

Search the North Shore

Search

## City of North Vancouver sets bike lift study in motion

Justin Beddall / North Shore News

October 9, 2015 09:41 AM



The plan to bring an urban bike lift to the City of North Vancouver moved forward at Monday's council meeting, but it still faces an uphill road.

CNV council voted 4-3 in favour of [working with the team that built a similar lift in Trondheim, Norway](http://www.nsnews.com/news/north-vancouver-city-mayor-s-uplifting-norwegian-visit-catches-media-attention-1.2044935) (<http://www.nsnews.com/news/north-vancouver-city-mayor-s-uplifting-norwegian-visit-catches-media-attention-1.2044935>) – the only one of its kind in the world – to study the feasibility of installing a similar lift in the city.

Council first discussed a bike lift in 2010 and in July instructed staff to prepare a preliminary report assessing the costs and opportunities associated with such a system.

“Leading the way presents some obvious challenges but it also makes a statement about the City's commitment to expanding cycling,” reads the staff report.

Trondheim's 130-metre bike lift began operation in 1993 and cost approximately \$300,000. In 2012 it was replaced by an updated design called “CycloCable.”

The system is similar to a ski lift but it's designed for bikers, who put one foot inside a “footplate” while a pulley system gently lifts them uphill.

The CNV staff report notes the feasibility study needs to consider regulatory and safety standards associated with the lift, as well as potential liability concerns.

Rough estimates from the manufacturer's website, project the system costing between \$2,400 to \$3,200 per metre to install.

Originally, Trondheim defrayed capital and operating costs by charging \$20 for an annual pass but the service is now free.

City staff identified four possible locations for the lift: Spirit Trail along East 4th (Kennard to Heywood); West Keith Road (Bewicke to Jones or Chesterfield); East Fourth Street (Heywood to Hendry); and Queensbury (Spirit Trail to East Third Street). Cost estimates for the different routes ranged from \$250,000 (Queensbury) to \$1.9-\$2.9 million (West Keith Road).

Staff recommended adding \$60,000 to the revised 2015 budget to be used to assist with the study.

In August, Mayor Darrell Mussatto paid his own ticket to Trondheim to try the lift.

"It's very effective in Trondheim – not just for cyclists going to school and work and such but for tourists as well," he told council. "They have people as young as five years old all the way up to 85 or 90 years old using this."

Coun. Rod Clark voted against the feasibility study.

"No other municipality in the world – in the world – has partnered with these people to do such a feasibility study, so why does the little City of North Vancouver have to be the one that wades in? It doesn't make any sense to me whatsoever. Until we address Harry Jerome and a number of other very major recreation capital expenditures, which we have on our horizon, I will not support this kind of lunacy."

The concept may have been appropriate at one time for Norway, but in these times and specifically for North Vancouver it is an outmoded concept. Why? Because as noted by councillor Bookham E-bikes are a far better solution. Note that the use of the cable lift is not free. Have you also noticed the children were running along while the Mayor used the contraption? What kind of message does that send? - cjk

Coun. Pam Bookham, who also voted against the motion, described the lift as a "novelty transit option" and said what riders want are safer routes.

"I can't support this particularly in light of the fact that the technology around electric bicycles is improving all the time and becoming much more efficient and easier to use and being picked up by people of all ages," she said. "I don't

understand why we would spend sixty thousand dollars to see if we should spend a significant number of millions of dollars to provide a lift assist on one small uphill section within our community given the nature of the city with its many, many hills.”

Mussatto, who agreed the study should consider the emergence of electric bikes, said municipalities must get creative to solve transportation issues.

“How do we get people out of cars and (using) other types of transportation, which is walking, cycling and public transportation,” he said. “I think this is a very tangible way to show that.”

Mussatto said the lift is a way to get average cyclists – “not diehard Olympic-type cyclists, they fly up the hill” – commuting to school or work or for general recreation for families and individuals of all ages.

And while the mayor noted there are some major issues that need to be answered before committing to a lift, he’s pleased that the idea will be studied. “I think this is an opportunity to sort of move that cycling culture and make us a healthier and happier city – that’s why I brought it forward, that’s why I spent my own dollar and I’m very proud of what I’ve been able to do.”

© 2015 North Shore News

**[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your Inbox. \(http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe\)](http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe)**