

To All Council Members and Stakeholders in Whistler,

I am writing this open letter in response to a presentation by the RMOW on July 5th regarding an Evo E-Bike Share Demonstration Project being implemented for late summer 2022.

I would like to thank the council for their time and effort already spent reviewing this project, and ask that they take a few more minutes to read this letter. I have tried to keep it brief.

To start, I would like to point out that I am in favour of an e-bike share program, and look forward to the day when we have a successful program in place. To achieve this efficiently, safely and in a manner that is fair to existing local rental operators, we need to have an effective and well thought-out trial.

Currently I don't think we have this. I think the proposed trial is not fit for purpose and poses serious safety risks. I am also of the opinion that the trial is being rolled out in a manner that is not showing due respect to local businesses.

Here are my questions, separated into 3 categories: Safety; Trial Efficacy; Business/Ethical Considerations.

Safety

1. How will Evolve/RMOW ensure riders are not intoxicated when renting bikes?

Even when filling out waivers that insist on no-intoxication, guests do still occasionally try to use rental equipment when intoxicated. If this was the case in my company, the rental would not be allowed, and I have also seen first hand employees of Canadian 01 deny rentals for the same reason. This ensures safety of the guest and also other trail users. Without that interaction with a trained and competent employee the outcomes could have been very different.

2. How will guests be informed how to use the bikes, and the local trails?

We often have to explain to international guests that the brakes will not be in the orientation they are accustomed to, and other aspects of bike usage. We also offer up advice on how to use the Valley Trail and even which paths exactly are Valley Trail or which are pedestrian (for example different sides of Northlands Boulevard).

3. What is the speed limit on the bikes? Does this match the speed limits in Whistler?

4. How will the helmets be sanitized and inspected?

If we suspect a crash has occurred or general helmet damage (this information is not always offered up by the guest). We ask what happened, inspect the helmets, and throw away any that

are damaged. We also disinfect PPE after each rental and allow it time to dry for the next user, to ensure the guest has a good user experience.

5. How will bikes be flagged for maintenance/repair?

We ask guests after each ride if any issues occurred, and handle the bikes each morning and evening. Our bikes have maintenance schedules. Not just to fix bikes that are broken, but to ensure all bikes are tuned and adjusted correctly. A poorly tuned bike can actually be more dangerous than a completely broken bike.

Trial Efficacy

On passing the resolution, Mayor Jack Crompton remarked “if we don’t test we don’t learn”. I would say if the trial is conducted without metrics for failure or success, without good data points, and without proper consideration, it can give very misleading results and actually do more harm than good.

1. What are the metrics for success or failure of this trial? Exactly what data are we collecting and why?

The proposal states “serving key destinations including parks, amenities, and key population centres”

2. How many locations are in key population centres?
3. Can the bikes be used by families (child passengers? attaching trailers? or riders under 16 years of age?)
4. If not usable by families, would the most suitable population centre of all, be at a larger staff housing units?
5. If scope of the trial is limited, should we start at staff housing? Rather than having 2 locations in the parking lots which are within easy walking distance of several existing rental providers?

Current pricing significantly undercuts existing rental providers, with the overage charge easy to avoid. It is still considerably more expensive than taking a car and parking, especially if vehicles are occupied by more than one person.

The proposal states “The target user group is those looking for single, short duration trips from one destination to another without the worry of bike theft, or the hassle of parking, and ultimately replacing car trips.” The background also mentioned trips to work by car. Current locations seem to be a hassle to get to for most people, unless they have already driven to a parking lot, or park.

6. How many of the proposed locations are centered within residential areas where household members would otherwise drive to work?

7. How many of the proposed locations are centered within residential areas where household members would otherwise drive to recreation areas?
8. How many of the proposed locations are in areas easily accessible by destination guests, that in lieu of an e-bike share program could rent bikes from an existing operator?
9. What proportion of trips to work originate from the current locations?

Local Business/Ethical Concerns

1. What is the environmental impact of the program, how will this be measured?
2. How will the bikes be transported to and from Vancouver for their maintenance and repair?
3. Will Evo be required to have a business license for each of its locations.
4. Will Evo be subject to the same limits on bike rack space as existing operators?
5. Will Evo pay the same per m2 as existing operators to rack their bikes on municipal land?
6. The presentation claims the project will not “target a user who would not undertake a trip through a bike rental provider”. If this indeed turns out to be false, will existing rental providers be compensated?
7. Should the RMOW be allowing free advertising in the parks and key locations around the village, that will increase brand awareness of a company setting out to compete with existing local operators?
8. Could the RMOW insist on their own decals being placed over the EVO branding for this trial? Similar to what they already have in their own fleet of e-bikes?
9. Is the Evo branding at key locations in the peak of summer beneficial to achieving our climate goals?

Local rental operators have to order their bike fleet over 1 year ahead of when they typically receive it. We have planned for over 1 year for the business that we will undertake in the next few weeks. As seasonal businesses we have a relatively short window in which we turn a profit (typically July and August).

10. Do you think informing us for the first time on June 27th, is an appropriate or fair amount of notice?
11. Do you think that starting the bike rental project in July is fair to existing operators?

The above questions have been raised by myself and other Whistler residents. If these questions remain unanswered and unconsidered, I think this shows lack of due diligence on behalf of the RMOW, and that the project should be postponed 7 months in order to perform this due diligence. This relatively short delay should still allow this project to contribute successfully to achieving our climate goals. I can't see a big downside to postponing the project a few months, but do think there could be considerable negative impacts to rushing through the trial. I'm writing this with an open mind, and would love to have these questions answered and be satisfied with the answers. I hope that is the case and I watch as the trial rolls out safely and

effectively. If this isn't the case and you share my concerns, please give the RMOW a few months more to work on the project and engage Whistler residents.

Thanks again for your time.

Yours sincerely

Will Naylor
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Owner and Operator of Whistler Sports Rentals Ltd.

P.S. As a business owner in the midst of my peak season and father of two young children I did struggle to find the time and energy for this, especially in the short time frame. So for anyone reading this grinding their teeth at the grammatical or spelling errors, my apologies!