

FAQs: Shared Mobility Devices in Arlington

October 2018

Arlington has developed a 9-month demonstration project, starting in October 2018, to provide structure to the operation and use of Shared Mobility Devices (SMDs) within the County and to evaluate their impacts. SMDs are pedal bikes, electric-assist bikes (e-bikes), and electric-assist scooters (e-scooters) that do not require a station.

Email mobility@arlingtonva.us to provide feedback during this demonstration project, including ideas and opinions on the direction the County should take with future regulations.

General Questions

Q: Who owns the SMDs (i.e. scooters and dockless bikes)?

These devices belong to private companies.

Q: Are these SMDs legal in Arlington?

Until the development of the pilot program, there were no regulations in place to prohibit the operation and use of these devices in Arlington. With the approved pilot program, County staff can regulate the number of devices, their top speeds, and other operational elements.

Q: Are these scooters and bikes part of Capital Bikeshare?

No. The SMDs are provided by private entities separate from the County-owned Capital Bikeshare system. Unlike SMDs, which can be parked nearly anywhere with respect to other sidewalk and street users, Capital Bikeshare bikes must be docked at a Capital Bikeshare station at the end of one's trip.

Q: What is the top speed of SMDs?

Before the pilot program the top speed of e-scooters was 15 mph and e-bikes was 20 mph. The pilot requires that speeds be limited to 10 mph for e-scooters and 15 mph for e-bikes.

Q: How many SMDs will come to Arlington?

With the launch of the pilot in October 2018, operators that the County permits are allowed an initial fleet size of 350 devices per mode (i.e. pedal bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters). If an operator is able to demonstrate sufficient demand for their devices (i.e. an average of 3+ trips/device/day over a calendar month) and parking compliance, they may petition the County for an additional 50 devices per month up to 750 devices per mode during the pilot.

Similarly, if these devices achieve less than 2 trips/device/day, the County will require the operator to reduce its fleet size by 50 devices per month. At this point, it is unclear how many companies will apply to operate in Arlington. Presently there are four companies operating in the District of Columbia.

Q: What can I do if an SMD is left on my property and I want it removed? How about if an SMD is left blocking a sidewalk?

If you are capable of moving the mis-parked SMD to a proper location, you may do so. The bikes and e-scooters are lightweight and relatively easy to move.

Or you may call the company to request they remove it. The company name and contact information is on the SMD. They are required by the permit to remove the SMD within 2 hours of a report.

Using These Devices

Q: If I want to try one of the SMDs, how do I do it?

These devices are accessed using company-specific apps. Download the app onto your smartphone, complete the registration and payment information process, and the app will provide you access to that company's devices.

Q: Where should I park the SMD at the end of my trip?

Be considerate every time you park an SMD by not obstructing pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Some SMD companies may enforce penalties on users that consistently park devices in improper ways, including banning users from devices entirely.

Some specific parking tips include:

- Do not block travel lanes
- Do not block driveways
- Do not block fire hydrants
- Do not block walkways
- Do not block wheelchair ramps
- Do not block pedestrian call buttons
- Do not block bus stops
- Do not block building entrances, including near ramp or walkway railings and ADA door buttons

Additionally, do not park on private property unless the SMD company specifically allows it at a certain location.

Q: Where can I ride SMDs?

E-scooters are allowed to be ridden on streets, but not on sidewalks or trails.

E-bikes are allowed to be ridden on streets and sidewalks, but not on trails.

Pedal bikes are allowed to be ridden on streets, sidewalks, and trails.

Q: Do pedal bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters have different traffic laws?

Pedal bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters must abide by the same laws as motor vehicles in terms of obeying posted traffic regulations, signs and signals.

Q: Can I ride from Arlington into neighboring municipalities or vice versa?

Possibly. Check the company's mobile app to determine where they offer service before you start your trip.

Q: Do I have to wear a helmet when riding an SMD?

County Code requires those 14 years of age and younger to wear a helmet when operating a bicycle. However, several SMD operators require their users to wear helmets when operating their devices. Check with each company's requirements before beginning your trip.

If you do not own a helmet and would like one, they are generally available for purchase at any bike shop and online. Several SMD operators also provide free or low-cost helmets to users that request them. Additionally, Arlington County Commuter Stores sell Capital Bikeshare-branded helmets.