

E-Bike Business Development Project
St. Paul-Elk Point Economic Development (STEP)
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Project Overview:

St. Paul-Elk Point Economic Development (STEP) developed an E-Bike network project for the area adjacent to Alberta's Iron Horse Trail and the project scope was to support existing businesses and/or organizations along the Iron Horse Trail to create an E-Bike network. Through the preliminary work on the project, it became clear the area currently has insufficient businesses and/or organizations in a position to form an E-Bike network. The project was then re-scoped to:

- Support E-Bike business development through the creation of an E-Bike Development Guide for Businesses.
- Identify businesses located in communities in proximity to the Iron Horse Trail with potential for E-Bike development.
- Identify supporting businesses needed for a successful E-Bike network.
- Identify existing and potential routes for E-Bike leisure cycling.

Methodology

A regional business inventory was completed for the areas adjacent to the Iron Horse Trail. With the inventory identifying few businesses ready to capitalize on E-Bike development and then the project re-scope, a literature and best practices assessment was then completed. The information from the assessments was used to create the E-Bike Business Development Guide (Appendix A).

Also from the literature, recommendations for business supports were noted, and municipal planning considerations (Appendix B) plus other needs to ensure a strong foundation for E-Bike network development.

Results and Findings

As identified in the preliminary study work by STEP, an insufficient number and variety of businesses exist in the region to support a strong E-Bike network today. While there are many sites, events and recreational opportunities in the area, there is a lack of unique accommodations and a low density of businesses near the Iron Horse Trail to support a robust network.

E-Bikes are rapidly gaining popularity, whether for commuters seeking a sweat-free ride, tourists exploring scenic routes, or fitness enthusiasts looking for a new challenge. Other users include traditional non-cyclists (seniors especially) who see the opportunity E-Bikes provide to be able to get outdoors for their health and improved local mobility. This surge in

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popularity has opened exciting opportunities for entrepreneurs looking to tap into the growing demand for sustainable transportation and unique visitor experiences.

Discussion and Recommendations

A successful E-Bike network requires a collaborative ecosystem. Key business opportunities for the STEP region include:

1. E-Bike Retailers and Repair Shops:

Importance: Providing sales, rentals, demos, and expert advice as well as maintenance and repair services, E-Bike retailers are essential for keeping E-Bikes running smoothly and safely. A robust network of retailers builds confidence in E-Bikes as a reliable recreational transportation option. The STEP area does not currently have an E-Bike retailer or repair shop, so expanding an existing business which incorporates this service, or establishing a new business is a new opportunity.

Role: Selling E-Bikes, accessories, and gear; offering repair and maintenance services; potentially offering rentals or demo programs; educating customers about E-Bikes.

Also, retailers, repair shops and the E-Bike rental businesses have a role in safety and accessibility advocacy with their municipal and provincial governments.

Recommendation: Establish or expand existing suitable businesses to specialize in E-Bikes specifically rentals and provide sales and services with a range of E-Bike models offered (commuter, mountain, folding), accessories (helmets, locks, lights), and gear.

Provide expert advice on E-Bike selection, usage, and maintenance to the rental business (if separate from sales and service) for the routes and terrains the rental business will utilize for their clients.

Justification: E-Bikes require specialized knowledge and maintenance. Local shops build confidence in E-Bikes as a unique recreational and tourism experience as well as a reliable transportation option. Having an E-Bike retailer and repair shop to support the rental E-Bike business is important to ensure safe and reliable E-Bikes are available for visitors.

Specific Actions:

- Partner with E-Bike manufacturers for training and certifications.
- Assist E-Bike rental businesses with bike selection, repairs and maintenance.
- Create maintenance packages and service plans tailored to E-Bikes.
- Share info on E-Bike safety and maintenance.

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2. Infrastructure Providers:

Importance: A readily available and reliable charging network is fundamental to E-Bike adoption. Companies that install and maintain charging stations alleviate "range anxiety" and make E-Bikes a practical choice for longer commutes or leisure rides.

Role: Installing, maintaining, and operating E-Bike charging stations; potentially offering payment solutions for charging; expanding the charging network's reach.

Recommendation: Invest in a network of E-Bike charging stations strategically located throughout the region. Prioritize locations near popular destinations, rest areas, and businesses.

Justification: Addressing range anxiety is crucial for E-Bike opportunities. Convenient charging infrastructure encourages longer rides and exploration.

Specific Actions:

- Partner with local businesses to host charging stations on their premises.
- Explore grant opportunities for funding charging infrastructure development.
- Implement a user-friendly payment system for charging services.
- Ensure charging stations are compatible with various E-Bike models.

Importance: Cellular and/or Network coverage for most of the routes will support app use, emergency response services, and area engagement and awareness.

Role: Installing boosters or other hubs at frequent stops if coverage is limited.

Recommendation: Improve cellular and network coverage along E-Bike routes.

Justification: Reliable connectivity supports app use (navigation, charging station location), enhances safety (emergency response), and facilitates engagement with local businesses.

Specific Actions:

- Identify areas with limited coverage and install signal boosters or hubs.
- Partner with telecommunication companies to expand network infrastructure.

3. Tourism and Hospitality Businesses:

Importance: E-Bikes are a fantastic way for visitors to explore a region. Hotels, B&Bs, tour operators, and local attractions benefit from increased visitor mobility and can offer E-Bike rentals or tours as part of their services. As the area has a low density of visitor services

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near the Iron Horse Trail, there is a large opportunity in the region to grow visitor businesses along potential routes, both E-Bike specific and supporting businesses. STEP has completed tourism opportunity studies for regional trail development, accommodation needs and assessments of existing assets for potential expansions, all of which are supportive of the E-Bike network development in the region (*Regional Tourism Opportunity Identification and Destination Development, Region Tourism Development Accommodations Study, Regional Trail Master Plan, and the Iron Horse Trail Staging Area Development Plan*).

Role: Offering E-Bike rentals; creating guided E-Bike tours; providing secure bike parking for guests; promoting E-Biking as a tourist activity.

Recommendation: Offer E-Bike rentals and tours to capitalize on the growing interest in E-Bike tourism. Promote E-Biking as a sustainable and enjoyable way to explore the region.

Justification: E-Bikes expand tourist mobility and open new possibilities for exploration. This attracts a wider range of visitors and boosts local economies. E-Bikes travel more slowly extending visitor dwell time in the region and require more services from the operators.

Specific Actions:

- Partner with local E-Bike retailers for rentals and maintenance.
- Develop curated E-Bike tour routes showcasing local attractions and scenery.
- Provide secure bike parking for guests at hotels, B&Bs, and attractions.
- Include E-Bike information and resources in visitor guides and promotional materials.
- Establish or grow businesses attractive to visitors on E-Bikes: unique full-service accommodation, tours with pickup and drop off locations if beyond E-Bike range or unsuitable for E-Bike travel, food experiences, and retail with shipping or hold for pickup options.

4. Technology and Software Companies:

Importance: Mobile apps for navigation, route planning, charging station location, and E-Bike sharing are essential for user convenience. Data analytics platforms help optimize network performance and understand user behavior.

Role: Developing and maintaining mobile apps; providing data analytics and network management tools; offering smart bike lock and tracking solutions.

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Recommendation: Develop and promote mobile apps that provide E-Bike navigation, route planning, charging station location, and local business information.

Justification: User-friendly technology enhances the E-Bike experience and connects riders with essential resources.

Specific Actions:

- Create apps that integrate with existing mapping services and tourism asset inventories and provide E-Bike specific routes.
- Include information on charging station availability and pricing in the app.
- Partner with local businesses to offer promotions and discounts through the app.
- Collect data on network usage to optimize performance and identify areas for improvement.

5. Insurance Providers:

Importance: E-Bikes can be expensive, and insurance provides peace of mind for rental business owners. Insurance companies that offer specialized E-Bike coverage support the growth of the market.

Role: Offering insurance plans tailored to E-Bikes; educating rental business owners about E-Bike insurance options.

Recommendation: Offer specialized insurance plans tailored to E-Bikes to address theft, damage, and liability concerns.

Justification: E-Bike insurance supports business viability for the rental business, ensuring quick E-Bike replacements and repairs that are done in a timely manner.

Specific Actions:

- Develop comprehensive E-Bike insurance policies at competitive rates, especially for the E-Bike rental industry.
- Educate business owners about the importance of E-Bike insurance for business risk mitigation.
- Partner with E-Bike retailers to offer insurance options for renters.

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6. Municipalities

Importance: Local governments play a vital role in creating a supportive environment for E-Bike networks. They are responsible for planning and building bike lanes, paths, and other infrastructure, as well as setting regulations and promoting E-Bike opportunities.

Role: Designing and implementing E-Bike-friendly infrastructure; creating regulations and policies.

Recommendation: Invest in the development of E-Bike-friendly infrastructure, including multi-use trails which allow E-Bikes, charging stations, rest areas, and signage. Promote E-Biking as a tourism experience.

Recommendation: Identify existing assets which could be re-purposed to support E-Bike visitor experiences. For example, the municipally owned Elk Point Eco Centre is currently not utilized for visitor services, however its proximity to the Iron Horse Trail could be leveraged for an E-Bike network hub.

Justification: Municipal support is crucial for creating a safe and welcoming environment for E-Bike tourists.

Specific Actions:

- Incorporate E-Bike network planning into transportation planning processes.
- Secure funding for E-Bike infrastructure development and maintenance.

7. Destination Management Organization (Alberta's Lakeland DMO)

Importance: Widely networked and a developer and supporter of tourism initiatives in NE Alberta, Alberta's Lakeland DMO can connect the rental business to regional operators and provide promotion and marketing of the experience to a wide audience.

Role: The DMO can market and promote the E-Bike offerings to visitors, promote and support events and activities of interest to E-Bikers and could potentially offer incentives for E-Bike business development. The DMO's knowledge of regional tourism assets will assist the rental business with route planning and tour development near existing experiences, rest areas, and visitor services.

Recommendation:

The DMO can:

- Develop maps and guides showcasing E-Bike routes and local attractions.

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- Organize or support community events and activities to promote E-Biking.
- Partner with local businesses and organizations to support E-Bike initiatives.
- Enhance amenities and services catering to E-Bikers, including rest areas, repair locations, information centers, and food & beverage options.
- Provide a website landing page on Travel Lakeland, expanding the reach of an individual business owner's own website, to the Travel Lakeland audience.

Justification: Maps, events and amenities improve the overall E-Bike visitor experience and encourage longer rides and stays and deeper exploration of the area.

Specific Actions:

- Prioritize locations for rest areas and repair locations along multi-use trails or routes.
- Partner with local businesses to provide discounts or services to E-Bikers.
- Ensure visitor centers have maps and information on E-Bike routes and attractions.
- Organize guided E-Bike tours and rides showcasing local scenery and attractions.
- Host E-Bike races or competitions.
- Partner with cycling clubs and non-profit organizations to promote E-Biking events.
- Pursue Amenities and Services:
 - Rest Areas: Rest stops with benches, restrooms, and water fountains provide a welcome break for E-Bikers on longer rides.
 - Bike Repair Stations: Basic repair locations with tools and stands allow E-Bikers to make minor repairs or adjustments on the go.
 - Information Centers: Visitor centres or information kiosks can provide maps, route suggestions, and information about local attractions and services (or area specific apps where network connection is viable).
 - Food and Beverage Options: Cafes, restaurants, and convenience stores along or near E-Bike routes provide opportunities for refreshment and rest.

Recommendation: Support events and activities which cater to or are accessible by E-Bikes.

Justification: Events attract E-Bikers, both events specific to E-Bike participation or events that cater to riders with E-Bike amenities.

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8. Community Organizations:

Importance: In the STEP region, community groups host many events and manage recreational and tourism assets.

Role: Organizing events and activities accessible to E-Bikers.

Recommendation: Host events that incorporate the E-Bike visitor needs with charging stations, secure locking areas and E-Bike travel within or to the event location.

Justification: Community groups provide many regional tourism experiences and could encourage E-Bike tourism at their events and in the region by offering E-Bike services at their events or facilities.

Specific Actions:

- Plan events with E-Biker needs in mind.

9. Manufacturers and Distributors:

Importance: Sell E-Bike models ensuring quality, variety, innovation, and a range of options to meet diverse needs. They support local E-Bike retailers and networks.

Role: Manufacturing and distributing E-Bikes; developing new E-Bike technologies; supporting retailers and E-Bike networks.

Recommendation: Support local retailers and E-Bike networks by providing training, marketing materials, and access to a wide range of E-Bike models and parts.

Justification: Manufacturer support is important for ensuring the success of local E-Bike businesses and networks.

Specific Actions:

- Offer training programs for retailers on E-Bike maintenance and repair.
- Provide marketing materials and resources to promote E-Bikes to visitors.
- Collaborate with local governments and organizations on E-Bike initiatives in the STEP region.

By implementing these nine recommendations, a supportive E-Bike business development environment will arise in the Elk Point and St. Paul region attracting visitors as E-Bike users.

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E-Bike Rental Business Development Strategy

E-Bike sales market is experiencing significant growth, with global E-Bike sales projected to reach \$138.44 billion by 2031. For the rental market, size was valued at approximately \$1.8 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach \$5.6 billion by 2032 (all USD), growing at a rate of about 15.2% from 2024 to 2032.

This growing market is a large opportunity for entrepreneurs looking for a new business or existing businesses wanting to diversify. Within the rental market, niche business models exist such as short-term rentals, guided tours, and rent-to-own programs.

Like all new business ventures, each entrepreneur should develop:

- A detailed business plan covering market research, financial projections and funding, legal requirements, and marketing strategies. These plans should include safety and advocacy roles for the business to support the industry's sustainability.
- Purchasing strategies to acquire the right E-Bikes with features that match the existing routes, potential routes and the visitor profiles.
- Strategic marketing plans, including a user-friendly website, active social media presence, and partnerships with local businesses.

The ***E-Bike Rental Company Development Guide (Appendix A)*** provides detailed guidance to entrepreneurs considering an E-Bike rental business.

Routes

For tourism operators and event/site owners, understanding E-Bike users is key to creating or supporting interesting routes for their visit. Most fully independent traveler (FIT) E-Bikers will create a route of their own, based on what they want to see and do in the area. Ensuring assets and events are well promoted with map coordinates will ensure the FIT E-Biker can plan a unique and enjoyable route.

For those operating E-Bike tours, using existing routes such as the Iron Horse Trail, the St. Paul Art Walk (to be modified for E-Bike safe travel routes) and area park trails will minimize the development burden. Specialized tours can be built around themes (antiques, heritage, culture) as well.

For route planning, identify shared priorities and potential conflicts between non-bikers and tourist E-Bikers of the areas (for example using low traffic residential streets for E-Bike travel instead of main thoroughfares). It is important to design tour routes that leverage the network infrastructure (chargers, services) while showcasing local attractions and scenic areas.

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Those investing in E-Bike sales or rentals should be well-versed in the area trail and route conditions before promoting them to users. Advocating for safe lanes, well maintained surfaces and reduced vehicle speeds on shared user routes can ensure the safety of the users, especially visitors who are unfamiliar with the area.

Consider fostering partnerships between tour operators and local businesses to offer discounts and special experiences to both residents and visitors, creating a desirable route.

More regional businesses are needed for a strong network, especially unique accommodations, retail and new experiences (further details in the STEP Accommodations and the Tourism Opportunities Studies), to encourage tour bookings and E-Bike rentals in the area. Developing these new tour offerings based on current tourism trends like transformational experiences (visitors want to connect to something bigger than themselves) or by partnering on niche tours such as stargazing, holiday romance, nostalgia tourism, sleep tourism, digital detoxes, travelling off-the-beaten-path or with purpose.

Possible routes to existing assets could include:

- The Iron Horse Trail between Elk Point to St. Paul. At 32km long the gravel, mostly level trail is suitable for all types of riders, on the right E-Bike model, and can be completed in under 2 hours. There are several rest areas and picnic areas along the way for breaks. The trail is open April 1st to December 31st subject to weather conditions.



- Elk Point to Fort George and Buckingham House (via grid roads).
- Culinary Tours to local establishments like the Creamery at St. Edouard, Lakeland Brewing in St. Paul, Owlseye Greenhouse or other restaurants and local hot spots.
- The STEP Trails and Tourism study proposes these Signature E-Bike and Leisure Cycling routes:
 - Town of St. Paul
 - Town of Elk Point
 - Heinsburg-Whitney Lakes Loop

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- Additional potential routes are:
 - St. Paul to Westcove
 - St. Paul to
 - Lac Bellevue
 - Floatingstone
 - Edouardville
 - Ashmont
 - Mallaig
 - Or to regional Signature experiences

The Elk Point Eco-Centre could be an E-Bike central hub due to its proximity to the Iron Horse Trail providing rentals and travel information. There is parking and amenities at the Eco-Centre.

Conclusion

This report underscores the potential for E-Bike network development within the St. Paul-Elk Point region. By prioritizing the nine key recommendations outlined, the region can cultivate a thriving E-Bike ecosystem that caters to both residents and tourists. These recommendations encompass establishing robust retail and repair services, investing in essential charging infrastructure and network connectivity, and developing compelling E-Bike visitor experiences.

Furthermore, leveraging technology through user-friendly applications and securing municipal and Destination Management Organization support for infrastructure and promotion are crucial. The report also highlights the significant growth potential of the E-Bike rental market, offering entrepreneurs a promising avenue for diversification and new business ventures.

To maximize the impact of the E-Bike network, strategic route planning is essential. Utilizing existing trails like the Iron Horse Trail, developing themed tours, and promoting area assets with precise map coordinates will enhance the user experience. Encouraging partnerships between tour operators and local businesses will create a comprehensive and appealing network.

Ultimately, by implementing these findings, the St. Paul-Elk Point region can unlock new economic opportunities and attract a growing segment of E-Bike enthusiasts, solidifying its position as a premier destination for signature recreational E-Bike experiences.

Appendix A: E-Bike Rental Company Development Guide

Introduction

This guide outlines the steps for launching and running a successful E-Bike rental business. From crafting a solid business plan and securing funding to selecting the right E-Bikes and marketing services, and to ensure customer engagement and satisfaction.

The E-Bike market is growing rapidly, offering a great opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs. Global E-Bike sales are expected to reach \$138.44 billion by 2031. This growth extends to the rental market, with a rise in E-Bike rentals due to increased awareness of its sustainability and the desire for experiential travel and alternative ways to explore.

The potential clientele for E-Bike rentals is diverse and extensive. Visitors often choose E-Bike travel as the experience, allowing them to immerse themselves in a location. Recreational enthusiasts enjoy exploring trails and paths with the help of an electric motor. E-Bikes are also a practical and eco-friendly mode of transportation.

Step 1: Planning the Rental Business

A solid business plan is the foundation of the E-Bike rental company. It outlines the vision, strategies, and financial projections, serving as a roadmap for success. This plan will guide decisions and is essential for attracting investors or securing loans.

Business development supports are available through Community Futures, Business Development (BDC), Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), ATB Financial and Alberta Business Link.

Business Model

The business model defines revenue generation and the visitor value proposition. There are several models to consider in the E-Bike rental industry.

The business could focus on short-term rentals (hourly, daily) or offer longer-term options (weekly, monthly) for extended visits. Offering hourly, daily, and weekly rental options can attract a wider range of visitors with varying needs.

Consider multiple rental locations which allow users to pick up and return bikes at the same or different locations. Even though multiple location pickup and drop off allows the visitor more freedom, GPS tracking and other technologies may be needed to manage the E-Bikes. Consider partnering with other location owners, versus owning all the locations in one business, with assigned colours/models for each owner. A Memorandum of Understanding between the location owners would be required to ensure service levels are

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consistent between locations. Additional charger stations may be required depending on the distance between each rental location.

Decide between offering guided tours, which provide a unique experience for tourists, or self-guided rentals for those who prefer to explore on their own or a combination of both. Additionally, an E-Bike rent-to-own model allows customers to rent an E-Bike with the option to buy it later, potentially diversifying the business revenue streams.

Partnering with events is another effective way to engage visitors. Collaborate with local festivals, races, or community gatherings to provide E-Bike rentals for attendees.

E-Bike and accessory sales could be included in the business revenue streams. Visitors who enjoy their rental experience may be interested in purchasing their E-Bike or upgrading their gear. Creating a selection of high-quality E-Bikes and accessories can create an additional revenue stream while catering to the growing demand for E-Bike ownership.

The choice of business model will depend on the target visitor market, resources, and overall vision for the company. A combination of business models may be the best approach to maximizing revenue and catering to a diverse clientele.

Legal and Incident Response Requirements

Navigating the legal landscape is critical in establishing an E-Bike rental business. Failing to comply with regulations can lead to fines, delays, or even business closure. Determine the legal requirements:

1. **Business registration** Register the business with the appropriate government agencies in the region. This typically involves obtaining a business permit or license, registering a business name, and obtaining a tax identification number.
2. **Local business permits** Check with local municipality for specific permits or licenses to operate an E-Bike rental business. These may include zoning permits, health permits, or other local regulations.
3. **Liability insurance and waivers** Liability insurance is essential to protect the business from potential lawsuits in case of accidents or injuries involving rental E-Bikes. Additionally, create a waiver form for customers to sign, acknowledging the risks associated with E-Bike use and releasing the company from liability (example included in Appendix A).
4. **Purchasable Insurance** (like rental car companies offer) could be offered for additional visitor coverage or deductible reductions.

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E-Bike regulations vary and change as the industry grows. Research the region's laws and regulations regarding E-Bikes. Determine what the regulations dictate for:

- Minimum age requirements for riding certain classes of E-Bikes.
- Helmet laws for E-Bike riders.
- Registration or operator license requirements.
- E-Bike use on roads, bike lanes, and trails.

Alberta identifies E-Bikes as “power bicycles” and is consistent with the federal definition of “power-assisted bicycle” in MVSR CRC, c 1038 s 2. Motor output must not exceed 500 W (0.671 hp) and E-Bikes cannot travel faster than 32 km/h (20 mph). Fully operable pedals are required. No driver's license, vehicle insurance, or vehicle registration is required.

Operators must be 12 years of age or older. All operators are required to wear a motorcycle helmet meeting the standards set in AR 122/2009 s 112(2). A passenger is permitted only if the E-Bike is equipped with a seat designated for that passenger.

As the rental business owner, ensure the renters are aware of any route restrictions during their rental period. Consider the emergency and non-emergency access needed to support renters as regional cell service can be intermittent and road access directly to the trail may not be convenient to the incident or break down location. Include in the operations fleet an off-highway vehicle for response and transport of E-Bikes and riders back to the rental location(s). Ensure the business has an emergency response plan that coordinates with the regional first responders.

Financial Planning

Ensure the financial plan considers the business strategies and their costs as well as a rental pricing plan to ensure profitability. Identify if any tourism grants or low-no interest loans are available for the initial capital investment (reach out to Community Futures, Business Development (BDC), Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), ATB Financial and Alberta Business Link for assistance in finding grants or lenders).

Startup Costs

- Startup costs include acquiring E-Bikes suitable for local route conditions, which vary in price depending on the brand, model, and features.
- Buying in bulk may reduce acquisition costs.
- Additional purchases include helmets, locks, and other accessories (lights, reflectors, comfy seats, adjustable handlebars, and storage racks).

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- The initial inventory should include spare parts, repair tools, and charging equipment.
- Marketing and advertising.
- Technology investments.

Investing in rental management software will streamline bookings, payments, and inventory tracking. A well-designed website and possibly a mobile app will attract customers to the rental business. Marketing efforts, such as social media campaigns, local advertising, and partnerships with tourism agencies or hotels, are a business cost to be included in the budget.

Additional, costs include comprehensive liability insurance to protect the business, along with the necessary licenses and permits to operate legally.

Funding sources could include:

- Personal Savings
- Friends and Family
- Angel Investors - High-net-worth individuals who invest in early-stage companies
- Venture Capital (VC) - Firms that invest large sums in high-growth potential startups.
- Crowdfunding - Raise small amounts from many people online.
- Small Business Loans – with a solid business plan and good credit, approach financial institutions for small business lending.
- Government Grants and Subsidies especially PrairiesCan and Travel Alberta who lend or grant funding to tourism businesses.
- Strategic Partnerships (especially for multiple rental location plans).

Operational Costs

Operational costs include regular E-Bike maintenance, repairs, and replacement of worn-out parts. Include a budget for electricity costs to charge the E-Bike fleet, potentially installing solar panels for a more sustainable solution.

Staffing needs will depend on the size and scale of the business for customer service, bike maintenance, and tour guides. Also, securing adequate storage for the E-Bike fleet is a necessity.

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After determining the startup and operational costs, consider the pricing strategy. Ideally, it should balance attracting customers and ensuring profitability.

- Analyze what similar businesses are charging for rentals.
- Calculate total costs (both startup and operational) and divide them by the number of rentals expected to determine a break-even price per rental.
- Determine the unique value of the region's local routes and the rental business, such as high-quality E-Bikes, scenic routes, guided tours, or additional services.
- Research the price sensitivity of the visitor market, from premium to budget.

To attract a broader range of customers, consider offering various rental packages and discounts for longer rentals or off-peak seasons or implement dynamic pricing based on demand or special events.

Step 2: Choosing the Right E-Bikes



Selecting the right E-Bikes for the rental fleet is key decision to the success of the business. The right bikes will attract customers, be suitable for the planned routes and withstand the rigors of frequent use, lowering operating costs and repair downtime. As the existing and potential trails are mostly gravel, E-Bikes suitable for urban (paved) environments may not be suitable for the region's routes.

E-Bike Types

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The type of E-Bikes will depend on the target market and the terrain in the area. Offering a variety of options can cater to a wider range of customers and expand the business potential. Here are the main categories of E-Bikes:

- **City/commuter E-Bikes** - Ideal for urban environments, these bikes prioritize comfort and practicality, with features like upright handlebars, fenders, and racks. They are perfect for daily commutes and leisurely rides around town.
- **Cruiser E-Bikes** - Designed for relaxed riding, cruisers feature comfortable saddles, swept-back handlebars, and often wider tires for a smooth ride. They are well-suited for scenic routes and casual explorations.
- **Mountain E-Bikes** - Built for off-road adventures, mountain E-Bikes have sturdy frames, suspension systems, and knobby tires for tackling trails and rough terrain. They appeal to thrill-seekers and outdoor enthusiasts.
- **Folding E-Bikes** - Convenient for urban dwellers and travelers, folding E-Bikes collapse into a compact size for easy storage and transport. They are versatile and ideal for multimodal commutes.
- **Cargo E-Bikes** - Equipped with racks or compartments for carrying cargo, these bikes are practical for deliveries or hauling groceries. They are gaining popularity among businesses and families.

Commercial-Grade vs. Consumer Models

Typically, the most popular personal models sell for \$1,000 - \$2,000, while the commercial-grade E-Bikes start at around \$1,500 and top out at around \$4,500.

There are key differences between E-Bikes for personal use and those for commercial use. Below are two main points to consider:

- **Commercial-grade electric bikes are built differently** - They typically have stronger frames, fewer components, and are robust in design. They are built to withstand prolonged use by amateurs and can last as long as five years. Personal-use E-Bikes, in contrast, won't last as long and will require a much higher level of maintenance.
- **The manufacturer's warranty is better** - Typically, most manufacturers will not offer an extended warranty on personal-use E-Bikes if they are used for commercial purposes. Additionally, most commercial E-Bikes come with a minimum one-year warranty.

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Where to Source E-Bikes

When sourcing E-Bikes for the rental business, consider purchasing directly from manufacturers. This can offer cost savings but may require more research and negotiation. Alternatively, working with distributors who specialize in E-Bikes can provide a wider brand and model selection and additional support and services.

Partnering with E-Bike retailers can also be a mutually beneficial arrangement. They can provide maintenance and repair services for the rental fleet. Researching different suppliers and comparing their prices, warranties, and support services is important. Consider attending E-Bike trade shows or industry events to connect with manufacturers and distributors and explore the latest models and technologies.

Step 3: Understanding Operations and Logistics

The success of the E-Bike rental business hinges on efficient operations and seamless logistics. The key aspects that will ensure the business runs smoothly are:

Location

Since the target market is tourists, setting up shop in high-traffic areas near popular attractions, hotels, or transportation hubs can maximize visibility and foot traffic or locate the business near well-maintained bike paths, scenic routes, or popular trails. Additionally, partnerships with local hotels, resorts, or businesses can be highly beneficial. By collaborating with these establishments, guests have a convenient rental location, while providing the rental business with a steady stream of potential customers.



Fleet Management

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Begin with a modest fleet of 10-20 E-Bikes, depending on budget and location, and gradually expand as demand grows. Ensure there is sufficient charging infrastructure to keep the fleet fully charged and ready for rental.

Consider installing charging stations at the rental location, partner businesses, or popular destinations along routes. Having a maintenance and repair plan to keep the E-Bikes in top condition and available to rent, either through a staff mechanic for in-house repairs or plan to outsource maintenance.

Technology

Leveraging technology will support efficient operations and enhance the customer experience. Invest in reliable rental and booking software to streamline bookings, payments, inventory tracking, and customer communication to save time and resources and provide a seamless experience for customers. Additionally, installing GPS tracking systems on E-Bikes can deter theft, help locate lost or stolen bikes, and track usage patterns for business decision making.

Step 4: Marketing and Customer Acquisition

Attracting and retaining customers is essential for the success of the E-Bike rental business. A well-rounded marketing strategy will help reach the target audience, build brand awareness, and drive bookings.

Website

Invest in a design for the business website that reflects the brand and appeals to the target visitor profile and consider siting the website within the Travel Lakeland website as a landing page. Working with Travel Lakeland's website will reach a larger visitor audience than a stand-alone site. The site should include easy navigation, clear rental information, and a seamless booking process. Partner with STEP and the DMO on asset location maps and event calendars to enhance the customer experience and position the company as a well-connected resource for E-Bike enthusiasts.

Social Media

Harness the power of social media platforms to connect with potential customers and build a community around the business brand. Focus on platforms where the target visitor audience is most active. For E-Bike rentals, Instagram and Facebook are effective channels for showcasing the business, sharing customer photos and testimonials, and running targeted ads. Share a mix of visually appealing photos and videos of the E-Bikes in action, customer stories, tips for riding, and promotions to keep the audience engaged.

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Social media accounts require frequent analysis to inform business decisions.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Optimizing the website for search engines will help potential customers when they search for E-Bike rentals in the area. If the business website is within the Travel Lakeland site as a landing page, SEO will be optimized for the landing page by Travel Lakeland. Within the landing page (or business website) identify relevant keywords the target audience is searching for, such as "E-Bike rental [your town]" or "best E-Bike tours [your location]." Incorporate these keywords naturally into the website's content, meta descriptions, and image alt tags. Through its Travel Lakeland site, the DMO will provide analytics to support target marketing, identify trends and data.

Customer Reviews

Positive reviews are invaluable for building trust and attracting new customers. Provide exceptional service to ensure visitors have a positive experience and leave glowing reviews. Encourage customers to leave reviews on platforms like Google, Yelp, or TripAdvisor.

Other Tactics to Consider:

- Placing brochures at campgrounds, swimming pools, the community Visitor Info Centre, Hotels, and Municipal offices.
- Partnering with sporting event organizers to share the E-Bike rental business information to visiting teams and participants (Lakeland Finals Rodeos, Baseball tournaments, Curling bonspiels for example).
- Sharing business information more widely with the DMO, Go East marketing and other advertising agencies or print media.
- Registering the business on Travel Alberta's ATIS platform.
- Budgeting for paid advertising in tourism guides.
- Engaging the media with the business grand opening and keep up with continued media releases.
- Inviting influencers and stakeholders for familiarization (FAM) tours (such as Travel Alberta, municipal elected officials, other regional tourism operators, and ambassadors).
- Submitting a monthly article to newspapers or publishing a blog or e-newsletter.
- Partnering with E-Bike or cycle shops in larger centres where visitors live, to promote your business.

A comprehensive marketing and customer acquisition strategy will attract a steady stream of visitors and establish a loyal following who share the business to other travellers.

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Step 5: Expanding the E-Bike Rental Business

Once the E-Bike rental business is established and running smoothly, explore avenues for growth. One exciting opportunity is to offer guided E-Bike tours. These tours can cater to tourists seeking unique experiences, locals eager to discover hidden gems in the area, or even corporate groups looking for team-building activities. Tap into the new visitor market segment and generate additional revenue by showcasing scenic routes, historical landmarks, or culinary delights on two wheels.

When promoting tours, include tips and directions to visitors such as:

- When tours are offered seasonally and weekly
- Tour Start Times, Duration and Degree of Difficulty
- Tour Departure or Starting Location with Address and/or Pin
- Tour Stops
- Type of Experience
- What's Included
- Guided Tour or Self Guided
- Average riding time and distance between stops
- Age Restrictions
- Information needed to match the rider to the E-Bike model
- Maximum/Minimum Group Size
- Gratuity (if guided)
- Bring your own bike (BYOB) or Bikes Included
- Allergies (if food and beverage in tour)
- Cancellation Policy
- Weather Conditions which would impact riding and What to Bring
- Bring layers of clothing and dress for the weather
- Ensure bike has been serviced (if customer is using their E-Bike)
- Proper shoes
- Helmet (indicate if legally required)
- Bike lock – if included
- Sunscreen Lotion, Bug Spray
- Bells to notify other Trail users and for wildlife deterrent. Share Bear Smart information and recommend carrying bear spray if route dictates
- Water
- Identification

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- Recommend the route plan and check in times/points be shared with friends or family not riding, especially for solo riders

Describe E-Bike and Personal Protection

- E-Bike capacity and restrictions
- Helmets are required in Alberta; included or not
- Locking and security policy

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can allergies be accommodated? (if culinary included)
- What is the average riding distance?
- What level of biking ability is needed on these tours?
- Are alcoholic beverages included?
- What are the rental business' policies and legal requirements regarding impairment during riding?
- Are you family friendly?
- What stops are we going to?
- Cancellation Policies?
- Is this a rain or shine event?
- Where does the tour finish?
- Where to park?
- Payment Process?
- Is there a waiver form to sign?
- Private, Group & Corporate tour information
- What is the latest time to book a tour?
- Capacity of the Bike tour?

Conclusion

The E-Bike rental market presents a regional opportunity for entrepreneurs to establish a successful rental business. This guide has outlined steps, from initial planning and financial considerations to operational logistics, marketing strategies, and potential expansion avenues.

Key takeaways include the importance of a robust business plan, a well-defined business model tailored to the target market, and attention to legal and safety requirements. Selecting the appropriate E-Bike fleet, understanding operational logistics, and leveraging

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technology for efficient management are crucial for a smooth and customer-friendly experience.

Furthermore, a comprehensive marketing strategy, encompassing a user-friendly website, active social media engagement, and strategic partnerships with STEP and the DMO, is vital for attracting and retaining customers. The potential for expansion through guided tours and collaborations with local events and businesses offers additional revenue streams and enhances the overall visitor experience.

By adhering to the guidelines presented, entrepreneurs can launch and grow an E-Bike rental business, capitalizing on the market's rapid expansion and contributing to the sustainable and experiential travel trends.

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Waiver Example

**ELECTRIC BIKE RENTAL AGREEMENT, RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF CLAIMS,
ASSUMPTION OF RISKS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT
(hereinafter referred to as the "Release Agreement")**
**BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT YOU WILL WAIVE OR GIVE UP CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE OR CLAIM COMPENSATION FOLLOWING AN
ACCIDENT
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!**

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT _____

ORGANIZATION NAME: Citrus Cycles Ltd. and its (their) directors, officers, employees, instructors, guides, agents, representatives, independent contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, sponsors, successors and assigns (all of whom are hereinafter referred as "the Releasees")

DEFINITION In this Release Agreement, the term "Electric biking" shall include all activities, events or services provided, arranged, organized, conducted, sponsored or authorized by the Releasees and shall include, but is not limited to: electric biking; electric bike rental; orientational and instructional courses, seminars and sessions; travel, transport and accommodation; and other such activities, events and services in any way connected with or related to electric biking or the rental of electric biking equipment.

RENTAL AGREEMENT I accept full responsibility for the electric bike equipment rented ("the Equipment") and agree to pay for any damage to the Equipment and replace the Equipment at full retail value if not returned by the agreed date.

ELECTRIC BIKING SAFETY I acknowledge that I have been advised to wear an approved helmet. I acknowledge that I have been advised to wear a full-face helmet and other protective equipment such as elbow/ forearm and knee/shin armour when free riding or downhill. Wearing an approved helmet while electric biking may be mandatory under provincial law. I am aware that electric biking is subject to all applicable municipal and provincial highway traffic regulations. I am familiar with the proper use of the Equipment, including all quick release mechanisms, brakes and gear shifters. I am aware that there are technicians available to answer any questions that I may have as to the proper use of the Equipment.

ASSUMPTION OF RISKS I am aware that Electric biking and the rental of Electric biking equipment involves many risks, dangers and hazards including, but not limited to: mechanical failure of the Equipment, loss of balance; difficulty or inability to control one's speed and direction; variation or steepness in terrain; rapid or uncontrolled acceleration on hills and inclines; variation or changes in the riding surface including rocks, gravel, cliffs, trees, roots, tree stumps, streams and creeks and manmade structures such as bridges, ladders, berms and jumps; changing weather conditions; exposure to temperature extremes or inclement weather; travel or transport to and from the sites used for electric biking; travel on highways and backcountry roads; encounters with domestic and wild animals including dogs, bears and cougars; collision with pedestrians, motor vehicles, and cyclists; becoming lost or separated, from ones party; negligence of other participants; and NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE RELEASEES AND THE MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS AND THEIR STAFF, INCLUDING THE FAILURE ON THE PART OF THE RELEASEES TO SAFEGUARD OR PROTECT ME FROM THE RISKS, DANGERS AND HAZARDS OF ELECTRIC BIKING AS A RESULT OF MY USE OF THE EQUIPMENT.

I AM AWARE OF THE RISKS, DANGERS AND HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH ELECTRIC BIKING AND THE RENTAL OF ELECTRIC BIKING EQUIPMENT AND I FREELY ACCEPT AND FULLY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, DANGERS AND HAZARDS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PERSONAL INJURY, DEATH, PROPERTY DAMAGE OR LOSS RESULTING THEREFROM.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF CLAIMS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT In consideration of the RELEASEES agreeing to rent me Electric biking equipment and permitting my use of their services, equipment and other facilities, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is acknowledged, I hereby agree as follows:

1. TO WAIVE ANY AND ALL CLAIMS that I have or may in the future have against the RELEASEES AND THE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS AND TO RELEASE THE RELEASEES from any and all liability for any loss, damage, expense or injury, including death, that I may suffer or that my next of kin may suffer, as a result of my participation in electric biking or the use of the Equipment, DUE TO ANY CAUSE WHATSOEVER, INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE, BREACH OF CONTRACT, OR BREACH OF WARRANTY ON THE PART OF THE RELEASEES IN RESPECT OF THE DESIGN, MANUFACTURE, SELECTION, INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE, INSPECTION, SERVICE OR REPAIR OF THE EQUIPMENT, or in respect of the provision of or the failure to provide any warnings, directions, instructions or guidance as to the use of the Equipment;
2. TO HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFY THE RELEASEES for any and all liability for any property damage, loss or personal injury to any third party resulting from my participation in Electric biking or my use of the Equipment;
3. This Release Agreement shall be effective and binding upon my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, assigns and representatives, in the event of my death or incapacity;
4. This Release Agreement and any rights, duties and obligations as between the parties to this Release Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted solely in accordance with the laws of the province of British Columbia and no other jurisdiction; and
5. Any litigation involving the parties to this Release Agreement shall be brought solely within the province of British Columbia and shall be within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of that province.

In entering into this Release Agreement I am not relying on any oral or written representations or statements made by the Releasees with respect to the safety of participating in Electric biking or my use of the Equipment, other than what is set forth in this Release Agreement. I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS RELEASE AGREEMENT PRIOR TO SIGNING IT, AND I AM AWARE THAT BY SIGNING THIS RELEASE AGREEMENT I AM WAIVING CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS WHICH I OR MY HEIRS, NEXT OF KIN, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, ASSIGNS AND REPRESENTATIVES MAY HAVE AGAINST THE RELEASEES.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Witness:	Signature of participant
Please print name clearly	Please print name clearly
	Signature of Guardian

Recommend adding a sign off for the statement: I understand I am legally required to wear the proper helmet while operating the rental E-Bike.

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Appendix B Planning Considerations for E-Bike Networks

E-Bike networks offer numerous benefits, including supporting sustainable transportation, enhancing tourism, and improving community health. An E-Bike network can provide a dedicated and safe infrastructure for E-Bike users including visitors who are attracted to E-Bikes for a unique experiential activity. This appendix outlines municipal planning considerations.

Planning Needs Assessment

Initiate a needs assessment to identify potential user groups (commuters, recreational riders, tourists), analyzing existing cycling infrastructure, and determining desired destinations and routes.

Public Consultations: Engage the community through public meetings, surveys, and online forums to gather input on route planning, infrastructure development, and program design.

Partnerships: Collaborate with local businesses, tourism organizations, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise.

Route Considerations

Separated Bike Lanes/Paths: E-Bikes can travel at higher speeds than regular bikes, making separation from car traffic necessary for safety and comfort. Painted bike lanes work but physically separated lanes are ideal.

Wide Lanes: Especially on multi-use trails, all users appreciate wider travel surfaces to ensure safe passing and areas for breaks.

Smooth Surfaces: E-Bikes handle rough terrain better than road bikes, but routes should still be maintained to be comfortable and reduce bike wear and tear.

Good Lighting: Well-lit routes are essential for visibility and safety, especially during dawn, dusk, or at night. Plan visitor routes and tours for daylight hours as area familiarity and knowledge are less than a resident's and could impact the visitor's experience.

Clear Signage: Clear and comprehensive mapping and signage enhance the user experience and support compliance. Especially for visitors, signage with clear directions, distances and route restrictions is important.

Access to Amenities: Rest areas with benches, restrooms, and water fountains are appreciated, especially on longer rides. Access to cafes, restaurants, and shops along or near the route is also a plus.

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Scenic Views: Routes with scenic views, natural beauty, or interesting points of interest are highly desirable.

Variety: A mix of different types of routes, such as paved paths, gravel trails, and quiet roads, can cater to different preferences and riding styles.

Hills (to a point): E-Bikes make hills much easier to climb, but excessively steep or long inclines can still be challenging. A route with some rolling hills can be enjoyable, but significant elevation gain should be avoided.

Route Distance: Consider the desired length of routes and provide options for shorter and longer rides.

Connectivity: The network should connect key destinations, such as tourist attractions, residential areas, commercial centers, parks, and public transportation hubs.

Emergency Response Planning: Include in municipal emergency response procedures to address incidents on the network, noting restricted road access to trails and trail widths and conditions which would impede response vehicles.

Other Users: Engage in public awareness campaigns to educate trail and route users on the rules and guidelines for ensuring no conflicts between users and additional safety considerations when sharing the route with E-Bikes. Conduct educational campaigns to promote E-Bike safety, responsible riding practices, and the benefits of the network.

Associated Supports for E-Bikes

Charging Stations: Strategically placed charging stations support for E-Bike adoption. Consider partnerships with local businesses or public facilities to host charging stations.

Bike Parking: Secure bike parking facilities at key destinations will encourage E-Bike use.

Maintenance Facilities: Access to maintenance facilities, either through partnerships with local bike shops or dedicated repair locations, will support long-term network sustainability.

Evaluation and Reporting

Performance Metrics: Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to track network usage, safety, and user satisfaction and report regularly to stakeholders.

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Appendix C – STEP Businesses, Sites and Events Suitable for E-Bike Rental locations, Charging and Secured Locking

Locations	Attractions	Events
St. Paul		
Ag Corral	River Ranch Adventures	Lakeland Rodeo Association Finals
Backroad Farmhouse Coffee Co.	Magic Lantern Elite Theatre	Portage Market
Bear's BMX & BS	Musée St. Paul Museum	SPVAC BIG Pottery & Art Exhibit and Sale
Boscombe Community Hall	SPVAC St. Paul Visual Arts Centre & Gallery	SPVAC Rodeo Exhibit and Sale
Canalta St. Paul	St. Paul Art Walk	St. Paul Friday Farmers' Market
Magnet Shoes	St. Paul Golf Course	St. Paul Midweek Farmer's Market
Smitty's	St. Paul Lions Trout Pond	
Cornerstone Co-op	Iron Horse Staging Area	
The Landing	St. Paul Recreation Centre	
Lakeland Brewing Company	UFO Landing Pad	
The Nest Café & Boutique	St. Paul Skateboard Park	
The Tin Cup Restaurant & Patio by Little Greek	St. Paul Swimming & Aquatic Centre	
Twisted Fork		
UFO Pizza		
Wrap N Roll		
Warehouse Sports		
Elk Point		
Elk Point Eco Centre Possible E-Bike Hub	Elk Point 100 Foot Mural Park	Elk Point Car Show
Golden Loaf Bakery	Elk Point Allied Arts Dinner Theatre	Elk Point Chili Cookoff
Jennifer Jacula Creative	Elk Point Canadian Legion Cenotaph	Elk Point Community Breakfast
Knotty Boyz Embroidering & Giftware	Elk Point RCMP Centennial Monument	Elk Point Dinner Theatre
Magic Pizza	Elk Point Pioneer Museum	Elk Point Farmers' Market
Wally's Pub & Eatery	Fort George Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site	
	Peter Fidler Statue	
	Moose Hills Lake and Loop	

