



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Briefing on proposed dockless vehicle regulations. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; John Jacks, Director, Center City Development and Operations]

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Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/12/2018	1	City Council B Session		

DEPARTMENT: Center City Development and Operations

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Jacks

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

A briefing on the proposed dockless vehicle ordinance.

SUMMARY:

This is a briefing on the proposed dockless vehicle ordinance which will regulate dockless bicycles, electric assisted dockless bicycles, and dockless scooters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Center City Development and Operations is proposing a pilot program with a comprehensive set of regulations and a permitting process for the emerging dockless vehicle industry. CCDO's proposed regulations will clarify rules for both dockless vehicle operators and riders. These regulations will cover where vehicles can be ridden, how they should be parked, establish a minimum age for riders, and require 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 subscribers through a phone application. CCDO initially provided a high level briefing on dockless vehicles at the January Transportation Council Committee meeting. The briefing provided an overview of the emerging industry, which focused primarily on dockless bicycles as they had been introduced in Dallas, Seattle, and elsewhere. Since January, dockless scooters have overtaken dockless bikes as most common type of dockless vehicle in the quickly growing industry.

Following the January Transportation Committee meeting, CCDO researched the approaches other cities are using to effectively regulate this new industry. The goal is to create a clear set of rules for riders and vendors that will mitigate issues that have been seen throughout the country while simultaneously working with operators to ensure the regulatory framework is not overly onerous. Over the past six months, CCDO has regularly communicated with operators and stakeholders regarding the proposed regulations.

While continuing to work with dockless vehicle companies, the company Bird deployed a fleet of dockless scooters in San Antonio on June 22nd. Bird had not been one of the eight firms that had been in contact with the City about their intention to launch service here. Following Bird's entrance to the market, Lime launched a fleet of dockless scooters a month later on July 25th. These companies have grown their fleets since implementation. Bird has shared that their current fleet consists of approx. 400 scooters and Lime has approx. 345. Trip data provided by these firms shows that over 100,000 trips have occurred thus far. In addition to Lime and Bird, five other companies continue to express interest in operating in San Antonio.

On August 20th, CCDO shared an overview of proposed regulations for dockless vehicles with the Transportation Committee. Prior to this presentation, a public meeting was held at the Central Library on July 31st and an online survey has received over 2,000 responses. A Public Hearing focused on dockless vehicles is scheduled for Wednesday, September 12th at 6:00PM in order to provide an additional opportunity for the community to give feedback on this issue.

This B Session is an opportunity to obtain input from the full city council before the proposed regulations are presented to City Council for approval.

ISSUE:

CCDO proposes a six month pilot program that aims to address concerns that have been identified since dockless vehicles were introduced in June. The City does not intend to limit the number of vehicles or operators throughout the six month pilot program, but will instead utilize data provided by the companies to ensure that their fleet size is appropriate, ensuring that an excessive number of vehicles have not been put into service.

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, placed perpendicular to the sidewalk on a narrow sidewalk and encroach on the minimum 36" ADA clearance, and when operators fail to yield to pedestrians. Riders must utilize bike lanes when available and yield to pedestrians. City Code currently prohibits the use of any electric or motorized vehicles on the river walk, park trails, creek ways, or in parks and plazas. The Parks Department and the San Antonio River Authority have recommended that this prohibition remain during the pilot program while they study whether these modes are appropriate in those areas.

As noted above, clear and intuitive parking rules provide an opportunity 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.

The proposed regulations will also include a minimum age of sixteen years old. The vendors in contact with the City typically require users to be eighteen years of age or more. This age limitation is proposed in case a company enters the market without a minimum age.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is an informational briefing on proposed regulations. No action is requested of the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.