Agenda – Council – November 23, 2023

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – October 31, 2023

Item No. 3 Implementing a New Bike Registration System and Bike Theft Prevention Program

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 14, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the following to Council:

1. That 529 Garage be endorsed as the City's preferred bike registry.

2. That funding for the new bike registration system and bike theft prevention program, in the amounts of $50,625 in 2024; $50,210 in 2025, $51,550 in 2026 and $52,890 in 2027, be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget process.

3. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to provide a verbal update on the progress of the New Bike Registration System and Bike Theft Prevention Program, at the April 2025 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Agenda – Council – November 23, 2023

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – October 31, 2023

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 14, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 31, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendment:

- Add the following new Recommendation, and renumber the remaining Recommendation accordingly:

  "3. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to provide a verbal update on the progress of the New Bike Registration System and Bike Theft Prevention Program, at the April 2025 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services."

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 12, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee recommended:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to consult with the Winnipeg Police Service, Bike Winnipeg, and the WRENCH., and report back within 120 days to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services on the following:

   A. The feasibility of replacing Winnipeg's bicycle registry with a new system that:

      i. Provides the service free of charge to registrants;

      ii. Is part of a larger multi-jurisdictional network to ensure wider tracking of bicycles;

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – October 31, 2023

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

iii. Provides City staff and the Winnipeg Police Service with access to a dashboard of data tracking and administrative tools to effectively manage and reduce bike thefts;

B. Any budget implications involved with the adoption and maintenance of the new system.

2. That Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Implementing a New Bike Registration System and Bike Theft Prevention Program

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
W. Yee	C. Fernandes	C. Kloepfer	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Service has concluded its consultation with the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS), Bike Winnipeg, the WRENCH (Winnipeg Repair Education Cycling Hub), and third-party bicycle registries whose “core” business is to facilitate cloud-based registration of bicycles regardless of municipal or provincial boundaries. As a result of those consultations, the report recommends the City of Winnipeg (the City) replace its current bike registration system by obtaining administrative rights of 529 Garage and encourage the use of 529 garage, a program that helps reduce bike theft by providing citizens with free bike registration.

Under the City’s current bike registration system, the City owns and controls the data within it; this is not the case with 529 Garage. The City would no longer own nor control the data within the bike registry, and the City’s role in administering the data is non-existent. Rather, the City would purchase “administrator rights” to gain access to the data. Moving to this new system will enable the City to enhance their role in (1) evolving crime prevention strategies; (2) proactively enforce and deter bike thefts; and (3) provide recovery, storage, and auctioning of unclaimed bikes.

The WPS is in support of an ongoing voluntary free registry for residents, led and supported by the Community By-law Enforcement Services (CBES) division of the Community Services Department, as part of a broader bike theft strategy, and supports a broader multi-jurisdictional network registry in their efforts to return stolen bikes to their rightful owners. CBES and WPS identified opportunities to enhance or improve resources available to residents in their efforts to curb bike theft, several of which will be explored in partnership over the next several months. WPS would continue to be the lead agency focusing on crime prevention strategies and enforcement of bike thefts while CBES would continue to be the lead in providing back-end support for bike recovery, storage, and the auction of unclaimed bikes.

Financial resources for the Community Services Department are required to move forward with implementation of the recommendations of this report. If the Recommendations of this report are not approved, the Public Service will continue to operate the existing program as-is.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That 529 Garage be endorsed as the City's preferred bike registry.

2. That funding for the new bike registration system and bike theft prevention program, in the amounts of $50,625 in 2024; $50,210 in 2025, $51,550 in 2026 and $52,890 in 2027, be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget process.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City of Winnipeg be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On June 12, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee directed the Public Service to undertake consultation with the Winnipeg Police Service, Bike Winnipeg, and the WRENCH, and report back within 120 days to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services on the following:

A. The feasibility of replacing Winnipeg's bicycle registry with a new system that:

   i. Provides the service free of charge to registrants;
   ii. Is part of a larger multi-jurisdictional network to ensure wider tracking of bicycles;
   iii. Provides City staff and the Winnipeg Police Service with access to a dashboard of data tracking and administrative tools to effectively manage and reduce bike thefts.

B. Any budget implications involved with the adoption and maintenance of the new system.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are two significant implications toward moving to a cloud based "free" bike registration system. The first is the, technical complexity related to transferring existing bike registrations to the new system; the second is the cost to the City both in terms of obtaining administrative rights to the registration information from the provider and the loss of annual recoveries of the existing bike registration revenues for the City.

Financial Implications

The existing bike registration system registers approximately 2,100 bikes annually totaling approximately $16,000 per year in revenue, with a total average annual cost of $8,000 to support it. Annual lost revenue, due to fewer sales at the annual bike auction, is estimated at approximately $25,000.

The estimated annual cost to obtain administrator rights to 529 Garage system is approximately $14,000 that includes:

- 1,500 staff accounts and unlimited search accounts – provides officers the ability to search 2.7 million bike registrations, from any location with the 529 Garage Police app;
- 4 hours of professional service support for the first year;
- 500 free shields (tamper proof stickers) on sign up, and wholesale shields price on any reorders.

The estimated promotional costs associated for the new registration system as outlined in this report is approximately $3,625 for the first year, and approximately $1,900 ongoing annual costs associated with community events to promote the registration program.

It is anticipated that a net mill rate support impact of approximately $51,000 in 2024 to implement the new registration program, with a 2% annual inflationary increase each year thereafter.

Bike Registration Financial Implications					
	2024	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**
Revenues:					
Loss of current bike registration revenue	$16,000	$17,000	$18,000	$19,000	$20,000
Estimated Loss of revenue from sales at the annual bike auction	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000
Net Revenue Loss	**$41,000**	**$42,000**	**$43,000**	**$44,000**	**$45,000**
Expenditures:					
Reduced Current Expenses - Agency Fees to Eply	($8,000)	($8,000)	($8,000)	($8,000)	($8,000)
Administrative rights to 529 Garage	$14,000	$14,300	$14,600	$14,900	$15,200
Promotional Shields for giveaways	$1,875	$1,910	$1,950	$1,990	$2,030
Ten (10) Retail Store Starter Kits - *One-time cost*	$1,750	0	0	0	0
Net Expenditure Increase	**$9,625**	**$8,210**	**$8,550**	**$8,890**	**$9,230**
Total Mill Rate Financial Impact	**$50,625**	**$50,210**	**$51,550**	**$52,890**	**$54,230**

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Part 1 – Overview

As part of the Community By-law Enforcement Services (CBES) and Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) collaboration related to bike registrations and bike recovery, both have agreed to expand on the current “lost and found” bike registration system to a larger multi-jurisdictional network registration system to better support the WPS larger crime prevention strategy for stolen bikes.

Part 2 - Current City’s online bike registry

The current online bike registry was selected to replicate the former manual “lost and found” registry. Based on that objective Personify (formally ePly) was contracted in 2018 as they satisfied the City’s requirements as a cost-effective online registry that was developed and implemented. An “app” was explored with the provider; however, they were unable to provide a mobile app without significant revision, development and cost to the City. Various improvements

have since occurred to enhance user experience of the web-based registry through the City's webpage.

Since May 2019, the Public Service has enhanced public education and awareness through consolidated information on the City of Winnipeg's website, including information on storing and locking bikes safely, reporting a stolen bike, how to register bikes, recycling and disposal of bikes, as well as other cycling information.

Additional measures were taken with the objective to increase registrations, such as public messaging, social and traditional media, promotional campaigns focused on protecting bikes from theft, and registration on the City's online registry to improve the rate of return of stolen bikes.

Partnerships have been developed with local bike shops to distribute retail-friendly printed material (posters/postcards) to citizens. Since the start of the new program, the Public Service has visited approximately 20 major retail locations annually, and store managers / owners received various promotional items related to the online bike registry including door hangers and postcards, to promote the bike registry.

Since implementation of the online bike registry, the number of voluntary registrations has increased significantly. Prior to online registrations, there were only 7,113 registrations over an 18-year period for an annual average of 395 per year. Since implementation (April 2018 – January 2023), an additional 12,048 registrations have occurred.

Part 3 – Proposed Changes to the Bike Registry

Every year, hundreds of bicycles are reported stolen, and it is likely that not all that go missing are reported. On average, CBES and the WPS recover roughly 600 bikes annually, but unfortunately very few have been registered, making it challenging to return them to their rightful owners.

The recommendations of this report will have CBES providing administrative and field support, promotion, bike recovery, storage, and returning of stolen bikes in support of a free bicycle registration service through 529 Garage. 529 Garage is a mobile and web-based application that allows bike owners to register their bikes in a database that will work worldwide, upload images, and notify others if their bike is stolen. The free registration will assist the WPS to advance their crime prevention programs, conduct proactive enforcement, and for both CBES and WPS to identify stolen bikes that are recovered so they can be returned to their rightful owners.

The 529 Garage bike registry is accessible to hundreds of police services across Canada and the United States, increasing the likelihood of a bike being returned. It also includes the option for citizens to purchase a 529 Garage Shield to warn thieves that the bike is registered, acting as an additional deterrent to thefts. However, unlike the current registration system, information collected is owned and managed by 529 Garage. The City has no rights to the data.

529 Garage has been effective in other jurisdictions. In 2015, Vancouver Police implemented 529 Garage, and reported a 30 percent reduction in bike thefts, two years after introducing 529 Garage.

Public registration of bikes is quick and easy; citizens can download the 529 Garage app from their smartphone or tablet or go to their 529 Garage website and enter all the bike's information including the serial number, brand, colour, and add photos (optional).

If the bike goes missing, it's easy to report it as stolen or missing using the 529 Garage app or website. 529 Garage will then send out an alert to the community to alert others to keep an eye out and notify 529 Garage if they find the missing bike.

Once the registrant enters the bike as missing in the 529 Garage app, 529 Garage will direct the registrant to the WPS online reporting site to complete a police report.

In addition to registering their bike with 529 Garage, citizens can add an optional 529 Garage Shield to their bike at a cost of approximately $15 (sold direct from 529 Garage). This provides a visible theft deterrent by letting thieves know the bike is registered with 529 Garage. These tamper proof stickers can be affixed to the bike frame and include a unique registration number that can link to your bike's registration, acting like a license plate for the bike.

As part of this program, the Public Service will purchase a number of 529 Garage shields annually to be distributed free of charge by WPS and CBES through promotional programs, to promote the free bike registration program.

Further exploration will occur with local bike shops to determine if they would like to partner in supplying bike Shields directly from Winnipeg's local bike shops. To encourage participation, the program includes the one-time purchase of 10 retail store starter kits that include store window decals, countertop display cases and 10 Shields that advertise the free bike registration program. These will be provided free of charge to partnering retailers.

Part 4 - Next Steps to Improve Bike Theft Prevention

The Public Service will continue to educate and support residents to better protect themselves against bike theft, including the following actions:

The Community By-law Enforcement Services Division;

1. CBES will take the lead in the purchase, support and maintenance of the new registration program;

2. CBES will continue promotion/marketing and education of the bike registration program;

3. CBES will continue to provide a Bicycle Recovery Officer to pick up recovered bikes and to work with police on getting the recovered bikes back to their rightful owners;

4. CBES will continue to provide the storage and inventory of recovered bikes and administer the annual bike auction for bikes that are not recovered;

5. Build on existing partnerships with local bike shops to explore retail-friendly printed material (posters/stickers/bike tags) for distribution from retailers. Work with retailers to register bikes at the time of purchase (not mandatory).

The Winnipeg Police Service;

1. Advance and evolve public messaging, media, and promotional campaigns, focused on protecting bikes from theft, and include information of registration in the City's supported bike registry program to improve the rate of return of stolen bikes;

2. Enhance their larger crime prevention model as it relates to bike thefts in Winnipeg to support the work of CBES and the bike registry app, by including and resource information in their crime prevention messaging and presentations.

Part 5 – Schedule of Implementation of New Program

November/December 2023 – Agreement negotiation with 529 Garage for administration rights to program.

January 2024 – Work with 529 Garage to transfer existing bike registration to new system.

March 2024 – Launch new bike registration system – Media Release and Social Media Campaign. Emails will go out to existing registers giving them the opportunity to update their information and to set passwords for the new system.

April - June 2024 – Work with local bike shops in implementing partnerships related to the new bike registration program.

Part 6 – Jurisdictional Scan

Research was conducted in July and August 2023 to identify third-party bike registration vendors working in partnership with Canadian municipal governments. Fourteen medium – large Canadian Municipalities were included in the scope of this research.

Key Findings:

- Of the 14 municipalities, 10 actively partner with a third-party bike registration vendor:
  - **8** work in partnership with 529 Garage (Vancouver, Victoria, Red Deer, Regina, Brandon, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City)
  - **2** work in partnership with Bike Index (Calgary, Edmonton)
  - **4** use their own municipal-based system (Saskatoon, Hamilton, Peel Region, Toronto)

This research confirmed an approach wherein the WPS will continue to be the lead agency focusing on crime prevention strategies and enforcement of bike thefts. Each of the municipalities that partner with third-party bike registration vendors resource their support via the municipality's police department / service. CBES will continue to lead the bike recovery program, and provide back bone support such as, storage, inventory, the annual bike auction and the support from the bicycle recovery officer in picking up recovered bikes. The big shift will be that CBES and WPS will collaborate and the WPS will play a larger role to support promotion/marketing and education of the new bike registration program as part of a bigger crime prevention program. (Appendix A-C)

The Public Service consulted with Bike Winnipeg and the WRENCH to determine their needs, receive feedback, inform the Public Service's review, and to determine the overall direction of this report.

Part 7 – Cloud Technical Review

529 Garage and Bike Index were selected as the two possible solution providers. Both vendors provide a national (international for 529 Garage) database for searching for stolen bicycles. As the Public Service recommendations encourages citizens to use a third-party bike registry, it conducted a technical cloud review focused on the following requirements within each solution; records management, privacy requirements, information security, and technical requirements. 529 Garage scored significantly higher based on the review, therefore the Public Service is recommending the City of Winnipeg (the City) replace its current bike registration system by obtaining administrative rights of 529 Garage. Appendix D provides a summary of the findings of the review.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: September 28, 2023

Project Name: Implementing a New Bike Registration System and Bike Theft Prevention Program

First Year of Program **2024**

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 9,625	$ 8,210	$ 8,550	$ 8,890	$ 9,230
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 9,625	$ 8,210	$ 8,550	$ 8,890	$ 9,230
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	(41,000)	(42,000)	(43,000)	(44,000)	(45,000)
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 50,625	$ 50,210	$ 51,550	$ 52,890	$ 54,230

Additional Comments: Direct costs include the net expenditure increase required as a result of moving from the current bike registration system to new bike registration system. Existing budget amounts represent the loss of revenue from the Bike Registry program and an estimated reduction in bike auction sales effective 2024 onward.

The Net Budget Adjustment Required of approximately $51,000 per year represents the net impact of increased expenses and foregone revenue as a result of the implementation of the new bike registration system.

The net budget adjustment required is requested to be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget process.

Ozzy Garrett - September 28, 2023

Ozzy Garrett CPA, CGA
Manager of Finance
Community Services Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Innovation and Technology Department
- Winnipeg Police Service
- Bike Winnipeg
- WRENCH

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Goal #1: Leadership and Good Governance
1.7 Equitable Service Access
1.15 Community Capacity Development

Goal #3: Economic Prosperity
3.12 Poverty Reduction

Goal #4: Good Health and Well-Being
4.6 Community Safety

Goal #5: Social Equity
5.6 Equitable Service Access

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The information and recommendations presented in this report align with and advance the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (2021 – 2031) as follows:

They embody the following **Guiding Principles**:

1. We will Promote and Maintain the Welfare of All Residents
2. We will Develop Trust and Meaningful Partnerships to find solutions and drive change.

They align with the following Goals and Objectives:

Goal 5: Transportation System Equity is Enhanced
Related 10-year Objectives:

A. The affordability and accessibility of transportation and transit service is increased.

B. Improvements to transportation and transit infrastructure and services prioritize areas of higher poverty, and increased interconnectivity to employment and affordable goods

and services.

C. Increased collaboration with community partners improves access to safe and secure transportation by all residents.

Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible
Related 10-year Objective:

A. Residents have equitable access to City services, in particular demographic groups who experience marginalization.

B. Community development models and collaborative approaches are enhanced or initiated for service planning and delivery in areas of higher poverty.

C. Use of City's tools and resources are maximized to reduce systemic inequities.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Community Services Department
Division: Community By-law Enforcement Services
Prepared by: Terry Cormier, Licensing Coordinator
Date: September 28, 2023
File No: CMS-2023-24

Attachments:

Appendix A – Jurisdictional Scan (Bike Registration Systems)

Appendix B - Jurisdictional Scan (Canadian Municipalities)

Appendix C – Project 529

Appendix D – Summary Cloud Technical Review