
Port of Olympia Citizens Advisory Committee – Non-Motorized Transportation Sub-Committee

Memorandum

To: Port of Olympia Commissioners

From: Cameron Wilson & Gigi McClure

Findings Regarding the Port's ability to offer non-motorized transportation services to patrons of the Swantown Marina

Scope of Work:

Evaluation of non-motorized or shared transportation options for North Point – This task would include an evaluation of options to encourage transportation alternatives connecting North Point (and other Port Peninsula destinations) to downtown and other attractions by ways other than single occupancy vehicles.

Efforts Undertaken:

The subcommittee reached out to the City of Olympia, the Downtown Alliance, and to several providers of non-motorized transportation services in other metropolitan areas.

City of Olympia: The City of Olympia is not very supportive of “on demand” type electric bike/scooter services on their roads and sidewalks for a host of reasons including but not limited to the congestion they create when used improperly on roadways or sidewalks and when “dropped” in inappropriate locations which may impede pedestrian and ADA accessibility, as well as becoming an attractive nuisance for ongoing criminal activity with respect to stealing and dismantling of bikes currently plaguing the community. Until/unless the Port of Olympia was able to create a private system of

pathways/roadways which are located exclusively on Port owned property, there does not appear to be a practical way of providing these types of services as long as they would need to be operated on City owned streets/sidewalks.

Downtown Alliance: The Downtown Alliance had, several years ago, explored the concept of a multi-passenger electric vehicle transportation service akin to a large “golf cart” that could be used to move people around Downtown Olympia. That concept was also determined not to be viable for many of the same reasons listed above – in addition to the direct cost of insuring, maintaining, and operating such a service

Transportation Providers: The sub-committee identified two companies capable of supporting electric bikes in the area: Omaha Trek B Cycle and Gotcha Cycles.

Leasing Options: Both companies provide leasing options. Washington State University’s Coug Bike Program has a monthly lease cost of \$1000 per month. University student can utilize the bikes for 4 hours free and are charged \$5/hour overage fee and \$5 for locking and leaving a bike outside of the Coug bikes rack. Any bike left outside the WSU campus is charged \$25 fee. The bikes are also available to community members at a rate of \$6/hour, \$5 for locking a bike outside the Coug bikes racks, as well as a \$25 fee for leaving the bike outside the WSU campus.

Attractive Nuisance: The Coug Bikes Program run by WSU was specifically designed to avoid the “attractive nuisance” of random bikes left all over other cities in Washington. WSU considered docking station verses non-docking station application. WSU purchased 120 docking station. Omaha Trek B Cycle provides bike recovery through the tracking systems attached to each bike at an additional cost outlined in the contract.

WSU provides 4 hours free use to students with a \$5 return fee if not returned to a docking station, and a \$25 recovery fee for long distance recovery. In this case when students ride the bike to Idaho and the bikes are not returned.

Docking Stations: Electric docking stations are a significant initial cost and not provided by either bike company. WSU purchased the docking stations separately for approximately \$1,800 each.

Maintenance: Maintenance is not provided through the WSU contract. A local bike shop would be needed to sub-contract for the maintenance of all bikes.

The leasing company will provide the parts in accordance with the contract. This too would require additional funding separate from the bike utility lease provided by either company. WSU conducts internal maintenance to save money, however, the University staff found maintenance internally take up to 85% of the staff's time due to the number of bikes assigned. WSU also found maintenance cost by the leaser to be "too costly".

Profit: WSU staff stated "bike rental does not offer any profit to the University. The intent is to support the needs of the students and providing alternative transportation within Pullman for our students".

Conclusions: As of this writing, there are significant impediments to the Port of Olympia providing non-motorized transportation options in the Downtown Olympia area. We do believe citizens and visitors would actively use such services, the jurisdictional conflicts with respect to the cost of procuring, maintaining, recovering stolen/damaged transportation, charging locations, and a host of other concerns make this a particularly difficult project to implement at this time.