

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2018

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: HILLARY ORR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A NINE-MONTH PILOT SHARED MOBILITY PROGRAM

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a nine-month pilot program to allow private companies to operate fleets of rental dockless shared mobility devices within the City of Alexandria.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Transportation Commission endorse a nine-month pilot program for operation of private dockless shared mobility devices within the City right of way and recommend that City Council approve the pilot program.

**BACKGROUND:** The framework of the City's Transportation Master Plan includes Guiding Transportation Principles that direct Alexandria to:

- Develop innovative local and regional transit options
- Provide all citizens, regardless of age or ability, with accessibility and mobility
- Increase the use of communications technology in transportation systems
- Lead the region in promoting environmentally friendly transportation policies

The City Strategic Plan also includes indicators to:

- Increase safety
- Increase the percentage of commuters using alternative transportation
- Maintain the view of overall ease of getting to places residents usually visit

Consistent with those principles, staff has studied comparator cities to understand the potential positive and negative impacts of shared mobility devices (SMDs, i.e. "dockless" bikeshare and electric scooters) and how other communities are handling these particular transportation options. Staff reviewed the District of Columbia and Montgomery County pilots, industry publications and guidance and evaluations from cities across the county.

Five companies operate SMDs such as "dockless" bikeshare bikes (both pedal and electric pedal-assist) and electric stand-up scooters in the District and Montgomery County, MD. The District and Montgomery County pilot programs, which started last fall, include minimal operating agreements and no permit fees. These jurisdictions have extended their pilot programs through the end of 2018. DC considers their pilot

successful and intend to continue allowing SMDs to operate beyond the end of 2018 on a permanent program.

Staff determined that the best approach in Alexandria for both users and SMD companies would be to release a pilot program with terms comparable to Arlington County with a coordinated approach and timeline.

**DISCUSSION:** The proposed approach outlines a nine-month pilot demonstration program starting after City Council approval in November 2018 to evaluate the operations of SMDs in the City of Alexandria. The purpose of this demonstration period is to observe how and whether SMDs help further the City's transportation goals, promote safety and provide real-world information that can guide the development of a longer-term approach. The terms of the proposed program closely resemble the pilot in Arlington County which was discussed with several SMD providers and was approved by the County Board on September 25. The pilot will include opportunities for public feedback and a data-driven evaluation which will be incorporated into future Council consideration of whether such a program should be formalized. T&ES staff is coordinating with APD on enforcement and crash reporting issues.

Alexandria's proposed pilot program would require participating companies to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment 1) and obtain approval of a permit (Attachment 2). This permit process would allow the SMD providers to officially operate in the City and would stipulate the parameters within which they must operate. Key features of the permit would include:

- A permit fee of \$5,000 per company
- A cap of 200 total devices per company in the City of Alexandria at any one time (could rise if ridership benchmarks are reached)
- Required safety features for all devices
- Device parking and use regulations which companies must communicate to users
- Clear information on how residents can report problems and provide feedback to companies
- Commitment to respond to customer and community issues in a timely fashion

The proposed pilot would run for nine months, from roughly November/December 2018 until August/September 2019. The proposal also requests the ability for staff to extend the pilot administratively beyond this date if necessary, in order to accommodate any additional evaluation and subsequent recommendations without interrupting ongoing operations by the SMD companies.

SMD companies will be required to submit data during the pilot (Attachment 3), similar to the data received from the City's operator of Capital Bikeshare. These data requirements are consistent with those of Arlington County.

As part of the evaluation of the pilot program (Attachment 4), staff will gather community feedback and provide information to the public throughout the process.

At the end of the pilot, staff will review the data and feedback and prepare a proposal for Council consideration for the future of SMD services in the City.

In anticipation of the responsibilities to set up, manage and evaluate this pilot program, the proposal includes a permit fee one-time flat fee of \$5,000 per company, which is consistent with Arlington County. This fee includes any extension months if applicable. Currently, five providers offer service in DC that could expand into Alexandria. If all five chose to enter the City, fee revenue would be \$25,000, consistent with the estimated cost for community outreach and evaluation. Staff time, evaluation and outreach costs will be funded with the Complete Streets budget.

Over the past month, staff has begun to get initial feedback from the community about this pilot program and the requirements. The City launched a website with FAQs and other information about the program as well as an online feedback form to gather information. Staff attended meetings of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and Old Town Business Association to provide information on the pilot and gather input that could help make the pilot more successful. Additionally, the City hosted a Community Open House on October 6, 2018 where three companies brought vehicles for the community to test and provide feedback. Another Community Open house is scheduled for October 25, 2018 for residents to ask questions of staff and provide feedback on the proposed pilot.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Draft MOU

Attachment 2: Draft Permit Application

Attachment 3: Draft Vendor Data Requirements

Attachment 4: Draft Evaluation and Outreach Criteria