

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ROBERT SPRINKLE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, TRAFFIC
ENGINEERING
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: SCOOTER ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
AGENDA ACTION: ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council introduce an ordinance to allow all scooters to operate on public streets, public alleys, and public gutters by amending Chapter 9-22 of the Santa Rosa City Code, related to Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Skates, In-Line Skates, and similar devices.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the City Council update the Santa Rosa City Code to allow for the use of all scooters in public streets, public alleys and public gutters, whether the scooter is part of a City scooter program or not. These devices will still be prohibited on sidewalks per the existing ordinance.

This ordinance supports the following Council goals and priorities: 3) ensure a healthy and safe community for all, 4) promote economic and community vibrancy, and 5) build and maintain sustainable infrastructure. A shared scooter system will help to reduce vehicle miles traveled which helps the City of Santa Rosa (City) to achieve important Climate Action Plan goals. In addition, a shared scooter system supports the City's Silver Bicycle Friendly Community designation.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On December 6, 2022, staff provided a six-month update to the Council on the approved Shared Scooter Pilot Program.

On April 26, 2022, the Council adopted Ordinance No. ORD-2022-005 to amend Santa Rosa City Code Title 9, the Health and Safety Code Chapter 9-22, Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Skates, In-Line Skates, and Similar Devices to allow scooters to operate on public streets, public alleys, and public gutters during the City Council-approved Shared Scooter System Pilot Program.

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On December 14, 2021, the Council, by Resolution No. 2021-232: 1) approved the City of Santa Rosa's Shared Scooter System Pilot Program; and 2) authorized the Assistant City Manager or Director of Transportation and Public Works or designee to modify permit conditions, issue and/or revoke permits, and/or limit and/or suspend the operation of a shared scooter system.

On November 10, 2020, the City Council gave direction to develop a one-year pilot for a shared scooter system program.

On September 22, 2020, the City Council Climate Action Subcommittee provided comments and feedback on how shared scooters integrate into Climate Action Plan goals and policies.

ANALYSIS

Council approved a Scooter Share Pilot Program in December 2021. Following a competitive application process, the City awarded Bird Rides, Inc. a pilot program permit. Bird flew in the first 100 electric scooters on July 1, 2022. Bird operated scooters in Santa Rosa until ceasing operations on August 31, 2023.

In connection with the Shared Scooter Pilot Program, the City amended section 9-22.020(D) of the Santa Rosa City Code to allow scooters operating under the City's Shared Scooter System Pilot Program to use public streets, public alleys, and public gutters by exempting them from the general prohibition against operation of scooters, and similar devices in those areas. Scooter use was still prohibited on sidewalks.

With conclusion of the City's Shared Scooter Pilot Program, staff recommends that Council further allow for the use of all scooters in public streets, public alleys and public gutters, whether they are part of a City scooter program or not. Santa Rosa City Code currently only allows scooters on public streets, public alleys and public gutters when the scooters are operating under the City's Shared Scooter System Pilot Program, which has now concluded. With staff's recommended change, all scooters, whether part of a City program or not, could operate in public streets, public alleys and public gutters. These devices will still be prohibited on sidewalks per the existing ordinance.

A redline of the proposed modifications to Section 9-22.020(D) of the Santa Rosa City Code is included with this Staff Report as Attachment 1.

FISCAL IMPACT

Adoption of the Ordinance would not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities, and CEQA

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Guidelines Section 15183, Projects Consistent with a Community Plan, General Plan or Zoning. Specifically, the project consists of the continued operation of the existing street network with a negligible expansion of use. In addition, the project implements the City's General Plan by providing alternative modes of transportation, furthering connectivity and greenhouse gas reduction goals and policies.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On November 21, 2019, staff made a presentation to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board (BPAB) on shared scooter devices as an informational item.

On October 12, 2020, the BPAB provided comments and feedback related to the operations of shared scooters.

On October 28, 2020, staff made a presentation to the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) on shared scooter devices.

On March 17, 2021, staff made a presentation to the Downtown Action Organization (DAO) on shared scooter devices and was asked to return to the DAO when a draft permit process was developed.

On March 18, 2021, staff made a presentation to the Historic Railroad Square Association on shared scooter devices and was asked to return to the Association when a draft permit process was developed.

In January of 2024, staff met with representatives from Police, Fire, Parking, the DAO, and the Historic Railroad Square District and all were in favor of transitioning the pilot program into a formal Shared Scooter Program.

NOTIFICATION

A public hearing notice was posted at City Hall March 15, 2024 and published in the Press Democrat as a one-eighth page March 15, 2024 and posted on the City's website, pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-66.020(D).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Proposed Redlined Changes to City Code Chapter 9-22
- Ordinance

PRESENTER

Alexander Oceguera, Active Transportation Planner