Options for Implementing a Scooter-Share Pilot

Transportation and Public Utilities Committee - July 15, 2019
New Mobility Blueprint
(was Future of Mobility Implementation Blueprint)

Our goal is to develop actionable recommendations for policy, programs, and regulations that will help the City implement new mobility options in a way that aligns with and advances existing goals and policies.
New Mobility Blueprint Process

• Technical Advisory Group—first meeting was July 10, 2019
• Transportation trend assessment and future projections
• Strategies and actions that allow the City to shape new mobility to meet existing community goals
• Residential/neighborhood EV charging pilot design
• Proposed regulatory strategy for key policies
• Recommended approaches to effective public engagement
Recent Scooter-Share Headlines

Scooter companies are racing to build more robust equipment to become more profitable… and finding ways to enter and stay in big city markets

Scooter Breakdowns Weigh on Lime

At the CES trade show in Las Vegas in January, Lime showed off a new model of its electric scooter with thicker tires, color display screens between the handlebars and stronger aluminum to help the vehicles last longer. But months later, the custom-designed scooter, called Gen 3, is having problems of its own. The screens frequently crack or malfunction, and repairing brakes and other parts has proven complicated. Even the tougher metal has caused trouble—the additional weight makes it harder for workers to cart home scooters to charge overnight.

Scooter companies had pinned their hopes on sturdier hardware to help them slow their cash burn and demonstrate that the business can be profitable. But Lime’s experience shows how challenging that can be.
Regional and City Processes

• Since Fall 2018 Cambridge Boston, Somerville, Brookline, Watertown and MAPC have held regular meetings to focus on key areas of collaboration:
  • State legislation
  • A memorandum of understand regarding:
    • Minimum requirements for scooter operators to ensure seamless operations and unified user experience across municipal boundaries
    • A joint scooter operator selection process
  • Model program guidelines to be adopted by each community (in development)

• In parallel, a City interdepartmental scooter working group meets every two weeks to develop local requirements for a pilot program:
  • Working group members include staff from the Commission on Persons with Disabilities; Community Development; Law; DPW; and Traffic, Parking and Transportation
State Scooter Legislation – Multiple Bills Pending


- Governor Baker filed a road safety bill that includes language about new mobility options, including scooters, and requires MassDOT to develop a micro-mobility advisory working group. Operationally, scooters would be regulated as bicycles.

- Latest update indicates that bills have yet to be reported out of their respective committees; it is not clear whether this will happen prior to the Legislature goes into informal session after July 31.
Proposed Joint Scooter Operator Selection Process

• Launch scooter pilot after state legislation enacted—depending on season

• Joint minimum requirements for scooter companies (MOU)

• MAPC Process to pre-approve and select vendors
  o Must meet minimum requirements and owe no outstanding fees due to any of the communities
  o 3 vendors will be selected at random and allowed to operate in the pilot.

• Vendors selected through the lottery process must seek permits to operate in each community
Proposed Scooter Permitting Process in Cambridge

Year 1

- Companies would apply for 12.08.020 - Display of merchandise permit to operate in Cambridge.
- Propose that Council would issue permits only to companies that have been selected through MAPC eligibility and lottery process.
- Vendors would enter into license agreement with the City.
- TPT would update traffic regulations to align with state law.
  - Eliminate hours of operation
  - Permit scooters on Cambridge-owned off-road paths
  - Clarify where they can and cannot be operated on sidewalks

Year 2

- Would use pilot lessons learned to develop new municipal ordinance to permit scooter-share and potentially other shared mobility programs
Key Proposed Cambridge Scooter Pilot Elements

- Maximum speed—15 mph
- Sidewalk riding rules—mirror bicycle regulations
- Morning scooter deployment—equitable distribution across city
- Parking restrictions—cannot obstruct accessible paths and ramps
- Enforcement procedures for violations—fines for not responding w/in 2 hours; integration with constituent reporting services including SeeClickFix
- Winter operations—likely not included in pilot
- Permit fees—fees to be set in accordance existing regulations
- Lower rates for income-eligible users
- Fleet size—minimum 250 per vendor; add scooters based on demand (3+/day)
- Education of users re how to ride safely and park properly
- Insurance and indemnification
- Data privacy and sharing agreement
What our neighbors are doing

- **Boston** Mayor Walsh filed an Ordinance in January that delegates regulatory authority to the BTD commissioner and allows the ability to levy penalties and fines, but didn't define them yet.

- **Brookline** moved forward with a scooter **pilot** with Bird and Lime this spring, *before* state legislation passed.
  - Began on April 1 and ends on November 15, 2019

- **Somerville** is waiting to see what approach the other communities take and will likely sign on to that.

- **Watertown** has just joined the group.
Thank You