City of Ottawa Pilot Project Review Summary

The excerpts below are from the '2020 Electric Kick Scooter Strategy and Pilot Project', Administrative Report to Transportation Committee on February 3, 2021, and City Council on February 10, 2021.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Receive the results of 2020 Electric Kick Scooter Strategy and Pilot, as outlined in the report; and
2. Approve the continuance of Ottawa's Electric Kick Scooter Pilot in 2021 as detailed in the report, with the proposed changes to the pilot program, revised fee structure and procurement strategy; and
3. Approve the implementation of a competitive procurement process and enter into Agreements with successful proponents of the process; and
4. Direct staff to report back to the Transportation Committee and Council at the conclusion of the 2021 pilot project for consideration of future pilot seasons.

E-SCOOTER TRIP CHARACTERISTICS

- Pilot ran from July 16, 2020 to October 31, 2020.
- Available for rent from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- 72,720 unique riders took more than 238,000 rides on the fleet of three qualified vendors with agreements with the City: Bird Canada (260), Lime (260), and Roll (80).

KEY ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS

- In July and August, daily e-scooter trips averaged 2,700 on weekdays and 3,200 on weekends, with some weekends as high as 4,500 daily trips.
- In September, daily e-scooters trips averaged 1,900 trips on weekdays and 3,200 trips on weekends.
- In October, daily e-scooter trips averaged 1,141 trips per weekday and 1,580 trips on weekends.

TRIP LENGTH AND DURATION

- Trips ranged from less than one kilometre to more than 10 kilometres.
- The average scooter trip length was 1.9 kilometres.
- Average trip duration was 15 minutes.

TRIP PURPOSE

- City ran online survey from November 11 to December 7, 2020.
- 4,448 respondents completed the survey.
- Most common reasons respondents reported for using an e-scooter were:
  - For fun or leisure (76%)
  - To try out the service (51%)

  - Getting to and from social activities (49%)
  - Running errands and appointments (36%)
  - Getting to and from shopping or a local business (34%)
  - Getting to and from dining (33%)
- Getting to and from work (18%) or to and from school (5%) were not common reasons for using e-scooters.

TIME OF DAY USAGE

- Available for rent from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- Most popular times to travel were 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., peak from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

ALIGNMENT WITH MOBILITY OBJECTIVES

- 46% reporting they drove less.
- 33% reporting travelling less as a car passenger (personal vehicle or ride hailing).

FACILITATING TRANSIT AND MULTIMODAL TRIPS

- E-scooters were geofenced to 8 km/h on multiuse pathways through transit stations.
- Approximately 2% of all e-scooter trips were combined with transit trips.
- Many survey respondents indicated that at least one of their e-scooter trips was transit linked.

HEALTH AND MOBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- They monitored walking and biking trips that were replaced by e-scooter trips to understand if the introduction of e-scooters reduced the health benefits residents achieve through active transportation.
- 35% of riders noted that they walked less.
- 30% of riders reported that they walked more.
- Riders also noted the mental health benefits during the pandemic of being able to get outside and see friends while practicing safe physical distancing.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

- Trip data demonstrated that 48% of e-scooter trips started in a Business Improvement Area (BIA) and 45% ended in a Neighbourhood Improvement Area.
- E-scooters appear to also support tourism in Ottawa.

ISSUES MANAGEMENT IN THE 2020 PILOT SEASON

- Staff collaborated with councillors, multi-department staff working group, and with e-scooter operators to address issues.

SIDEWALK RIDING AND MIS-PARKED E-SCOOTERS

- The pilot prescribed that the e-scooter pilot would take precautions to make the program better for all residents.
- Included prohibiting e-scooters from riding on sidewalks and requiring e-scooters to be parked in the furniture zone, the area closest to the curb that is in line with trees, benches and bike racks, and out of the way of pedestrian travel.
- 'The City of Ottawa Electric Kick Scooter By-law, enacted on June 24, 2020, included the following provisions for proper riding and parking:
  - No person shall operate, or cause to be operated, or use an electric kick scooter on a highway with a legal speed limit greater than 50 kilometres per hour, unless with a reserved bicycle lane;
  - No person shall operate, or cause to be operated, or use an electric kick-scooter on a sidewalk, unless permitted by official sign;
  - No person shall operate, or cause to be operated, or use an electric kick-scooter in a park, or part thereof, where cycling, skateboarding or rollerblading is prohibited; and,
  - No person shall park or stop an electric kick-scooter or permit an electric kick-scooter to remain parked or stopped on a highway, roadway, sidewalk or trail, path, walkway, park, exhibition ground or multi-use pathway trail in such a manner that obstructs the flow of pedestrian, vehicular or cyclist traffic."
- The pilot took several measures to address sidewalk riding and misparked e-scooters, including:
  - Requiring providers to respond to misparked e-scooters in under one hour;
  - Communication and public outreach campaign from the City of Ottawa including updates to the e-scooter Ottawa.ca project page, pubic service announcements, communications to Business Improvement Areas and stakeholder groups, targeted messaging on social media, and providing key messages to councillors and Business Improvement Areas to share with their networks;
  - In-app and in-person communications from the providers; and,
  - Collaboration with shared e-scooter providers for targeted messaging in specific areas that had a higher e-scooter ridership.
- E-scooters was required to include a sticker with 'no sidewalk riding' message.
- Roll received 7 re-parking requests; Bird received 49; and Lime received 116.
- Operators largely met the one-hour time limit on re-parking requests.
- The City (3-1-1) received 65 e-scooter re-parking requests; 30 transfers to the vendors; 53 general queries.
- 38% or riders were satisfied or very satisfied with the process or reporting misparked e-scooters, and only 26% of non-riders were satisfied or very satisfied.
- Many residents were disappointed that the burden of reporting misparked e-scooters was placed on residents who were not responsible for this behaviour.
- 250 emails were received from residents expressing concerns about the pilot.

EFFECTIVE INJURY PREVENTION

- Ottawa Public Health's E-Scooter Injury Epidemiology study (Electric Kick Scooter Strategy and Pilot Project, Document 3) cautioned that introducing e-scooters could result in injury rates significantly beyond those experienced by people walking or cycling.
- Staff acted to mitigate this injury risk in the following ways:
  - Reducing speed limits
  - Time of day limits
  - Communication with local transit services
  - Public outreach – education and helmet giveaways

OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE (OPS) SUPPORT

- Ottawa Police Service (OPS) participated on the Interdepartmental Working Group. OPS staff were in regular contact with the City of Ottawa staff working on the e-scooter pilot to provide updates to staff including in the traffic unit and patrol officers. Following City of Ottawa staff requests and resident traffic complaints, OPS issued 14 tickets ($180 each) to e-scooter riders for illegal sidewalk riding.

REPORTED INJURIES

- To date, staff are aware of reports of seven minor injuries caused by e-scooter falls or collisions. These reports are from a combination of residents emailing staff, riders reporting injuries to e-scooter operators and OPS contacting staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021 PILOT

- Based on the high number of e-scooter trips - including those that replace car trips – the support for local business and the increased mobility choices, staff recommend continuing the pilot in 2021 with some modifications, in addition to those detailed above.

SEASON

- Staff recommend a full 2021 season from as early as April 15 to October 31 to meet higher rider demand during the warmer months. The April 15 launch would be contingent on weather and the completion of spring street sweeping operations. Trip data from 2020 indicates a decline in trips in cooler weather, supporting this recommendation. E-scooter usage during winter conditions is not recommended.

COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

- Staff recommend using a competitive procurement process to identify up to three qualified e-scooter providers. Based on the number of trips taken during Ottawa's first pilot season, additional companies are making inquiries about the 2021 program. Given the City of Toronto's experience with over 15 providers expressing interest in operating in that city, staff anticipate high interest from additional e-scooter providers in Ottawa for the 2021 season. The 2020 agreements were non-

exclusive, meaning there was no cap to the number of providers who could operate in Ottawa.

- Limiting the number of e-scooter providers operating in Ottawa is proposed because it:
  - Reduces the potential for sidewalk clutter due to multiple competing providers;
  - Offers residents more consistent service;
  - Rewards eligible providers with larger fleet sizes for service excellence, including fast response times to misparked e-scooters and innovative rider education; and
  - Reduces staff time managing the program.
- The competitive procurement documents for the 2021 season will be based on the 2020 Micromobility System Framework. Proponents will submit a proposal for consideration to the City. The City will then select successful proponents to operate a shared e-scooter fleet for the 2021 season. The selection criteria are expected to include the following elements, among others:
  - Effective issues management experience;
  - Safety record;
  - Illustrated communications and outreach/education plan;
  - Plan for low GHG emissions operations (e.g. equipment used to retrieve scooters and for battery charging);
  - App functionality and ease of use;
  - Experience;
  - Innovation;
  - Pricing structure; and
  - Approach to equity.

FLEET SIZE FOR 2021 SEASON

- It is further proposed that the e-scooter fleet size be increased to between 1,200 to 1,500 (from the 2020 fleet cap of 600). The new fleet size takes into consideration e-scooter demand during the peak summer season, issue management considerations, the desire for a wider central deployment area, and the opportunity for satellite operations outside the Greenbelt.

DEPLOYMENT AREA AND FLEET SIZE

- 85 per cent of riders reported it was “very easy” or ”somewhat easy” to find an e-scooter.
- Among those who rode only once or not at all, availability within the deployment area and living or working outside the deployment areas were key factors in not using e-scooters.
- In addition to residents requesting a larger deployment area, some BIAs also requested e-scooters.
- In 2020, the deployment area was determined by e-scooter providers. The City determined both the maximum citywide fleet size and the number of vehicles per

provider. The providers determined their deployment area according to what was operationally feasible.

- In 2021, staff propose an increased fleet size, but would tie the increase to an increased central deployment area to mitigate against the risk of over supply, which could lead to sidewalk clutter. While staff propose that operators be given some flexibility in their deployment areas, staff recommend requiring a minimum central deployment area to provide certainty to ward Councillors, BIAs and workplaces.

2021 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SIDEWALK RIDING AND IMPROPER E-SCOOTER PARKING

- For the pilot to proceed in 2021, it must address sidewalk riding and improper parking, two key issues that create barriers to accessibility. Staff recommend that providers be required to proactively monitor and re-park misparked e-scooters in high use areas to lessen the responsibility for reporting from residents. Staff also recommend operators provide a simple in-app reporting mechanism so that residents do not need to wait for customer service as they may need to when calling the providers' customer service line. Residents who are blind or who are partially sighted will be able to contact 3-1-1 directly. Customer service agents will then email all providers who will be responsible for coordinating their quick response.
- Staff also recommend the following measures be taken in the 2021 pilot:
    - Designating parking areas within and in addition to furniture zone parking as outlined in the Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project, Electric Kick Scooter By-law (ACS2020-TSD-PLN-0001) Document 4 - Electric Kick Scooter Parking Considerations);
    - Requiring operators to include in-app incentives for parking in these designated locations;
    - Exploring parking solutions for areas where there are no furniture zones;
    - Requiring increased and focused in-app, social media and in-person communication and education on safe and courteous e-scooter riding and parking;
    - Requiring providers to issue warnings and remove riders from their app for parking violations, including leaving e-scooters on the sidewalk in such a way that the sidewalk is inaccessible;
    - Exploring the inclusion of a voluntary per trip fee ($0.05 to $0.07) based on the voluntary Vehicle for Hire fees that Uber and Lyft contribute to the Vehicle for Hire Accessibility Fund;
    - Continuing to provide councillors and BIAs with key messages and continuation of outreach on the City of Ottawa's social media;
    - Deploy temporary signage in key locations and deploy in-person safety ambassadors at key locations and events, if feasible under pandemic restrictions;
    - Continuing to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and other accessibility stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of parking mitigation strategies, and,

- Expanding the City's education/outreach campaign to ensure riders and other residents understand e-scooter rules and reporting mechanisms.

FEE STRUCTURE

- Overall, the fee structure applied in 2020 allowed for recovery of the pilot costs and staff recommend maintaining the application fee, vehicle fees and communication and outreach fees for 2021. However, staff recommend reducing the application fee for fleet increase to $2,000 (from $3,000) in order to:
  - Better align with municipal best practices; and,
  - Ensure that the City's overall program is economically viable for micromobility service providers.

REVENUES

- The e-scooter pilot program operates on a cost-recovery basis.
- Due to the shorter season, City staff were able to pilot the use of micromobility fleet monitoring software (e.g. RideReport and Populous) under no-charge trial agreements for the 2020 season. This software used the e-scooter data feeds provided to the City by the e-scooter providers and allowed staff to effectively monitor the fleet and get an instant overview of scooter deployment in the city. There will be an expense for the use of this software in 2021, which will be recovered from the 2021 revenue.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

- City teams include: Transportation Planning, Traffic Services, Right of Way Management, Heritage and Urban Design Services, By-law and Regulatory Services, Roads and Parking Services, Legal Services, Transit Customer Systems and Planning Service, Ottawa Public Health Injury Prevention, Ottawa Public Health Epidemiology, Parks and Facilities Planning Services, Safer Roads Ottawa, Service Ottawa (3-1-1 and Open Data), the Corporate Accessibility Office, IT, ATIP (access to information and privacy), BIA and Ottawa Markets Liaisons and the Ottawa Police Service.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Prior to the pilot's launch, staff informed STO (Societe de transport de l'Outaouais), PSPC (Public Services and Procurement Canada)'S Parliamentary Precinct Branch, the NCC (National Capital Commission), Ville de Gatineau, uOttawa, Carleton University and the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) of the pilot and provided direct staff contact information should these external stakeholders have any questions or concerns during the pilot.
- During the pilot, staff adjusted geofencing around the Parliamentary Precinct to eliminate misparked e-scooters in Parliament Hill parking lots and responded to external stakeholder questions as required.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)

- Through the 2020 Micromobility Agreements, e-scooter providers were required to meet with the AAC at the AAC's request and staff were requested to report back to the AAC within six months of the pilot launch.
- The AAC made the following observations and requests:
  - Travel in 2021 may continue to be unusual. Conducting further pilot seasons beyond 2021 would be helpful in understanding the full impact of e-scooters in Ottawa.
  - Recommend that staff include an approach to managing accessibility impacts and communication in the 2021 competitive procurement process.
  - Add a voluntary surcharge to each e-scooter trip, modelled on the Vehicle For Hire voluntary fee on Uber and Lyft trips, in recognition that many people with 27 disabilities are not able to use shared e-scooters and are disproportionately impacted by their improper use on sidewalks and by their improper parking.
  - Request that staff look into including accessible e-scooters in future pilots (Note: staff investigated accessible e-scooters following this meeting and the provincial e-scooter pilot regulations and the City's By-Law do not include seated e-scooters).
  - Request that staff ask e-scooter providers interested in operating in Ottawa to look into e-scooters that emit a consistent noise, following the introduction of such vehicles in England through the company Tier.

CONSULTATION WITH CNIB

- On October 15, the CNIB Foundation, the Alliance for the Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC), and the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB), hosted a focus group about e-scooters and accessibility for Ottawa residents who are blind or partially sighted, noting concerns with unsafe riding on sidewalks and improper e-scooter parking.
- City staff and ward councillors were invited to attend.
- Participants noted that the pandemic has impacted travel patterns, especially for vulnerable populations, including seniors and peoples with disabilities, who have been recommended to stay home by health care professionals. As a result, there is a concern that data collected during the 2020 pilot will not accurately reflect travel patterns in a post-pandemic Ottawa.
- Finally, CNIB noted that e-scooters create safety and accessibility barriers for pedestrians who are blind or partially sighted. Until the outlined concerns and recommendations, including the request for a scannable QR code prominently and consistently placed on the device and marked using tactile and high contrast lettering and the request that e-scooters have a consistent noise that they emit to warn pedestrians that they are approaching, the CNIB Foundation does not recommend the City of Ottawa extend the e-scooter pilot.

E-SCOOTER SURVEY

- To understand how this new form of transportation impacted different demographic groups, the City conducted an end-of-season survey. The City's E-Scooter Survey was open from November 11 to December 7. The survey received 4,448 responses, with 64 per cent of respondents (2,856) reporting they had ridden an e-scooter during the pilot and 36 per cent of respondents (1,592) reporting that they had not.
- The survey was announced by Chair Tierney, and distributed by Mayor Watson and Councillors, through the City's social media channels, the Accessibility Spotlight and by e-scooter providers, as required by the 2020 Micromobility Agreements.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

- The Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments for this report. The Chair feels that there is consensus within the AAC that kick e-scooters (e-scooters) can and do create accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities and seniors in Ottawa. It is the Chair's view that any proposal to continue the e-scooters project into 2021 would not have the support of the majority of the AAC unless it requires that e-scooters emit a constant noise and it create a single-step enforcement mechanism for the removal of improperly parked e-scooters. Because the current proposal does not do this, the Chair cannot support the report. The AAC has been insistent that e-scooters should be required to emit a constant noise to alert nearby pedestrians, given their less visible profile and the speeds they can achieve. As the report notes, technology exists to accomplish this. Given this, the Chair feels that the report fails to provide a rationale for not requiring that e-scooters in Ottawa emit a constant noise despite the safety risk they pose to Blind and visually impaired persons. Such a requirement would be consistent with the AAC's motion (MOTION No. AAC 2020 2/6) on prioritizing the needs of seniors and pedestrians with disabilities in multi-use pathways. Second, the Chair wishes to stress that the impacts of improperly parked scooters on seniors and persons with disabilities are very real. Encountering a barrier like an improperly parked e-scooter is demoralizing, frustrating, and sends a signal that disability is not welcomed or valued in Ottawa. An improperly parked e-scooter can completely prevent a senior or person with disability from getting to their destination. Seniors and persons with disabilities don't create these barriers and we should not bear the burden of removing them. Under the current proposal a person with a disability or a senior who experiences an improperly parked e-scooter in 2021 would need to encounter the barrier, report it to the e-scooter provider, monitor the e-scooter for an hour, and then request enforcement if the e-scooter has not been moved. This is unacceptable. In the Chair's view, any e-scooter project must have an enforcement mechanism that reflects the significance of the barriers e-scooters create. This means that a senior or pedestrian with a disability should only have to report an improperly parked scooter once, to a single authority. It should then fall to that authority to ensure the e-scooter is moved within the hour and to levy the appropriate penalty if it is not. Further, seniors or pedestrians with disabilities who

are effectively trapped by an e-scooter should be able to request immediate assistance. The AAC has seen no evidence that any of the current e-scooter providers would be able to put in place such a system, and so the operation of such a system should fall to the City, given that it is the one authorizing this project and that it is fully aware of the barriers e-scooters present.