

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD
STAFF REPORT
October 15, 2020

SUBJECT

Shared Mobility Devices (SMDs)

ISSUE

The Board may provide input on the potential use of Shared Mobility Devices (SMDs) in Santa Rosa.

STAFF PRESENTER

Nancy Adams, Transportation Planner
Rob Sprinkle, Deputy Director

RECOMMENDATION

For information only. No action required.

BACKGROUND

The evolution of Shared Mobility Devices (SMDs) has surged in the last several years. Examples of these devices include electric scooters and electric bikes.

Since the arrival of electric scooters in California in 2017, the landscape has evolved from being dominated by two vendors to being crowded with competitors. The e-scooter companies typically offer wheeled electric mobility that may be accessed via a smartphone app and a credit card and picked up and dropped off anywhere. The dock-less nature of e-scooters is primarily what makes them more convenient and appealing.

As cities struggle to meet the mobility needs of residents, workers and tourists, e-scooters can provide a convenient solution for improved mobility options. On the other hand, e-scooters can pose challenges to riders and pedestrians and the use of public right of way.

It is anticipated that in 2021 a pilot bike share project will be launched in several cities in Sonoma County along the SMART rail corridor which will include e-bikes. Santa Rosa is proposed to have four bike share hubs: 1) Downtown Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station, 2) North Santa Rosa SMART station, 3) Courthouse Square and 4) the Santa Rosa Junior College. Though bike share systems can offer unique opportunities, there are many challenges to effective implementation and regulation. Docked systems require significant infrastructure investment and they need to limit availability to designated docking areas. Conversely, dock-less shared bicycles offer more flexible transportation options, but can result in bicycles left in areas where they do not belong (including public right of way), causing safety concerns or nuisances.

Two of the goals of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018 (BPMPU2018) are Goal 1 Increase Access and Comfort and Goal 3 Support a Culture of Walking and Biking. If the City is willing to consider a policy that would enable these devices to operate within our jurisdiction, then it can help us in meeting these goals in the BPMPU2018.

On November 21, 2019, staff made a presentation to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board (BPAB) on SMDs.

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

ANALYSIS

1. Below are highlights of California Vehicle Code (CVC) rules related to bicycles and SMDs. (See Attachment 1 for vehicle code.)
 - a. Motorized scooters have a 15 MPH maximum when on a roadway or bikeway.
 - b. It is unlawful to operate a scooter on a highway while under the influence.
 - c. If a Class II bike lane is available, the operator shall ride in the bike lane with several exceptions: overtaking, preparing to turn left, avoiding debris, (see CVC 21229).
 - d. If no bike lane is accessible, the scooter shall ride as close as practicable to the right edge or curb of the roadway with several exceptions: overtaking, preparing to turn left, avoiding debris, (see CVC 21228).
 - e. Operators of motorized scooters shall not be operated on a roadway with a speed limit above 25 mph and less than 35 mph unless there is a Class II or Class IV bike lane and must be authorized by ordinance or resolution.
 - f. Operators of motorized scooters shall not operate on the sidewalk unless necessary to leave or enter an adjacent property.
 - g. Bicycle rules are the same for electric bikes as pedal bikes with the exception that you must be 16 years old to ride a Class 3 E-bike, you must wear a helmet, and Class 3 E-bikes are not allowed on Class 1 paths or Class VI protected lanes. (CVC 21213.)
2. City of Santa Rosa Municipal Code also includes regulations related to scooters, (See Attachment 2), prohibiting the use of scooters and bicycles in specific areas of Santa Rosa; specifically, in the Downtown and Railroad Square areas.
3. Staff would like some focused feedback from the Board on these questions/key issues:
 - a. The Board may provide input on SMDs.
 - b. Are there additional prohibitions or considerations the Board proposes?
4. This item is scheduled for a City Council study session on November 10, 2020. Staff would like to receive some input from the Board prior to the study session.

RECOMMENDATION

For information only. No action required.

Attachment 1: California Vehicle Code (CVC) Scooters and E-Bikes
Attachment 2: City of Santa Rosa Municipal Code Scooters