City of
Saskatoon
Communications & Public Engagement

ENGAGE

Shared E-Scooter Program

What We Heard – Phase 1
August 29, 2022

Engagement Summary

The City of Saskatoon is developing a regulatory framework for a shared electric scooter (e-scooter) program in Saskatoon. The framework is being developed with input from stakeholders, the public and e-scooter companies throughout 2022 to address the rules, requirements and other factors necessary for e-scooters to work here. If approved, a shared e-scooter program pilot could be in place by 2023.

The first phase of public engagement was conducted in spring 2022 to begin the conversation about Saskatoon's Shared E-Scooter Program. Once the proposed framework is developed over the summer, the second phase of public engagement will gather input on the proposed framework in fall 2022.

Phase 1

The objectives of the first phase of engagement were to:

- Present information about the Shared E-Scooter Program and regulatory framework
- Understand preferences, priorities and potential challenges for the e-scooter program

The engagement activities for Phase 1 included:
- Meeting with Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) to introduce the project.
- Meetings with key community partners, internal City of Saskatoon stakeholders and e-scooter companies. A total of 30 attendees participated in meetings.
- Follow-up survey for key community groups, partners, and internal stakeholders. 22 survey responses were received.
- Formal requests for input from the Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC), Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the Transportation department.
- Engage page online discussion forum and information.
- Emails and phone calls to the project team.

The main themes heard from Phase 1 engagement included:

Elements of the Regulatory Framework:

Where can you ride an e-scooter?
Nearly all respondents indicated they should be allowed to ride on cycle tracks, protected bike lanes and bikeways. A majority of groups also felt e-scooters could ride on multi-use pathways and potentially streets, with the least support for e-scooters riding on sidewalks. Support was high for e-scooters riding in most geographical areas of the city, including Business Improvement Districts, Meewasin Valley, and in parks and on the U of S campus.

Helmet usage
Most participants felt that helmets should be strongly encouraged as part of Saskatoon's shared e-scooter program. The safety benefits of requiring helmets was a prominent theme, especially for people under 18. Concerns about the ability to enforce helmet use were also raised, along with suggestions that e-scooter companies be required to provide helmets to users.

Age limits

A majority of participants felt that 16 years old should be the minimum age to ride an e-scooter in Saskatoon, largely because this is the age that young people can begin operating a vehicle and learning the rules of the road. Some respondents suggested 14 years as a minimum age to align with the minimum age required for e-bikes. Concerns about access to a credit card and cell phone and being of legal age also led some participants to suggest 18 years of age as the minimum.

Maximum speeds

A wide range of suggestions were heard in terms of e-scooter maximum speeds, from 10km/hr on sidewalks up to 32km/hr on roadways. The median speed suggested by most participants was 20km/hr. Many respondents indicated there should be slow zones for e-scooters on sidewalks or busy pedestrian areas to reduce the chances of collision. Others felt the maximum speed should match that of e-bikes at 32km/hr or look to the manufacturer's recommended maximum as the limit.

Hours of operation

A wide range of suggestions were received in regards to hours of operation, from early morning hours of 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. to later in the evening, before and after bars and restaurants close, and 24 hours / day. A common concern raised was about preventing the use of impaired riding on e-scooters and also providing alternate transportation home from bars and restaurants. Some individuals suggested e-scooters should be available to use 24 hours a day to bridge the gaps when public transit is unavailable for those who work night shifts or commute in the early mornings.

E-scooter parking and clutter

Abandoned e-scooters and the danger for sidewalk clutter was a large concern for many respondents. The need for efficient scooter collection and quick retrieval of abandoned or dangerously parked e-scooters was highlighted to keep sidewalks and pathways clear and free of obstruction for pedestrians and other users with accessibility needs. Some participants suggested e-scooters should only be allowed to park in preferred or designated areas away from high-traffic zones, or incentivized to do so through the vendor app.

General Comments:

Safety

Safety of pedestrians, trail users and people of all ages and abilities was a top theme to be considered in the program. Participants were concerned that the program should include mechanisms such a noise alert to protect pedestrian safety and avoid collisions among riders and other users. Concerns were also heard about the connectivity of the facility types e-scooters will be allowed to ride on and the number of users attempting to share the same space. The potential for collisions between cars and E-Scooters on streets was raised as a key concern as well.

Enforcement / Private e-scooter use

The ability to enforce proper e-scooter use through the framework was a concern for many participants. Several participants noted seeing e-scooters in use already throughout the city and raised concerns about the resources required to effectively enforce any rules the framework may introduce.

Alignment with bike bylaw and e-bikes

Many people expressed the desire for the e-scooter program to align with the existing bike bylaw and felt e-scooters should be treated similarly to e-bikes in the City. In terms of speed limits, facility types they are able to ride on, and helmet usage, respondents felt that the e-scooter framework should seek to match these elements. Participants felt it could be contradictory for e-scooters to have a different set of rules from e-bikes as they can be considered similar modes of transportation and may be confusing for riders and in communications with the public.

Improved transportation options

Several comments noted the benefits of e-scooters in providing an alternate transportation option in Saskatoon for commuters, public transit users, tourism events, and users who may not have access to a vehicle. Some participants also pointed out that e-scooters can be an environmentally-friendly transportation option and save on car trips within the city.

Equity / affordability of e-scooter program

Participants expressed the desire for the program to be accessible and enjoyable by all residents of Saskatoon regardless of their ability or economic status. Some questioned whether the cost to rent e-scooters would be accessible for lower-income residents. Suggestions included offering lower-income or student rates for the program, as well as offering reduced rates in areas of the City with low-income residents. E-scooter companies also indicated their interest in developing partnerships to offer rides for people without access to a credit card or smartphone.

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Background

People across North America are increasingly using micro-mobility vehicles to get around. These are fully- or partially- powered by a motor but are significantly smaller, lighter, and equipped with less power than conventional motor vehicles. This project focuses on one type of micro-mobility vehicle: the standing Electric Scooter. These devices do not have a seat or pedals, and the rider stands on a center floorboard to balance.

Saskatchewan legislation considers Electric Scooters a non-compliant motor vehicle and are therefore prohibited from travelling on public roads. Also, there are currently no City Bylaws allowing the use of these vehicles on sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes. The purpose of this project is to create the regulatory framework necessary to facilitate a pilot Shared Electric Scooter program.

During 2022, the City is engaging with the community on the development of the regulatory framework for E-scooters in Saskatoon. Based on the feedback we receive, along with technical considerations and other factors, a proposed framework for E-scooters will be presented to City Council in the winter of 2022-23.

1.1 Strategic Goals

This project supports the City of Saskatoon's strategic goal for Transportation to create a transportation network that is comprehensive, equitable, and integrated to promote all modes of travel in a safe and efficient manner. The City's Transportation Master Plan also includes shared micro-mobility as one of the future initiatives to pursue.

1.2 City Project Team

- Sheliza Kelts, Senior Transportation Engineer, Transportation
- Jay Magus, Director, Transportation
- Mark Wilson, Licensing and Permitting Manager, Community Standards
- Karen Grant, Communications Consultant, Communications & Public Engagement
- Amanda Lindgren, Public Engagement Consultant, Communications & Public Engagement

2 Summary of Engagement Strategy

The engagement goals for this project are:

Phase 1: Build Understanding about the Shared E-Scooter Program and regulatory framework
- Understand preferences, priorities and potential challenges for the E-Scooter program

Phase 2: Develop a Regulatory Framework for E-Scooters in Saskatoon
- Share the proposed regulatory framework for shared e-scooters in Saskatoon and identify any concerns or challenges
- Provide clear communication on project timelines and decision-making process, including how community input was used in the framework

Table 1: Summary of Engagement Strategy

Phase	Engagement Objective	Participants	Engagement Goal	Engagement Activities
1	Build Understanding	City of Saskatoon Stakeholders Key Community Groups and Partners E-Scooter Companies	Understand preferences, priorities and potential challenges for the E-Scooter program	Meetings Survey Engage Page Correspondence
2	Develop proposed regulatory framework	City of Saskatoon Stakeholders Key Community Groups and Partners E-Scooter Companies Community	Share the proposed regulatory framework for shared e-scooters in Saskatoon and identify any concerns or challenges	Meetings Engage Page Correspondence Community Session

2.1   Participants

Several groups were identified for engagement due to having relevant knowledge, interest, or potential to be impacted by the Shared E-Scooter Program. These groups were invited to engage on the development of the Shared E-Scooter regulatory framework:

2.1.1   City of Saskatoon Stakeholders

- Key internal stakeholders such as the Saskatoon Police Service, Solicitors, Licensing and Permitting, Bylaw Enforcement, Parks, Parking Services, Planning and Development, Transit, Supply Chain Management, Information Technology, Communications, Transportation, and Recreation and Community Development
- Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC)
- Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC)

2.1.2   Key Community Groups and Partners

- Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)
- Business Improvement Districts
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- Tourism Saskatoon
- University of Saskatchewan
- Usask USSU and Graduate Students Association
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Saskatoon Cycles
- Walking Saskatoon
- Saskatchewan Safety Council
- School Divisions
- Saskatoon Council on Aging
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- SaskAbilities

2.1.3   E-Scooter Companies

- Bird, Lime, Neuron, Roll, and local business owner The Boutique

3 Engagement Activities

Engagement activities for Phase 1 of this project included meeting with key community partners and internal stakeholders and collecting survey feedback from key participants and internal stakeholders. The Engage Page and social media campaign also encouraged the public to provide their initial comments and feedback on a Shared E-Scooter program through the online forum or directly to the Project Manager by email.

3.1 Phase 1: Meetings

Meetings were held in spring 2022 with identified participants to introduce the Shared E-Scooter Program and begin initial discussions about the topic. A virtual session was held for internal City of Saskatoon stakeholders on April 12, 2022. A hybrid meeting was held for key community groups and partners on May 25, 2022. Additional one-on-one meetings with SGI, E-scooter companies and key partners took place throughout spring 2022.

The Project Manager also presented information on the project to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee, Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Transportation department and asked for input on the regulatory framework from these groups.

3.1.1 Intended Audience

Participants included:

- Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)
- City of Saskatoon internal stakeholders
- Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC)
- Downtown BID
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- Saskatoon Cycles
- Saskatchewan Safety Council
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Tourism Saskatoon
- Usask Graduate Students Association
- The Boutique
- Bird
- Lime
- Neuron
- Roll

3.1.2 Marketing Techniques

Key stakeholders and community groups were invited to participate in initial meetings by the project team.

3.1.3 What We Heard

Common themes and comments from the meetings included:

Enforcement / Private e-scooter use

The ability to enforce proper e-scooter use through the framework was a concern for many participants. Several participants noted seeing e-scooter use already throughout the city and raised concerns about the resources and effectiveness of enforcing any rules the framework may introduce.

E-scooter parking and clutter

Abandoned e-scooters and the danger for sidewalk clutter was a large concern for many respondents. The need for efficient scooter collection and quick retrieval of abandoned or dangerously parked e-scooters was highlighted to keep sidewalks and pathways clear. Some participants suggested e-scooters should only be allowed to park in preferred or designated areas away from high-traffic zones, or incentivized to do so through the vendor app.

Safety

Safety of pedestrians, trail users and people of all ages and abilities was a top theme to be considered in the program. Participants were concerned that the program should include mechanisms such a noise alert to protect pedestrian safety and avoid collisions among riders and other users. Concerns were also heard about the connectivity of the facility types e-scooters will be allowed to ride on and the number of users attempting to share the same space.

Equity / affordability of e-scooter program

Several participants expressed the desire for the program to be accessible and enjoyable by all residents of Saskatoon regardless of their ability or economic status. Some questioned whether the cost to rent e-scooters would be accessible for lower-income residents. Participants suggested offering lower-income or student rates for the program, as well as offering reduced rates to ride in areas of the City with low-income residents. E-scooter companies also indicated interest in developing partnerships to offer rides for people without access to a credit card or smartphone.

Alignment with bike bylaw and e-bikes

Many people expressed the desire for the e-scooter program to align with the existing bike bylaw and felt e-scooters should be treated similarly to e-bikes in the City. In terms of speed limits, facility types they are able to ride on, and helmet usage, respondents felt that the e-scooter framework should seek to match these elements. Participants felt it could be confusing and contradictory for e-scooters to have a different set of rules from e-bikes as they can be considered similar modes of transportation.

E-scooter etiquette and education

Many groups suggested the need for some type of rider education or guidelines to encourage proper etiquette when riding an e-scooter. Suggestions included offering a training session or in-app tutorials through the vendor on the importance of proper riding, parking, and helmet use, as well as in-app activities to prevent impaired e-scooter riding.

Improved transportation options

Several comments noted the benefits of e-scooters in providing an alternate transportation option in Saskatoon for commuters, public transit users, tourism events, and users who may not have access

to a vehicle. Some participants also pointed out that e-scooters can be an environmentally-friendly transportation option and save on car trips within the city.

3.2   Phase 1: Survey

A targeted survey was sent to City of Saskatoon internal stakeholders and key community groups and partners to gather initial open-ended feedback on what the regulatory framework for E-Scooters in Saskatoon should include. A total of 22 responses were received, including 12 responses from City of Saskatoon stakeholders and 10 responses from community participants and stakeholders. The project team also invited input on elements of the regulatory framework from the Transportation department, Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee and the Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee.

3.2.1   Marketing Techniques

No marketing techniques were used for the survey as it was targeted to key groups to collect initial input for the development of the regulatory framework. Key participants were invited to participate in the survey following the initial meetings and sent reminder emails to follow up.

3.2.2   What We Heard

Respondents to the survey were asked to give feedback on different elements that the regulatory framework will address.

Where can you ride an e-scooter?

In terms of the facility types that e-scooters should be allowed to ride on, nearly all respondents indicated they should be allowed to ride on cycle tracks, protected bike lanes and bikeways. A majority of groups also felt e-scooters could ride on multi-use pathways and potentially streets, with the least support for e-scooters riding on sidewalks.

Support was high for e-scooters riding in most geographical areas including Business Improvement Districts, Meewasin Valley, and in parks and on the U of S campus.

Where can you ride? (25 survey responses)			
Facility type:		*Geographical area:*	
Sidewalks	9	Downtown Business Improvement District	21
Multi-Use Pathways	19	Broadway Business Improvement District	20
Cycle tracks	24	Business Improvement Districts (33rd Street, Riversdale, Sutherland)	19
Protected bicycle lanes	24	University of Saskatchewan campus	21
Bikeways	23	Meewasin Valley	21
Streets	16	Health sites (e.g. Royal University Hospital)	15
		Parks	19

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Minimum Age:	
14 years	4
15 years	1
12-15 years (if supervised by 18+)	1
16 years	14
18 years	4
No age minimum	1

Age limits
A majority of participants felt that 16 years old should be the minimum age to ride an e-scooter in Saskatoon, largely because this is the age that young people can begin operating a vehicle and learning the rules of the road. Some respondents suggested 14 years as a minimum age to align with the minimum age required for e-bikes.

Concerns about access to a credit card and cell phone and being of legal age also led some participants to suggest 18 years of age as the minimum.

Maximum speeds
A wide range of suggestions were heard in terms of e-scooter maximum speeds, from 10km/hr on sidewalks up to 32km/hr on roadways. The median speed suggested by most participants was 20km/hr. Many respondents indicated there should be slow zones for e-scooters on sidewalks or busy pedestrian areas to reduce the chances of collision. Others felt the maximum speed should match that of e-bikes at 32km/hr or look to the manufacturer's recommended maximum as the limit.

Hours of operation
A wide range of suggestions were received in regards to hours of operation, from early morning hours of 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. to later in the evening, before and after bars and restaurants close, and 24 hours / day. A common concern raised was about preventing the use of impaired riding on e-scooters and also providing alternate transportation home from bars and restaurants. Some individuals suggested e-scooters should be available to use 24 hours a day to bridge the gaps when public transit is unavailable for those who work night shifts or commute in the early mornings.

Helmets
Most participants felt that helmets should be strongly encouraged as part of Saskatoon's shared e-scooter program. The safety benefits of requiring helmets was a prominent theme, especially for people under 18 using the devices. Concerns about the ability to enforce helmet use were also raised, along with suggestions that e-scooter companies be required to provide helmets to users to help promote their use.

Parking
E-Scooter parking was one of the top themes raised by participants throughout this phase of engagement. The danger of e-scooters creating "sidewalk clutter" by being improperly parked and getting in the way of pedestrians was a top concern. Many participants suggested limiting e-scooter parking only to preferred or designated parking areas and the importance of creating designated parking spaces out of the way of other transportation users.

Some respondents suggested e-scooters should not be allowed to park at all in certain areas, such as sidewalks, and highlighted the need for efficient parking enforcement to limit the nuisance that improperly parked e-scooters may create.

3.3 Engage Page and Other Comments

Feedback was also received through the Engage Page, online Disqus forum, and through emails to the project team.

3.3.1 What We Heard

A total of 26 emails, and 9 online posts were summarized into the following themes:

Helmet usage

Many respondents talked about the importance of helmet use while riding an e-scooter. Some felt helmets should be mandatory or encouraged, while others felt helmets should be required for those under 18.

Safety

Safety of pedestrians, trail users and people of all ages and abilities was a top theme to be considered in the program. People were concerned that the program should include mechanisms to protect pedestrian safety and avoid collisions among riders and other users.

Improved transportation options

Several comments noted the benefits of e-scooters in providing an alternate transportation option in Saskatoon for commuters, public transit users, tourism events, and users who may not have access to a vehicle.

Environmentally-friendly option

The lower carbon footprint of e-scooters was a positive theme in many comments. Respondents noted e-scooters can help reduce trips by car in the City and contribute to lower transportation emissions.

Align with bike bylaw and e-bikes

Many people expressed the desire for the e-scooter program to align with the existing bike bylaw and felt e-scooters should be treated similarly to e-bikes in the City. Participants also raised the issue of privately owned e-scooters and how these would be treated under the proposed framework.

E-scooter parking and clutter

Abandoned e-scooters and the danger for sidewalk clutter was a large concern for many respondents. The need for efficient scooter collection and designated parking areas was also highlighted.

Equity / affordability of e-scooter program

Several participants questioned whether the cost to rent e-scooters would be accessible for lower-income residents. Participants suggested offering lower-income or student rates for the program, as well as offering reduced rates to ride in areas of the City with low-income residents.

City resources to operate the program

Some participants expressed concern that City resources would be better spent on other priorities such as developing active transportation infrastructure. Others were concerned that the program

would use City funds and resources without recovering costs or generating revenue for the City. One participant also questioned whether e-scooters would be permitted to operate during the winter months and how facilities such as bike paths would be cleared of snow during this time.

4   Limitations

Phase 1 of public engagement took place in spring 2022. During this time, the City of Saskatoon and the province of Saskatchewan had recently lifted COVID-19 public health restrictions, and the community was in a time of transition in regards to public gatherings and public health precautions. The project team hosted a combination of online and hybrid meetings to try and accommodate participation from all groups. A number of online avenues to provide feedback were provided. However, it may be that some groups were unable or uninterested in participating due to emerging priorities from the pandemic and the resulting time of transition.

Additional considerations for low-income, Indigenous and equity groups will need to be considered in future engagement opportunities. One limitation of online engagement opportunities is that they are not as inclusive of people with limited or no access to internet, including low-income groups and people experiencing disabilities.

5   Next Steps

Further engagement is planned once the proposed regulatory framework for the Shared E-Scooter Program is developed by City staff. We will be looking for feedback on the proposed framework from key community partners, stakeholders and the public to verify the framework and identify any potential concerns or red flags before presenting the framework to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation.

Updates on future engagement opportunities will be posted on the City's Engage page and communicated to those who participated in the first phase of engagement. Participants can also sign up to receive email updates about the project at saskatoon.ca/engage.