GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
District Department of Transportation

Public Hearing on
B26-0244, the "Micromobility Fire Safety Standards Act of 2025"
B26-0245, the "Personal Delivery Device Weight Limit Amendment Act of 2025"
and
B26-0246, the "Automated Curbside Management System Amendment Act of 2025"

Testimony of
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Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
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John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Good morning, Committee Chairperson Allen members of the Committee, staff, and District residents. My name is Sharon Kershbaum, Director of the Department of Transportation, commonly referred to as DDOT. I am here today to present testimony on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser regarding Bill 26-0244, the "Micromobility Fire Safety Standards Act of 2025"; Bill 26-0245, the "Personal Delivery Device Weight Limit Amendment Act of 2025"; and Bill 26-0246, the "Automated Curbside Management System Amendment Act of 2025."

Bill 26-0244, the "Micromobility Fire Safety Standards Act of 2025"

This bill would require electric bicycles, electric mobility devices, and traction batteries manufactured, distributed, sold, or offered for lease or for rent in the District to meet safety standards. The bill also would require the certification mark from a certification body displayed visibly on the equipment, device or product, verifying conformity to these standards.

Electric bikes, electric scooters, and other electric micromobility devices offer residents and visitors a convenient alternative to personal vehicles and contribute significantly to the District's multimodal transportation network. As these devices increase in popularity, DDOT recognizes the importance of user safety and abating incidents of batteries and devices experiencing thermal runaway.

All DDOT-permitted shared fleet devices are already tested and certified to UL 2849, UL 2272, and UL 2271, and meet the testing and certification requirements the bill establishes. DDOT also already requires certification from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), as referred to in the bill as "ISO/IEC 17065". Under DDOT's permitted operator agreement, we require certification of their equipment, and we hold physical certificates from the operators.

Additionally, we believe the bill positively promotes the adoption of uniform safety standards among unpermitted operators and businesses who manufacturer, distribute, sell, lease, and rent micromobility and traction batteries in the District, and aligns their products with industry best practices.

DDOT encourages the Council to consider minor revisions to the bill's requirements:

1) We recommend that the bill is revised to allow ion batteries, micromobility devices, and parts to have certification by an ISO/IEC 17065-certified lab, as an alternative option to a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) within the "Certification Body" definition; and
2) We recommend that documentation showing certification may be provided to DDOT by permitted operators and Capital Bikeshare, as an

alternative to displaying the certification mark visibly on the exterior of the equipment.

Like NRTLs, ISO certified labs provide a comprehensive review to ensure the safety and reliability of micromobility products. NRTLs are already ISO/IEC 17065 accredited and recognized by OSHA. New York City requires micromobility devices and batteries receive either ISO/IEC 17065 or NRTL certification. We have not identified any jurisdictions that require both NRTL and ISO/IEC from a certification body, and we believe requiring both may be burdensome to our shared fleet device operators, without offering significantly higher safety assurances.

Next, while our operators' equipment and devices have certification, these devices do not specifically have a physical certification mark that is visible and affixed to the equipment. We recognize the importance in promoting transparency and assurances that equipment meets the prescribed certification standards, and believe the documentation provided to DDOT is sufficient to demonstrate product conformity.

Bill 26-0245, the "Personal Delivery Device Weight Limit Amendment Act of 2025"

This bill would raise the weight limit for personal delivery devices, otherwise known as sidewalk robots or PDDs, from 90 pounds to 275 pounds. The

weight limit is currently set at 250 pounds per emergency and temporary legislation that will expire May 14, 2026.

DDOT currently has one permitted operator, Kiwibot, whose PDDs are well under the 90-pound weight limit. Kiwibot is permitted to operate in and around the Howard University and George Washington University campuses, and they have also partnered with DDOT to conduct successful sign inventory and sidewalk condition assessment pilots.

The emergency weight limit change expanded the potential applicant pool for PDD permits, which DDOT was not anticipating when it originally opened the application. The permit program is currently on pause while we determine how to account for potentially larger devices and overlapping service areas between operators.

We are also investigating how our current permittee performs and, particularly, how the PDDs interact with pedestrians and wheelchair users. DDOT is interested in the promise of fewer delivery vehicles on our roadways that these devices bring, but our agency's top priority is always the safety of vulnerable roadway users. It is critical for DDOT to see that these devices are not creating a new hazard while addressing another, especially before permitting heavier, larger devices.

It is also important for DDOT to create sound rules and regulations around these devices based on actual observed operations. Our agency should also have the authority moving forward to regulate the size and weight of these devices so we can make improvements and adjustments as the industry and program develop over time. DDOT is currently in the process of establishing rules for PDD operations, and we would like to continue to work with the Council to share our goals for the program, including maintaining safety and order on routes primarily used by pedestrians, our most vulnerable roadway users.

Bill 26-0246, the "Automated Curbside Management System Amendment Act of 2025"

This bill would require that DDOT establish an Automated Curbside Management System that uses cameras, sensors, or other technology to automatically bill drivers for their time spent at the curb, automatically identify parking violations, and issue fines for unlawful use of curbside space. This bill would also require that DDOT establish within this system a Smart Loading Zones Program that manages curbside space reserved for picking up and dropping off passengers or loading and unloading goods with the use of an automated payment system. Regulations would be required for the Smart Loading Zones program no later than 90 days after the effective date of this bill, and the program would be

required to begin operating no later than six months after the effective date of this bill.

Additionally, the bill would require that DDOT, for any procurement related to implementation of the bill, prioritize applicants whose automated curbside management technology can provide additional functionality, such as automated lane enforcement, automated enforcement of moving violations, and a dynamic pricing system that adjusts parking rates based on demand.

For residents and visitors in the District, an automated curbside management program would be a significant change. Today, to occupy the curbside, a driver would need to actively prepay for their time using an app on their phone, by paying the meter, or, in the case of commercial loading, through a permit. The automated program would either passively bill users in real-time or send invoices after-the-fact. A program modification of this capacity would require adequate time to develop, test, deploy, refine, and introduce to consumers and a significant customer education effort.

DDOT has already identified the potential benefits of automated curbside management and has been actively researching to assess how this technology would be most appropriate to implement in the District. In an RFI that was issued in September of 2024, DDOT gathered information from the automated curb management industry. The responses indicate that it would be most beneficial if

DDOT were given the authority to enter a revenue sharing agreement, such as a franchise agreement that could provide the selected contractor with a share of revenue from the collected fees in the automated curbside managed zones. The current language in the bill would not give our agency that authority.

Additionally, DDOT is concerned that the procurement related requirements of this legislation in its current form are overly prescriptive, especially given that DDOT may not have the operating budget to set aside the necessary funds that would allow for DDOT to carry out the required procurement process. DDOT is also concerned about the mandated timelines for issuing regulations and operationalizing the program. Ninety days would not provide enough time to issue regulations, and the six-month deadline given to begin operating the program is likely infeasible given that DDOT does not have control over the procurement process, which is one of the major barriers to operationalizing a program quickly.

Technology in this industry is evolving rapidly, and DDOT would appreciate the opportunity to plan for how to best implement significant changes to curbside management in the District.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am available to answer any questions that you may have.