

PAC and DoVe - Dockless Vehicles in Arlington

At the request of the County Manager, County staff are designing a demonstration project for shared mobility devices (dockless bikes and scooters) in Arlington. The pilot project will be limited-term, approximately 9 months, and will allow County staff to observe how the service works, collect data, get community feedback, and make followup recommendations, including potential code changes or feedback on how to address these services in the MTP. Information on DoVes (Dockless Vehicles) in Arlington, including this proposed pilot project, are on [this](#) County transportation webpage. [The first thing the County needs to do is provide direct links to this page - from main page, transportation page, engagement page, bike page!.]

Some issues being considered by staff are: limits on numbers of devices, where devices should be parked or ridden, how regulations will be enforced by both the County and the vendor operators, what appropriate communication and outreach strategies will be, and what fees are reasonable to cover County administrative expenses.

Staff are reaching out to internal stakeholders, the vendors, and relevant advisory committees and commissions, with the goals of presenting their plan to the Board on September 22 and beginning the demonstration in October.

Specific pedestrian concerns:

Where DoVes are parked: DoVes should always be parked in a safe, easily accessible and convenient area that does not interfere with pedestrian, transit, bike, or other vehicular traffic. DoVes should NEVER be parked in the clear zones of sidewalks, within bus stops, on pedestrian ramps, within crosswalks, blocking fire hydrants, in the landscape zone if the DoVe could be damaged or could damage the plantings. 1) The County should proactively provide locations to park DoVes, especially in areas with lots of pedestrians and other traffic. Parking locations could include additional bike racks, bike corrals (use parking spaces), and hard surface areas in the landscape zone. 2) County may want to require vendors to have DoVes that must be locked to a surface - better for DoVes, probably better parked DoVes, 3) The cost of providing additional parking can be part of the vendors' fees; parking should also be available to cyclists using their own bikes (see ITDP document).

Management of mis-parked DoVes: DoVes that are parked in unacceptable areas mentioned above are a major inconvenience to most pedestrians and can make the sidewalk inaccessible to pedestrians who are older, frail, very young, or have disabilities. Mis-parked DoVes can be an absolute hazard to these pedestrians if they run into the DoVes or trip or fall on them. The common vendor practice of asking pedestrians to report mis-parked DoVes, usually through an app, and the vendor will relocate the DoVe within two hours is NOT acceptable in Arlington. 1) Waiting at least 2 hours for the DoVe to be moved is not the answer as the DoVe remains a hazard until it is moved, 2) Many of us have no time, smartphone, physical or mental ability, or interest in reporting mis-parked DoVes - e.g. someone with impaired vision who just tripped on a

DoVe cannot know whom to contact or even what the DoVe is. 3) The onus needs to be on the vendor and on the DoVe user to ensure DoVes are parked correctly; and 4) The County needs to work with the vendors to ensure that DoVes are parked correctly every time by their users. Maps of available appropriate parking areas/general descriptions of correct and unacceptable parking locations should be provided to all users and widely promoted. Maybe the County can have its own app for users for this type of information. The County needs to enforce parking rules (see various experiences in documents) and should consider penalties to both users and vendors, especially repeat offenders. The County should consider dropping vendors that do not comply with County restrictions., 5) Vendors should develop their own plans to redistribute DoVes - both for rebalancing of supplies and for those that are mis-parked.

Where can DoVes be ridden in Arlington? We need a clear delineation of relevant current laws and regulations for all types of DoVes - along with definitions and illustrations of each type of DoVe. A dockless regular bicycle would be allowed to use the sidewalk, bike lane, or travel lane just like any other bike. What are the regulations for motorized bikes and scooters? They can be a real hazard on a crowded sidewalk. What types of DoVes can be ridden on local trails? All DoVe users will need careful instruction on road safety, and the County will need to place more PAL-type signage by busy sidewalks. If DoVes are ridden on County sidewalks frequently, we will also need wider sidewalks in many areas to avoid conflict among users. DoVes also need automatic headlights and taillights and working bells/horn, and all riders need instructions to use them.

Other issues:

- Regional planning: Users of DoVes ride them throughout the DC metropolitan area, so the County needs to work with other transportation officials in the area on a uniform, regional guideline.
- Data collection: The Seattle report noted that they wished they had asked for different data to be collected in their trial project; it was a lost opportunity to capture rider behavior.
- Size of fleets in pilot project: Several of the reports on pilot projects noted that their caps on fleet sizes for individual vendors were too low to both 1) be profitable, and 2) provide adequate service throughout the pilot area. One key planning issue for the County will be how the vendors will provide DoVes to both poorer parts of Arlington and those that are relatively transit-deserts (such as some northern and western parts of the County). The County should also consider asking vendors to supply additional types of DoVes, such as adult tricycles and bikes modified for cyclists with disabilities.
- Community involvement: It is critical that the County get good public feedback both during and after completion of the pilot project. The Seattle report had some excellent examples. Real in-person public outreach to various communities will be essential; do not just rely on online/app feedback.
- Program evaluation: Do it thoroughly and thoughtfully before expanding the program. Make the final report public and widely available so others can learn. Document what worked and what could have been done differently.

Selected Dockless reports:

- Seattle DOT: [2017 Free-Floating Bike Share Pilot Evaluation Report](#) (2018): Additional information is available through the SDOT [main DoVe page](#).
- Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP): [Dockless Bikeshare Policy Brief](#)
- National Association of City Transportation Officials: [NACTO Policy 218](#): Guidelines for the Regulation and Management of Shared Active Transportation (July 2018)
- District Department of Transportation (DDOT): Dockless Vehicles in the District ([webpage](#))
- District Department of Transportation (DDOT): Dockless in DC – [presentation](#) to MWCOG (Metropolitan Washington Council of Government), May 31, 2018

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