



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 24-914, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-1.

MTP - ACTION ITEM - (1) Receive a Presentation from Coco Regarding Their Remotely Controlled Delivery Devices; (2) Discuss and Consider Implementation of the Service in Culver City; and (3) Make Recommendations to Staff.

Meeting Date: April 11, 2024

Contact Person: Alicia Ide, Management Analyst
310-253-5618

Attachments: Yes ☒ No ☐

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒ **General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Notice: E-Mail via GovDelivery(04/09/2024): Meetings and Agendas - Mobility, Traffic & Parking Subcommittee; Notify Me - Construction, Street Maintenance and Closures; Stay Informed - Bicycle & Pedestrian / Culver CityBus / Construction, Street Maintenance and Closures

Department Approval: Yanni Demitri, Public Works Director/City Engineer 04/09/2024)

BACKGROUND

On September 28, 2021, Coco Delivery presented their business operations to the Mobility, Traffic and Parking Subcommittee, introducing themselves and requesting permission to operate in Culver City at a future time. The company indicated that they were beginning operations in Santa Monica and, while not yet ready to expand their operation into Culver City, wanted to begin discussions to determine the level of interest the Subcommittee had regarding such an operation Subcommittee Members had generally positive responses, noting that new regulations would be required to govern this new technology. Coco has now returned to staff indicating their desire to begin operations in Culver City as early as fall 2024. A link to a recording of the 09/28/21 meeting is attached.

DISCUSSION

Coco is a company that delivers food using small vehicles remotely controlled and driven by a driver traveling along the sidewalk within a 2-mile radius from a provider to the customer. Currently the company uses hundreds of remotely piloted vehicles to deliver food from restaurants, convenience shops, and grocery stores in Southern California. As an all-electric vehicle, their service provides a sustainable way to deliver food short distances, reducing the use of cars and traffic, eliminating greenhouse gas emissions, as well as avoiding parking issues associated with food pickup and

delivery. Food is also typically delivered faster, and restaurants and customers save on delivery fees.

Coco has been operating in Santa Monica and other locations on a trial basis, and in 2023, they were approved to operate their ongoing service in Santa Monica.

Since this is a new technology that poses unique concerns, to operate in Culver City staff would need to develop and adopt specific codified regulations and then issue Coco a permit or license to operate their non-autonomous, remotely controlled vehicles/devices. The City Attorney will advise the Subcommittee of any significant barriers.

Santa Monica developed a comprehensive set of requirements specifically for this type of service as part of their Zero-Emissions-Delivery-Zone pilot project. Their requirements cover many concerns regarding use of this technology. A copy of their current regulations is attached for reference. Santa Monica also amended their municipal code to address how remotely controlled devices are to operate. Their current code section is also attached to this report.

Staff can use the Santa Monica examples to develop Culver City's own requirements and related code amendments. Staff can also be informed by current agreements and the requirements the City adopted for use of electric scooters in the City and reach out to other cities using Coco's service to obtain copies of their regulations and license agreements to review. Culver City, however, has some specific requirements that will need to be included. For example, Culver City has a significant \$3M/\$6M insurance requirement that this and other competing companies will need to meet, oftentimes requiring them to increase their coverage and increase their premiums.

Staff has spoken to Santa Monica staff who oversee Coco's operations in Santa Monica. They expressed that they had no issues of significance to report and had approved the ongoing operation of the service throughout Santa Monica with a few geographic restrictions.

Coco proposes to begin operations in Culver City as early as fall 2024. Coco has identified some restaurants in Culver City who have already expressed interest in becoming their clients.

A representative from Coco will introduce the company, its devices and their operations, and its service, and respond to questions and concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time, however, if service is approved license fees would likely be collected.

ATTACHMENTS

- 2024-04-11-ATT-MTP-Coco-MarketingPresentation
- 2024-04-11-ATT-MTP-SantaMonicaRegulations - Personal Delivery Devices (PDD) Administrative Regulations, September 2023

- 2024-04-11-ATT-MTP-SantaMonicaMunicipalCode-3.12.1055 - Autonomous and remotely controlled personal delivery vehicles or devices.

LINKS

- View recording of the 09/28/2021 Mobility, Traffic, and Parking Subcommittee meeting.
<https://culver-city.granicus.com/player/clip/2214?view_id=1&redirect=true>
- View NPR Marketplace Segment on Coco in Santa Monica.
<<https://www.marketplace.org/2023/06/27/robot-food-delivery-autonomy/>>
- View Meet Coco the Robot on YouTube.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh0jXznVMcM>>
- View Coco Vehicle Marketing Video
<<https://culvercity.admin.opencities.com/files/assets/public/v/1/images/public->

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff is seeking Subcommittee guidance on the following:

1. Is the City is interested in allowing this type of service?
2. If the Subcommittee is interested in allowing this type of service:
 - a. Is a trial period preferred or should staff proceed with permitting full operations?
 - b. Are there any specific requirements or concerns that should be addressed? For example, should the service be restricted to specific geographic areas?
 - c. Should staff agendize a concept presentation to the full City Council before proceeding with developing a set of permit conditions and identifying code changes that will be required?