



City of San Antonio

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Title: A briefing on the Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program. [John Jacks, Director, Center City Development & Operations]

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

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Jacks

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

A briefing on the Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program

SUMMARY:

Center City Development & Operations will provide a briefing on the Dockless Vehicle Pilot Program and the department’s recommendations related to regulating dockless mobility.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On October 11, 2018, City Council adopted a pilot program that created both a permitting structure and operational rules for dockless vehicles. These regulations established rules for how companies are allowed to deploy vehicles in the right-of-way and also clarified rules for users related to riding and parking vehicles. Center City Development & Operations (CCDO) has been monitoring the program and coordinating enforcement in with other City departments, including SAPD. At time of adoption, City Staff communicated that the program would be monitored until late spring and that staff would then return to City Council to discuss recommended adjustments to the regulatory framework, if required. CCDO now intends to brief the Transportation Committee on recommended changes to our regulatory approach.

Dockless vehicles are a new transportation mode that includes GPS enabled bicycles, electric assisted bicycles, and electric scooters. These vehicles are introduced by private companies who place them 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 in San Antonio entered the market on June 22, 2018, prior to the City's adoption of the pilot program. Five other companies have since launched service here and another company has an open permit to enter the market. These companies have all since obtained permits to operate under the pilot program. Through March, there have been approximately 1.85 million rides in our market across all companies in operation.

On January 22nd, the Transportation Committee endorsed amendments to the initial pilot program intended to address issues with scooter clutter, safety, and unforeseen impacts to Centro's regular services. At the time, there was significant concern that the City had already received permit applications for 16,100 vehicles, and Transportation Committee endorsed a moratorium on both issuing permits to new providers and on allowing our existing operators to expand their permit counts. The moratorium has been impactful as several companies have since submitted requests to enter the market or expand their permit counts, and these additional operators had communicated an interest in adding thousands of additional vehicles to our market. The mid-point amendments, in addition to efforts undertaken by the companies, have had a positive impact on reducing the amount of scooter clutter downtown, and they appear to have created a safer operating environment, though there is limited data to reference on rider safety as these amendments were only adopted by City Council on February 14th.

Following this briefing at Transportation Committee, the full City Council will be briefed at B Session on Wednesday, May 15th. If supported, related amendments would then be considered by City Council on May 30th.

ISSUE:

The City of San Antonio has embraced the micromobility movement, adopting a pilot program with a relaxed regulatory framework to allow operators to demonstrate the utility of this new mode. This pilot program has been an opportunity to better understand the impact of these vehicles on San Antonio. It is clear there is demand for dockless vehicles as demonstrated by the high levels of ridership, and the City remains committed to supporting this mode, while recognizing that there are issues created by any disruptive technology that must be addressed. Notable concerns with dockless vehicles remain, and CCDO will recommend to the Transportation Committee that the City create a more orderly operating environment by selecting firms through a Request for Proposals.

The Request for Proposals may result in the selection of up to three firms. Staff recommends that those firms be authorized to operate 5,000 vehicles in total, while building flexibility into the contracts to expand deployment over time if ridership is high and deployment issues and other problems have been addressed. CCDO also plans to allow for flexibility for future innovative dockless products; should a significant innovation in the market occur, such as new mode that has significant promise, then the City will have an opportunity to bring an operator into the market for that purpose. This RFP will be issued in late May and staff anticipates that the selected firms would be approved by City Council in August or September. City staff has coordinated this recommendation with a stakeholder group that includes Tech Bloc, Centro, SARA, and other community partners.

To allow for this RFP process to conclude without the removal of dockless vehicles, City staff recommends an extension for companies currently under operation through the anticipated contract award. CCDO proposes a 50% reduction in permits for all companies currently permitted for over 1,000 vehicles. These changes would go into effect after a company's initial permit expires. This reduction has not been applied to smaller operators as it may significantly impact their ability to operate. A table with the proposed permit counts under the

extension is below. This assumes that all currently permitted operators will seek a permit extension.

**Company Permitted Vehicles Permit Count
Under Extension**

Lyft	2,000	1,000
Razor	1,000	1,000
Bird	4,500	2,250
Lime	4,000	2,000
Jump	4,000	2,000
Spin	500	500
Blue Duck	100	100

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Transportation Committee endorse the RFP approach to identify the best operators for our market as well as the recommendation for extending current permits through the completion of the RFP, which is anticipated to be in August or September 2019.