

Region of Waterloo
Transportation Services
Transit Services

To: Planning and Works Committee
Meeting Date: February 6, 2024
Report Title: Update on Shared Micromobility Program 2023 Riding Season

1. Recommendation

For information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

This report provides updates on the first season of commercial e-bike and e-scooter share operated by Neuron Mobility. Staff have exercised the renewal option of the Council-approved Licence Agreement for 2024.

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 first year of operations of the program is considered an overall success (see Appendix A) by the Shared Micromobility Project Team working with Neuron Mobility. It is also one of the largest single operator programs in Canada, and the first program coordinated across multiple municipalities.
- According to the monitoring platform used by the Shared Micromobility Project Team, over 190,000 rides were taken, totalling over 360,000 kilometers travelled, and resulting in up to 12 tonnes in carbon dioxide savings. The popularity of the shared system led to the accelerated expansion of the service area in many areas throughout Waterloo Region (see Appendix B). Neuron estimates that the program injected \$8.2 million into the Waterloo Region economy.
- Based on program data and feedback received, the Project Team priorities for 2024 include working with community partners (e.g. post-secondary institutions, etc...) and Neuron on outreach and education, planning for service area expansion opportunities in alignment with the 2020 Micromobility Feasibility Study, and working with Neuron to improve geofences and parking compliance.

- Project Team members will have exploratory discussions on coordinating campaign(s) on e-scooter etiquette and/or rules of the road in the upcoming months.
- The Project Team is currently working with Neuron on the 2024 service area expansion.
 - There is a new tool on the [Shared Micromobility Program](#) page that allows users to submit recommendations for Neuron stations. Station recommendations outside of the service area will be used to inform future expansions.
- Neuron has confirmed a low percentage of trips resulted in misparked vehicles, which is in part due to the program requirement to end trips in designated stations. Staff are working with City partners to identify locations to deploy dedicated parking infrastructure, such as parking mats and corrals, to help riders end their trips correctly at the designated stations. As per the Licence Agreement, Neuron has 15-60 minutes to respond to misparked vehicles to avoid paying Liquidated Damages.
- Equity initiatives will become a greater priority as the program matures. Staff have had initial conversations with Neuron about integrating adaptive vehicles (i.e. vehicles that are adapted for use by people with limited mobility or disabilities) into the fleet, and will continue to investigate potential approaches in 2024.
- Region and City staff have renewed the agreement with Neuron, and Neuron plan to redeploy its fleet for an April 2024 launch (see Appendix C). The Project Team is currently working with Neuron on the 2024 service area expansion.
- The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) e-scooter pilot terminates on January 1, 2025. The Region's Licence Agreement's renewal terms covers the life of the current MTO pilot. The current program with Neuron could be renewed for a 2025 riding season if the MTO chooses to extend the pilot.
- The Province announced plans to redefine e-bikes into three classes (bicycle-style, moped, and motorcycle-style) under the 2021 Moving Ontarians More Safely Act. However, no regulatory changes have been made at this time. Staff are waiting for further direction from the MTO prior to undertaking a public consultation program and making Traffic and Parking Bylaw recommendations to expand permissions for certain types of e-bikes and cargo e-bikes. Under the Region's current bylaw e-bikes are considered motor-assisted vehicles and are not permitted on Regionally-owned Boulevard Multi-Use Paths (BMUPs), and Neuron would be required turn off the e-assist so their fleet operates as "pedal bikes" on these corridors.

- However, in Summer 2023 the City of Kitchener passed a motion to update their Traffic and Parking Bylaw to allow for Neuron e-bikes to travel on trails BMUPs with 15km/h e-assist as an interim measure while awaiting clarity from the MTO on regulatory changes for personal e-bikes. Region and City staff have confirmed the Region can defer to City bylaws for BMUPs/multi-use trails on Region right-of-way owned and maintained by the City, and permit Neuron e-bikes to operate on select multi-use paths with speed-limited e-assist. A preliminary review of the fall 2023 public consultation suggests there is interest to allow Neuron e-bikes on trails system-wide, similar to Kitchener. Staff will work with the Cities to align permissions for Neuron e-bikes in early 2024.

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.

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 the 2019 bike share pilot, the 2020 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).

Regional and Area Municipal staff receive updates on the micromobility program through the Shared Micromobility Working Group, Traffic Coordinating Committee, Inter-municipal Partnership for Active Transportation, and leadership updates.

Public: 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 fees to offset any program costs to the Region/Cities and to fund program improvements supportive of the Region's goals for the program.

The Region's 2023 Grand River Transit Operating Budget included a provision of \$85,000 of revenue and expenses (net zero tax levy impact) for Micromobility

Integration. In 2023, approximately \$62,000 was collected in trip and vehicle fees from Neuron and approximately \$15,000 was spent on operating expenses. Operating expenses were marginal in the first year of the program as the Project Team prioritized launching the service and assessing program sustainability and future needs. No liquidated damages were collected from Neuron's refundable deposit for non-compliances as Neuron was responsive to staff requests.

The Region's Approved 2024 Grand River Transit Operating Budget includes a provision of \$65,000 of both revenue and expenses (net zero tax levy impact) for Micromobility Integration. The Project Team will continue to collaborate on program development initiatives scaled to the vehicle fees collected from Neuron in 2024.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

The Project Team will continue working with Neuron on addressing the feedback received from users and non-users. Staff will report to Regional Council after the 2024 riding season.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Progress on Shared Micromobility Program Goals

Appendix B: Map of Service Area

Appendix C: Letter from Neuron confirming interest in returning to Waterloo Region in 2024

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