

DATE: June 4, 2024

TO: Council Transportation Committee

FROM: Kirstin Hinds, Economic Development Strategist
John Lang, Economic Vitality Manager

VIA: Dawn S. Cameron, Acting Assistant City Manager/
Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Personal Delivery Device Program Update

RECOMMENDATION

Receive an update on relaunching the Personal Delivery Device Program and provide feedback on program augmentations.

BACKGROUND

A personal delivery device (PDD) is an automated or remotely piloted device that contains storage space for packages, food, and other delivery items. The PDD Pilot Program was created in 2018 in response to the City being approached by PDD companies wishing to operate within the City's jurisdiction and the City not having policies to regulate the use of PDDs in the public right-of-way. A pilot program was approved by the City Council (Attachment 1—City Council Report, February 27, 2018). The pilot program provided guidelines and the approval process, including operational and insurance requirements for companies interested in operating in Mountain View. One company, Google, participated in the PDD Pilot Program. They partnered with the Mountain View Public Library to operate a "Book Bot" PDD. The program allowed Library patrons to return Library materials via the PDDs, and the program ran for three months, from March 2019 through June 2019.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic began, and businesses had to change their regular operations. The City Council directed staff to implement programs to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The PDD Pilot Program emerged as a method to support essential businesses and allow the public to stay at home. The City Council approved continuation of the PDD Pilot Program (Attachment 2—City Council Report, May 5, 2020) with Starship Technologies as a participating company. The pilot program officially sunset on December 31, 2022.

In October 2022, staff began working on program augmentations and conducting additional best practice research. Staff presented new augmentations to the PDD program to the Downtown Committee on [December 5, 2023](#), and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) on [January 31, 2024](#), and received feedback. BPAC feedback included greater consideration for e-bike delivery, surveying the Mountain View community on interactions with PDDs and impact on enjoyment of the sidewalk, concerns with PDDs in the bike lanes, in particular blocking the bike lanes, and a need for measurable metrics. Today, there are no current operators of PDDs in Mountain View, but the Economic Development Team continues to field inquiries from interested vendors both operating in Mountain View and from outside City limits.

ANALYSIS

The Economic Development team is looking to formalize the PDD program to both support growing innovation and Mountain View's existing business community. Redefined goals for a PDD program include:

1. Support increased demand and economic growth associated with autonomous vehicles and support changes in shopping and dining patterns, including use of delivery devices for retail, medical, and food purchases.
2. Provide opportunities for local, small businesses to expand their customer reach and engagement.
3. Create opportunities for innovative Mountain View-based companies to partner with the City.
4. Help reduce pollution by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through use of personal delivery vehicles.

Based on research from other communities along with recent interactions with companies interested in participating in the pilot program, staff is developing new program considerations related to both economic development and ensuring pedestrians and other sidewalk users are safe. Program augmentations and changes reflect input and feedback from both the Downtown Committee and BPAC. The suggested PDD Pilot Program augmentations are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Mountain View Current and Proposed PDD Program

Topic	Current Program (Maintaining)	Program Augmentations (*) / Additions (+)
Company Requirements	No more than three PDD companies can participate at once.	
Company Requirements	No more than 10 devices per company in operation at one time.	
		+ Maintain a local presence in Mountain View, beyond the device itself.
		+ Priority given to companies based in Mountain View. + Company must provide a 24/7 contact person for law enforcement.
Device Operations	Gross weight of the device is less than 100 pounds, excluding cargo.	* For devices that operate on sidewalks, maximum gross weight of the devices is less than 100 pounds, excluding cargo. For devices permitted to operate within bicycle lanes, the size of the device may exceed 100 pounds but not more than 500 pounds.
	Human handler to be present with each operating device for the first six months.	* Fully autonomous PDDs must have a human handler present with each operating device. Semiautonomous PDDs (devices with a remote human handler) may not be required to have a human handler present.
	Contact information required (website, address, and contact information of company)	* Contact information is required to be listed on each device for both the City and vendor (website, address, and contact information). Information should also be in Braille.
		+ Consider allowing devices to operate within bicycle lanes and/or travel lane shoulders where the speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour.
Data Requirements	Documentation of incidents involving an injury to an individual/animal.	+ Add performance measures, including number of deliveries, miles traveled, time of day completed by each PDD, incidents involving interactions with the public, other incidents or malfunctions within the public right-of-way, estimate of CO ₂ emissions reduced from delivery trips, and heat map of routes.
Data Requirements		+ Provide a report every quarter and quarterly check-in with City staff.
Data Requirements		+ Document all public inquiries and complaints (spreadsheet summary).
Data Requirements		+ Provide feedback and assessment of sidewalk infrastructure or traffic infrastructure that may pose safety or operational challenges for pedestrians and PDDs.

Topic	Current Program (Maintaining)	Program Augmentations (*) / Additions (+)
Safety Requirements	PDDs are not to unreasonably interfere with pedestrians or traffic.	+ Minimize stopping on a curb ramp, in front of pedestrian push buttons, and within bicycle or travel lanes. + PDD companies are to provide a plan to stay updated on road closures and construction, as well as not interfering with emergency responders.
	Yield to Pedestrians, including people on skates, skateboards, and bicyclists.	
		+ PDD speed limits on sidewalks shall be limited to the pace of pedestrians present on the sidewalk, not to exceed 10 mile per hour maximum. PDD speed limits in the bicycle lane/travel lane shoulder shall be limited to the pace of cyclists present, not to exceed 20 miles per hour maximum. PDDs shall exercise due care under circumstances and conditions.
	Additional Items	
Additional Items		+ Work with City staff to align the program with other existing City policies, such as the Mobile Vending Permit program (regulates use near parks and schools, and hours of operation), Active Transportation Plan, and other relevant City plans, policies, and existing guidelines. Work with the Police Department to align with the California Vehicle Code.

The proposed PDD Program rules and regulations would be incorporated in an agreement between the City and the PDD company. Additionally, the PDD company is required to apply for a Mobile Vending Permit with the City of Mountain View.

The proposed augmentations to the PDD Pilot Program provide more opportunities for the City to collect data on the performance of PDDs operating within the City limits. In addition, PDD companies who are found not to be in compliance with their agreement will have their mobile vending permit revoked.

NEXT STEPS

After discussing the program augmentations with the Downtown Committee (December 5, 2023), BPAC (January 31, 2024), and the Council Transportation Committee, staff will continue to work with the Public Works Department to ensure the program provides the balance between pedestrian safety and economic development initiatives. Staff will return to the City Council for program adoption in fall 2024.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

KH-JL/LL/4/PWK

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- Attachments:
1. [City Council Report, February 27, 2018](#)
 2. [City Council Report, May 5, 2020](#)