implementing a Dangerous Riding Detection system. (e.g. if riders engage in repeated dangerous behaviour, they will be banned from accessing the e-scooter/e-bike share program);
- Issuing warnings, suspensions, and bans from the app for repeated infractions;
- Having a setting in the smartphone app that requires riders to photograph their e-scooter/e-bike at the end of the ride and for Neuron Mobility to penalize the rider for parking infractions; and,
- Providing a 911 emergency button on the devices that can detect, in some circumstances, when a rider has fallen and provides the option to call for emergency services.

Neuron Mobility e-scooter and e-bike data to date indicates that the e-scooters/e-bikes have become a functional, reliable, and economical form of alternative transportation in Vernon. Ridership data supports the goals of the City's Master Transportation Plan and Climate Action Plan to reduce single occupancy vehicle use and transition to low-emission forms of transportation. Moreover, with Neuron Mobility's demonstrated commitment to community safety, and strong working relationship with the City of Vernon, Administration recommends that Council authorize the extension of Neuron Mobility's contract for one additional year to coincide with the end of the Province's Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council direct Administration to extend the e-scooter and e-bike sharing contract with Neuron Mobility to April 5, 2024 as outlined in the memorandum titled "Extension of the Electric Kick Scooter and Electric Bike Sharing Contract with Neuron Mobility" dated September 14, 2022 and respectfully submitted by the Active Transportation Coordinator.

Respectfully submitted by:

for 
Anne Huisken
Active Transportation Coordinator