

Subject: Bike Share Program Recommendation and Direction

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Report to Transportation Committee on 22 June 2023

and Council 12 July 2023

Submitted on June 9, 2023 by Councillor Shawn Menard

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Rapport au Comité des transports

le 22 juin 2023

et au Conseil le 12 juillet 2023

Soumis le 9 juin 2023 par Conseiller S. Menard

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REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Transportation Committee recommend that City Council endorses the development of a bike share program this term of council, and that City Council direct staff to:

- a. Update the information on bike sharing that was reported in 2021 as part of the Public Bike Parking Strategy; and**
- b. Incorporate the relevant findings of current studies being carried out by Envirocentre/Ottawa Climate Action Fund and by Transportation Association Canada on shared micromobility services; and**

- c. Report back to Transportation Committee in 2025, with recommendations on an appropriate bike share model that would serve the needs of the City**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des transports recommande que le Conseil municipal approuve l'élaboration d'un programme de vélo-partage pendant la durée de ce mandat du Conseil, et que le Conseil municipal demande au personnel de :

- a. Mettre à jour l'information sur le partage de vélos qui a été rapportée en 2021 dans le cadre de la Stratégie de stationnement public pour vélos; et**
- b. Intégrer les constatations pertinentes des études actuelles menées par EnviroCentre et le Fonds d'action climatique d'Ottawa ainsi que par l'Association des transports du Canada sur les services de micromobilité partagée; et**
- c. Rendre compte au Comité des transports en 2025, avec des recommandations sur un modèle approprié de vélo-partage qui répondrait aux besoins de la Ville.**

BACKGROUND

Bike share programs are a micromobility transportation option that provides transportation alternatives, allows for trip-chaining and helps solve the “last-mile” transit issue. Bike share programs can be operated as docked systems (bicycles must be returned to one of the bike share docking stations to end a trip) or as a dock-less system (bicycles can be left in public spaces when ending a trip).

The concept of an Ottawa bike share program is being presented in the context of the city parking strategy. As noted in the *Ottawa Public Bike Parking Strategy, March 2021*:

Bike share provides the potential for a partnership with the implementation of bike parking and support for bike infrastructure. In this way, the accommodation of bike share with public bike parking can support additional growth in the cycling user group within the City.

Bike share systems and public parking, especially high-capacity unsecured bike parking, will frequently conflict over available space at critical destinations. To this end, when possible coordination of space supports both users, including the potential shared bike like is achieved in the City of Hamilton. This type of coordination can be achieved through increasing capacity and mapping of bike parking throughout the life cycle of the bike parking operation.

Bike share programs have operated in Ottawa in the past. Under the supervision of the National Capital Commission, the Capital Bixi Bike program operated from 2009 to 2013. Subsequently, operations such as Right Bike, VeloGo and CycleHop operated at various times, using different models. CycleHop ceased operations in Ottawa in 2018. Bike share has not returned to Ottawa, since. Both the docked and the dock-less model have been tried in Ottawa.

On April 7, 2021, staff presented the Public Bike Parking Strategy to the Transportation Committee. As part of that report, staff prepared an analysis on Bike Share options for the city, in response to motion brought forward by Councillor Menard on June 3, 2020. The report investigated four possible bike share models that could be considered for Ottawa:

- City-owned and managed;
- City-owned, contractor-managed;
- Non-profit business; and
- Profit business.

This was a preliminary review by staff. More in-depth review would be required before recommendations or planning of a bike share program in Ottawa could be finalized.

DISCUSSION

Bike share programs have been growing in popularity throughout Canada and North America. In cities like Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal, Philadelphia and Washington, bike share programs have proven successful, expanding their service delivery and providing a low-cost, efficient transportation alternative for residents. Some of these programs have been operating for a decade or longer, proving enduring success.

In 2023, the cities of Hamilton and Montreal both announced their bike share program would be operating year-round.

Having had limited, but fleeting, success with bike share programs in Ottawa, it could benefit Ottawa to learn from successful models throughout North America and, especially, Canadian cities with a similar context, like Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton.

Further, having facilitated the deployment of a successful e-scooter program over the past three years, the city has a local example of a successful micromobility program. While an e-scooter program is not perfectly analogous to a bike share program, it will offer valuable lessons-learned in terms of need and operation, especially in terms of parking needs and avoiding sidewalk clutter.

Implementing a bike share program would align with the city's new Transportation Master Plan and its goals to reduce the dependence on private automobile use. *Policy 4-4* in the TMP specifically identifies bike share as a complement to public transit and a means to allow greater transportation choice, while also noting that the city has an important role to play in roll-out of any new micromobility systems:

Policy 4-4 Leverage the Shared Mobility Marketplace to Achieve City Objectives

Shared mobility allows users to access transportation services on an as-needed basis, rather than using a personally-owned vehicle or device. In recent years, shared mobility has grown to encompass a variety of transportation modes including carsharing, ridehailing, and "micro-mobility" services such as bike sharing, e-bike sharing and e-scooter sharing. It also includes "mobility-as-a-service", whereby users can access multiple public and private mobility services (e.g. public transit, ridehailing, taxis, carshare, bike share, scooter share) on demand, through a single platform and payment channel. While shared mobility

may be provided (at least in part) by private companies, the City has an important role in ensuring that new mobility solutions align with the goals and objectives of the TMP and *Official Plan*.

Shared mobility services complement public transit and facilitate a lifestyle where all types of trips can be made without the need to own a car. Bike share, e-bike share, and e-scooter services can provide zero- or low-emission alternatives for a variety of trips including first mile / last mile connections to rapid transit. Based on research in other cities, approximately 10-35% of bike share users are typically attracted from auto modes³⁴. Similarly, ridehailing and carsharing can be used to connect to public transit, and also facilitate trips for which public transit may not be a viable option (e.g. a late-night trip or a trip to a destination outside the city); in some studies, carsharing has been shown to reduce overall car ownership rates³⁵. However, shared mobility services can also have negative impacts. For example, fleets of shared bikes or e-scooters require space in the street furniture zone and can create accessibility barriers if incorrectly parked on sidewalks. Ridehailing has been shown to increase congestion and the amount of vehicular travel in major cities.

The City will play an active role in the shared mobility environment in order to advance transportation system objectives and mitigate potential negative consequences. Shared mobility services must prioritize safety, comfort and accessibility for both users and non-users. They must also support the City's equity goals. The City will create appropriate regulatory frameworks, monitor the outcomes of these services, and refine its approach as needed. The City will also aim to leverage innovation to minimize any negative impacts of shared mobility.

The City will continue to explore opportunities to provide bike share and other shared micro-mobility services in Ottawa, including through partnerships with private companies, recognizing these services as a critical link to the City's rapid transit system. Where warranted, pilots may be undertaken to ensure such services meet the City's objectives prior to more widespread adoption. Further, the City will support carshare use citywide, such as providing dedicated carshare spaces at transit stations, recreation facilities, and other City facilities as appropriate. New service models such as free floating carshare will also be enabled where feasible, to support more residents in living car-free or car-light. Finally, collaboration between the City of Ottawa, Ville de Gatineau, and National Capital Commission on shared mobility services and their regulation will enable more efficient and coherent regional mobility systems.

Currently, two additional studies by outside parties are underway which should also be considered by city staff in the planning of a bike share program in Ottawa.

First, Envirocentre and Ottawa Climate Action Fund (OCAF) are embarking on a *Future Bike Share Ottawa* program. This nascent project will seek to gain a better understanding of bike share programs, including the strategies, objectives and conditions that facilitate successful programs, as well as the infrastructure, technical needs and costs of such programs. The first step in the project will be completed this fall, which will allow staff to review and integrate their findings into a potential bike share program in the future.

The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) are conducting a review of shared micromobility services across Canada, relying on lessons learned from past and current bike share programs. Like the Envirocentre/OCAF project, this review will provide valuable information and guidance to city staff to determine a proper implementation model for a bike share program in Ottawa. The study is expected to be completed in early 2024, allowing integration for a bike share program to be implemented this term of council.

More work remains before a bike share model can be identified that would suit the needs and context of Ottawa. With the city's experience with micromobility, as well as the previous work completed by staff, it would be prudent for the city to further investigate a potential bike share program for the city. Further, it would be prudent to time this work so that the result of other bike share studies can be considered when developing recommendations for our city.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the report recommendations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services is aware of this report and will be at Committee to address any legal questions that may arise.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This would be a city-wide issue, I believe.

Departmental Comments

While micromobility options, such as bike sharing, can potentially support the last mile connection to transit, it may be premature for the City to commit to the implementation of a publicly-funded program at this time. There may be duplication of efforts because there are two important studies currently underway that will provide the City with additional and important clarity related to a potential bike share program in Ottawa:

Envirocentre/OCAF - Future Bike Share Ottawa Study:

- To review conditions that lead to successful bike share Programs
- To understand the opportunities, implications and next steps for the region
- To understand the 'why' – to clarify objectives which may lead to follow-up work to assess technical and cost-related details
- The current phase of study is expected to be completed in Fall 2023

Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) - Review of Shared Micromobility Services in Canadian Communities:

- To synthesize and document lessons learned from Canadian organizations (re: role of shared micromobility services, key opportunities and how micromobility services can be leveraged to improve transportation systems)
- To explore system sizing, operating models, financial needs, transit integration, etc.
- The study is expected to be completed in early 2024

Furthermore, the information that staff provided to Council in 2021 (concurrent with the [Public Bike Parking Strategy](#)), has good information and provides a solid directional lead in terms of a potential bike share system, but it was a preliminary review that did not cover the issue to the depth that it is currently being explored through the above referenced Envirocentre/OCAF and TAC studies.

Staff recommend that Council wait for the outcome of these studies prior to pursuing any specific model. Subsequently, staff will report to Transportation Committee with information from the studies and develop recommendations on a go-forward plan for the City. Given the timelines of the two studies, and to properly consider all City-specific details, including financial implications, staff can report back in 2025 at the earliest.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

No specific accessibility impacts have been identified.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

No specific risk implications have been identified.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

No rural implications/ not applicable.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Not applicable

DISPOSITION

The Public Works will take appropriate action based on the recommendations made by the Committee and Council.