



AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Transportation

CM/ DCM/ ACM: Mario Canizares

DATE: November 14, 2017

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide direction regarding the options for regulating stationless bike share companies in Denton.

BACKGROUND

Due to complaints received by the City about VBikes blocking sidewalks, staff was asked to research regulation options for stationless bike share companies. Stationless bike share is a third generation bike share system that provides bikes for the public to use for short trips that does not require the bike to be locked to a docking station or bike rack. Whereas previous systems required a user to pick up and return a bike to fixed stations, this system provides users more flexibility for their origins and destinations. The system is app-based and all information and technology is on the bike. These systems require no monetary support or subsidization from the City.

Since July 2017, VBikes has been operating in Denton with approximately sixty bikes. The company states they rebalance the system two to three times a week through their maintenance team, either in the morning or late at night to avoid heavy pedestrian traffic. Bikes are usually placed in parking-friendly and high-traffic areas. When a complaint is received, VBikes sends a team out to retrieve the bike(s) from the complaint area. A person may register a complaint through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), via phone, through the app, or email.

Other stationless bike share companies have expressed interest in coming to Denton. In late September, staff, along with University of North Texas staff, met with representatives from Spin about operating in Denton. In early November, staff also met with representatives from LimeBike. All three of these currently operate in Dallas, with a fourth, Ofo, that arrived in October.

Existing sections in Chapter 16 of the Denton Code of Ordinances are applicable to stationless bike share systems. Section 16-76 states that it is unlawful for a person to solicit on City property without a license agreement and that the licensee shall pay a rental fee based on square footage. Section 16-91 states that a merchant cannot engage in soliciting within the City without first obtaining a permit.

If the City of Denton wishes to better define how a bike share company operates in Denton, a bike share-specific ordinance could be considered. This ordinance could state explicitly what bike share companies are allowed to do and reference a permit system that would cover topics tailor-made for bike share such as safety, parking, operations, data sharing, customer service, and cost. In discussions with the Legal Department, it was recommended that a permit system may be the best way to ensure bike share companies are operating in the way the City wants them to. It also allows for a process of making the company accountable for misplacement of bikes.

OPTIONS

1. Allow bike share companies operate as they are now, take no action.
2. Use an existing ordinance to regulate bike share companies without instituting a permit.
3. Use an existing ordinance to regulate bike share companies and institute a permit process.
4. Create a new ordinance to regulate bike share companies and institute a permit process.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends option 4.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

Mobility Committee provided a memo regarding VBikes at their October 10, 2017 meeting.

FISCAL INFORMATION

VBikes cost is \$1 per hour or \$14.95 a month for unlimited rides.

Spin Bikes cost is \$1 per half hour, or \$29 a month for unlimited rides less than 30 minutes

Lime Bike cost is \$1 per half hour (50 cents for those with a .edu email address), or \$29.95 per month with 100 rides.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELATIONSHIP

The City of Denton's Strategic Plan is an action-oriented road map that will help the City achieve its vision. The foundation for the plan is the five long-term Key Focus Areas (KFA): Organizational Excellence; Public Infrastructure; Economic Development; Safe, Livable, and Family-Friendly Community; and Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship. While individual items may support multiple KFAs, this specific City Council agenda item contributes most directly to the following KFA and goal:

Related Key Focus Area: Public Infrastructure

Related Goal: 5.5 Provide alternative modes of transportation

EXHIBITS

1. Agenda Information Sheet
2. Code of Ordinance excerpts 16-76 and 16-91

Respectfully submitted:
Mark Nelson
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