September 17, 2018

Ms. Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Shared Mobility Pilot Program

Dear Chair Cristol,

I am writing to express the view of the Transportation Commission regarding the proposed Shared Mobility Pilot Program.

The Transportation Commission, by a vote of 10-1 recommends that the County Board enact the pilot program as proposed by staff EXCEPT without the hard limit of 350 devices per provider per mode.

The Commission heard this item at its September 5th meeting. The commission heard a presentation from staff. There was one public speaker, Jim Hurysz, who expressed concern that scooter riders are a threat to public safety.

Overall, the commission supports the pilot program and finds that shared mobility solutions such as “dockless” bicycles, e-bikes, and e-scooters have the potential to significantly contribute to sustainable mobility for Arlington citizens. Particularly, they have great potential for providing a first mile / last mile solution for transit and also for replacing cars for short trips.

Given the pilot’s requirements that mobility providers must justify fleet size increases beyond 200 vehicles and that they are only allowed to increase in 50 vehicle increments, the commission felt that the hard limit of 350 vehicles was unnecessary, overly burdensome and likely to tie the county’s hands in the event that one or two companies end up dominating the market rather than the 5+ companies that the County is currently expecting to apply.

Given that this particular market depends on network effects to function, these providers are likely to be especially sensitive to fleet size caps and overly-restrictive caps are likely to limit the usefulness of the data we get. If we limit the fleet size so much that customers are unlikely to find a vehicle nearby when they want to take a trip, they won’t find the service useful enough to stay an active member and we won’t truly learn how these providers would fit into Arlington’s buffet of mobility choices.

The commission also discussed the proposed fees, the proposed speed limits and the proposed data-sharing requirements.
Present and voting in favor were commissioners Bushue, Warren, Calkins, Lantelme, Wadsworth, Yarie, Brose, Slatt, Price, and Hester. Commissioner Clement voted against the proposal as she feels that Arlington’s street infrastructure is insufficient to safely accommodate e-scooters.

I am happy to answer any questions at 571-482-8454 or chris@dodgersden.com.

Best,

Christopher Slatt, Chairman