

Testimony on Behalf of the County Executive

Bill 36-21, Motor Vehicles and Traffic – E-Scooters – Operation Requirements and Registration

My name is Hannah Henn, Deputy Director in the Department of Transportation, and I am providing testimony on behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich. Bill 36-21 is an important step toward encouraging safe and responsible use of e-scooters in the County. The County Executive supports the proposed bill and its requirements that aim to protect low speed e-scooter riders and improve safety and accessibility for all people traveling on roads and sidewalks in the County.

When used properly and appropriately managed, micromobility devices such as e-scooters can expand the reach of our overall transit network and reduce the use of automobiles for short and medium length trips. MCDOT has an existing pilot program agreement with private companies for shared use scooters and bikes. The agreement includes requirements for parking, operating hours, and operator age. While this arrangement has generally been effective, improper parking of e-scooters is the dominant concern raised by the public about these vehicles. Proper parking is especially important to minimize potential obstacles for people with disabilities.

The County Executive supports the fact that Bill 36-21 further defines parking requirements that are the responsibility of rental companies and their riders. Additionally, the County Executive supports the inclusion of parking requirements for privately owned vehicles, as individual ownership is growing in popularity. Bill 36-21 should improve enforcement capabilities for existing provisions in agreements with rental fleets while ensuring that the safety and operating requirements also apply to privately-owned e-scooters.

At the County Executive's direction, MCDOT will focus on the working sessions to ensure that the final legislation is as effective as possible in supporting the enforcement of the parking guidelines. Possible solutions may include restructuring the agreement between the County and rental companies to impose fines levied on private companies or renters when scooters are improperly parked.

The Department has several technical comments and clarifications that can be addressed during committee work sessions on this legislation. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.