



BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 557

February 20, 2020

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 557 – Motor and Electric Scooter Sharing Companies – Nonvisual Access

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports with amendment** House Bill (HB) 557.

The City of Baltimore has created a dockless vehicle permit program for use of its public right of way by companies that rent electric scooters and bicycles on a short-term basis. Our program includes regulations to ensure that our public sidewalks do not become hazards for those with visual impairments. However, like any other rules regulating public safety and the right of way, we recognize that these regulations will not always be adhered to.

As such, the BCA agrees with the language in HB 557 imposing a requirement on companies that rent such vehicles to provide a tactile phone number on their devices and to ensure the accessibility of their websites and mobile phone apps for use by those with visual impairments to register complaints and communicate with the companies.

The BCA does have two suggested operational amendments:

1. The BCA notes that the short-term rental of vehicles other than automobiles involves quickly evolving technology with regard to vehicle design. Accordingly, the BCA recommends that the requirements within the bill be amended to be "applicable to any small shared vehicles under 1 ton that are permitted by local jurisdictions to be rented for use in the public right of way."
2. While impacted companies will undoubtedly be able to achieve compliance without significant long-term cost, the BCA suggests delaying the effective date of the bill until January 1, 2021 to provide a reasonable timetable to do so.

The BCA respectfully requests a **favorable with amendments** report on HB 557.