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SUBJECT: Micromobility (Scooter Share) Program Update and Next Steps
DATE: January 15, 2020

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Public Works Department staff will present an overview of scooter share operations to date and next steps on a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The RFP process will include a competitive solicitation for one or more micromobility vendors to enter into a contract with the City, replacing our current system of short-term permits.

BACKGROUND:

Increasing the use of active transportation is a central goal of the City of Tacoma's Transportation Master Plan and Environmental Action Plan, in alignment with the Tacoma 2025 focus on providing Tacoma residents with accessible and efficient transportation options.

Micromobility programs, such as scooter share and bike share, are one strategy to reduce barriers to using active, sustainable transportation options.

These programs can:

- Capture a new market of active transportation users.
- Address barriers that come with bike or scooter ownership such as cost, maintenance, and storage.
- Help close first and last mile gaps, and connect users to transit.

However, micromobility programs can also bring concerns including ADA access, pedestrian comfort and safety, and property damage.

In fall 2018, the City of Tacoma launched a bike share/scooter share pilot with the goal of learning how best to realize the benefits of micromobility programs, while addressing common pitfalls.

Micromobility Permits in Tacoma

In 2017, the City of Tacoma completed a Bike Share Feasibility Study that evaluated the potential for traditional dock-based bike share in Tacoma. The feasibility assessment identified a number of significant challenges to implementing a bike share program in Tacoma.

Soon after, in the summer of 2017, dockless bike share debuted in the United States, starting in Seattle. Since then, dockless bike and scooter share has grown rapidly, and provided transportation options for people across the country.

In fall 2018, the City granted right-of-way use permits to two companies, Bird and Lime. These permits were granted with the goal of evaluating the use and impacts of a new transportation option for people traveling around Tacoma.



Lime began by deploying 250 scooters and 100 bikes in Tacoma on Friday, September 21, 2018, for a 60-day initial permit. They were granted an extension through January 20, 2019, and allowed to operate up to 500 scooters and 250 bikes in Tacoma. Lime elected to remove electric bikes from their Tacoma fleet in early February 2019. They were granted two additional permit extensions for 500 scooters, first through September 30, 2019, and the current permit through May 31, 2020.

Bird began by deploying 250 scooters in Tacoma on October 12, 2018, for an initial 60-day permit. They were granted an extension through February 11, 2019, and allowed to operate up to 500 scooters in Tacoma. Bird did not pursue additional permit extensions.

Currently, Lime is the only scooter share vendor operating in Tacoma. Lime elected to remove their scooters from the streets for a winter break on December 17, 2019. They expect to re-launch their program in March 2020, depending on weather conditions.

Usage to Date

Since the pilot project kicked off, 86,434 unique riders have taken 346,585 trips on Lime scooters in Tacoma – travelling over 431,266 miles between September 21, 2018, and December 17, 2019.

ISSUE:

Lime currently operates under a short-term permit that is valid through May 31, 2020. Staff is working to structure a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will include a competitive solicitation process for one or more micromobility vendors to enter into a contract with the City, replacing our current system of short-term permits. The RFP is being structured to address lessons learned in the pilot period.

Staff will present an overview of the scooter pilot program to date and a status update on the RFP process.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.