



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 18-5522

Type: Staff Briefing - With Ordinance

In control: City Council A Session

On agenda: 10/11/2018

Title: Ordinance establishing a six month dockless vehicle pilot program, the creation of permit and application fees, and amending City Code to allow riding and parking dockless vehicles in the Right of Way. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; John Jacks, Director, Center City Development & Operations]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Draft Ordinance, 2. Ordinance 2018-10-11-0803

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: Center City Development and Operations

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Jacks

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program

SUMMARY:

Consideration of an ordinance establishing a dockless vehicle pilot program, adopting fees, and amending City Code to allow for the operation and parking of dockless vehicles.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Center City Development and Operations is proposing a six month pilot program that includes a comprehensive set of regulations and a permitting process for the operation of dockless vehicles in San Antonio’s public right of way. CCDO’s proposed regulations clarify rules for both dockless vehicle operators and riders. These regulations will cover where vehicles can be ridden; how they should be parked; set a minimum age for riders; create fees; and, require the companies to maintain a local fleet manager.

Dockless vehicles are a new transportation mode that includes GPS enabled bicycles, electric assisted bicycles, or electric scooters. They are introduced by private companies who place the vehicles in the city's right of way so they can be used by customers or subscribers through a phone application. The first company to launch service deployed their fleet in June of this year. Three companies are currently operating in San Antonio with approximately 2,650 vehicles deployed collectively by these vendors. Four other firms have expressed interest in providing service here.

CCDO briefed the Transportation Council Committee on the proposed pilot program at their August 20th meeting. The full City Council was also briefed at B Session on September 12th. In addition, significant public input has been gathered through a public meeting at the Central Library, an online survey that has received over 4,000 responses, as well as through a public hearing that was held on September 12th allowing residents an opportunity to speak to City Council about this issue.

Dockless vehicles provide a first mile / last mile transportation option and are a new transportation alternative. One of the biggest concerns these vehicles pose is the potential for conflicts with pedestrians on sidewalks; issues have arisen when vehicles are parked or deployed in a way that blocks ADA curb ramps and when they are placed perpendicular to the sidewalk or in the center of narrow sidewalks in a manner that encroaches on the minimum 36" ADA sidewalk clearance.

ISSUE:

The city is creating a pilot program that will promote safety for riders and pedestrians. The dockless vehicle pilot program requires riders to utilize bike lanes when available. Riders must always yield to pedestrians. If riders operate a vehicle on a sidewalk adjacent to a street that does not have bike lanes, they must maintain a two foot buffer from pedestrians. All riders must be 16 years old or older.

As noted above, clear and intuitive parking rules are important for an orderly dockless vehicle ecosystem. CCDO proposes that vehicles must be parked in a way that maintains the 36" ADA minimum sidewalk clearance. Additionally, bus stations, curb ramps, and street furniture like benches should not be blocked by vehicles. Companies will have two hours to correct violations unless the vehicle is located in a highly sensitive area; in that scenario the company will be required to rectify the issue within one hour.

City Code currently prohibits the use of any electric or motorized vehicles on the river walk, on park trails or creek ways, or in parks and plazas. The Parks Department and the San Antonio River Authority have recommended that these prohibitions remain during the pilot program while they study whether these new modes are appropriate in these areas.

This ordinance also amends City Code to allow for riding on streets with speed limits under 35 mph, in bike lanes or multi-use paths, and on sidewalks when bike lanes are not present. Additionally, existing prohibitions against parking dockless vehicles on sidewalks will be amended so long as the parking requirements in the ordinance are met.

There is no limitation on the number of providers that can obtain permits or caps on the number of vehicles a company may obtain during the pilot program. Vendors currently in operation will have 30 days from enactment of this ordinance to complete the permit process. Fees for the six month pilot program include a \$500 application fee and a \$10 per vehicle application fee. CCDO will administer the permitting process. The companies will also be required to pay a \$50 relocation fee if City staff must relocate a vehicle after a company fails to correct a parking violation within the time period established in the ordinance.

Dockless vehicle providers must carry insurance and will be required to indemnify the City.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose not to adopt or amend the pilot program. Delaying program adoption or altering fees may lessen the City's ability to bring in revenue to offset anticipated costs. In addition, establishing clear rules for riding, parking, and deployment of vehicles is important for both riders and pedestrians.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the establishment of a dockless vehicle pilot program and adopts related application fee, vehicle permit fees and relocation fees.

Each vendor that operates in San Antonio will submit a vendor permit application to the City which requires a \$500 fee. Additionally, each vehicle will require a permit to operate in the amount of \$10 per vehicle. A \$50 relocation fee will also be applied if companies fail to correct a parking violation or fail to remove a broken vehicle within the timelines established in this ordinance.

Based on the current number of companies and the current fleet sizes, staff anticipates that the six month pilot program will generate \$28,000 in revenues from application and permit fees. Funds generated in this amount will be deposited in the General Fund. Revenue may be higher depending on the number of companies that choose to enter the market and any expansion planned by current providers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance.