

January 12, 2023

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

Dear Mayor, Council and Staff;

The bike rental community fully supports creating a bicycle transportation system for Whistler residents and reducing our carbon foot print (e.g. BIG MOVES). We do not support the RMOW partnering with and providing advantages to a big company with no previous commitment to our community (BCAA) to take our bike rental business. We pay high commercial rent, employ Whistler residents, pay taxes and have supported the Whistler community for many years.

The week after Christmas holidays, which was very busy for our shops, we saw that the council agenda for January 10, 2023, included a report on the E-bike pilot program initiated this summer and a recommendation from staff to go to market with an RFP for an expanded E-bike program for 2023 and 2024. Like the pilot program, there was no sharing of information by RMOW staff with the bike rental operators signing on this letter. The reality is that RMOW has not initiated any communication with the bike rental operators signing on this letter since July when the pilot was launched.

Thank you to Ralph Forsyth and Jen Ford for supporting small business and good community engagement. However, we are disappointed that the Mayor and the rest of Council did not hold the RMOW accountable to engage with small businesses. Our goal is to make the RMOW's program work for Whistler residents while maintaining our bike rental business with visitors to Whistler. ***All we wanted from Council was to ensure that RMOW staff engaged in a meaningful way the bike rental business community, shared insights from the pilot program, and secured feedback from the local rental operators to ensure both the program goals are met and our small businesses can retain our share of the bike rental market.***

For the RMOW's 2023 and 2024 E-Bike program we hope that the RMOW will seriously consider the following key areas of concern and the related competitive impacts on our businesses:

- 1) Locations of the bike pick-up and drop-off locations should be a reasonable distance from existing bike rental shops and visitor nightly accommodation (we suggest at least 250 meters).
- 2) Pricing must be designed to not undercut local bike rental operators and the program must be exclusive for shorter duration rides only (30 minutes or less) afterwards overage fees should apply. Comparing ride time on an RMOW/BCAA bike to a per hour traditional bike rental is not appropriate as guests on a per hour traditional rental are not actually riding bikes for entire period. The 1 hour of ride time in the pilot until an overage fee occurs is too long and overage fees should apply after 30 minutes. Additionally, there should be clear communication and

signage that the RMOW's program is for short duration commutes only and clearly direct guests to the local bike rental providers for bike rentals in excess of 30 minutes.

- 3) There should be restrictions on discounting and marketing online for the winner of the RFP. For example, this summer BCAA advertised heavily on Facebook and offered discounts (including free ride time) to gain market share from local businesses. This targets out of town visitors and increases Facebook advertising costs for local bike rental operators. Additionally, any marketing support from the RMOW to promote its e-bike program should also be offered to local bike rental providers.
- 4) The RMOW should be charging the winner of the RFP rent for the bike pick-up / drop-off locations and for bike storage with the RMOW. RMOW should eliminate bike rack fees for bike rental operators with racks on the village stroll and consider special allowances regarding signage rules for bike rental operators. There needs to be a level playing field.

The process followed by the RMOW to date to communicate with local bike rental operators regarding the RMOW's E-Bike program was not sufficient. Going forward we hope that the RMOW can communicate, engage, welcome feedback and share information with local small businesses in a more collaborative and transparent manner so the RMOW e-bike program can benefit the entire Whistler community, including Whistler bike rental operators.

On behalf of the Whistler local bike rental business community –

Dave Wilcox & Todd Friesen - Premium Mountain Rental

Matt Delaney - Arbutus Routes

Will Naylor – Gateway Bikes / Whistler Sports Rentals

Simon Miller & Ryoma Chiyasu – Spicy Sports

Carlos Strachan – Comor Sports