

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2024 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 2

Resolution No. 19 -2024

Introduced by: The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

A RESOLUTION adopting a permit fee for the Publicly Accessible Electric Scooter Sharing System.

Introduced and read first time Feb 5, 2024.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

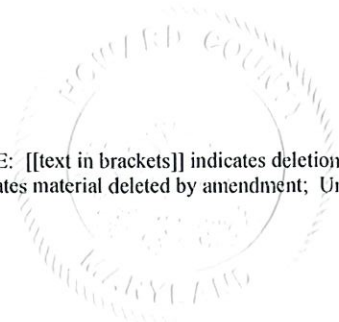
Read for a second time at a public hearing on Feb 20, 2024.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted , Adopted with amendments___, Failed___, Withdrawn___, by the County Council on Mar 4, 2024.

Certified By Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; Strike-out indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment



1 **WHEREAS**, Title 21, Subtitle 8 of the Howard County Code establishes a Publicly
2 Accessible Electric Scooter Sharing System Permit within the Columbia Planning Area; and

3
4 **WHEREAS**, Section 21.803 of the County Code provides that the amount of a permit fee
5 shall be set by Council Resolution; and

6
7 **WHEREAS**, the permit fee was first established by the passage of Council Resolution
8 No. 78-2020 and was subsequently adopted by Council Resolution No. 84-2021 at a rate of
9 \$10,000; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, the Office of Transportation is proposing to change the fee to \$2,000.

12
13 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the County Council of Howard County,
14 Maryland this 4 day of March, 2024, that the permit fee for a Publicly Accessible
15 Electric Scooter Sharing System Permit is \$2,000 per permit.

16
17 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the permit fee adopted by this Resolution shall
18 continue in effect until changed or repealed by subsequent resolution of the County Council.



Howard County Office of Transportation

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

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.



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FAX 410-313-1655

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Date: January 16, 2024

To: Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer

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

Subject: Administration Fiscal Impact for Council Resolution xx-2024, Electric Scooter Sharing Permit Fee

The proposed resolution reduces the shared electric scooter permitting fee from \$10,000 to \$2,000 for the 2024/2025 operating year. In 2022/2023 operating year, the permit fee was \$10,000, paid by one operator. In 2023/2024 the permit fee was set at \$10,000, but no operators applied for a permit. Compared to 2022/2023 operating year, the change in fee results in an \$8,000 reduction in revenue to the County. Compared to 2023/2024 operating year, the change in fee results in a \$2,000 increase in county revenue. These projected changes assume one permit operator in 2024/2025.

As in 2022/2023, the Office of Transportation intends to operate the 2024 scooter program with existing staff so there would be no increase in operating expenditures.

Office of the County Auditor
Auditor's Analysis

ADDENDUM
Council Resolution No. 19-2024

Introduced: February 5, 2024

Auditor: Diane Zagorski-Kelly

Other Comments:

We received additional information from the Office of Transportation regarding permit fees assessed by neighboring jurisdictions with existing scooter operations:

- University of MD, College Park: \$50 per scooter
- Arlington County: \$80 per scooter
- Washington DC: \$250 (two-year permit fee)
- City of Alexandria: \$10,000 (annual permit fee)¹
- Baltimore City: \$42,000 (annual permit fee, with a possibility of a one-year extension)²

According to the Office of Transportation, in Howard County the number of scooters per operator are expected to be between 100 and 200.

¹ https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/2024_alx_micromobility_permit_application.pdf

² https://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/2021%20Permit%20Application%20FINAL_0.pdf

**Office of the County Auditor
Auditor's Analysis**

Council Resolution No. 19-2024

Introduced: February 5, 2024

Auditors: Diane Zagorski-Kelly

Fiscal Impact:

The fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be estimated, as it is unknown if the fee being reduced from \$10,000 to \$2,000 will result in a vendor applying for and receiving a permit to operate a shared scooter program in the County.

The Planning Manager of the Department of Transportation (the Department) has indicated that this resolution's intent is to entice potential vendors to apply for a one-year scooter sharing program permit in Fiscal Year 2024, which could result in the County collecting up to two \$2,000 permit fees in its General Fund.

The Planning Manager indicated that the incremental operating costs of the shared scooter program would be \$500 per month for a subscription service to manage the program. This would result in maximum annual cost of \$6,000, which would exceed the potential permit revenues of the shared scooter program. However, the Planning Manager indicated this subscription may not be necessary every month of the operational period.

Purpose:

Council Resolution 19-2024 decreases the fee for a Publicly Accessible Electric Scooter Sharing System Permit from \$10,000 to \$2,000.

Other Comments:

The application process for the next operational period of May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025 began on February 1, 2024. The Department will communicate to potential applicants that permit fees for the upcoming operational period are pending the result of Council Resolution 19-2024.

The last issued permit for the shared scooter program ran from June 3, 2022 through November 20, 2022. Of the \$10,000 paid for that permit, \$2,000 was provided as a stipend for the Columbia Association. The Department stated if Council Resolution 19-2024 passes, this stipend will be discontinued.

Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Anne Arundel County, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia currently offer publicly accessible scooter sharing programs through the use of approximately eight active vendors in the region.