



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Legislation Text

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REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: April 30th, 2018

Report No. CSS-18-008

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Blair McDonald, Director of Community Safety Services

SUBJECT:

U-Bicycle North America

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approves a one year trial to allow U-Bicycle North America to display and store bicycles for rent on Township property subject to conditions as directed by Council.

RELEVANT POLICY:

Business Licence and Regulation Bylaw, 2013, No. 2810

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

Ensure multi-modal traffic strategies consider and reflect business and residential growth and development.

BACKGROUND:

In September of 2017 U-Bicycle reached an agreement with the City of Victoria to launch U-Bicycle bicycle rental services in the City of Victoria for a one year trial period. U-Bicycle and the City of Victoria agreed to numerous conditions relating to U-Bicycle's operations.

At the March 19th, 2018 Council meeting, Mr. Raviv Litman, Operations Manager (Victoria, BC), made a presentation to Council about U-Bicycle's operations and interest in expanding their services to include bicycles available for rent in Esquimalt. Council directed staff to prepare a report.

On April 19th, 2018 a meeting was held with Municipal staff and U-Bicycle representatives to discuss the potential for U-Bicycle to expand their business into Esquimalt.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

U-Bicycle is seeking to place up to 35 bicycles in strategic locations throughout Esquimalt.

A meeting with the Directors of Parks and Recreation and Engineering and Public Works was conducted in which concerns were raised regarding where bikes might be left by patrons. Concerns were raised about bikes being left on right of ways, either streets or sidewalks, and also bikes being left in public spaces like parks which could contribute to issues of unsightliness. Additionally, Esquimalt bylaws do not allow for privately owned items to be left in parks. Staff also felt the need for a direct link to U-Bicycle staff was important to promptly address any complaints relating to U-Bicycle equipment within the Township. Lastly a concern regarding maintenance of bicycle racks was also raised, especially if those racks are installed by U-Bicycle on public lands.

The City of Victoria's pilot with U-Bicycle has resulted in the following conditions being imposed on U-Bicycle by the City of Victoria:

- A mechanism for users/members of the general public to contact U-Bicycle for questions, concerns, complaints etc. is established.
- A helmet solution needs to be provided to support operator requirements under the Motor Vehicle Act.
- Bikes must comply with the Motor Vehicle Act bicycle requirements and be regularly inspected.
- Information is made available to U-Bicycle users to educate them on rules and responsibilities of the road as outlined in the Motor Vehicle Act. On-line resources such as Bike Sense, are helpful guides and available free of charge.
- A record of bicycle maintenance activities and record of reported collisions is kept.
- Information is clearly provided to users on where to leave bicycles (public bike racks, located on public property or at other private location as negotiated by U-Bicycle).
- Your company will monitor and re-distribute bikes which are not parked correctly or that have not been used in ten consecutive days. We also encourage your company to use fines/penalties for bikes left abandoned or locked up to anything other than a bike rack.

2. Organizational Implications

Potentially, there are several areas which may impact Esquimalt staff. It is likely that some U-Bicycles will be left in areas where they should not be (parks, sidewalks, roadways, etc.) It is also likely that in many of these instances, a complaint to staff may be generated. While U-Bicycle will commit to moving these wayward bikes, it will likely still require a phone call from Township Staff to U-Bicycle Staff to have the bikes moved to an appropriate location.

There will likely be, initially, complaints to the Township and VicPD reporting some U-Bicycles as stolen/abandoned bikes.

U-Bicycle already has an inter-municipal business license with the City of Victoria which allows them to operate throughout the CRD.

3. Financial Implications

There should not be significant financial implications to the Township excepting those staff time costs already mentioned.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

U-Bicycle advises that a great deal of their business results in and around commuting times. It is reasonable to believe that adding bicycles in Esquimalt will result in more people choosing to use cycling as a method of commuting vs. driving. This could have a positive environmental/traffic flow impact.

5. Communication & Engagement

If U-Bicycle will be bringing bicycles into Esquimalt, it will be important to ensure that it is communicated to the residents what sort of company U-Bicycle is, and that they will likely be seeing more U-Bikes in Esquimalt. Also, that these bicycles are not stolen or abandoned and if they have concerns, they should contact U-Bicycle directly.

This messaging would take place via the Township Website and social media channels.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That Council approves a one year trial to allow U-Bicycle North America to display and store bicycles for rent on Township property subject to conditions as directed by Council.
2. That Council not approve a one year trial to allow U-Bicycle North America to display and store bicycles for rent on Township property subject to conditions as directed by Council.
3. That Council proceed with an agreement to allow U-Bicycle North America to display and store bicycles for rent on Township property subject to conditions as directed by Council, without a trial period.
4. That Council provide alternate direction to staff.