E-Bikes and E-Scooters Pilot Program

NEIGHBORS OF NORTHWEST BRANCH

Chuck Kines, Park Planner-Coordinator

OCTOBER 1, 2019
Why are we here?

- Rapid growth in e-bikes and e-scooters
- Private/personal use
- Capital Bikeshare
- Commercial dockless e-vehicle companies in DC area
- MCDOT expanded commercial dockless e-vehicle pilot program in 2019
Why are e-bikes and e-scooters so popular?

- First-mile, last-mile transportation
- Helps people with mobility
- Easy to use
- Supports car-less lifestyle
- Allow some people to travel farther and enjoy a longer experience
Commercial dockless e-bikes and e-scooters have arrived in Montgomery County.

Commercial dockless e-vehicles are also in DC, and several other jurisdictions in the DMV.

MCDOT launched a new pilot to allow commercial dockless vehicles companies to operate in certain areas of the county.

We expect certain park trails to be used by customers, and we want to have some control over their use.
Policy Background

- Current state of regulations
  - Park Rules and Regulations
  - Maryland Vehicle Laws
  - County Laws
What is a Park Directive?

- A Park Directive is a policy tool described in Chapter 1, Section 3 of the Park Rules and Regulations that allows for a change to the Park Rules and Regulations in one county to allow certain activities on parkland for a certain time in that county.
Department of Parks Pilot Program

- 6-month pilot program
- June 1-December 1, 2019
- Five hard surface, hiker-biker trails:
  - Rock Creek Trail
  - Sligo Creek Trail (to county line)
  - Matthew Henson Trail
  - Long Branch Trail
  - Northwest Branch Trail (to county line)
- Two phases
  - Phase 1: Personal
  - Phase 2: Commercial
We’re at crossroads, how should Parks respond?

- All hard surface (paved) park trails are shared use
  - Some people perceive them as sidewalks
  - Some perceive them as bikeways
- Countywide park trails down county are used for both recreation and commuting
- Bicycle Master Plan includes these park trails
- Hard surface park trails in local, neighborhood, regional and recreational parks are not included in this pilot
We want to observe and collect data

- We want decisions to be driven by data and actual observations
- We would like to support MCDOT and give users opportunity to ride on certain park trails
- During pilot, we will observe use, collect data, identify and track public safety issues
Types of vehicles **not** included
Types of E-Bicycles

- **Class I**
  - Equipped with small motor
  - Pedal-assist only when rider is pedaling
  - Speed at which motor ceases to provide assistance
    - 20 mph
Types of E-Bicycles

- **Class II**
  - Equipped with small motor
  - Throttle assist on-demand
  - May or may not have pedals
  - Speed at which motor ceases to provide assistance = 20 mph
Types of E-Bicycles

- Class III
  - Equipped with small motor
  - Pedal-assist only when rider is pedaling
  - Speed at which motor ceases to provide assistance
    - 28 mph
Types of E-Bicycles

- **Class IV**
  - Larger gasoline-powered engine
  - No speed regulators
  - Are typically categorized and regulated as mopeds
E-Scooters
Outreach and Public Comments

- Public notice signs
- Town Hall webpage
- Social media
- Multiple languages
Examples of data and information we will examine and analyze:

- User conflicts and Safety
- Infractions, violations, thefts
- Operational challenges and logistics
- Differences between private use and commercial use
- Public input
- Intercept Survey
Status of M-NCPPC Pilot Program

- Pilot runs June 1 to December 1
- Vendor MOU’s under negotiation
- The vendors have been slow in launching their full deployments; therefore, not many users on park trails yet
- City of College Park: proposed pilot program with University of Maryland, 10/1/19 – 9/30/20
- NPS policy statement allowing e-bikes where traditional bicycles are allowed (effective 8/3/19)
- State legislation becomes effective October 1
Our data collection is still in-progress
- Coordinating with MCDOT and Park Police on incident and use data
  - Data from vendors are incomplete
  - MCDOT hired company to assemble and analyze data
- Parks will conduct sample trail user intercept surveys in October
  - Sligo Creek Trail
  - Rock Creek Trail
- Received 135+ statements in Open Town Hall
- No major incidents reported in County pilot areas
What’s Next

• Pilot Program concludes on Dec. 1
• Option to extend the pilot program 6 months or a year to:
  ○ Allow fully deployed allotments to be active
  ○ Allow neighboring jurisdictions to begin their pilots during our pilot period
  ○ Allow pilot period to include warmer weather months

• Report to Planning Board in November 2019
  ○ Present initial findings
  ○ Request extension for 6 months to a year
Questions?

Chuck Kines
301-495-2184
Charles.Kines@montgomeryparks.org