

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Inclusion Advisory Committee Recommendation – Use of Bicycles, Skateboards and Scooters in the Pedestrian Mall

Date Prepared: June 23, 2021

Report To: Special Meeting of Council

Councillor and Role: Councillor Deanne Stapleton

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

The Inclusion Advisory Committee is recommending that any form of wheeled mobility outside of wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices should be required to be walked through the Pedestrian Mall. The recommendation is being brought forward to Council for further direction.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

At the June 16th meeting of the Inclusion Advisory Committee the use of bicycles, skateboards, and scooters in the Downtown Pedestrian Mall was discussed. The IAC has requested that the following recommendation be brought to Council before the opening of the Pedestrian Mall on July 1, 2021:

Recommendation

Moved By Debbie Ryan

Seconded By Trevor Freeborn

The Inclusion Advisory Committee recommend that the use of bikes, scooters, skateboards, and any other vehicle that can travel at high speeds can pose safety concerns within the Pedestrian Mall. The Committee feels that access should be limited to pedestrians, wheelchairs, and other assistive devices. Any form of wheeled mobility outside of wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices should be required to be walked through the mall.

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In 2020, Council approved the use of bikes, skateboards, and other modes of safe active transportation within the road closure as it fosters physical activity, reduces the use of motorized vehicles and the impact that they have on the environment. Safety management protocols have been put in place for the 2021 and will be promoted using barricades, signage, and a social media campaign. Staff will also be providing Commissionaires and cleaning staff with safety information and protocols including awareness of:

- Persons with vision and hearing loss may not see/hear bicycles or skateboards approaching and may unknowingly place themselves in the path of a skateboard or bicycle.
- Individuals with mental health conditions; Autism Spectrum Disorder and intellectual disabilities may experience sensory overload and/or anxiety when the body's senses are overloaded. Fast moving modes of active transportation may contribute to sensory overload and/or anxiety.
- Individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other mobility aids may find themselves in a position where they cannot easily move out of the path of a cyclist or skateboard.

The Bike St. John's Advisory Committee was consulted via E-poll and were unanimously against the proposed recommendation. The following feedback was provided:

- There are no known reports of collisions or incidents involving bicycles with pedestrians at the Pedestrian Mall, so it is difficult to gauge if this is a real or perceived risk.
- Bicycles are still often unfairly thought of as unfamiliar or unwelcome additions. The City should be encouraging the use of bicycles in more safe spaces like the Pedestrian Mall where together we can learn to interact safely and become more comfortable with the presence of bikes in the City at large.
- Safety management protocols, such as education and signage, are welcome additions to the mall. It would be worth discussing what constitutes safe behaviour (speed, location of travel, etc.) to enhance education and engineering controls, and to allow for community policing.
- A ban would be deeply contrary to the inclusive and community-minded spirit of the Pedestrian Mall.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: N/A
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Inclusion Advisory Committee, Bike St. John's Advisory Committee, Pedestrian Mall Staff
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: A City that Moves
4. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A
5. Privacy Implications: N/A

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Consult with Communication about circulating the message to the public.
7. Human Resource Implications:
8. Procurement Implications: N/A
9. Information Technology Implications: N/A
10. Other Implications:

Recommendation:

Safety education protocols be reviewed and implemented with pedestrian mall staff. Access for bikes, skateboards and scooters be permitted, use of these monitored throughout the summer and further action is taken to modify access if required.

Prepared by:

Approved by: Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Inclusion Advisory Committee - Use of Bicycles at Pedestrian Mall.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 24, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Natalie Godden - Jun 24, 2021 - 10:20 AM

Tanya Haywood - Jun 24, 2021 - 10:58 AM