

Region of Waterloo
Transportation Services
Transit Services

To: Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Development Committee
Meeting Date: February 11, 2025
Report Title: Update on Shared Micromobility Program 2024 Riding Season

1. Recommendation

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo amend the licence agreement between the Region and Neuron Mobility (Canada) Limited to extend the term for the time period of April 1st to October 31st for 2026, 2027, 2028 and 2029 if all parties agree in writing by December 31, 2025, December 31, 2026, December 31, 2027, and December 31, 2028, as applicable, with the Commissioner of Transportation Services having authority to execute the amendment in a form approved by the Regional Solicitor, pursuant to Report TSD-TRS-25-002, dated February 11, 2025.

2. Purpose / Issue:

This report provides updates on the second season of the commercial e-bike and e-scooter share operated by Neuron Mobility. Staff have exercised the renewal option of the Council-approved licence agreement to relaunch the program for the 2025 riding season.

Staff is also requesting the ability to extend the program annually until November 2029 in response to the Ministry of Transportation’s recent extension of the provincial e-scooter pilot.

3. Strategic Plan:

Supporting the introduction of low energy micromobility options and programs that can be integrated with the Region’s transit network aligns with the Climate Aligned Growth priority of the Region’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. This work is also a Strategic Action of the TransformWR plan (Action 1.3.1: Launch Micromobility Systems).

4. Report Highlights:

- The second year of operations of the program with Neuron Mobility is considered an overall success by the Shared Micromobility Project Team (Appendix A).
 - Close to 173,700 rides were taken, totalling over 288,000 kilometers

- travelled. According to the monitoring platform used by the Project Team, this year's ridership resulted in up to 9.9 tonnes in carbon dioxide savings (equivalent to approximately 396 mature trees), and up to 22 tonnes in total (equivalent to approximately 880 mature trees).
- In 2024, the size of the service area increased substantially to 64.61 km² from 39.55 km², and the service area now connects the three Cities (see Appendix B). The Project Team will work to identify areas for future expansion over the winter.
 - The Project Team worked with Neuron to improve geofences and parking compliance, and Neuron has confirmed a low percentage of trips result in misparked vehicles. The Project Team continues to monitor parking compliance. The Project Team is sourcing parking corrals and decals for parking areas for select locations in collaboration with Neuron.
 - In response to feedback received by the community regarding the need for more education/resources on the rules of the road and rider etiquette, the Project Team retained the services of a creative agency using program improvement fees collected from Neuron. The resulting campaign targeted e-scooter riders between 18-24 years of age, with the goal of promoting safe behaviours amongst e-scooter riders and increase awareness of applicable laws and consequences. Deliverables included social media posts, ION and bus shelter posters, magnets for distribution at events, and posters (Appendix C). The key messages pertained to riding with a helmet, riding sober, not riding or parking on the sidewalk, as well as no tandem riding. These messages were also intended to address stakeholder concerns over late night issues (Appendix A).
- Region and City staff have renewed the agreement with Neuron, and Neuron plan to redeploy its fleet for an April 2025 launch (Appendix D).
 - Neuron will be introducing accessible fleet options into the Region's shared micromobility program in 2025 – a priority identified by the Project Team in response to community feedback.
 - Neuron has purchased two models of adaptive vehicles (i.e. upright tricycles (Appendix E) and handcycle tricycles specifically designed to meet a range of needs for individuals living with mobility impairments/disabilities). Program improvement fees collected from Neuron will be used to introduce and integrate the accessible fleet into the program, and the vehicles will be owned and maintained by Neuron. Neuron will be testing the service delivery model and integration, as well as collecting data on key metrics. If considered successful, Neuron may consider an expanded accessible fleet with greater system integration. This is one of the first initiatives of its kind

run by a private shared micromobility operator in Canada.

- The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Electric Kick-Scooter Pilot Project (O. Reg. 389/19) has been extended for an additional five years, until November 27, 2029. The MTO opted to collect more data for their analysis of the impact of the pilot which will inform future policies.
 - Staff are requesting to extend the term of current license agreement with Neuron Mobility to continue participating in the pilot in recognition of the delayed response to the pilot program due to the pandemic, and the favourable preliminary findings of the Region's shared micromobility program in achieving municipal strategic initiatives and climate action goals for sustainable transportation. City partners will also be seeking to extend their participation in the joint licence agreement with Neuron through their respective processes.

5. Background:

In August 2022, Region staff issued a joint request for proposals (RFP) with the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, for a single shared system operator for bike/e-bikes and e-scooters (as described in TES-TRS-22-07).

Neuron Mobility was selected as the preferred service provider as they scored highest on the Technical Submission and met the performance expectations established through their proposal during an equipment demonstration. The program launched in Spring 2023, and first year of operations of the program was considered an overall success (as described in TSD-TRS-23-005).

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities: Transportation staff from the Region of Waterloo and Cities comprise the Project Team that are working with Neuron. This Project Team coordinated a 2019 bike share pilot, the 2020 shared micromobility study, the e-scooter Traffic and Parking By-law amendments (TES-TRS-22-06), and the shared program implementation plan (TES-TRS-22-07).

Public: The Region/Cities e-scooter safety campaign ran from September to October. Neuron conducted over 20 safety events in 2024. An online survey was conducted to get feedback from the community on the first year of Neuron operations. The Project Team undertook public engagement for the 2018/2019 bike share pilot with Drop Mobility (TES-TRS-18-11), 2019/2020 Micromobility Feasibility Study with Alta Planning + Design (TES-TRS-20-14), and the 2021 e-scooter bylaw update (TES-TRS-21-01).

7. Financial Implications:

The shared micromobility program is intended to be revenue neutral, with Neuron being charged scalable trip and vehicle fees to offset any program costs to the Region/Cities

and to fund program improvements supportive of the Region's goals for the program. In 2024, approximately \$60,000 was collected from Neuron and approximately \$60,000 spent on operating expenses and program improvements, including the rules of the road and rider etiquette campaign, and introduction of accessible fleet options.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

The Project Team will continue to collaborate with Neuron on program development and system expansion initiatives, as well as addressing feedback received from users and non-users. Staff will report to Regional Council after the 2025 riding season.

Attachments:

Appendix A: Progress on Shared Micromobility Program Goals

Appendix B: Service Area Map

Appendix C: E-Scooter Safety Campaign Deliverables

Appendix D: Letter from Neuron Confirming Interest in Returning to Waterloo Region in 2025

Appendix E: Neuron Upright Tricycle with Description of Key Features

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