



## Howard County Office of Transportation

3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-0702

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[bgartner@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:bgartner@howardcountymd.gov)

FAX 410-313-1655

TDD 410-313-2323

**Date:** January 16, 2024

**To:** Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Chris Eatough, Planning Manager, Howard County Office of Transportation

**Subject:** Administration Testimony for Council Resolution xx-2024, Electric Scooter Sharing Permit Fee

Council Bill 3-2020 represents the enabling legislation for an electric scooter sharing permit process and fee, to be managed primarily by the Howard County Office of Transportation. Council Resolution 78-2020 established the one-year permit fee as \$10,000.

The Office of Transportation would like to reduce the permit fee from \$10,000 to \$2,000, as proposed by Council Resolution xx-2024.

Reducing the permit fee would decrease one of the barriers to permitting a qualified operations vendor for shared scooter operations. For the 2023/2024 operations year, no vendors applied for a scooter operations permit in Howard County. In follow up interviews with potential vendors, permit cost and concerns over profitability were stated as reasons. A reduced permit fee will increase the likelihood of receiving permit applications for the 2024/2025 operations year. Scooter operations are not subsidized by Howard County so the financial model for operations vendors is based on user revenue versus cost of operations.

The six month scooter operations pilot in 2022 provided valuable information on scooter operations in Howard County. Ridership was strong (over 3,600 trips in the peak month of June) and user feedback showed that scooters provided a valuable “last mile” solution to trips in and around Downtown Columbia. Some issues emerged regarding scooter parking which were addressed with updates to the permit terms and conditions such as:

- Requiring parking only in designated areas
- Requiring double sided kick stands
- Requiring on the ground service seven days a week

Details on the scooter permitting process including the terms and conditions, permitting schedule and report from the 2022 pilot can be found on the Office of Transportation website, here <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/transportation/bikeshare-shared-electric-scooters>

The Office of Transportation supports Council Resolution x-xxxx and recommends adoption by the County Council.