

Privately Owned Electric Kick Scooters on Public Right-of-Way

ISSUE

Privately owned electric kick scooters (e-scooters) are not legally permitted on the public right-of-way in Saskatoon. Should private e-scooters be permitted on the public right-of-way?

BACKGROUND

History

At its meeting held on January 29, 2025, City Council considered the Shared Electric Kick Scooter Program Pilot report, and resolved in part:

- “1. That Option 1 – Permit shared e-scooters on the public right-of-way be approved;
2. That shared e-scooters be permitted under Bylaw 7200, The Traffic Bylaw, 1991, and that vendors be acquired through a competitive procurement process to a maximum of two qualified vendors, and”

The report noted that the use of private e-scooters on the public right-of-way would be the subject of a future report to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation planned for late spring/early summer 2025.

On September 22, 2022, the Province of Saskatchewan released *The Limited Speed Motor Vehicle Regulations*, which focuses on e-scooter use. The regulations state the following:

- Helmets are required.
- Drivers must be at least 16 years of age.
- Maximum operating speed of 24 km/h.
- Restricts use to any street with a posted speed limit of 50 km/h or lower.
- If designated bicycle lanes exist on a street, then e-scooter operators must utilize the bicycle lane.
- Legal operation is subject to a municipality enacting a bylaw governing operation of the streets of said municipality.

The Limited Speed Motor Vehicle Regulations are attached as Appendix 1.

Current Status

Privately owned e-scooters are not legally permitted on the public right-of-way in Saskatoon.

Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

A sample of the current status of privately owned e-scooters on the public right-of-way in Canadian cities is included in Appendix 2. Highlights of the review include the following:

- Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Regina, Hamilton and Ottawa permit private e-scooters on the public right-of-way.
- Edmonton, Red Deer and Winnipeg do not permit private e-scooters on the public right-of-way.
- Helmets are required in Vancouver, Victoria and Regina, regardless of age; they are required for operators under the age of 18 in Hamilton and Ottawa; helmets are not required in Calgary.
- No passengers are permitted in the cities that allow private e-scooters.
- Vancouver and Victoria permit private e-scooters on all city streets using the roadway (not sidewalks) and on cycling infrastructure; Calgary permits e-scooters on its pathway network only; Regina, Hamilton, and Ottawa permit use on roadways with a maximum speed of 50 km/h and on cycling infrastructure.

Comparison between Shared and Private E-scooters

Although the physical appearance between shared and private e-scooters are very similar, they operate in very different circumstances. To highlight these differences, a comparison between the regulatory framework developed and applied to the shared e-scooter program was made with private e-scooters (Appendix 3). The following regulatory framework items developed for the shared e-scooter program are not applicable to a private e-scooter:

- Operating season.
- Procurement philosophy.
- Fleet size.
- Vendor customer service (the ability to contact the operator to discuss or resolve an issue).
- Vendor technological enhancements (intoxication/cognitive test, pedestrian safety, beginner riders, continuous riding, helmet use, parking compliance, age limit compliance, and no-sidewalk riding compliance).

The following regulatory framework items developed for the shared e-scooter program pilot are applicable, at a minimum in part, to a private e-scooter:

- Regulations: operating speed, age limit, and helmet use.
- Specifications.
- Where to ride.
- Parking requirements.

Private E-scooter Regulatory Framework

In the event that Committee and Council is in favour of allowing private e-scooter operation within the City of Saskatoon then, based on the above comparison of the regulatory framework for shared e-scooters and the provincial regulations, the following framework is proposed for private e-scooters:

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Item	Details
Regulations (requirements determined by the Province)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operating Speed: maximum of 24 km/h. ○ Age Limit: minimum of 16 years or older. ○ Helmet: required. ○ Bell or sound-making device. ○ Lights on the front and back that turn on automatically.
Where to ride?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allowed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multi-use trails. ○ Cycle tracks. ○ Protected bicycle lanes. ○ Streets with posted speed limit of 50 km/h or lower (must use protected bicycle lanes if they exist). ○ Private property. ○ No-riding zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sidewalks. ○ Streets with posted speed limits greater than 50 km/h. ○ Saskatoon Transit vehicles, bus mall, bus zones. ○ Civic square. ○ Skate parks. ○ Spray parks. ○ City parkades. ○ Buildings. ○ Slow-down zone: E-scooters must slow down to 15 km/h when being ridden on the Meewasin Trail.
Parking Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multi-Use Trail Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the Furniture Zone: must not obstruct or interfere with the Sidewalk Zone. ○ If no Furniture Zone, must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not impede Sidewalk Zone or Frontage Zone to access any buildings. ○ Provide at least 2.0 metres of Sidewalk Zone. ○ Not park where these requirements cannot be met. ○ Street Parking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In residential areas: wherever a vehicle may be legally parked. ○ In residential parking permit areas: Allowed within 10 metres of an intersection. ○ In pay parking area: in Furniture Zone or within 10 metres of an intersection where the e-scooter is parked immediately adjacent to a time restricted parking area. ○ No-Parking Zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bus terminals and bus zones, except in designated parking areas. ○ Loading zones. ○ Accessible parking zones. ○ Wheelchair ramps, bicycle ramps or curb ramps. ○ Bridges. ○ Centre median islands. ○ Fire hydrants. ○ Within 1.5 metres of an access to a garage or driveway.

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Item	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Street furniture that requires pedestrian access (benches, pay parking stations, bus shelters, pedestrian push buttons).○ Within shrub beds or within 0.5 metres of trees within the public right-of-way.○ Park Pathway Parking:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Must not park on the pathway.○ Within 1.0 metre of either side of a pathway and allow for at least 2.0 metres of unobstructed space for pedestrian movements.○ Must not be parked within shrub beds or within 0.5 metres of a tree.

Stakeholder Feedback

The following table summarizes the organizations that were contacted to hear their comments about the potential of private e-scooters on the public right-of-way:

33 rd Street BID	Saskatchewan Safety Council
Broadway BID	Saskatoon Council on Aging
CNIB	Saskatoon Cycles
Downtown BID	Sutherland BID
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools	Tourism Saskatoon
Meewasin Valley Authority	University of Saskatchewan
SaskAbilities	USSU
Saskatchewan Health Authority	

The letter provided and responses received are included in Appendix 4. No objections to private e-scooters were received.

OPTIONS

The Administration explored two options as follows.

Option 1 – Status Quo (Do not permit privately owned e-scooters on the public right-of-way)

This option would not legally allow privately owned e-scooters on City of Saskatoon public right-of-way.

Pros:

- Lowers the potential for mis-parked and/or abandoned e-scooters, albeit there is a lower probability of this due to the private ownership of the devices.
- Lowers the potential for riding e-scooters on sidewalks and in other areas where they are not desired.
- Lowers the probability of rider or pedestrian injuries.

These ‘pros’ are classified as lower potential, but not completely eliminated, as there are people who currently operate private e-scooters despite not being legally permitted.

Cons:

- Loss of opportunities for a cost-effective transportation option, potential travel timesaving versus other modes of transportation, a more environmentally friendly transportation option than driving a vehicle, reduced parking demand for vehicles and recreation.
- Potentially confusing and frustrating to the public as shared e-scooters are permitted, but private e-scooters would not be.

Option 2 – Permit privately owned e-scooters on the public right-of-way

This option would allow privately owned e-scooters on City of Saskatoon public right-of-way permanently under the same operating regulations as shared e-scooters.

Pros:

- Provides another transportation option.
- Less expensive mode of travel compared to driving a vehicle.
- Provides recreation opportunities.
- More environmentally friendly transportation option than driving a vehicle.
- Reduces parking demand for vehicles.
- Potential timesaving for travel versus other modes of transportation.

Cons:

- Can be mis-parked or abandoned, though this is unlikely with private e-scooters.
- Potential for unlawful riding on sidewalks.
- Potential for speeding.
- Potential for riding outside of public right-of-way such as parks.
- Risk of rider or pedestrian injuries.
- No technological enhancements available (intoxication/cognitive test, pedestrian safety, beginner riders, continuous riding, helmet use, parking compliance, age limit compliance, and no-sidewalk riding compliance.)
- When compared with shared e-scooters, there is no control on fleet sizes and no customer service is available to help mitigate issues.
- Creates additional enforcement work for the Saskatoon Police Service.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council:

1. That Option 2 – Permit privately owned e-scooters on the public right-of-way be approved;
2. That privately owned e-scooters be permitted under Bylaw 7200, The Traffic Bylaw, 1991 in accordance with the regulatory framework in this report; and
3. That the City Solicitor's Office be requested to amend Bylaw 7200, The Traffic Bylaw, 1991 in accordance with the regulatory framework in this report.

RATIONALE

The recommended option is Option 2 – Permit privately owned e-scooters on the public right-of-way with the following rationale:

- Provides another transportation option.
- Less expensive mode of travel compared to driving a vehicle.
- Provides recreation opportunities.
- More environmentally friendly transportation option than driving a vehicle.
- Reduces parking demand for vehicles.
- Potential timesaving for travel versus other modes of transportation.
- Provides another option other than the shared e-scooter companies.
- Aligns with permitted shared e-scooters on the public right-of-way.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

If Option 2 is approved, the Administration will provide a news release, a PSA, and use social media to communicate that privately owned e-scooters are allowed on the public right-of-way and specify the operating regulations.

NEXT STEPS

If Option 2 is approved, the Administration will work with the Solicitor's Office to make the necessary changes to Bylaw No. 7200, The Traffic Bylaw, 1991.

APPENDICES

1. *The Limited Speed Motor Vehicle Regulations*
2. Approaches in Other Jurisdictions
3. Comparison between Shared and Private E-scooters
4. Stakeholder Feedback

Report Approval

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