



CITY OF MODESTO
COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT

DATE OF MEETING:
September 2, 2020

Date: August 13, 2020

TO: Economic Development Committee
Ted Brandvold, Chair
Tony Madrigal, Vice-Chair
Doug Ridenour, Sr., Member

THROUGH: Joseph P. Lopez, City Manager

FROM: Jaylen French, Director of Community and Economic Development

SUBJECT: Pilot program allowing the use of autonomous robots for delivery of goods in the City of Modesto

CONTACT: Marcus Tucker, Business Analyst (209) 577-9473; mtucker@modestogov.com

DESCRIPTION:

Consider approving the creation of a pilot program to allow the use of autonomous robots, also known as Personal Delivery Devices "PDD" in the City of Modesto, issuing a PDD Permit to Starship Technologies, Inc., and forwarding to Council for approval. (Funding Source: General Fund)

STRATEGIC PLAN ELEMENT:

The action supports the City Council 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Goal E, Drive Economic Vitality.

BACKGROUND:

Starship Technologies, a London based company founded in 2014, created and launched the use of an autonomous delivery robot also known as a Personal Delivery Device "PDD." These devices have travelled over 500,000 miles and completed more than 200,000 commercial deliveries, while encountering over 15 million people. This technology is currently being used in many cities in the United States such as: West Lafayette, Indiana, Redwood City, California, and Madison, Wisconsin. Internationally, these devices can be found making deliveries within the United Kingdom and Germany.

The PDD delivers groceries, restaurant take-out items and more. It can carry approximately three grocery bags worth of goods and weighs about 65 pounds without cargo. The PDD is autonomous, using nine on-board cameras to assist in its travels along sidewalks and going no more than four miles per hour.

Human controllers assist with navigation at street crossings and can remotely control when needed to ensure public safety and to protect the device. The PDDs travel throughout a five-

mile radius from their docking point. Customers can establish their delivery times, track their items while in transit on the mobile application at all times, and securely retrieve their items with their unique code that unlocks and opens the robot.

DISCUSSION:

Starship Technologies seeks to expand their pilot program in the United States to evolve the PDD technology and to expand their utility. Starship Technologies will work with Save Mart to bring goods, not including age restricted items, to residents located within the designated areas. Starship Technologies agrees to assume all liability for the use of the PDDs within the public right-of-way, specifically limited to sidewalks and streets.

The Permit shall be effective from the date specified on the official Permit and shall remain in effect as described therein. All of the terms and conditions for Starship Technologies to participate in this pilot program will be part of a permit issued to allow the use as noted above.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Other than receiving permitting fees, there is no fiscal impact to the City to participate in this pilot program. If successful, the program could ultimately have a positive fiscal impact on the City by increasing potential sales tax dollars from businesses that have been able to expand their delivery service through use of the PDDs.

Approved by:

Jaylen French, Director of CEDD

Joseph P. Lopez, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Terms and Conditions for Permit