

Evaluation of the use of Cargo Bikes in City Operations

Date: March 27, 2019

To: General Government and Licensing Committee

From: General Manager, Fleet Services Division and Director, Environment & Energy Division

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to a motion adopted by City Council in July 2018 to evaluate the potential use of cargo bikes in City facilities and maintenance, and to seek authority to proceed with the implementation and evaluation of the use of cargo bikes in City operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Fleet Services Division and Director, Environment & Energy Division recommend that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Fleet Services and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division to implement and evaluate the use of cargo bikes in the Parks, Forestry & Recreation operations.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report. Funds are available in the 2019 Council Approved Capital Budget of Parks, Forestry and Recreation in the City Wide Environmental Initiatives project 2018-2019 for the three (3) cargo bikes proposed for testing.

The Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on July 3, 2018, City Council adopted the motion entitled, Exploring Active Transportation Options in City Facilities and Maintenance and directed the General Manager, Fleet Services and Director, Environment and Energy Division, in consultation with relevant City Divisions, to explore the opportunities for using cargo bikes in City operations and maintenance, including exploring the possibility of a pilot program using local cargo bike manufacturers, and to report back to Government Management Committee (now General Government and Licensing Committee) in the first quarter of 2019.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.GM29.31>

COMMENTS

Transportation accounts for about one-third of the greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto and is also the primary local source of emissions that contribute to air pollution. The City of Toronto has committed to reducing emissions from its operations through actions included in the TransformTO Climate Action Strategy and the City's Green Fleet Plan. The use of cargo bikes has been researched as a way to reduce emissions from City fleet operations and encourage the use of active and low emission transportation options for employees.

Cargo bikes, also known as freight bikes or utility bikes, are based on typical bicycle designs that are modified to carry loads or meet operational requirements different than a regular bicycle. Cargo bikes can be designed to suit many needs and carry different loads, including passengers or freight. Some models are designed to operate similar to regular two-wheel bicycles with an extended front or rear section to carry loads. Other models may have three or four wheels and have larger cargo boxes or containers in the front or the rear.

In recent years, the growing popularity of cargo bikes has led to a greater variety and availability of cargo bikes including options for electric-assist cargo bikes. Cargo bikes are already being used in other jurisdictions to supplement municipal vehicle fleets. The cost of a cargo bike ranges from \$2,000-\$10,000 per bike depending on customization and whether it has electric assist technology.

The use of cargo bikes for City operations can offer a number of benefits including:

- Eliminating greenhouse gas emissions & improved air quality: there are no emissions associated with the use of the cargo bike.
- Cost saving: cargo bikes have a lower upfront capital cost and no or low fuel requirements.
- Operational efficiencies: cargo bikes are able to navigate off road terrain and may be less affected by parking restrictions or traffic congestion.
- Improved health: employees using cargo bikes will be using active transportation.

City staff from Fleet Services and the Environment and Energy Division collected feedback from Fleet Services client Divisions on potential implications of the use of

cargo bikes in the City operations. The key benefits of using cargo bikes identified by staff included environmental benefits, cost savings, increased employee health, and operational efficiencies. The key concerns identified by staff included health and safety, limited applicability for all tasks, and weather restrictions.

Staff research indicates that cargo bikes are most appropriate for replacing light duty vehicles, gators and utility carts that are used seasonally and do not travel long distances. Based on research and consultation with City staff, it was determined that the best option to test the operational effectiveness of cargo bikes is in the City Parks Maintenance and Operations unit, of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division. An initial roll-out will test the use of three (3) cargo bikes at Allan Gardens for seasonal park maintenance. The purchase and maintenance of cargo bikes (to be provided by the bikes supplier), and associated staff training (3 day course, provided by Parks staff and covered under ELI, Corporate Training) will be covered within the existing Parks, Forestry & Recreation budget (the City Wide Environmental Initiatives project 2018-2019). Training and safety requirements related to the use of bicycles in the City operations are governed by the Bicycle Safety Policy (http://insideto.toronto.ca/hrweb/health_and_safety/pdf/a/13-advmemo76.pdf).

This approach will allow the City to evaluate the costs, staff adoption and perception, security, storage, and maintenance requirements needed, to assess the feasibility and value of a larger scale implementation.

The use of cargo bikes falls within the existing Bicycle Safety policy. Under this policy, City staff who operate cargo bikes will be required to successfully complete Can-Bike Level 4 Advanced Cycling Skills course.

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