

Region of Waterloo
Transportation Services
Transit Services

To: Planning and Works Committee
Meeting Date: April 4, 2023
Report Title: Update on Shared Micromobility Program Launch

1. Recommendation

For information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

This report informs the Planning and Works Committee of the upcoming launch of a commercial e-bike and e-scooter share operated by Neuron Mobility.

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 Focus Area 2 (Sustainable Transportation) of the Region's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. This work is also a Strategic Action of the TransformWR plan (Action 1.3.1: Launch Micromobility Systems), and supports Strategy 5 of the Region's 2018 Transportation Master Plan (Position the Region for New Mobility).

4. Report Highlights:

- Micromobility is an umbrella term for light personal transportation devices that include human and motorized vehicles. The most common micromobility vehicles are bicycles, electric assist bikes (e-bikes), and e-scooters. Shared systems provide people access to vehicles through a membership, pay-per-use, or time-based fares. For the purposes of this report, micromobility will refer to shared bicycles e-bikes and e-scooters.
- The Region and Cities are entering into a joint Licence Agreement with Neuron Mobility. Transportation staff from the Region of Waterloo and Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo comprise the core Project Team that are working with Neuron towards a spring system launch that will include e-bikes and e-scooters

(See Appendix A).

- Neuron is planning for a soft launch starting mid to late April to identify any operational issues and identify areas of higher demand before a full service launch in early to mid May. Dates have not yet been finalized and are considered weather-dependant. The Project Team and the Region and City Communications staff are coordinating with Neuron to plan a launch event. Details will be shared once available.
- Neuron will be responsible for service delivery (e.g. maintenance and redistributing of vehicles). As the licensors of public lands that will be used for Neuron stations, the Region and Cities' primary roles after launch will include contract administration, approving station/vehicle parking locations, and the monitoring/evaluation of the overall program and operator performance. Region and City staff will also redirect operational questions/issues received from residents to Neuron and amplify Neuron's messaging through their Communications channels. The Project Team is in the process of finalizing an Agreement of Understanding to formalize the Region and Cities respective roles and responsibilities. Please refer to Appendix B for details on Neuron program operations.
- Under the Licence Agreement, Neuron will pay fees to the Region to offset costs incurred by the Region and Cities related to program administration and evaluation (e.g., micromobility management software), field operations (e.g., site checks, urgent removals, additional signage/markings), accelerating access to new areas/priority populations, piloting integration of new vehicles (e.g., accessible trikes or hand bikes) and communication, outreach, and engagement beyond what is required by Neuron.
- According to the North American Bikeshare & Scootershare Association's 2021 State of the Industry Report, individuals choose to use shared micromobility services for a faster and easier travel, for fun, to save money, and increase travel options/flexibility, with broader benefits to the community including environmental benefits, personal health/exercise benefits, reduced need for parking, reduce traffic or time driving.
- In the Shared Micromobility Feasibility Study (discussed in TES-TRS-22-07) conducted by consultants from Alta Planning + Design, it was projected that in the first year of implementation, up to 620,500 bike trips and 465,375 e-scooter trips could be made under a medium uptake scenario. Alta Planning had also estimated that bike share and e-scooter share could reduce emissions from transportation by as much as 1,241 metric tonnes of CO2 annually by year five of program implementation under a medium uptake scenario. It should be noted that these estimates above were based on the recommendation to launch with 850 bikes and

425 e-scooters. The Project Team can discuss whether there is sufficient demand to scale up the number of e-bikes with Neuron later in the riding season.

- It is anticipated there may be issues during the launch phase related to the introduction of up to 1,000 vehicles on Region and City streets. However, it is understood that the shared micromobility program will help the Region and Cities meet their active transportation and climate action goals, provide a valuable service to the community, and plan for the further expansion using lessons learned from the launch phase. To address potential concerns, such as improperly parked vehicles, the Project Team has worked with Neuron to develop an approach that promotes desirable user behaviour and operator compliance. Neuron was required to prepare a Safety Plan, and all vehicles will be equipped with various safety features (see Appendix A). The License Agreement places obligations on Neuron to address issues related to vehicle redistribution and removals with associated liquidated damages if they are non-compliant.

5. Background:

In August 2022, the Region issued request for proposal P2022-18, on behalf of itself, and 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).

Five (5) submissions were received, with Neuron Mobility receiving the highest overall score, which included their technical submission and met the performance and privacy expectations established through their proposal during an equipment demonstration. Neuron distinguished themselves from other high-ranking proposals by their emphasis on safety. Neuron currently operates in six Canadian locations, including Ottawa and Calgary.

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Area Municipality Communication:

Transportation staff from the Region of Waterloo and Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo comprise the core Project Team that are working with Neuron towards a spring system launch. This Project Team coordinated the Drop Mobility bike share pilot, development of the micromobility feasibility study, e-scooter public consultation, and the recommended Traffic and Parking By-law amendments described in Report TES-TRS-22-06, as well as the shared program implementation plan in Report TES-TRS-22-07.

The Project Team has formed an expanded Region and Municipal Staff Shared Micromobility Working Group to address pre and post launch issues that will affect

various staff groups. Through the Working Group, staff have been working collaboratively to plan for the launch of a shared micromobility program, and will continue to support the program's ongoing activities. The Working Group is comprised of various sub-groups, which currently include Communications, Data, Enforcement and Safety, Contract Management, Member Services, Station Siting and Operations.

Regional and Area Municipal staff have been regularly updated on the micromobility program through the Traffic Coordinating Committee, Intermunicipal Partnership for Active Transportation, and leadership updates.

Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

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). A public project page will launch shortly to collect feedback.

7. Financial Implications:

The Region's Approved 2023 Grand River Transit Operating Budget for Micromobility Integration includes an anticipated revenue of \$85,000 to offset the budgeted program costs of \$85,000. Regional costs include program administration, evaluation, operations, service expansion, and public outreach. The Region is not subsidizing Neuron's operations/costs. The anticipated revenue from Neuron through the Licence Agreement is based on vehicle, trip, administrative and program development fees designed to offset the costs and create a scalable, performance-driven program. No user fees are collected by the Region or Cities.

Through memoranda with the Cities, the Region collects all fees from Neuron and oversees administration. The Cities will be remitted for specific costs incurred (e.g., City operations related to a micromobility station on a local trail). Staff plan to monitor the budget for any variance from the zero net impact, as well as any financial impacts associated with the operation, and maintenance of roads, active transportation facilities, or the shared micromobility system through future micromobility program update reports to Regional Council.

The approved 2023 Regional budget includes funding under the TransformWR Climate Action Plan for one additional staff position to support the shared micromobility program. This new position will work closely with the shared micromobility system operator and Project Team to support the accelerated delivery of enhancements to the shared micromobility program as well as day-to-day operation of the program and several other low energy transportation initiatives from the TransformWR Climate Action

Plan. The Project Team will continue to provide support with strategic planning and coordination with staff groups from their respective organizations.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Staff will report to Regional Council no later than the end of the first riding season on the operator's performance and progress towards achieving the overall program goals.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Neuron Vehicles with Description of Key Features

Appendix B: Neuron Program Operations at Time of Launch

Appendix C: Shared Micromobility Feasibility Study Map of Proposed Service Area and Phasing

Prepared By: Julie Belanger, Principal Planner, Transit Services

Blair Allen, Acting Manager, Transit Services

Reviewed By: Doug Spooner, Director, Transit Services

Approved By: Mathieu Goetzke, Commissioner, Transportation Services