

To: Oshawa Active Transportation Advisory Committee

From: O.A.T.A.C. 2022 Projects Working Group

Subject: Review of safety on paths with eBikes

## **1.0 Purpose**

To respond to O.A.T.A.C resolution adopted Sept. 7, 2022 requesting the 2022 Projects Working Group to provide comments on the safety on paths with eBikes.

## **2.0 Comments**

EBikes are rapidly gaining in popularity as are the use of regular bicycles. In areas where rentals are available, eBikes are very popular as are scooters and other power assisted smaller modes of travel. With rentals of scooters and eBikes coming to Oshawa, existing paths and many sidewalks are going to be crowded.

These crowded paths and sidewalks will have considerable speed differences between pedestrians and eBikes, scooters and other small wheeled powered vehicles. These conflicts will occur, whether permission is granted or not for these vehicles to use the sidewalks and paths. As is the case now on the Harmony Creek Valley Trail, the Waterfront Trail and likely other areas, seniors, those with mobility challenges and even families with young children are hesitant to use these facilities do to the conflicts between fast moving wheeled vehicles and pedestrians.

To reduce this problem, the City has been moving to providing a sidewalk on one side of collector and arterial roads with a multi-use path on the other side. It would be desirable and safer to provide both facilities on both sides of the road to reduce road crossings. This would greatly encourage the move away from autos and save funds on new roads or road widening in the future. On local residential roads pedestrians can use the sidewalk while bicycles, whether power assisted or not, may share the road with autos. Eventually there will be sufficient multi-use paths on collector and arterial roads to prohibit bicycles whether power assisted or not from using sidewalks, except for a younger age group. This separation of faster moving wheeled vehicles from pedestrians will also be required along the waterfront, creek valleys and other off road locations where multi-use paths are being provided.

## **3.0 Conclusion**

- 3.1 The problem is not eBikes on multi-use paths in the valley but the rapidly growing popularity of active transportation including walking, bicycling whether on an eBike or not and other forms power assisted smaller modes of travel on

limited facilities, leading to overcrowding and conflicts in the speed of travelers. As is being undertaken on roads, these corridors will need a separation between faster moving wheeled vehicles and pedestrians. Two sets of paths are required for this separation. The path materials must be distinctly different so their use is recognizable. Appropriate signs for each path type will be required. As part of the updating of the Active Transportation Master Plan, the consultant should identify the location for each of these paths in the Oshawa Creek Valley, Harmony Creek Valley and Waterfront. The 2022 Projects Working Group is prepared to assist in this work.

- 3.2 The current plan of having a sidewalk on one side and a multi-use path on the other side of all collector and arterial roads should be supported but consideration should be given in utility locations and road widening to provide both facilities on both sides of the road in the future.

To achieve the current plan, the City should decide which side of all collector and arterial roads the multi-use paths are to be constructed. This should be part of the work of the consultant when they are updating the Active Transportation Master Plan. When significant sections of sidewalks are being replaced on the side of the road to be a multi-use path, the multi-use path should be constructed even if it is for a short section. This would save the City considerable funds in the long term and implement the separation of pedestrians and faster moving wheeled vehicles sooner. The 2022 Projects Working Group is prepared to assist in this work.

- 3.3 In addition to this evolving provision of facilities, the City should strengthen the educational program of teaching trail etiquette.