

Frequently Asked Questions: E-scooter Pilot

10/30/19

1. What is an e-scooter?

An e-scooter is a two-wheeled device (one in front, one in back) propelled by an electronic throttle with a deck for standing. The operator holds onto handlebars to steer. This is one of a number of new “micro-mobility devices” becoming popular for short trips.



2. Will the e-scooters be allowed to ride on sidewalks or in bike lanes?

The City is currently reviewing the regulations that will apply to all bike (electronic or otherwise) and “micro-mobility” devices. It is unlikely that e-scooters will be allowed on sidewalks in areas of high foot traffic, such as the downtown or Fairhaven business districts. However, they may be allowed to ride on sidewalks in lower traffic areas if another suitable location unavailable. The final decision on these rules will include a public process and decision by the City Council.

3. How will scooter parking be managed? (ok to call “scooters” sometimes and “e-scooters” other times?)

The City is currently developing criteria to select an operator for an e-scooter pilot program using a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP). Proposals will need to include evidence of proper management of e-scooters in other cities. Interested businesses will need to describe how they will ensure their customers park in appropriate locations; how the e-scooters are collected, recharged and redistributed; and how they will respond to complaints and improper parking, etc.

Throughout the pilot program, the City will collect data regarding the operator’s performance and establish new rules if necessary. The City will also be able to terminate the program at any time if performance measures and adherence to the rules are unsatisfactory.

4. How will the City address concern from all user groups, including the mobility-impaired?

Prior to the launch of the pilot program, the City and e-scooter team will reach out to a variety of user groups, including those with impaired mobility and/or other Americans with Disabilities (ADA) advocacy groups, business owners, cycling advocates, and others,

to gather information and discuss options for how to manage the e-scooter program. The community will be asked to provide input during the e-scooter pilot program, and the management of the program may be adjusted along the way in response concerns.

5. How much will it cost an individual to operate a scooter?

The cost of an e-scooter rental will be determined by the operator selected for the pilot program. In many cities, e-scooters currently cost a dollar to unlock and 40-cents per mile to operate.

6. Is there a going to be a low-income program?

One of the questions in the RFP is how the operator will provide access to the e-scooters for those who are low-income or do not have a smart phone.

7. Will this program cost taxpayers money?

The City is developing the regulations to allow a private business to operate, the City will not subsidize the program. A permit fee and/or use charges will likely be established to recuperate all or a portion of the cost for staff time needed to administer and monitor the program.

8. How many scooters are going to be part of this pilot?

The number of e-scooters deployed will be proposed by the operator as part of the RFP process. The City may establish a maximum number of e-scooters or allow for an increase based on utilization and performance, to be determined as part of the pilot program development.