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Media Contact: Gunnar Olson
515-334-0075 | golson@dmampo.org

Survey asks what Des Moines area residents think of e-scooters

What do you think of e-scooters in Des Moines? That's the question being asked of the public in a new survey, available at www.dmampo.org/e-scooter-study/. The deadline to respond is Sunday, January 19, 2020.

"We want to know what you, the citizens, think," said Todd Ashby, CEO and Executive Director of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. "The technology is here, so how do we want to respond? Do we want an e-scooter share program? What's the best fit for our city and region? How do we address safety? What regulations are needed?"

An e-scooter, short for electric scooter, is an electric powered, stand-up scooter that can carry a person at approximately 15 miles per hour for short distances. Privately owned e-scooters are already being used within the public right of way in Des Moines. Additionally, several scooter-sharing companies have expressed interest in starting a program in Des Moines.

The survey is being conducted as part of a broader study of e-scooters by a group of community organizations, including the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART), the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Operation Downtown, and the Street Collective of Greater Des Moines.

The study group recognizes the potential benefits of e-scooters, including additional mobility options for residents and visitors, as well as to make the city more competitive in workforce attraction and economic development. At the same time, the study group recognizes the potential issues, notably the safety of people walking, biking, driving, or otherwise utilizing the public right of way.

The study is being closely coordinated with the City of Des Moines, which has regulatory authority over the City's streets and sidewalks. The study is also researching the experiences from other cities with e-scooter programs, gauging interest from possible e-scooters share-program vendors, and seeking input from stakeholder groups and first-responders such as the police and fire departments.

The study group will make recommendations to the Des Moines City Council in early 2020. If there is support, a pilot program for an e-scooter sharing program could be launched in the summer of 2020 on a trial basis.