



To: Columbia Association Board of Directors  
From: Kristin Russell, Director, Office of Planning and Community Affairs and Jessica Bellah,  
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Subj: Information Memo - Electronic Scooter Contract details  
Date: June 18 2020

### **Background**

On June 11, the Office of Planning and Community Affairs (OPCA) presented to the CA Board information on potential policy changes that would allow use of CA pathways for e-Scooters. The next step will be for the Board to vote to update CA's open space policies to treat electric scooters as electric bicycles in line with Maryland's transportation guidance. Second, the Board will also vote on allowing commercial electric scooter sharing companies to operate on CA land.

In the course of the June 11 presentation, the Board discussed their concerns related to commercial e-scooter operations on CA property. The purpose of this memo is to advise the Board as to how these concerns can be addressed through a license agreement or through already-existing County regulations.

### **Fees and Operation Management**

- No operating fee is proposed at this time; however, in the event that allowing e-Scooters to operate on CA property becomes a cost or operational burden on CA, fees could be negotiated within the next licensee agreement term.
- CA open space staff will have the right to collect or move e-Scooter vehicles in the normal course of CA operations if they are deemed to be interfering with user safety or staff operations. Such vehicles may be collected and brought to the CA facility for pickup by the e-Scooter operator for no additional fee. The purpose of this provision is to reduce any impact to CA operations. In the event this becomes an issue, negotiation of a fee or alternative practice is recommended within the course of the current agreement term and/or future terms.
- The agreement will require the e-Scooter company to reimburse CA for the cost of recovering scooters when CA staff must mobilize outside of the course of regular operations.

## **Clutter**

- A license agreement will outline the process for an e-Scooter company and CA to mutually agree to the locations of any docking stations on CA property.
- CA may choose to create designated parking areas that encourage orderly parking of scooters. Parking in such locations can be incentivized by an e-Scooter company, in coordination with CA.
- Scooters may be parked in any other legal location that bicyclist would be allowed to park.
- E-Scooter companies have the ability to disallow the ending of trips in undesirable locations via their geo-fencing tool.
- Per above, CA open space staff will have the right to collect or move e-Scooter vehicles if they are deemed to be interfering with user safety.

## **Speed Limit**

- CA reserves the right to designate scooter-free zones and to set speed limits, subject to limitations of the technology.
- The speed of e-Scooters can be set by the company and can be reduced in certain areas via a geo-fence control. Although the geo-fence is not fine-tuned enough to differentiate at a smaller scale, it would be possible to designate large areas of the CA pathway system, such as the Lake Kittamaqundi loop, with a lower speed limit if desired.
- Rather than set a speed limit within the agreement itself, staff can require an e-Scooter company to demonstrate the vehicles to CA staff prior to deployment in order to determine the safest speed limit.

## **Enforcement of bad behavior/Renter education and safety guidance**

Most enforcement and education concerns are addressed by the Howard County's permit process and management including:

- All e-Scooters are individually marked with large serial numbers. In the event a user is reported for bad behavior, the user can be identified by reporting the serial number. An e-Scooter company can take corrective action including banning that user in the future.
- Scooter users are subject to the same police enforcement procedures as bicyclists.
- All commercial operators are required to conduct two training events per year in addition to providing tutorial information at the point of rental to users of their vehicles.
- E-Scooter companies are required to incentivize the use of helmets and parking or "ending trips" in designated parking areas.

### **Signage on CA property**

- Limited signs may need revision to clarify for the public that e-Scooters are permitted, and/or in locations where conditions warrant.
- If CA desires to post additional signage indicating speed limits or scooter free zones, this would be an additional cost for CA. However, these are not necessary at the outset and it is advisable to determine the ultimate speed limit, no-go areas and identify best directional signage by observing usage patterns prior to posting new signs.

### **Liability**

- The license agreement includes an indemnification section to protect CA.