

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
October 14, 2019
East Conference Room

Present: Councilmembers Bullock, Litten & O'Malley

Also Present: City Planners Katelyn Milius & Dave Baas, Officer McNeeley, Captain Wilkins, Cuyahoga County Director of Sustainability Mike Foley, representatives of scooter companies Lime & Spin

Call to Order: 7:14 p.m.

The Committee approved the minutes of the September 23, 2019 Public Safety Committee meeting.

Communication from Director Sylvester regarding Cuyahoga County Bicycle & Scooter Share Program

Chairman Bullock and Mr. Baas briefly summarized the key takeaways from the September 23rd committee meeting on this topic. In response to that meeting, Law and Planning have been working on draft legislation to update the traffic code to appropriately regulate e-bikes and scooters. These regulations would be in force on all such devices on City streets. The Committee has yet to determine if the City will adopt a local system.

Director Foley delivered a presentation on the County's bike/scooter share programs. In 2016 the County issued an RFP and launched its first bike share program with support from NOACCA. The program includes 250 bikes at 30 stations/docks. The contract is for five years and expires in 2021. This technology quickly became obsolete as docked systems fell out of fashion and scooters gained in popularity. The bike share has provided over 55,000 rides over its three years.

Director Foley discussed the County's 2019 Bike and Scooter Share permit process, which creates a regulatory scheme including the following elements:

- Establishes a licensing system and charges \$5,000/year per vendor. Fifteen cents per ride goes to City or origin.
- Minimum # of scooter = 150. No maximum number.
- Any community that wants to establish its own program will sign an MOU with the County. Cities may not create their own licensing/permitting infrastructures.
- Scooter/bike riders may ride anywhere within the county but cities can create and enforce their own laws on ridership.

Director Foley discussed additional details of the operator license program including indemnity, insurance and parking locations, among other details.

Director Foley discussed the Safety & Maintenance requirements of the licenses. Scooter speeds are capped at 12 mph. Workers performing maintenance work are required to earn \$15/hour. Other safety and maintenance regulations were pulled from national best practices.

Thus far, the County has awarded scooter licenses to Lime, Bird, and Spin. Bird has also been awarded a license for e-bikes. There have been over 65,000 rides on these devices in just 1.5 months.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chairman Bullock clarified that the City is still in the learning phase and that no decisions will be made tonight. The Law Department will have legislation drafted to regulate existing scooters for the Committee's next meeting.

Officer McNeeley and Captain Wilkins expressed some concerns about the potential for accidents and congestion. They also described situations where they were asked to respond to scooters being left at private properties. Property owners view them as a nuisance, especially if they have an alarm going off. LPD does not want to routinely be tasked with retrieving scooters. LPD also asked for improved responsiveness by the companies when they call about retrieved scooters.

The Committee discussed "re-balancing" of the scooters. This is where company employees retrieve scooters throughout the day and return them to their places of origin.

Committee members asked if Lakewood were to adopt a program (sign an MOU with the County) if it could:

- Limit the amount of scooters
- Restrict the time and location of rides

It was determined that these are the types of details that would be determined in a contract/MOU.

The Committee spoke about the overall trends in mobility and the advantages of scooters and bikes on the environment. Scooter representatives acknowledged that while scooters reduce the number of cars on the road, they do not do so on a one-to-one basis. Committee members speculated that the City's cycling community would consider scooters complimentary to cycling as they are both alternative modes of transportation.

Chairman Bullock expressed concern about the legal liability of individuals who may be involved in scooter accidents. It is becoming commonplace for auto insurance to not cover scooter use. Director Foley confirmed that there is no legal liability to the City. Mr. Bullock advocated for regular safety training as part of a potential operator agreement with a scooter company.

The Committee agreed that regardless of whether the City adopts scooters that it must update its traffic laws to address those that will be on the road.

Director Foley remarked that he would welcome Lakewood making a decision by springtime. The Committee discussed scooter use in inclement weather. They handle well in the rain but not the snow.

Councilman Litten remarked that if the City decides to move forward with scooters that he would like the City to introduce the idea to residents through outreach and provide the opportunity for questions.

Public Safety Committee adjourned at 8:23 p.m.