

Information Item

Date: September 15, 2020

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Damon Dequenne, Assistant City Manager
Toneq' McCullough, Director of Transportation

Subject:
Shared Micromobility Operations (Electric Scooters) Update

Strategic Focus Area: Quality Transportation

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



In 2019, City Council adopted a micromobility ordinance that provided a framework for the management of shared micromobility systems, including dockless bicycles and dockless electric scooters. The ordinance created a process by which staff could evaluate applications from micromobility vendors and distribute up to two permits for each mode for the operation of such systems. The 2019 call for applications resulted in five companies submitting applications for dockless electric scooter operations and one company submitting an application for dockless bicycle operations. The City awarded permits to two electric scooter operators with service beginning in fall 2019. Throughout the fall and winter, there were approximately 10,000 electric scooter rides in the city with clear ridership patterns downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. By spring 2020, however, both vendors had been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and ceased operations in Winston-Salem.

Staff then began preparations for the 2020 permit application process, through which the city received two permit applications for electric scooter operations. During the application process, electric scooter vendors expressed concerns with aspects of the City's micromobility ordinance:

- Fee structure
- Indemnification requirements
- Requirement that all devices be removed from the public right-of-way each evening

Staff worked through the issues related to fee structure and indemnification requirements, but the requirement that all devices be removed from the public right-of-way each evening continues to be a concern for vendors, Section 78-369(c). "No person or business may use, display, proffer, make available for rent, station, or leave any electric, stand-up scooter on or in any public right-of-way between the hours of 9 (nine) p.m. and 6 (six) a.m."

They cited the high cost incurred to remove all devices each evening and the negative impact to customer service and user fees accordingly. They have requested that this requirement be suspended temporarily while the City considers removing the requirement from the ordinance.