

Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of March 7, 2023

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** February 23, 2024
From: William Doyle, Acting Director, Engineering and Public Works
Subject: Provincial Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

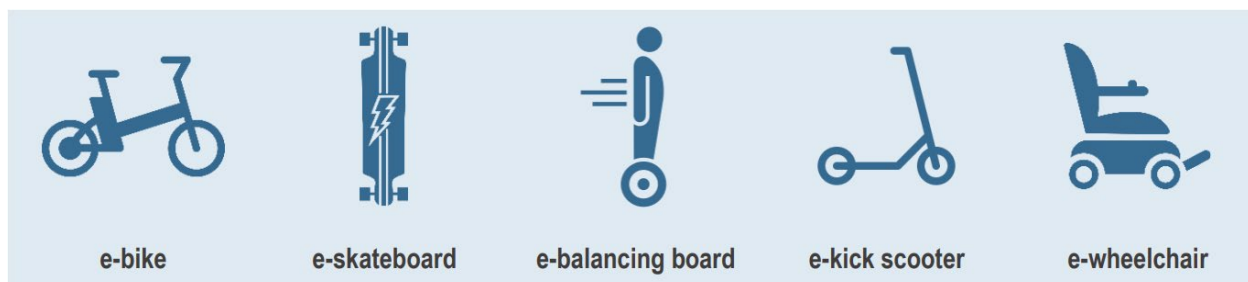
1. Instruct the Director of Engineering and Public Works to notify the Province that the City wishes to participate in the Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project, starting on April 5, 2024, and ending on April 5, 2028; and;
2. Direct staff to report back in 2026 on the interim findings of the Pilot Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Personal electric mobility devices have become a ubiquitous form of transport in Victoria over the past five years. Just under 30% of bicycle trips within the Capital Regional District (CRD) are made by e-bikes, despite them accounting for only 10% of the stock of bikes. The surge in e-bicycle usage can be related to several factors including increased market penetration, the introduction of provincial financial incentives, rapid expansion of e-bike styles (such as cargo and trikes), and the City's expanding network of safe and comfortable infrastructure.

Other e-mobility devices, such as e-skateboards, e-balancing boards, e-kick scooters and e-wheelchairs (shown in the figure below) are also increasing in popularity. According to the 2022 CRD Origin and Destination Survey, an estimated 1.8% of households in the city now report having access to at least one e-micromobility device.

Collectively, these electrified micromobility devices present a significant opportunity to transform mobility in Victoria. Uptake of these devices is expected to continue to increase with an aging population, improvements to battery technologies, and the expansion of active transportation infrastructure and device parking solutions. Finally, these technologies enable "first mile/last mile" options to extend the reach of public transit and support longer distance regional and inter-community trips.



As part of a continued effort by the B.C. Government to modernize the Motor Vehicle Act, the Province has extended their existing Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project for municipalities and First Nations to test the use of e-kick scooters on public roadways.

The new pilot includes terms that make it easier for municipalities to participate with an improved focus on road safety outputs. While the pilot project is still limited to e-kick scooters, other municipalities in the Capital Region are now considering participation.

The provincial government is using the results of the pilot project to determine if and how e-kick scooters should be authorized for permanent use in B.C. Additional amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act are also being considered by the B.C. Government in the coming months which may present further opportunities to pilot other devices such as electric mobility scooters and wheelchairs and could improve options and travel experience for people with disabilities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the provincial Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project and seek Council's endorsement for the City's participation in the pilot.

BACKGROUND

In 2021, the provincial government established a three-year pilot project to test the use of e-kick scooters on roadways and pathways in B.C. communities. At the time, the City decided not to participate due to high resource requirements, lack of regional interest, and the limited scope of only allowing e-kick scooter technology (vs piloting several different micromobility devices, including electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters). In response to Council direction, staff advanced other transportation priorities such as reducing local street speed limits, implementation of the All Ages and Abilities ("AAA") bike and roll network and improving secure parking options.

The initial e-kick scooter pilot was scheduled to end in April 2024; however, it has been extended for a further 4 years until 2028. The new pilot includes updated terms that reduce the administrative and resource requirements for municipalities to participate. The B.C. government is anticipated to use the results of the seven-year pilot project to determine if and how e-kick scooters should be authorized for permanent use under the Motor Vehicle Act.

Policy Alignment

Participation in the pilot aligns with approved direction in Go Victoria, the Climate Leadership Plan and the EV Charging & E-Mobility Strategy. By expanding options for residents to legally use these devices, the City can support further mode shift and help reduce household transportation costs for residents.

Enrolling in the pilot project aligns with approved policy objectives, legitimizes existing users, and provides a convenient "first mile/last mile" option to extend the reach of public transit for inter-municipal and inter-community travel. Participation will provide the City with access to a peer resource network to share experiences, challenges, and opportunities.

Pilot Terms

The pilot framework includes mandatory safety specifications for devices, including motor/speed limiters, power sources and lights. Users operating in pilot communities are required to wear helmets and have the same rights and responsibilities as a cyclist under the Motor Vehicle Act. There are some restrictions on where these devices can be permitted such as provincial highways, roadways with speed limits over 50km/h, or on the sidewalk.

The City does not anticipate additional resources will be required for participation and enforcement efforts would fall under the purview of Victoria Police's traffic unit. Staff will utilize existing budgets, programs and partnerships to encourage safe, courteous travel among e-kick scooter users and work with the CRD and other municipalities to collect and share available data.

Due to provincial legislative amendments of December 2023, as of April 5, 2024, there will be no requirement to amend the Streets and Traffic Bylaw to participate in the pilot. Municipalities may, however, introduce prohibitions on the use of e-kick scooters on certain roadways or pathways. Existing municipal prohibitions such as riding on the sidewalk would apply to e-kick scooters too. Staff are not currently contemplating any bylaw changes to allow shared e-kick scooter services or bylaw changes to limit e-kick scooter use beyond what is outlined in the provincial pilot terms. E-kick Scooter users would be permitted in all existing bike lanes and on all streets with a speed limit of 50km/h or lower within the City. Proposals may be brought forward for Council's future consideration based on feedback from the public and agency partners including Victoria Police.

Upon launch of the pilot, the City would share information with the public about the legal use of e-kick scooters on roadways and designated pathways. Any feedback gathered from the public, agency partners, or staff during the pilot period will be shared with the Province on an annual basis through to 2028.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1: (Recommended)

- 1. Instruct the Director of Engineering and Public Works to notify the Province that the City wishes to participate in the Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project, starting on April 5, 2024, and ending on April 5, 2028; and;**
- 2. Direct staff to report back in 2026 on the interim findings of the Pilot Project.**

Under this option, The City would proceed with participating in the pilot which legitimizes existing users and provides a convenient "first mile/last mile" option to extend the reach of public transit for inter-municipal and inter-community travel. Participation will provide the City with access to a peer resource network to share experiences, challenges, and opportunities.

Option 2: (Not Recommended)

- 1. Do not participate in the Provincial Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project.**

Under this option, existing users would not be authorized and the City would not benefit from expanding transportation options for residents to legally use these devices, supporting further mode shift, and gaining access to insightful data and experiences from other municipalities.

Accessibility Impact Statement

This Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project does not include other micro-mobility devices, electric mobility scooters and/or e-wheelchairs which have been previously advocated for by the City based on support from the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Although the pilot project is currently limited to e-kick scooters, additional amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act are currently being reviewed by the B.C. Government and staff anticipate future changes may provide additional opportunities to test the use of these devices on public roadways in the future. Staff will continue to advocate to the Province for the inclusion of use of a wider variety of micro-mobility devices on city streets as part of a modernized Motor Vehicle Act.

2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan

The project aligns with Council's Strategic Priority on Transportation.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Participation in the pilot project will be accommodating with existing resources.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The project supports several policy directions in Chapter 7 of the Official Community Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

Participation in the provincial Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project aligns with City goals and priorities to encourage a shift to low-carbon travel modes and will contribute to the development of future provincial regulations.

Respectfully submitted,

Ross Kenny
Assistant Director, Engineering and
Public Works - Transportation

William Doyle
Acting Director, Engineering and Public Works

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

Attachment

FAQs for Municipal Governments – Electric Kick Scooter Pilot Project