

Clause embodied in Report No. 9 of the Works Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its Special Meeting held on July 30, 31 and August 1, 2002.

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BikeShare Program

(City Council at its Special Meeting held on July 30, 31 and August 1, 2002, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Works Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (June 6, 2002) from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services:

Purpose:

To report on options for providing support to the Community Bicycle Network's Bikeshare program.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The adoption of this report will result in a marginal loss of revenue arising from the recommended waiving of encroachment agreement fees for BikeShare bike racks estimated at \$1,660.00 for 2002. It is anticipated that the estimated loss in encroachment agreement fee revenue in 2003 will be a further \$1,660.00.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) fees for encroachment agreements necessary for the placement of BikeShare bike racks within the public right-of-way be waived, provided all other requirements are met; and
- (2) the appropriate City officials be authorised to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The Planning and Transportation Committee, at its meeting on September 11, 2000, in considering a communication (August 22, 2000) from the Toronto Cycling Committee, requested the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services to report on:

- (a) the introduction of a program to collect and deliver unwanted and abandoned bicycles to be used in the BikeShare Program;
- (b) the commitment of funds for an operating budget for the BikeShare Program; and

(c) the financial and staff implications for this proposal.

(Clause No. 14(j) contained in Report No. No. 9 of the Planning and Transportation Committee.)

Comments:

The BikeShare program is operated by the Community Bicycle Network (CBN), a non-profit organisation. CBN maintains a fleet of bicycles, available at several “hubs” throughout the City, for BikeShare members to use. The bicycles are basic single-speed models with internal coaster brakes (pedal brakes) and solid tires, requiring minimal maintenance.

The program aims to provide bicycles for city residents who may not have the financial resources or the storage space to own a bike, who feel uncomfortable leaving their own expensive bicycles locked up downtown, or who wish to commute to a BikeShare hub by other means and then pedal to their ultimate destinations. A nominal annual membership fee (\$25) ensures that members have made a commitment to the program, and enables the program’s administrators to keep track of the bicycles in the same way libraries keep track of books. Members can sign out any available bike, free of charge, and must sign it out again after three days if they wish to continue using it.

The BikeShare program contributes directly to the City's goals of reducing air pollution and encouraging alternatives to automobile use. Furthermore, BikeShare is a good example of a program that promotes cycling in a very visible way. The support of programs such as BikeShare is consistent with the Toronto Bike Plan approved by City Council in July 2001.

Diverting Unwanted/Abandoned Bicycles from the Waste Stream:

In consultation with BikeShare, we have reviewed several options for assisting in the diversion of unwanted, abandoned or discarded bicycles from the waste stream to BikeShare. The program’s needs, in terms of salvageable bicycles, are relatively modest at this time. Parts salvaged from unwanted bicycles that cannot be refurbished would also be helpful.

Bicycles reported as abandoned are inspected by Transportation Services By-Law Enforcement staff. Those in usable condition, or only slightly damaged, are tagged with a request for the owner to remove them. If not voluntarily removed within seven days, they are removed by Transportation Services Road Operations staff, in co-ordination with By-Law Enforcement staff, and turned over to the Toronto Police Service. Bicycles can be reclaimed from the Police by owners if they can identify the bike. Those that are obviously abandoned, being damaged, stripped, or otherwise un-usable, are simply removed by Road Operations staff and discarded. For a six-month trial period beginning this summer, these bicycles will be stored temporarily at a Works yards, to be picked up by BikeShare when notified. Following this trial period, we will evaluate whether the program should be continued or modified in any way.

A number of other options for diverting abandoned bicycles to BikeShares were considered and rejected because they are either not economically viable or beyond the current needs of BikeShare. These options included establishing collection bins at waste transfer stations and

including the BikeShare phone number on garbage collection calendars so that citizens could call them directly.

Commitment of Funds to BikeShare's Operating Budget:

BikeShare program administrators have indicated that their basic operating budget requirements are presently being met by sponsorship. Current sponsors include Toronto Dominion Friends of the Environment, Toronto Community Foundation, Ontario Power Generation, Transport Canada and the Toronto Atmospheric Fund. However, there are incidental costs associated with City policies regarding the placement of bicycle parking facilities in the public right-of-way, which could be offset through municipal assistance.

Wherever a bike rack is to be placed within the public right-of-way, the City requires the owner to enter into an encroachment agreement. As a cost saving measure to BikeShare, and a reaffirmation of the City's support for programs of this nature, it has been recommended that the City waive the fee (currently \$415.18) for encroachment agreements required for BikeShare bike racks, provided all other requirements are met. At this time, encroachment agreements are required at two hub locations, and it is possible that one or two more may be required this year, for a total estimated cost of \$1,660.00. Should the fee be waived, Transportation Services Right-of-Way Management staff will continue to assess each application according to their usual criteria, including the appropriate setbacks and liability insurance requirements.

At BikeShare hubs where space constraints preclude the use of BikeShare's standard bike racks, Transportation Services will install "post-and-ring" bicycle stands. Since it is important that the hubs be easily identifiable to members, these City bike racks will be fitted with signs identifying them as a BikeShare hub. There are currently three hub locations where post-and-rings are required, amounting to approximately 15 individual bike stands in total, and it is possible that a similar number may be required if additional hubs are established. BikeShare has agreed to ensure that space at these racks would also be available for use by the general public.

Financial and Staff Implications:

Diverting bicycles from the waste stream to BikeShare and providing post-and-ring bike stands for BikeShare's use can be undertaken within existing resources, given that BikeShare is a relatively small program. Should the program expand significantly and begin to impact on financial and staff resources, we will re-evaluate our participation and report further to the Works Committee on any required changes.

Conclusions:

Transportation Services has been working with BikeShare to support the program because it is consistent with the goals of the Toronto Bike Plan. Given that BikeShare is a relatively small program, support from Works and Emergency Services (installing post-and-ring racks and diverting some abandoned bicycles from the waste stream) can be provided within existing staff and budgetary resources. While the program's operating budget requirements are currently being met by sponsors, waiving the City's fee for encroachment agreements for BikeShare bike racks would assist in making the program a success.

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