

Council to consider expanding vehicle fleet with proposed e-bike pilot

(Penticton, BC – April 1, 2022) – A report recommending the introduction of electric bikes (e-bikes) into the City’s vehicle fleet is set to come before Council during its April 5 meeting.

The proposed purchase and select use of four ‘cargo style’ e-bikes was identified as a sustainable alternative to gas powered vehicles which, at the present time, are difficult to procure due to global supply chain shortages and expensive to operate with current fuel prices. If approved, the e-bikes will be used for a variety of tasks under a pilot project, to evaluate their suitability for the City’s operation going forward.

“There are a number of occasions where transportation via bike can be incorporated into the work routines of certain staff who, traditionally, have used pick-up trucks to perform their duties,” said the City’s Public Works Manager, Len Robson. “By specifically purchasing cargo style e-bikes that provide riders with power assisted mobility and extra carrying capacity, traditional barriers involving steep terrain, personal endurance and poor storage for tools and equipment are effectively removed from the operational equation leading to a higher adoption of cycling as a viable mode of transportation for City employees.”

After applicable government rebates are included, the purchase of the four e-bikes will cost approximately \$21,000. The report appearing before Council Tuesday recommends drawing the funding for the e-bikes from the City’s Climate Action Reserve which is available for projects that lower GHG emissions.

Research into municipal e-bike usage identified the cities of Kelowna, Courtney, Nanaimo and Squamish, as well as the Vancouver Parks Board and the UBC Endowment Lands as e-bike adopters. If adopted in Penticton, the following three areas would pilot the e-bikes:

- Bylaw Services – to be used during patrols
- Recycling Ambassadors – to be used during neighbourhood cart checks
- Variety of Public Works staff – to be used to perform suitable tasks

“One of the ‘Six Big Moves’ encouraged in the City’s Community Climate Action and draft Corporate Energy and Emissions plans involves active transportation and an overall reduction of traditional fossil fuel powered vehicles. By means of this pilot project and the staff who participate in it, the City is proposing another solution aimed at fulfilling this important objective.”

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