



Date: November 26, 2012

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Public Bike Share in Parks

RECOMMENDATION

- A) THAT the Park Board allow the Public Bike Share station network to integrate park destinations, subject to the General Manager Park Board approving all technical station details on a site by site basis;***
- B) THAT all legal documentation be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services and the General Manager Park Board; and***
- C) THAT no legal rights arise and no consents, permissions or licenses are granted hereby and none shall arise or be granted unless and until all contemplated legal documentation has been executed.***

POLICY

The Park Board approves all use of lands under its jurisdiction.

On July 25, 2011, the Park Board endorsed the framework for the new Strategic Plan, including directions to encourage active, healthy lifestyles and to minimise our environmental footprint.

On July 14, 2011, City Council adopted the Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) which listed the development and installation of a bike share program as one of the five highest priorities for Green Transportation.

On October 15, 2012, the Park Board adopted the Stanley Park Cycling Plan.

BACKGROUND

The implementation of a Public Bike Share (PBS) system in Vancouver is intended to provide people with an easy, convenient and sustainable transportation option in the city. Green transportation goals are currently being developed in the City's Transportation Plan process, with a target of 50% of all trips to be made on foot, bicycle, or transit by 2020.

City staff have been directed by Council to explore a PBS system, and are working towards a 2013 launch of the system. The initial service area for will cover the Metro Core, an area that includes the downtown peninsula and the Central Broadway area, likely extending from Arbutus Street to Main Street, with most stations sited every 300 to 400 metres. This initial phase will consist of approximately 125 stations and 1,500 bicycles.

Subsequent to a procurement process that started in April 2011, Alta Bicycle Share Inc. has been selected as the owner/operator in the City's ongoing feasibility evaluation of a PBS. As part of this evaluation, the City and Alta entered into a non-legally binding letter of intent (LOI) on August 2, 2012. The LOI sets out a number of conditions that Alta must satisfy before the City would be willing to award the contract for a Vancouver PBS to Alta. The City and Alta are continuing to work together based on the LOI.

On October 17, 2012, City Council approved by-law amendments that will facilitate an operator to implement and operate a viable PBS system. Essentially, these amendments enable legislation that defines the parameters of the PBS operations, and allow the negotiations to progress.

Similarly, this report is asking the Park Board to agree in principle to locating some bike stations on park land, with all details in regard to the number of stations, their precise locations, their installation and operation to be developed to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

DISCUSSION

The initial service area for the PBS contains several recreation facilities and parks including Stanley Park that are destinations for residents and visitors.

Station Details

The PBS stations are prefabricated and modular, which allows for easy installation and relocation if required. The equipment does not typically require anchoring or connections to external utilities (e.g. power). Power is supplied by solar panels with backup batteries, and communications are provided wirelessly. Similarly, customer transactions are electronic, and will be completed wirelessly.

The size of the stations can vary, but typically they are 1.8 metres wide by a minimum length of 12 metres, to be increased in intervals of 3 metres depending on demand. Additional space is required to safely maneuver the bike in and out of docking stations. The modular nature of these PBS stations also allows for additional docking stations to be installed easily, and for a variety of different configurations that is suitable for a particular location. Placement of the PBS stations must take into consideration the existing mobility patterns, infrastructure, underground utilities, and provide access for users of the system.

Examples of station schematics and photos from others cities can be seen in Appendix A.

Station Siting

Final locations for the 125 stations have not yet been determined, but the City will propose locations both on private and public property, with some proposed on park land. Access to park land for stations will encourage residents to use the Public Bike Share to access their parks, community centres and related amenities by bicycle rather than personal vehicle or transit.

The complete network of stations will be developed by staff together with the proposed operator. Initially, station locations will be based on existing data indicating high demand, but some flexibility will be required once actual usage data allow better understanding of local demand. Based upon early demand analysis, it can be expected that approximately 10% of the PBS stations could be on park land.

Any station proposed for park land will be evaluated with the help of the following criteria:

- a. Consider street right-of-way locations first where possible (on street boulevards or street parking areas);
- b. Minimize impacts on existing use of parks and seawalls;
- c. Minimize impacts to existing trees and habitat;
- d. Minimize impacts on access for emergency response and maintenance vehicles; and
- e. Accommodate access for bicycle re-distribution vehicles.

Sponsorship

The PBS system will rely on financial support from sponsors. In exchange for this funding, sponsors will receive acknowledgement in the form of logos on PBS stations, docks and bicycles, as well as signage at stations that will provide the City and Park Board an opportunity to incorporate other communication related to wayfinding, services, rules of behaviour, etc. However, commercial advertising (promotion of products or services) will not be permitted.

Public Engagement

Initial public and stakeholder feedback was collected in two phases of public consultation, showing general support for a proposed PBS:

- Phase I during summer 2009 featured a bike share equipment demonstration, and online and in-person surveys.
- Phase II during summer 2011 featured an online survey and two City-hosted open houses.

The City of Vancouver also has ongoing discussions with various potential government, public and private institution partners such as UBC and TransLink, to align objectives and timelines where possible.

Most recently, the City hosted four external stakeholder outreach meetings in September with over 35 organizations from a variety of external agencies, including TransLink, the Vancouver Police Department, Business Improvement Areas, UBC, SFU and several bike rental/retail businesses. The meetings provided an overview of the PBS system along with the opportunities and challenges associated with the initiative. City staff also provided an update on the status of the project and the planned timeline.

Some of the bike rental shops in Vancouver have voiced concern over the potential installation of PBS, especially within and around Stanley Park. City staff continue to keep an open dialogue with this group, and will explore all options to mitigate the impact of PBS on their business.

A more detailed summary of the stakeholder feedback can be seen in Appendix B.

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the Park Board allow PBS in parks jurisdiction, subject to General Manager approval. By making PBS available in parks this will help to integrate park destinations into this important transportation initiative that is consistent with the goals of the Park Board Strategic Plan and the Greenest City Action Plan.

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Appendix A: Sample PBS Station Layout Diagrams & Example Photos of PBS Stations

Appendix B: Executive Summary of Key Stakeholder Feedback

Appendix A – Sample PBS Station Layout Diagrams & Example Photos of PBS Stations

FEATURES:

- COMPLETELY PORTABLE AND INFINITELY EXPANDABLE
- "PLUG AND PLAY" – NO COSTLY EXCAVATION WORK REQUIRED
- USES SOLAR POWER AND WIRELESS COMMUNICATION
- VARIETY OF CONFIGURATIONS (STRAIGHT, L-SHAPED, FRONT-TO-FRONT)
- EASY TO INSTALL, MAINTAIN, RELOCATE, OR REMOVE

TYPICAL STATION FOOTPRINT

* DOES NOT INCLUDE HELMET KIOSK

12M MINIMUM FOOTPRINT – 15 DOCKS/9 BIKES

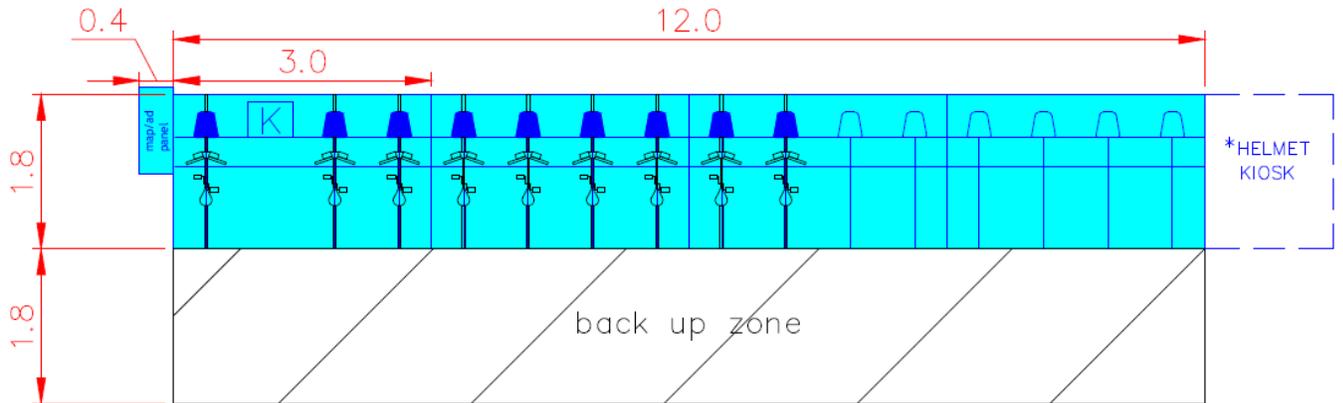




Figure 1 - Hubway (Boston, MA)



Figure 2 - Toronto BIXI (Toronto, ON)

Appendix B – Executive Summary of Key Stakeholder Feedback

Executive Summary

The City, in coordination with Mobilize Strategies, hosted 4 separate stakeholder outreach meetings with over 35 participants from a variety of external agencies, including TransLink, VPD, BIA's, UBC, SFU and several bike rental/retail shops to discuss the City of Vancouver's plans for Public Bike Share (PBS). The meetings were held on September 5th, 11th, 12th, and 28th, and provided an overview of the PBS system along with the opportunities and challenges associated with the initiative. City staff also provided an update on the status of the project and the planned timeline. After the presentation was completed, the attendees were provided an opportunity to ask clarification questions based on what they heard, which was then followed by an open discussion about PBS in Vancouver.

In addition to the four stakeholder meetings explained above, staff also reached out to a variety of City organized committees including the Women's Advisory Committee, Seniors' Advisory Committee, Active Transportation Policy Council, Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee and the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee. Similarly, staff provided an update on the PBS project, responded to questions, and collected feedback from the groups.

While the City staff obtained a tremendous amount of feedback from a wide range of perspectives, there was more significant discussion around these 3 key themes:

1) Impacts to Public Realm

There were questions about where the stations would likely be placed, and how they would impact areas such as sidewalks, parking lanes, etc. As well, people were curious to understand the physical dimensions of the stations and how they would look and interface with the public realm.

2) Impacts to Bike Rental Businesses

Several bike rental shops, particularly the ones concentrated near Stanley Park, raised significant concerns about the negative impacts PBS would impose on their business model. These shops would like the City to explore a variety of different mechanisms to avoid taking rental business away through PBS. Some of the ideas included: restrictions on PBS station siting, modified PBS fare structures to deter tourist trips, and partnership opportunities to help raise awareness of existing bike rental companies and their potential advantages over PBS.

3) Education

From all perspectives, there was a general concern around safety issues and how PBS will change the existing landscape. How can we educate new/returning bike riders? Will there be more riders on the sidewalk? Can PBS help foster a safer bicycle culture? How can we encourage helmet compliance? Those are just a few of the questions asked during the meeting, but in general there was an understanding that education played an important role in the roll-out of the PBS program.