

June 29, 2022

Mayor and Council
Resort Municipality of Whistler
4325 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC V8E 0X5

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please accept this letter as a preliminary response from certain Whistler bike rental operators regarding the E-Bike Share Demonstration Project letter received on June 27, 2022 (enclosed). At this time our ask is that the RMOW defer the BCAA E-Bike Share Demonstration decision until further consultations and assessments can be completed and important questions are answered.

In our estimation, the RMOW's partnership with BCAA to operate a bike sharing/rental program may materially shift valley and e-bike rentals from the existing local operators to the RMOW and BCAA. This is an example of Whistler's economy moving away from local businesses to large, non-whistler enterprises, like BCAA.

We look forward to hearing more about this project on June 30, 2022. That said, our initial concerns are significant and include the following:

- 1) The E-Bike Share Demonstration will result in the RMOW and BCAA directly competing with, undercutting and disrupting Whistler's local bike rental businesses and employees. A material difference between Whistler as compared to Vancouver, UBC or Kelowna in implementing a bike share program is that Whistler already has 25 local bike rental providers servicing Whistler residents and guests with short term bike rentals.
- 2) The RMOW has had no consultation with Whistler's bike rental providers prior to making the decision regarding this summer's BCAA e-bike program. Implementing this program half-way through the summer after local bike rental businesses have already purchased rental bikes will have negative consequences for our businesses and our employees.
- 3) The RMOW has partnered with BCAA on the program without first discussing the opportunity with local providers. Existing Whistler rental providers are already offering valley and e-bike rentals in Whistler. The RMOW should first explore opportunities to work with local businesses to expand rental offerings as opposed to a non-Whistler organization like BCAA.
- 4) There are numerous unanswered environmental and economic questions that should be carefully considered before implement a program like this in Whistler. Refer to the appendix to this letter for some of these questions.

Whistler's E-Bike Share program will result in the RMOW and BCAA competing directly with and undercutting Whistler's local bike rental economy. This program should be put on hold until more detailed consultation can occur with local Whistler bike rental businesses and employees and a better understanding of the environmental impacts can be assessed.

We look forward to discussing this further.

Signatures:

David Wilcox – Premium Mountain Rental [REDACTED]
Todd Friesen – Premium Mountain Rental [REDACTED]
Matt Delany – Arbutus Routes (matt@arbutusroutes.com)
Will Naylor – Gateway Bikes (will@whistlersports.com)
Steve Cousins – Spicy Sports (Cuz@spicysports.com)
Coco Farrell – Evo Whistler, Evo Village Sports, Sportstop (cfarrell@evo.com)
Peter Stokes – Premium Mountain Rental (peter@premiummountain.ca)

APPENDIX A – QUESTIONS

- 1) Why is the RMOW partnering with a non-Whistler organization like BCAA on this program? And is the RMOW interested in providing local rental providers with the opportunity to address the program's environmental objectives as opposed to BCAA?
- 2) Is it appropriate for the RMOW to move forward with this decision with no consultation with Whistler's existing rental providers? And should the RMOW be competing with existing rental providers?
- 3) Does the RMOW have good understanding of the possible impacts of this program on the existing rental providers?
- 4) What are the environmental impacts of manufacturing BCAA's e-bikes and possibility of over-supplying Whistler with bikes? How does this impact compare to possible benefits of the RMOW's bike rental program?
- 5) How much rent or fees will BCAA be paying to the RMOW for this opportunity? and how does this compare to the market rent that Whistler's existing rental operators are paying to have a presence in Whistler?
- 6) How will the RMOW and BCAA support small local rental operators and their employees if there are material financial hardships as a result of this program?
- 7) What is the current and normal supply of rental bikes in Whistler? What is the rental utilization (occupancy) of this supply from mid-April to Mid-October? Does the RMOW believe that Whistler's bike rental market is under-supplied?
- 8) Does the RMOW know how many valley and e-bike rentals there are in Whistler that are at risk of being shifted from local Whistler operators to BCAA as a result of this program?

- 9) Does the RMOW have a good understanding of a typical valley or e-bike rental guests in Whistler? Does the RMOW understand what these guests use the rental bikes for to appropriately assess whether BCAA will inadvertently compete with local rental operators?
- 10) Does the RMOW know how many employees work in Whistler's bike rental, retail economy?
- 11) Whistler's bike market is already well supplied local operators, why will adding more bikes result in fewer cars?
- 12) Is the RMOW aware of the legal liabilities and maintenance and safety obligations associated with renting bikes? Is there adequate insurance, liability waivers, maintenance staff, renter education to protect the RMOW against these risks?
- 13) Does the RMOW understand when bike purchase orders need to be made by existing rental operators and should programs like this be communicated to local rental providers before these purchase orders are made?
- 14) What are the capital and operating costs and RMOW staff time required to implement this program? Are there better uses of these resources considering the bike market is well supplied by local operators?
- 15) What is the useful life of BCAA's bikes? how are they disposed? And what is the environmental impact of disposing the bikes?
- 16) Why is this decision being rushed mid-summer? Can the RMOW consider taking sufficient time to properly consult with local businesses to assess the impacts of the program?
- 17) Would the RMOW consider shifting the demonstration program start date to mid-September to properly target whistler residents and help mitigate the negative impacts on local rental operators?
- 18) Summer bike rental guests often rent bikes for a 4 hours period. However, the rental guests are often not riding the bikes for the full 4 hours. A typical guest will rent for 4 hours, ride to one of the lakes or parks, picnic or swim and return to the village. Why does the RMOW believe that if there are BCAA drop-off and pick-up locations in the village and at the parks, BCAA will not be competing with existing operators?