



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: January 15, 2018  
Contact: Margaret Wittgens  
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: March 14, 2018

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services  
SUBJECT: City Support for Mass Participation Bike Rides

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- A. That Council approve a grant comprised of funding, value-in-kind and services of up to the value of \$200,000 to continue to provide sponsorship support for a pilot involving two mass participation bike rides to be held in August and September of 2018. These events are called "Our City Ride" and "Bike the Night" respectively.
- B. THAT the General Manager of Engineering Services and the Director of Legal Services be authorized to enter into one or more sponsorship agreements with the event organizers subject to each of them being satisfied with the terms and conditions of such agreements; and
- C. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by Council's adoption of these recommendations unless and until the sponsorship agreements are executed by the City's authorized signatories.

Recommendation A requires 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members per *Vancouver Charter* S. 206(1).

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

In 2017, Council voted unanimously to provide sponsorship funding to support a pilot of two mass participation bike rides, Our City Ride and Bike the Night. Both events were successful and yielded important benefits and learnings in the initial year of the pilot. The organizers of both events have submitted unsolicited proposals for a second year of City support in 2018; such support would continue the pilot for mass cycling events for a second year. Both events are low-barrier, non-sport and family-friendly. Combined ridership is anticipated to be 10,000 participants of all ages and abilities. The proposed rides are consistent with goals and actions

set out in the City's Transportation 2040, Greenest City and Healthy City plans and initiatives. A combination of cash and in-kind support up to the value of \$200,000 for both events is being sought.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

The Council-approved Transportation 2040 Plan includes a commitment to the encouragement and promotion of cycling. Section E.1.1.4 states:

*"Develop recurring cyclovia-style event(s) that celebrate active transportation."*

On March 31, 2017, Council approved \$250,000 in cash and value-in-kind support be granted to sponsor a pilot involving two mass participation bike rides held in August and September 2017 (RTS 12017).

### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The General Manager of Engineering Services and the City Manager recommend approval of the foregoing.

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

World over, cities invest in and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy non-sport bike rides on car-free streets. These mass participation, low barrier events rely on significant government support via funding and cost offsets, but once established attract other support that allows for sustainable growth and diversification.

Current City policy supports the encouragement and promotion of cycling through mass participation-style events. In 2016, two small, low barrier, all ages and abilities rides took place. Building off those events, the organizers of Our City Ride and Bike the Night sought City support for larger rides in 2017.

- Our City Ride was held on Saturday, August 19, 2017. Over 2,500 people enjoyed a 17 kilometre route through downtown Vancouver neighbourhoods and Stanley Park. A cycling and healthy living -focused festival held at David Lam Park had an attendance of 6,000. \$25,000 in Norco bikes and accessories were donated to families in need.
- Bike the Night was held on September 16, 2017. A 10 kilometre route left the stadium district and journeyed into Kitsilano, then returned to downtown. 3,500 participants decorated their bikes and enjoyed the "after dark" ride.

City support in 2017 was provided in both direct funding and cost offsets. A total of \$80,000 in cash and \$155,000 in cost offsets was provided by the City. The offsets were only applied to expenses directly related to the planning, management and execution of the actual rides, including, but not limited to, traffic planning, signage, street closures, traffic management and ride support such as medical services. Both events also secured additional sponsorship for a combined total of \$210,000 in cash and value-in-kind from other contributors. This

contribution was not only necessary for well-executed events, but for the rides to be free to all participants under 18.

Post-event assessments have determined that the rides were safely and well run. The events attracted a gender and age-diverse range of participants: both events had a fairly even split between people identifying as male and female and there was significant family involvement. Both events were also successful at supporting City goals regarding cycling promotion and education. Through websites, promotions and at the event sites, both events provided educational information regarding safe riding practices, rules of the road and bike mechanics. Our City Ride's "Kid Zone" included a bike skills training course. Many participant testimonials spoke to an increased sense of confidence and safety when riding. In the case of Bike the Night, post event surveys showed 8% of participants reported "being more comfortable riding in the dark"; 10% more people claimed they used lights now when riding at night; and 78% of participants now use their bikes for transportation at least once per week—an increase of 6%.

Organizers have agreed to work with City and Park staff regarding some route and communications issues identified in the assessment; these issues are those that typically are found in relation to route-based events.

Both events' organizers have solicited the City for continued support of these events. As in 2017, the main focus of the support would be to assist with the considerable expense associated with safely closing major City streets.

### *Strategic Analysis*

Staff recommend that Council approve the continuation of the City's support for this pilot. The success of the rides, the feedback from the public and the ability of the organizers to secure other funding and sponsorship all provide a sound basis for this recommendation. More significantly, without City support, both rides would need to charge entry fees for all participants; this would be antithetical to the spirit, and most likely, the success of the event.

A second year will also allow organizers to better determine participant and sponsor appetite and whether the standalone model is a sustainable one. Events such as these have their potential failure directly built into their success. More participants result in roads closed for a longer duration, which translates to higher costs. Additional assessment is needed to determine where the tipping point for sustained success is and what that would look like logistically and financially.

Staff do not believe the goals of a low barrier, all ages and abilities ride can be achieved without City support, particularly in the area of City cost offsets. The support recommended is consistent with contributions provided for sport cycling events in other local municipalities.

As in 2017, the 2018 proposals received by Our City Ride and Bike the Night are unsolicited and were considered according to the City's internal Unsolicited Proposals Policy. Staff believe it is appropriate for the City to continue to sponsor and enable these events as a pilot; to build on the learnings from the first year and increase the City's understanding of mass participation rides. These events have unique logistical and other challenges and require organizers who have this specific experience, combined with a deep knowledge of Vancouver, to be able to do it well.

Based on the learnings from the second year of the pilot, staff will recommend an approach for City support for mass participation rides beyond 2018. This recommendation will be coordinated with the Special Event Policy update currently underway which will provide a policy framework for the various ways the City supports special events.

*Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)*

*Financial*

The grant comprised of funding, value-in-kind and services of up to the value of \$200,000 will be provided from within the 2018 approved Engineering operating budget.

*Environmental*

This event supports greenest city goals to promote sustainable modes of travel.

**CONCLUSION**

As demonstrated around the world, events such as Our City Ride and Bike the Night generally only succeed when invested in and supported by government. Successfully mounted, these events not only increase the excitement and participation in cycling but also deliver on key Transportation 2040 objectives.

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