COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Distributed September 23, 2022		Subject
SC1.	Memorandum from the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development, dated September 20, 2022.	Micromobility Update

STAFF COMMUNICATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

SC 1
Staff Communication
Council - September 28, 2022.

DATE: September 20, 2022

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Vince Musacchio, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Development

RE: **STAFF COMMUNICATION – September 28, 2022 Council Meeting**
MICROMOBILITY UPDATE

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Staff communication is to:

1. Provide a status update on micromobility in Vaughan since the establishment of the micromobility framework in September 2021;
2. Summarize the public education and outreach activities to date; and
3. Advise on upcoming micromobility initiatives in fall 2022 and early 2023.

2. Background

Staff provided a communication to Mayor and Members of Council last September on the establishment of a micromobility framework (SC 4 Staff Communication CW(1) - September 14, 2021). This Staff Communication summarized the steps taken to develop the micromobility framework and identified the need for and next steps towards creating a broader New Mobility Policy.

The following activities have been initiated since the last Staff Communication:

1. Outreach and education

With the growth of micromobility device usage in the City, staff have received increasing reports of micromobility usage from residents through official City communication channels. Reported devices include e-scooters, golf carts, vespas, and dirt bikes. In response, the following activities were conducted:

i. Worked with Access Vaughan to respond to Frequently Asked Questions and to develop a short survey to collect feedback when residents report on micromobility incidents
ii. Developed city webpage for Micromobility where residents can find information and latest news about the regulations and safe operations of these devices
iii. Worked with York Region Police to increase patrolling in areas where resident concerns were noted, and to provide educational micromobility postcards that clarify where certain devices can and cannot operate.

iv. Public Service Announcements as well as accompanying Council Packages and social media messaging have been issued specific to micromobility and embedded in cycling safety and "You Asked, We Answered" public service announcements

v. Attended "Concerts in the Park" events to:
   - Educate residents on how to safely operate bicycles and other micromobility devices.
   - Solicit input on concerns and feedback on micromobility via an in-person survey and online survey, which was posted at www.vaughan.ca/micromobility)

2. Gather Information

It is important to learn from municipalities who have allowed the operations of private and shared e-scooters or e-bikes on their experiences with public acceptance, enforcement challenges, gaps in current legislation, complaints, public space obstruction, accessibility concerns, accident rates, perceived safety from auto and pedestrian perspectives, liability concerns and claims. The efforts to gather information to date include:

i. 2019 to current day - Municipal collaboration:
Staff have been collaborating with other municipalities through a working group chaired by York Region staff and continue to do so on an ad-hoc basis.

ii. November 2021 – Youth Survey:
Conducted micromobility survey at Maple High School to understand the popularity and acceptance of micromobility devices in youth. 44 students participated in the online survey.
   - 45% survey participates used a micromobility device, 25% own the device.
   - 71% would like to try/ continue riding micromobility device in the future.
   - 41% prefer to ride on sidewalk, while another 41% prefer to ride in bike lanes.
   - 77% participants feel safe riding a device

iii. June 2022 Request for Information to solicit shared electric devices solution:
Staff released a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit shared micromobility solutions from companies within different contexts in the City (such as residential areas, industrial, intensification, etc.) This RFI helped explore the opportunities of shared e-scooter/ ebikes as alternative mode of travel for short distance trips.

iv. June to August 2022 – In-person Survey
Staff solicited input, concerns and feedback on micromobility by conducting an in-person survey at the Concerts in the Park events.

3. Research and Analysis

White Paper on the accommodation of e-scooter/ e-bikes on existing cycling facilities

In September this year, staff engaged a consultant to investigate the accommodation of motorized micromobilty devices on existing and future cycling facilities. This investigation will be summarized in a white paper with the following deliverables:

i. Summary of Lessons Learned from E-scooter Pilots and Micromobility Programs across Canada
ii. Cycling Facility Design Recommendations to Accommodate Micromobility
iii. Micromobility Device Policy Recommendations
iv. Engagement and Education Recommendations

As part of the exercise, staff have reached out to ten (10) municipalities across Canada to learn about the changes and adaptation needed to accommodate these devices which will be incorporated into the summary of lessons learned deliverable.

3. Analysis

What have we heard from Vaughan residents?

Staff have collected 87 resident surveys and 44 targeted youth surveys.
The following are some key findings:

1. E-scooter users are more likely to own their devices compared to other devices
   - Online respondents are representatives of e-scooter riders, who are more likely to own the device and are more incline to online communications. In-person respondents are representatives of e-bikes riders, who are less likely to own the device when compared to other mode of micromobility.
   - 41% of the respondents have used a motorized micromobility device.
   - E-scooters are the most popular device online respondents reported they have used in the City while the most popular device used by in-person respondents are e-bikes.
   - Most of the online respondents who have used e-scooters own the device, while only half of the in-person respondents who have used e-bikes own the device.
2. Both online and in-person respondents generally feel that micromobility devices can be used safely in the city.
   - Respondents have identified a number of reasons that may lead them to feel unsafe, including not knowing where micromobility devices should be operated, the high top-speeds of micromobility devices, and when operating micromobility devices in mixed traffic on the road. These reasons coincide with inquiries and concerns staff have received through Access Vaughan, emails, and in-person outreach events.

- 74% of all respondents strongly or somewhat agree that motorized micromobility devices are safe to use in the city.

- The top three (3) reasons for respondents to feel unsafe using these devices in the city are:
    - Operating in mixed traffic on the road
    - The speed of the micromobility devices
    - Lack of clarity on where to ride micromobility devices

3. Respondents have primarily indicated that they would like to see these devices accommodated in cycling facilities separate from pedestrians and motorists

    - Respondents have identified facilities that are separated from motorists to operate these devices is preferred.

    - When respondents were asked where they think motorized micromobility devices should operate (may choose more than one answer), the top three choices for both online and in-person respondents are:
        - Bike Lanes / Cycle Tracks (87% of the respondents)
        - Multi-use paths (31% of the respondents)
        - Trails in parks or forests (28% of the respondents)

What have we gathered from the e-scooter/e-bike companies?

The Request for Information released by staff was intended to survey the shared micromobility service provider landscape as of this year. Since 2018 when shared electric kick-style scooters (e-scooters) were first broadly introduced in North America, their increasing popularity has required the industry to mature rapidly to address the needs of riders and safety concerns. Some key improvements to the shared e-scooters/e-bikes industry include the following:

1. Improved controls to reduce obstructing or cluttering the public right of way
    - Service providers typically require that devices will need to either docked at a station or parked at a “corral” at the end of a trip. If devices are not parked in the appropriate places, the trip will not end (it will keep charging the user until the trip ends) or the vendor will penalize the user with a penalty or suspend the user’s account.

2. Improved ability to regulate where these devices can operate according to the regulations of different municipalities
    - The quality of geofencing technology has greatly improved. Using this technology, when a device is approaching a space that is prohibited by the municipality, device will prompt rider with and audio alert. When the rider enters prohibited space, device slow to a stop.
    - Video recording has also been used to complement the regulation of speed and operating space where geofencing is limited.

3. Additional protections for the safety of the rider and other users

- Each e-scooter device is equipped with a helmet, which is unlocked once the rider begins using the device. The rider must take a picture using the vendor's app with helmet on, once the picture is verified, the device will unlock for riding.
- Devices are equipped with a noise generation system to alert other users in the vicinity.

4. Additional promotion of safe and courteous operation of the devices
    - Vendors have programs to work with schools and police to inform the public about safe and courteous riding
    - Vendors have supported education and training initiatives by partnering with police services and bylaw enforcement personnel and having them operate e-scooters or e-bikes, improving their operational availability and public visibility
    - Vendors reward good riding behavior with free or discounted rides

5. On-going promotion of e-scooters or e-bikes as first/last mile travel solution in support of transit service
    - Vendors can partner with businesses, transit agencies and municipalities to align service models to address issues and achieve sustainable travel objectives, examples include the following:
        - Discounted fees for students, seniors or low-income households
        - Discounts when connecting to transit
        - Adjust device availability near transit stations to address fluctuating transit demand

4. Next Steps

With the key findings obtained from the micromobility surveys, it is apparent that there is an opportunity to accommodate motorized micromobility devices safely and sustainably in existing or future separated cycling facilities. The following outlines on-going and upcoming work to accommodate and manage these devices in the City:

- Upon the completion of the white paper, which will present recommendations on bylaws, policies or facility improvements needed, staff will report to Council with recommendations and potentially seek approval to allow these devices on the recommended facilities.
- Staff continue to work with economic development and BCLPS staff, businesses and major employers in the city to explore areas to pilot shared micromobility to test the viability and sustainability of this service as an alternative mode of transportation for short discretionary trips. Should a viable service concept be identified, staff will seek Council approval for the potential shared micromobility pilot project.

For more information, contact Selma Hubjer, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management, at extension 8674 or by email Selma.Hubjer@vaughan.ca

Approved by

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