

BANKING/ FINANCE

Amid Sales Drop, Harley-Davidson Wants to Teach More People to Ride

by Ivan Moreno

Harley-Davidson is placing a renewed emphasis on teaching people to ride as part of its efforts to attract more customers.

The Milwaukee-based company's decision to expand the number of dealerships with a Harley "Riding Academy" comes as the industry grapples with years of declining sales and an aging customer base.

The program launched in 2000 with about 50 locations and now 245 dealerships in the U.S. offer the three- or four-day course. The company says about a quarter of those launched since 2014.

Harley sold 124,777 new motorcycles through nine months in 2017, down from 135,581 during the same period the previous year, according to the company's most recent earnings report.

The Motorcycle Industry Council says the median age of motorcycle owners increased from 32 to 47 since 1990. About 46 percent of riders are over 50; only about 10 percent are 30-34.

Samantha Kay rode on the back of her father's motorcycle growing up, but when the 25-year-old took a class to ride for the first time she couldn't help being anxious.

"I think motorcycles inherently do scare a lot of people," said Kay, a Milwaukee woman who is one of 50,000 people nationwide who took a riding course at a Harley-Davidson dealership this year.

The training is one of the ways Harley is trying to attract a new generation of riders such as Kay amid big demographic shifts.

"Some of the aging baby boomers, which have been the guts of Harley-Davidson's purchasers, they're getting older and some of them are just getting out of the sport because they can't handle the motorcycle anymore," said Clyde Fessler, who retired from Harley-Davidson in 2002 after holding several executive positions over 25 years. He created what became the "Riding Academy."

He said the idea "is getting people comfortable on a motorcycle and getting them to feel safe and confident."

In addition to riders getting older, a slow economic recovery has made it harder for millennials to buy new motorcycles, said Jim Williams, vice president of the American Motorcyclist Association.

Among the newest models, a 2018 Softail Slim starts at \$15,899 and a 2018 Sportster Forty-Eight at \$11,299.

"The younger generations are buying plenty of motorcycles, they're just not new," Williams said.

But it's not all the millennials' fault, said Robert Pandya, who managed public relations for Indian Motorcycles and Victory Motorcycles. Pandya recently launched "Give A Shift," a volunteer group discussing ideas to promote motorcycling. One of their conclusions, he said, is the idea that "if mom rides, the kids will ride."

Currently, women are about 14 percent of the riding population, according to the Motorcycle Industry Council.

"The biggest possible opportunity in motorcycling is to invite more women to ride," he said.

That's not lost on Harley-Davidson. Among the ways Harley-Davidson is trying to reach younger riders is by having motorcycle role models such as Jessica Haggett, the founder of the "The Litas" all-women motorcycle club, be a voice for the company on social media. And the company is also focusing advertising efforts in male-dominated sports such as the X Games and UFC events popular with younger viewers.

"I think we have to work harder to gain share of mind with young adults, for example, in that they have other activities in their lives. They're on screens, they're connecting socially, they're involved in gaming, they're involved in other things," said Heather Malenshek, Harley-Davidson's vice president of marketing.

She said the easily customizable Sports Glide model that launched in November and the aggressive, performance-driven Fat Bob also have younger riders in mind. In all, the company plans to release 100 new motorcycles over the next 10 years. During that time, the company also wants to gain 2 million new riders.

Terri Meehan took plenty of motorcycle rides with friends as a passenger but has wanted to be in the driver's seat for a while. The 42-year-old took the Harley-Davidson riding course in October because she wanted to learn from "an expert who could teach right way versus someone who had learned bad habits."

The price of the class varies by dealership but it's generally about \$300. Students spend time in class learning about motorcycle safety and on ranges learning to ride. Meehan plans to buy a motorcycle soon.

"My son's a psychology major so he asked me if I was going through a midlife crisis, which is actually quite hilarious," said Meehan.

Kay's experience notwithstanding, another challenge for Harley-Davidson is motorcycling simply isn't a major part of people's upbringing like it was once, Malenshek said.

"If you think about baby boomers, they probably were brought up on a dirt bike or had an uncle or a neighbor or something who was riding around in a Harley-Davidson. That may not be the case today," she said.

She said the company's CEO, Matthew Levatich, is encouraging employees to engage people in conversations about motorcycling if someone happens to say, "Nice bike." Malenshek took that to heart during an interaction with someone at a gas station who complimented her on her motorcycle and told her he'd never thought about riding.

"And I said, 'I can get you hooked up with the riding academy!'"

Ivan Moreno reports for the Associated Press.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **Council Zoning Hearing** on **Wednesday, January 17, 2018, beginning at 6:00 PM** to establish a three-month extension to the existing moratorium on the application of the City of Doral Workforce Housing Program, codified in Section 74-886-893 of the Land Development Code. The City Council will consider this item for **FIRST READING**. This meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida 33166.**

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE No. 2018-04

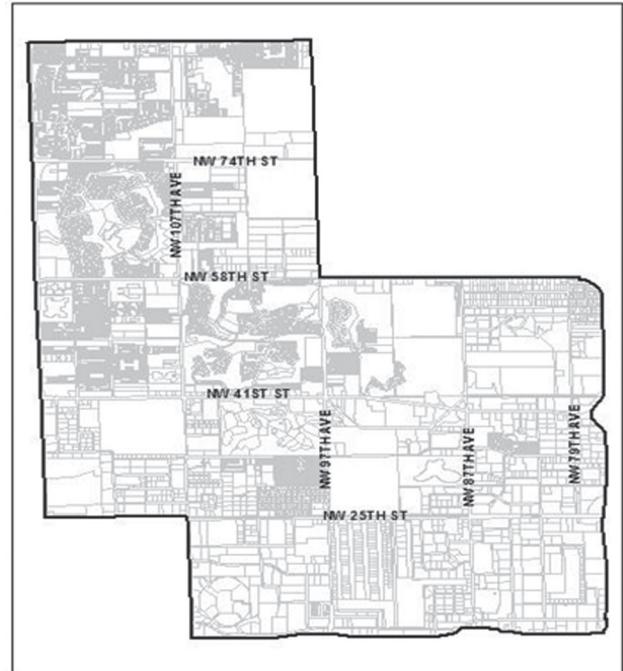
AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/DENYING A THREE-MONTH EXTENSION TO THE EXISTING MORATORIUM ON THE APPLICATION OF THE CITY OF DORAL WORKFORCE HOUSING PROGRAM, CODIFIED IN SECTION 74-886-893 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 18-01-DOR-09

APPLICANT: City of Doral

REQUEST: The City of Doral (The "Applicant") is requesting Mayor and City Council TO approve a three-month extension to the existing moratorium on the application of the City of Doral Workforce Housing Program, codified in Section 74-886-893 of the Land Development Code.

Location Map



Information relating to this request is on file and may be examined in the City of Doral, Planning and Zoning Department located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL 33166**. All persons are invited to appear at this meeting or be represented by an agent, or to express their views in writing addressed to the City Clerk, **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, FL 33166**. Maps and other data pertaining to these applications are available for public inspection during normal business hours in City Hall. Any persons wishing to speak at a public hearing should register with the City Clerk prior to that item being heard. Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

NOTE: If you are not able to communicate, or are not comfortable expressing yourself, in the English language, it is your responsibility to bring with you an English-speaking interpreter when conducting business at the City of Doral during the zoning application process up to, and including, appearance at a hearing. This person may be a friend, relative or someone else. A minor cannot serve as a valid interpreter. The City of Doral DOES NOT provide translation services during the zoning application process or during any quasi-judicial proceeding.

NOTA: Si usted no está en capacidad de comunicarse, o no se siente cómodo al expresarse en inglés, es de su responsabilidad traer un intérprete del idioma inglés cuando trate asuntos públicos o de negocios con la Ciudad de Doral durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación, incluyendo su comparecencia a una audiencia. Esta persona puede ser un amigo, familiar o alguien que le haga la traducción durante su comparecencia a la audiencia. Un menor de edad no puede ser intérprete. La Ciudad de Doral NO suministra servicio de traducción durante ningún procedimiento o durante el proceso de solicitudes de zonificación.

Connie Diaz, CMC

City Clerk
City of Doral

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