

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**Shared-Use Scooter Pilot Project****Report Purpose**

To provide background information on shared-use e-scooters and request that Priorities Committee recommend one or both of the options below to Council.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

Report***Background on e-scooters***

"Electric scooters" or "e-scooters" are small, motorized devices that have steering handlebars and a footboard mounted on wheels. They are "miniature vehicles" governed by the *Alberta Traffic Safety Act (the "Act") and its Regulations*.

Strathcona County has been approached by multiple shared-use e-scooter vendors to consider permitting the vendors to operate within Sherwood Park. These vendors rent e-scooters to patrons through "shared-use" programs and perform related services, such as maintaining the vehicles.

Under the *Act and Regulations*, electric scooters and other small, motorized miniature vehicles (micro-mobility devices) are prohibited for use on Alberta highways, which include places such as sidewalks and any place whether publicly or privately owned that the public is ordinarily entitled or permitted to use for the passage or parking of vehicles. These rules are summarized in the "Alberta Rules & Regulations Applying to Small Vehicles" prepared by Alberta Transportation (relevant excerpt Enclosure 1, pages 20-21). Electric scooters are sold and readily available, but currently may only be used in the County on private property that is not classified as a highway.

Shared-use e-scooter vendors can operate shared-used programs that allow customers to rent and ride e-scooters by applying for an exemption permit under the *Act* through the provincial government. The vendor must acquire approval from the municipality as part of the exemption process, to operate within defined and accepted parameters that best suit the community needs and expectations.

Over the last four years, shared-use e-scooter vendors have been operating in various municipalities (both large and small) throughout Canada and Alberta, primarily through temporary or pilot programs. These pilot programs generally involve the municipality regulating the e-scooter vendors to ensure certain operational parameters are met. Some examples of publicly available versions of licensing agreements (and a related business bylaw) that are entered into between municipalities and e-scooter rental vendors are provided in Enclosures 2 and 3.

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Options to move forward on e-scooters

Administration recommends the following options to move forward on shared-use e-scooters within Strathcona County. The options are not mutually exclusive and either or both could be recommended by Priorities Committee to Council.

Option A: recommend that Council direct administration to develop a pilot project

Priorities Committee could recommend that Council direct administration to develop a proposal to implement a shared-use e-scooter pilot project in Sherwood Park for Council's consideration.

A shared-use e-scooter pilot in Strathcona County is consistent with the strategic goals of 'Responsible Development' and 'Healthy and Safe Community' as defined in the County's updated Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026. It is also in alignment with themes of accessibility, sustainability, equity, active transportation, and efficiency woven into the Municipal Development Plan, the Integrated Transportation Master Plan, Transit Master Plan, Social Framework, and Trails Strategy.

Extensive public engagement has been undertaken in the development of all of these governance documents. SCOOP polls and questions related to the use of e-scooters have also taken place. As such, no further public engagement is recommended prior to undertaking a shared-use e-scooter pilot project, should Council support its implementation. A summary of related public engagement results is included in Enclosure 5.

Should a pilot project be undertaken, public engagement would be a key element of the evaluation to assess the long-term support and efficacy of the project in Strathcona County. While the pilot will provide the County with an opportunity to evaluate the operation within the community, vendors ultimately will determine the economic viability of operations. Economic viability will not be a factor in the County's assessment of the pilot.

If this is the recommendation of Priorities Committee, and if Council accepts the recommendation, then administration anticipates it would provide the following:

- a detailed proposal for the pilot project that would include specific recommendations such as the operational parameters, geographic restrictions, length of the pilot, and proposed number of vendors
- if a pilot project proceeds, a shared use e-scooter bylaw will also be required

Option B: recommend that Council direct administration to engage with the provincial government on e-scooter regulation

In addition to recommending a pilot project, Priorities Committee could recommend that Council direct further engagement with the provincial government on the issue of e-scooter regulation.

Currently, shared-use e-scooter programs are being developed and piloted by municipalities and are being authorized through exemptions under the *Act*. This creates at least three concerns with respect to the future longevity of any approved e-scooter program.

- First, while flexibility to address local concerns is important, the lack of a province-wide approach means there is the possibility of differing municipal approaches to e-scooters, which could create inconsistency.

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- Second, e-scooter vendors are allowed to operate through exemptions that may be revoked or modified, which could create uncertainty as to the terms upon which e-scooter services will be available on a long-term basis.
- Third, unless another type of exemption is enacted, use of privately-owned e-scooters on highways remains prohibited under the *Act and Regulations*. The current exemption-based process could create confusion for the public about the use of privately-owned e-scooters.

For these reasons, administration recommends further engagement with the provincial government on the issue of long-term e-scooter regulation.

This engagement could take the form of some or all of the following:

- a letter from Council to the Minister of Transportation and/or Minister of Municipal Affairs
- working with Alberta Urban Municipalities Association on a resolution advocating for a provincial approach on e-scooters and miniature vehicle regulations

Other Impacts

Policy: SER-013-002 Transportation Systems Management for the Sherwood Park Residential Area

Financial/Budget: n/a

Legislative/Legal: Alberta *Traffic Safety Act* and *Operator Licensing and Vehicle Control Regulation, Municipal Government Act*, if approved, a proposed shared use e-scooter bylaw to support implementing the program

Interdepartmental: All Departments

Master Plan/Framework: Integrated Transportation Mater Plan, Transit Master Plan, Environmental Framework, Social Framework, MDP

Communication Plan

Option A: develop a pilot project

Prior to the implementation of an e-scooter pilot, an extensive communication plan would need to be undertaken.

Development of recommendations for an e-scooter pilot would include engagement of both internal and external stakeholders, including:

- RCMP and Enforcement Services
- Emergency Services
- Transit
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Recreation, Parks and Culture
- Transportation and Agriculture Services
- Family and Community Services
- Chamber of Commerce
- School boards

Should Council support a pilot project, additional public engagement would occur to assess the public perception and acceptance of the e-scooter project within Strathcona County.

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Option B: engage with the provincial government on e-scooter regulation

Should Council choose to engage with the province on these issues, additional stakeholder consultation will be required, including with Intergovernmental Affairs, Alberta Municipalities, and other municipalities in the province.

Enclosures

- 1 Rules and Regulations Applying to Small Vehicles (attention to pages 20-21)
- 2 City of Edmonton License Agreement – Sample
- 3 Red Deer License Agreement and relevant bylaw excerpt
- 4 Summary of related public engagement results