



Legislation Text

File #: 21-2208, Version: 1

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

THRU: Telly C. Whitfield, Ph.D. - Assistant City Manager
Dr. Gerald Newton, AICP - Development Services Director

FROM: Taurus Freeman, MPA - Planning & Zoning Division Manager

DATE: September 7, 2021

RE:
Discussion of Micro-Mobility (electric scooters/bikes) Program

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S):
All

Relationship To Strategic Plan:
Strategic Operating Plan FY 2021
Goals 2026

- Goal 2: Responsible City Government Supporting a Diverse and Viable Economy
 - Objective 2.4 - Sustain a favorable development climate to encourage business growth
- Goal 4: Desirable Place to Live, Work and Recreate
 - Objective 4.5 - Ensure a place for people to live in great neighborhoods

Executive Summary:

Over the past several months, City Staff has been contacted by two companies, Bird Corporation and Spunk Scooter, requesting permits to operate a micro-mobility program in the city. The vendors would like multiple locations throughout the city to be operated on public roadways.

Micro-mobility programs are used within many municipalities, universities, and business campuses nation-wide. Micro-mobility refers to a range of small, lightweight vehicles operating at speeds typically below 20 miles/h and driven by users personally. Micro-mobility devices include bicycles, e-bikes, electric scooters, electric skateboards, shared bicycles, and electric pedal-assisted bicycles.

In August 2018, the City Council heard a similar request regarding bike sharing at the Work Session. At the time, bike-sharing was being utilized at Fayetteville State University, which lasted until 2019. The Council directed Staff to follow the City of Durham Ordinance model and bring the proposed ordinance back to Council for official action for a future regular meeting.

On April 6, 2021, the City Council received a presentation at the Work Session. Staff is coming back to Council for further direction.

Background:

The speed of micro-mobility diffusion has not come without growing pains. Some cities were caught off guard with the sudden influx of shared dock and dockless vehicles, especially after companies launched their fleets without municipal approval.

Cities like Raleigh, Durham, and Charlotte have enacted local laws pertaining to e-scooters. Some cities have banned the scooters/bike share entirely, while others have allowed them. Most municipalities polled in North Carolina thus far have not taken the ordinance route.

The vehicles can encourage multi-modal access to specific areas/districts, events, and the downtown. In addition to walking, driving, using bike racks, and electric vehicle charging stations, a micro-mobility program could provide additional transportation means to the public. Yet, public safety, liabilities, the minimum age to ride, and traffic guidelines were just some of the concerns.

The City Council can enact rules and regulations for the program with the passage of an ordinance that allows for multi-modal transportation in the city.

Issues/Analysis:

In an effort to control micro-mobility vehicles in the city, the City Council should take a position to allow or prohibit such use of electric vehicles. If the City Council chooses to move forward with allowing this activity, the following items may need to be addressed in an ordinance:

- Defines set parameters for potential vendor(s);
- Limiting the number of vendors/scooters in the city limits;
- Require formal application/permit process for possible vendors;
- Hours of operations;
- Age requirement;
- How to staff/manage at the city level;
- Penalties against vendors civil; and/or
- Enforcement and violations.

Budget Impact:

None. Micro-mobility programs are typically instituted by vendors that provide their vehicles and associated maintenance at no cost to the host municipality.

Options:

1. Direct Staff to draft ordinance to allow a Micro-Mobility Program within the City;
2. Enact a resolution prohibiting a micro-mobility program in the city; or
3. Take no action

Recommended Action:

NA

Attachments:

- Bird - Operations Overview
- Spunk Scooters - Operations Overview
- Spunk Scooters - Case Study
- Draft Ordinance - City of Fayetteville
- Ordinance - City of Durham