DATE: October 17, 2023

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Micromobility Feasibility Study: Adopt a Resolution Approving Recommended Short- and Long-term Micromobility Programs

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopts a resolution (Attachment II) approving the recommended short and long-term Micromobility Programs.

SUMMARY

The final Draft Micromobility Feasibility Study (Attachment III) has been prepared to develop a micromobility vision in Hayward: to aid in determining vehicle types (electric and classic bikes and/or e-scooters); to analyze partnership models with, including but not limited to, transit agencies, private or public entities, and bike shops; to investigate the interaction of shared micromobility with transit access and mobility hubs; to emphasize connections to educational centers and employment hubs; and to identify specific actionable pilot projects.

For the Short-Term Program Implementation:

The short term micromobility program will create an E-bike Rebate Clearing House at a central location where Hayward residents can access information regarding currently available e-bike rebate programs.

For the Long-Term Program Implementation:

The Long-Term program will focus on creating a regional shared micromobility program where forms of transportation vehicles that are small, low-speed, and human-powered or electric-assisted including *bicycles, electric bicycles (e-bikes), scooters, and electric scooters (e-scooters)* that individuals can rent out. Regional partners may include the cities of San Leandro, Hayward, Union City, Fremont, and the Alameda County unincorporated area including Castro Valley.

Council Infrastructure Committee Review

This item was reviewed by the Council Infrastructure Committee on April 26, 2023[1]. One Committee member was in overall favor of shared Micromobility; however, the Committee expressed concern that maintaining dockless bikes and e-scooters were most utilized successfully in beach and tourist cities as well as denser cities and may not be appropriate for Hayward. Additional concerns were a possible contribution to blight from discarded vehicles and safety issues from riding on sidewalks.

All Committee members were in favor of a bike rebate program in which residents may purchase a bike or electric bike with the City supplementing the capped cost. Staff are currently applying for a grant that includes bike rebate, bike storage facilities and bike safety education components.

BACKGROUND

The City of Hayward received a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) grant to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a micromobility program. Micromobility is a term used to describe forms of transportation vehicles that are small, low-speed, and human-powered or electric-assisted. They are built for one rider at a time and include *bicycles, electric bicycles (e-bikes), scooters, and electric scooters (e-scooters).* Shared micromobility refers to the organized operation of a fleet of micromobility vehicles that individuals can rent out.

MTC managed the Micromobility Feasibility Study (Project) on behalf of the City of Hayward. Toole Design consultant team was selected by MTC for the Project. To develop a micromobility program vision in Hayward, this Project pursued the tasks below:

1. Determining vehicle types (electric and classic bikes and/or e-scooters).
2. Analyzing partnership models with, including but not limited to, transit agencies, private or public entities, and bike shops.
3. Investigating the interaction of shared micromobility with transit access and mobility hubs.
4. Emphasizing connections to educational centers and employment hubs.
5. Identifying specific actionable pilot projects.
6. Reviewing capital and maintenance costs and funding options for bike/scooter share and bike/scooter libraries.

As part of the Project, community members across Hayward were asked about their travel patterns and preferences, familiarity with shared micromobility, and general perceptions, interest, and concerns for a potential shared micromobility program in Hayward.

[1] https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6179978&GUID=A901D5DA-F76B-45EC-A907-E76ACC65AE5B&Options=&Search=

DISCUSSION

The input gathered from this community engagement effort demonstrated that community members are generally supportive of the City introducing a shared micromobility program while also addressing infrastructure and safety concerns in combination with any shared micromobility program. Many residents are excited about the potential community, economic, and environmental benefits that will come from a shared micromobility program.

The Project also analyzed Hayward's potential of sustaining the micromobility program on the basis of population and employment density, street infrastructure, travel characteristics, access to BART and other regional transit, equity, and topography. This analysis indicated that 75,000 Hayward residents commute to work in other parts of the Bay Area with a mean commute time of 35.6 minutes. Over 75% of residents commute outside of the City for work, including 35% of residents who travel outside of the County. A high percentage of commuters traveling outside the City for work provides an opportunity for shared micromobility to fill first- and last-mile gaps between workers' homes and transit – in particular BART and AC Transit. This suggests that for Hayward, a micromobility program could significantly benefit first- and last-mile connectivity to regional transit.

The consultant reviewed peer city policies and regulations relating to micromobility. In addition, staff from four peer cities as well as BART were interviewed to get a more in-depth understanding of their programs' challenges, successes, and lessons learned. Every city interviewed expressed strong interest in shared micromobility but cited multiple challenges in sustaining their program. The key concern cited by peer city staff was the inability to sustain the program after its initial launch. Reasons for this concern included the inability of micromobility operators to maintain the appropriate service, lack of user demand, operator not able to provide service continuity, and COVID related impacts.

Project Recommendations:

The Project is recommending a short-term and a long-term approach to bringing micromobility to Hayward.

Short-Term:

The Short-Term recommendation suggests that to gain a quick benefit of providing an alternative to driving and connecting to mass transit stations like BART, the City should create an E-bike Rebate Clearing House. E-bike rebates can achieve many of the goals of this study, including reducing vehicular travel, traffic congestion, and parking demand and supporting walking, bicycling, and transit ridership.

There are currently several e-bike rebate programs that Hayward residents are already eligible for, but the details about the programs, including qualifications and steps to utilize them, are not always clear or widely known. These programs are also administered

through many different agencies, and there is not a central location where Hayward residents can access this information and understand which program is the best fit for them.

Therefore, this strategy recommends setting up a clearing house and creating one central location where Hayward residents can find information about all the e-bike rebate programs they may be eligible for, as well as a communications and outreach campaign to promote these programs. Since these programs are already funded with outside resources, a relatively small investment from the City of Hayward has the potential to create a significant mode shift as the number of residents having access to e-bikes increases.

Long-Term:

The long-term recommendation is to focus on creating a regional program that may include the cities of San Leandro, Hayward, Union City, Fremont, and the Alameda County unincorporated area including Castro Valley. Dense cities in the Bay Area like San Francisco and Oakland have had long-running shared micromobility programs; however, smaller and less dense cities have faced challenges sustaining programs in the long-term. Many Bay Area cities (e.g., Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Foster City, San Mateo, Burlingame, and South San Francisco) have had private operators remove service in 2019 and 2020 after deciding to prioritize other markets or pivoting from bikes to scooters or for other reasons.

In more recent news, Fremont paused their bikeshare program due to issues working with their contracted operator. Richmond paused their bikeshare program due to their operator leaving the industry entirely, and Pleasant Hill's e-scooter operator suspended operations after not achieving a profitable number of rides. This demonstrates a need for program flexibility – if one operator leaves, the program should be able to continue and onboard a new operator. The Project is proposing the long-term strategy to work with neighboring cities and unincorporated areas to develop a regional service area and solicit potential private operators.

City Staff concerns:

There are many benefits to micromobility devices, including their convenience and zero emissions, and their utility for transit riders to get to and from transit stations. However, staff also has serious concerns and reservations related to the micro-mobility implementation in Hayward for safety and concerns over creating blight.

Frequently, micromobility riders, especially e-scooter users, are either unaware of, or they outright disregard the rules of the road. They ride very fast, travel in the wrong direction, use roadways (not permitted), bike lanes (not permitted) and sidewalks, weave around pedestrians, and generally create unsafe situations for themselves and other members of the public. Changing the behavior of the riders is neither easy nor a short-term effort.

Many cities with e-scooters and bike share programs have experienced issues with riders leaving these devices on the public streets, sidewalks, and parking lots, or dropping them in

creeks and waterways as well as on private properties. There is very little that the cities can do to prevent these occurrences and there are little consequences for the offenders. This behavior contributes to blight in cities.

From the program management standpoint, the City's Transportation Division is currently severely under-staffed and implementation of a brand-new program at this time is not feasible. Likewise, dealing with and effectively addressing collection of discarded devices will be very impactful on the City's Streets Division staff.

Docked bikeshare:

Based on the experience of other similar sized cities, it appears that, from a program management perspective, docked bike share as opposed to dockless might be a better option. However, with very few exceptions, docked bike share models have typically not survived in cities of our size in the Bay Area since they do not provide the convenience of the dockless devices.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The approval being sought by this item has no anticipated measurable economic impact.

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff time is required for oversight, implementation, and evaluation of shared micromobility programs and should be considered in developing the program fee schedule. In the short-term, the program will be managed by current staff resources. Any potential long-term program implementation may require additional staffing, depending on the magnitude of the program, and how many other jurisdictions and potential providers decide to participate in the regional program.

Multiple city departments are often involved in the launch and management of the a program, including Finance/Procurement and Contracting, Planning, Public Works, Police, the City Manager's Office, etc. Working with a smaller number of operators can reduce staff time needed to manage the program, foster closer relationships with the operator(s), and increase operator(s) attention on providing customer service rather than competition.

Staff costs can include time for oversight, review of permit applications, responding to media and public information requests, data analysis, operator coordination and communications, field checks, and other functions. Other costs can include removing or impounding vehicles, responding to community enquiries and information requests, parking enforcement, and costs to run programs and activities to promote and support the micromobility program.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This agenda item supports Confront Climate Crisis & Champion Environmental Justice. Specifically, this item relates to the implementation of the following:

Reduce greenhouse gases and dependency on fossil fuels.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public outreach consisted of the following engagement activities:

- Project website - The project website included accessible project messaging, the project timeline, a summary of project needs and benefits, and links to surveys and flyers.
- Online survey - An online survey targeted people who live, work, or frequently visit Hayward for their feedback and perceptions of shared micromobility. The survey was promoted through the City's website and Instagram account and at both in-person engagement events, where paper versions were also available. A total of 121 people took the survey, with 98 complete responses and 23 partial responses. See Appendix C for full survey responses.
- Two (2) in-person tabling events - Two public outreach events were held to gather feedback from the residents. One took place at the Hayward Farmers Market on February 4, 2023, and the other was at the South Hayward BART Station on February 23, 2023. Three quarters (75%) of people at the events (115 people) and 69% of survey respondents (121 people) were in favor of a shared micromobility program.

Takeaways from public feedback are listed below:

1. Shared bikes and scooters are convenient and good for the environment.
2. Micromobility can improve access to recreation, transit, and dining/entertainment destinations in Hayward.
3. The service area should be citywide to accommodate a variety of trip purposes.
4. Sidewalk clutter is a major concern.
5. Safe rider behavior and safer streets are needed for a successful program.
6. Docked bikeshare was the most popular system type, and e-bikes were the preferred vehicle type, although e-bike libraries and e-bike rebate programs were also popular.

The input gathered from this community engagement effort demonstrates that community members are generally supportive of the City introducing a shared micromobility program and hope that the City addresses infrastructure and safety concerns in combination with any shared micromobility program. Many residents are excited about the potential community, economic, and environmental benefits that will come from a shared micromobility program.

- Social media and email promotion - The project and survey were promoted in the City's monthly newsletter in February 2023, with 215 click-throughs to the project webpage. The City's social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Nextdoor, and Twitter) promoted the project and survey, with a 4.8% engagement rate (double the normal engagement rate) and over 2,000 impressions.

NEXT STEPS

If Council approves the short- and long-term recommendations, staff will incorporate any Council comments in the study and begin work on the planning of the program. The short-term program implementation includes an updated review of available and future e-bike rebates and a communications plan for outreach and education. The long-term program implementation includes a plan with next steps for connecting with other jurisdictions, potential providers, and some high-level program recommendations.

Prepared by: Kathy Garcia, Deputy Director of Public Works

Recommended by: Alex Ameri, Director of Public Works

Approved by:

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Kelly McAdoo, City Manager