



City of Whitehorse

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April 21, 2021

Keith Lay
Active Trails Whitehorse Association

By email: activetwa@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Lay

Re: E-Bike Delegation Response

Thank you for your delegation on the matter of the E-Bike Bylaw to City Council on April 13th, 2021. Administration has carefully read and considered all of the feedback, and appreciates the opportunity to provide additional follow up and context on the recommendations made to Council pertaining to the proposed Bylaw and the correlating consequential amendments.

Age Restrictions for E-Bikes

Administration found that there are some municipalities with age restrictions on e-bike use and there are many that chose not to. The decision to not include an age restriction on e-bike use in Whitehorse supports keeping youth active and enables them to utilize active transportation infrastructure built to allow them to recreate as well as commute to and from destinations such as school.

Class 3 E-Bikes Nominal Power set at 750 watts

While bike wattage is important, City Administration made some decisions based on the top speed a device can achieve. While there is some correlation between wattage and speed, wattage does not always provide the whole picture. Increased wattage can mean longer battery life or increased load capacity for carrying groceries or other items. In the provincial document released by Recreation Sites & Trails B.C. for example, the definition of a Class 3 e-bike does not contain a wattage limit. It only provides a 45km/h top speed restriction. Administration however, decided to set the limit at 750 watts based on the majority of manufacturing specifications observed in the market.

Adding Roadway Permission to Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes in Sections 11 and 12

As with most forms of transportation, the relevant bylaw and the Motor Vehicle Act need to coexist and complement each other. The reason the proposed E-bike Bylaw prescribes that Class 3 e-bikes are permitted on the roadway but is silent on whether or not class 1 & 2 e-bikes are permitted on the roadway is because the Motor Vehicle Act is already very clear in that class 1 & 2 e-bikes are permitted to use the road.

Conversely, the Motor Vehicle Act does yet provide the same level of clarity for a Class 3 e-bike and thus the e-bike bylaw can now offer some.

The Need For City Trail Maps

This has been a long outstanding issue and I am happy to note that Administration has been working on this since the adoption of the 2020 Trail Plan. Two formal maps are in production. One of all the City Trails, and one that shows just the Motorized Multi Use trail network to help provide clarity and a visual aid to Whitehorse residents. These maps will be available to the public this summer.

Bike Modifications

Any modification made to an e-bike that changes the speed it may achieve would move the device in to the class of which that speed correlates. However, manufacturers have made it very difficult and in some cases impossible to make power modifications. All manufacturers make it clear that they do not recommend alterations and any attempt will void warranty and could ruin functionality.

Trail Definition Updates and Bylaw Amendments Related to 2020 Trail Plan

Administration is aware that with the adoption of the 2020 Trail Plan that there is future implementation work to address. This will be an ongoing process as implementation items continue to roll out.

Requirement of a Bell or Horn

Administration copied the language from the Bicycle Bylaw for overtaking another trail user and inserted it in to the e-bike bylaw. With the nature of their uses being very similar, Administration deemed this appropriate. Making an audible signal by voice or by bell is only one piece of making a safe and appropriate pass. Proper separation and trail etiquette are also essential. Administration notes that there are a few jurisdictions with mandatory bell use. They are however mainly in high traffic and high noise cities where sound from a voice or horn may dissipate.

If the e-bike bylaw is adopted Administration has committed not only to a public education campaign on e-bike use specifically, but also on trail etiquette. This type of engagement and information dissemination is a recurring practice for City staff and has become essential to building a relationship with the community. This year's campaign would be larger in scope considering the potential implementation of a new bylaw and all of the related content. Administration has documented the possible trail user conflicts expressed in your delegation and plans to address many of them during the education campaign and while working diligently with trail groups and stewards.

I want to thank you again for taking the time to work with Administration on getting the e-bike bylaw this far. Your feedback is much appreciated and was impactful in many ways.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kulych".

Landon Kulych
Manager, Parks & Community Development

c: City Council
c: City Manager