



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Office of the City Manager

409 South Main Street
Post Office Box 20031
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
(540) 432-7701 / FAX (540) 432-7778

G. Chris Brown
City Attorney

TO: Eric Campbell, City Manager
FROM: Wesley Russ, Assistant City Attorney
DATE: December 5, 2018
RE: Proposed Amendments to Titles 6 – Public Works and 13 – Motor Vehicles and Traffic

Summary: Consider amending Sections 6-1-18, 13-1-1, 13-1-53, 13-2-7, 13-2-9, and 13-2-10 of the City Code.

Background: On October 12, 2018, Bird launched a motorized foot-scooter rental service in Harrisonburg. On November 10, 2018, Lime launched a similar rental service.

Key Issues: Since the launch of scooter rentals in Harrisonburg, city staff have received a significant number of comments from the public. While initial comments were largely positive, as the total fleet size in the city expanded, staff began to receive an increasing number of complaints, particularly regarding parking.

Over the last two weeks, staff from several departments have had lengthy conversations with representatives from both Bird and Lime regarding the service they offer in the city and relaying concerns. Both companies assured staff that they would focus on self-regulating scooter parking, particularly regarding staging of scooters in the morning.

The proposed amendments to Section 13-2-7 are intended to clarify that scooters, like bicycles, may not ride on sidewalks in the designated area downtown. These amendments, coupled with the reminders not to ride on sidewalks that both companies provide “in-app” to users, is intended to alleviate concerns about scooters moving at high speeds through sidewalks with heavy pedestrian traffic. The proposed amendments to this section also note that no more than one person may ride on a single scooter at a time. This section would also be amended to clarify that violation of this section is a \$ 50 civil penalty, which is the maximum allowed by state law.

The proposed amendment to Section 13-2-9 address parking of scooters, along with bicycles, skateboards, “hoverboards,” and other similar devices. As amended, these devices could only be parked in the public right-of-way only in areas where they do not interfere with pedestrian traffic.

The proposed amendment to Section 13-2-10 will require anyone 14 years or younger to wear a helmet while using a motorized foot-scooter.

Finally, the proposed amendment to Section 6-1-18 would prohibit commercial vehicles from being parked on sidewalks or other city property entirely, unless the operator has a license, permit or franchise issued by the city. Commercial scooters or other merchandise parked in public rights-of-way without a license, permit or franchise would be subject to impoundment by HPD or Public Works, a recovery fee, and potential fines. Staff is drafting a licensing scheme to better regulate these devices and would include limitations on fleet size increases and response times when alerted to improper parking, to be brought to City Council for approval at its first January meeting.



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Environmental Impact: N/A

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Prior Actions: N/A

Alternatives: (a) Approve the ordinance amendments as proposed; or
(b) Deny ordinance amendments as proposed.

Community Engagement: N/A

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the amendments as presented.

Attachments: 1. Current ordinance reflecting proposed changes.

Review:

The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.

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