

Miami eyes one-year pilot program for e-cargo bicycles in busiest areas

By GABRIEL POBLETE

Electric cargo bicycles have been touted as an alternative to traditional delivery that'll mitigate traffic and curb carbon emissions. With that in mind, they could soon be rolling into some of the City of Miami's busiest areas.

Commissioner Manolo Reyes, the current chair of the Downtown Development Agency, is sponsoring a resolution for a one-year e-cargo bicycle pilot program. The pilot program has the backing of the agency's board of directors.

While the resolution features on today's (4/9) agenda, Mr. Reyes said the item is to be deferred because the commission will be focusing on more pressing issues related to the city's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

DHL, the courier, parcel, and express mail service, has been testing its vehicles in Miami. Mr. Reyes' office is reaching out to

other carriers, such as Amazon and UPS, to see if they can adopt similar services in the area.

As per the legislation, the pilot program would be restricted to the Brickell and downtown areas, as well as Coral Way, from Brickell Avenue to Southwest 37th Avenue, the city limits.

As the city's delegate for this program, the Miami Parking Authority would monitor compliance with the program. The authority already oversees compliance of the city's electric scooter pilot program.

The e-cargo bikes would be limited to 20 miles an hour and could be used only to deliver goods, packages, and services. E-cargo bicycles are defined as "any device generally recognized as a bicycle though equipped with two front or two rear wheels," as well as two tandem wheels.

The bikes would be encouraged to park in loading zones when available, or otherwise, park in bicycle

parking areas on the sidewalk. The bicycles could not be parked so as to impede pedestrian access or vehicular traffic.

Mr. Reyes stressed the vehicles would help with congestion, saying that delivery trucks can halt the flow of traffic as they stop for a drop-off. He added that the bicycles would be safer than electric scooters. He has been in steadfast opposition to the city's electric scooter pilot.

E-cargo bicycle programs have already been rolled out in other parts of the country. UPS announced in 2018 it would roll out its fleet of e-cargo bicycles to serve downtown Seattle operating on sidewalks and in designated bike lanes. In December, New York City announced it would launch a six-month pilot program focused in parts of Manhattan. In a press release, it was noted that UPS, DHL and Amazon would be delivering via New York's e-cargo bicycle pilot.



Delivery company DHL has been testing its e-cargo bicycles in Miami.