

# Dockless Vehicle Program: 6-Month Permit Update

July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) issues and manages dockless vehicle for-hire permits under which e-scooters and bikes are made available for rent from the public right-of-way. Permits were awarded on July 1, 2021, after an 11-month extension of previous permits under the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Following a competitive application process, Lime, Link, and Spin were awarded permits and must follow BCDOT's Rules and Regulations. The following is a summary and cursory evaluation of the 6 six months under the new permits.

For more information, visit: <https://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/bike-baltimore/dockless-vehicles>

## 2021 Permit Changes

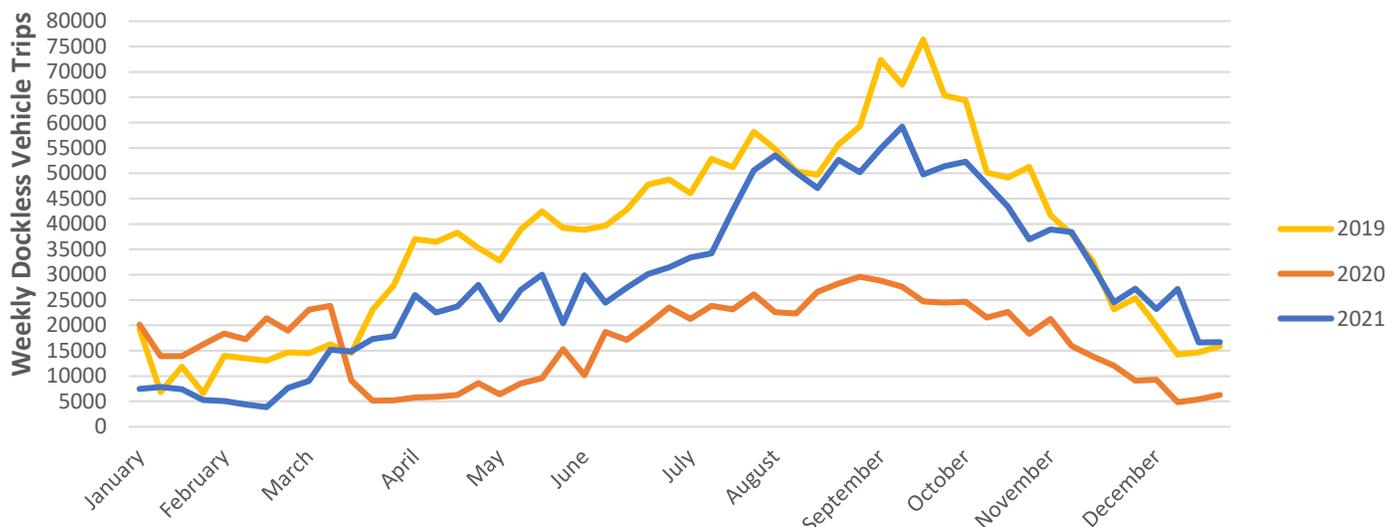
BCDOT updates the permit Rules and Regulations annually based on feedback from the Baltimore City community and industry developments. Below are the most impactful changes, which took effect on July 1, 2021.

- **Vehicle Standards** – BCDOT set a minimum tire size of 9 inches since larger wheels are shown to decrease the likelihood of a crash when a rider hits a pothole or uneven surface. A maximum weight limit of 75 pounds was established to reduce the severity of potential crashes since mass and speed are the main factors that make a crash more severe.
- **Deployment** – Permit holders have additional rules to follow when placing their vehicles for rent such as using the designated parking corrals and leaving vehicles parked for no more than 5 days.
- **Customer Service** – BCDOT now audits several customer service requirements, such as apps meeting Website Content Accessibility Guidelines so that people with disabilities can use them. This year, BCDOT also developed a process for monitoring responsiveness to requests (how quickly reported vehicles are retrieved).
- **Education** – Riders who log in for their first ride are now required to pass a quiz before renting a vehicle to ensure that new riders know the basic operation and parking laws.

## Program Data and Trends

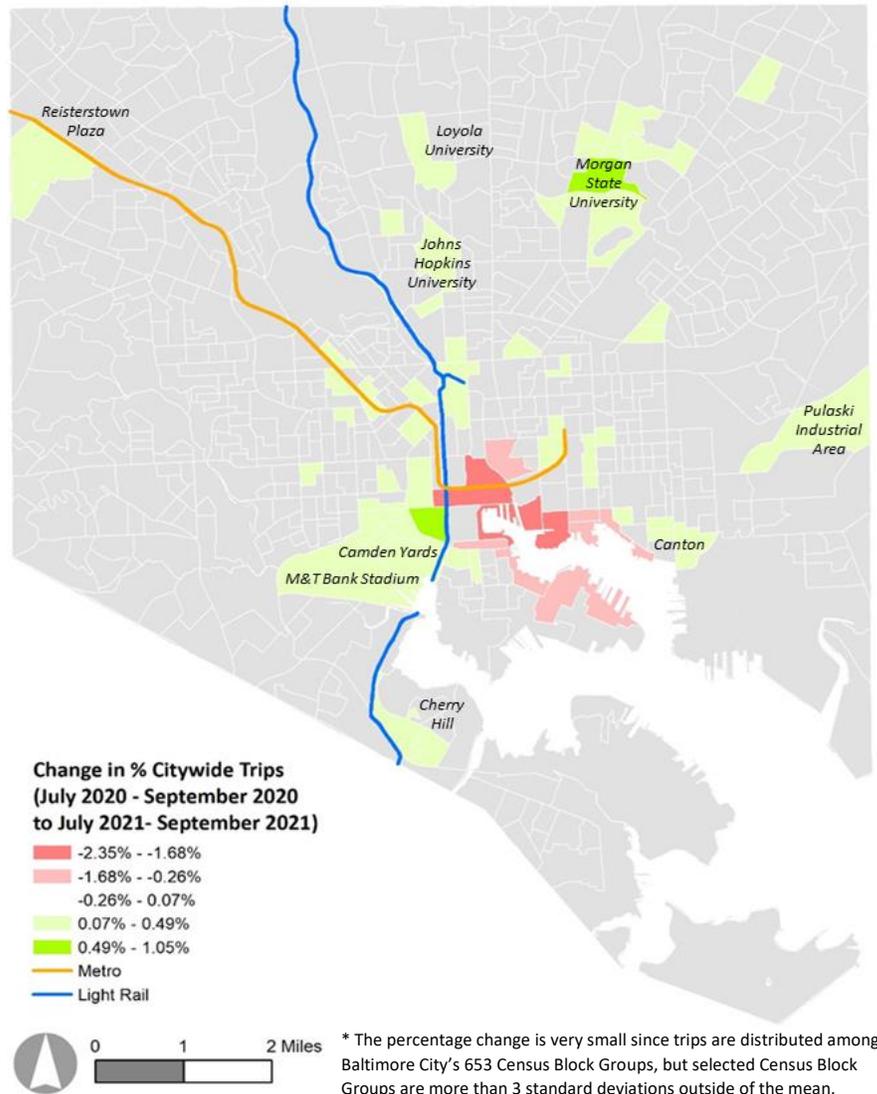
Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, transportation patterns have shifted tremendously. Key metrics for monitoring the Dockless Vehicle Program's success include the number of trips and how they are dispersed across Baltimore City.

Starting in spring 2021, dockless vehicle trip volume recovered significantly from the 55% decrease in 2020 (compared to pre-pandemic ridership); in the second six months of 2021, over 1 million trips were taken on dockless vehicles. Trips appear to be leveling out in the winter and are on track to exceed winter ridership from previous years. This is an indication of dedicated and steady ridership even in suboptimal conditions. Since the new permit launched on July 1, an average of 2,940 vehicles were deployed daily, and 2.1 trips were taken per vehicle per day as of December 15.

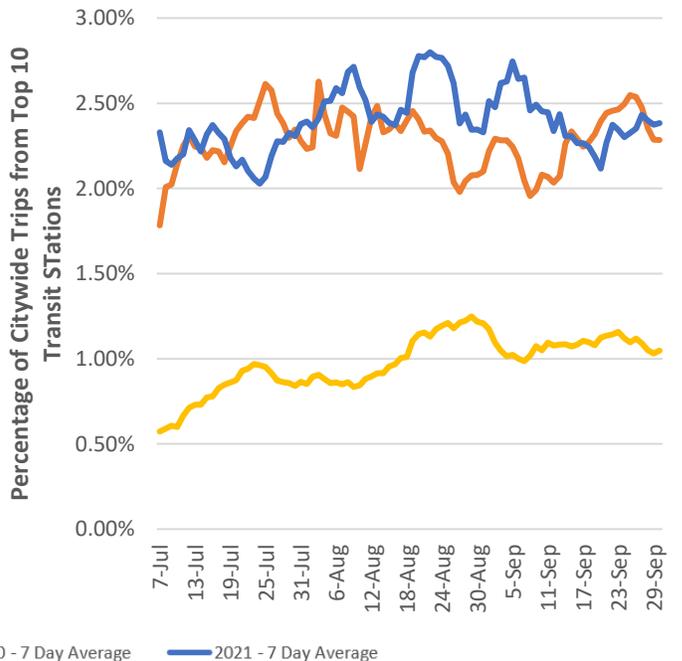
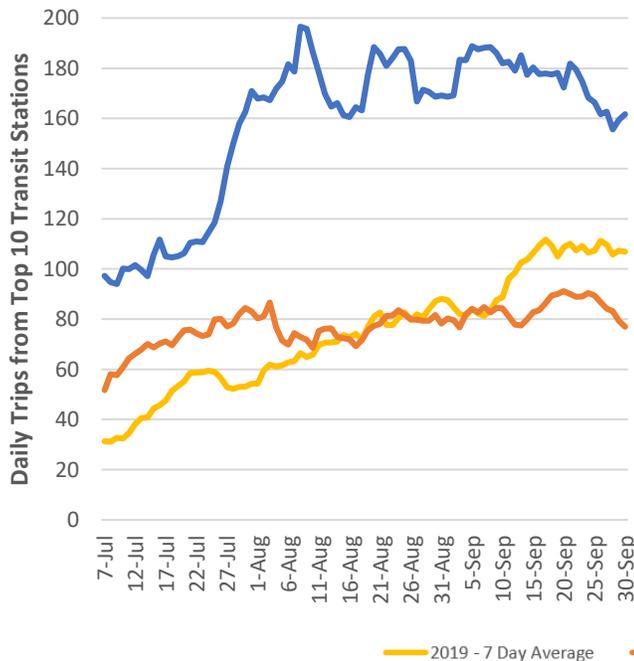


When looking at where trips occurred in 2021, there is a continuation of trends that started in 2020—a smaller share of trips are occurring downtown. Many of the areas that saw an increased share of trips coincide with re-openings after initial COVID-19 shutdowns: universities and the stadium area. The time of day that trips happen is also shifting back to the rush-hour periods (note that rush hour trip patterns disappeared in 2020).

There is also a continued increase in trips along the transit corridors of the Light Rail, Metro, and North Avenue, where the North Avenue Rising project is nearing completion. The increased share of trips to transit stations is also a continued trend from 2020. The graphs below show the share of trips and total trips to the top 10 transit stations (by trip origins) during the summer months from 2019-2021. The percentage of citywide trips increased substantially in 2020 and remained at that level in 2021, even when the number of citywide trips increased. This shows consistent ridership from people presumably using the vehicles to link with transit trips. BCDOT is working with MDOT MTA to support this option, with corrals and outreach near stations.



\* The percentage change is very small since trips are distributed among Baltimore City's 653 Census Block Groups, but selected Census Block Groups are more than 3 standard deviations outside of the mean.



## **BCDOT Support and Expenditures**

*BCDOT's support of the Dockless Program is directly funded through company permitting fees—the following are highlights from the past 6 months.*

### **Program Management and Evaluation**

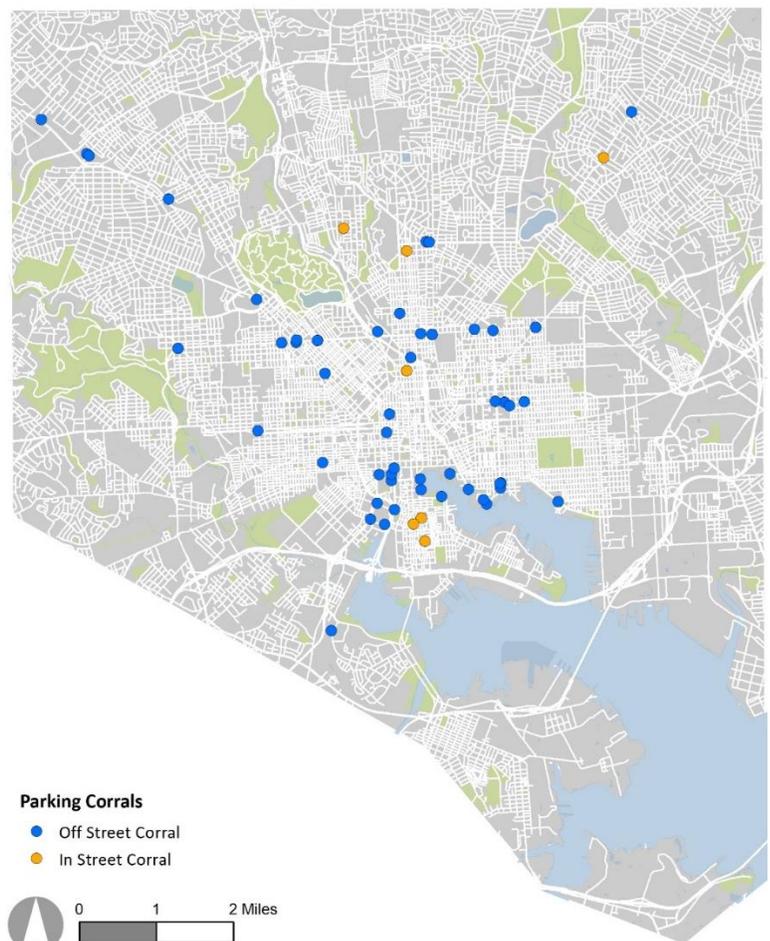
- **Compliance Monitoring:** BCDOT monitors permit holder compliance through a data dashboard and consultant help; reports are sent twice monthly to the operators to ensure collective goals are met. Monitored metrics include vehicle deployment to equitably serve the city and geo-fence updates in the smartphone apps. Monthly vehicle maintenance and parking inspections also ensure maintenance, upkeep, and proper parking as well as a way to test response time for vehicle retrieval or repositioning. Each month, BCDOT performs checks in a different location in the city. Permit holders averaged 95% compliance during the first 6 months of the permit. *Fees allocated to consultant help and data dashboard: \$120,000*
- **Vandalism Intervention:** BCDOT has partnered with the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) to develop a restorative response to increased vandalism since 2020. By working with MONSE, vandalism interventions with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) will be channeled through the Department of Juvenile Services to allow anyone connected to hacking to go through mediation and community conferencing rather than the criminal justice system. *Fees allocated to vandalism intervention: \$10,000*
- **Policy Updates:** BCDOT has started the process of updating the Rules and Regulations for the 2022 permit. Adjustments may reflect lessons from data and compliance. Additional steps include releasing a rider survey in early 2022 and releasing proposed changes in April 2022 for a 30-day public comment period.

### **Infrastructure**

- **Scooter and Bike Parking Corrals:** To increase courteous parking, BCDOT is installing low-cost scooter and bike parking corrals. Locations are selected based on transit connections, efforts to reduce vandalism, and equity zone locations with strong ridership. *See map of locations to right.*
- **Bike Facility Maintenance:** Bike facilities are the safest place to ride a scooter, but new riders and vehicular differences mean scooters can be more at risk for maintenance issues. BCDOT is working with the Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Commission (MBAC) to pick two intersections to be upgraded for safety along frequently traveled corridors. *Fees allocated to infrastructure: \$20,000*

### **Education & Outreach**

- **Event support:** BCDOT and permit holders are working to support events and community needs. For large events, temporary parking and sweeps are now required. BCDOT is developing outreach to communities, employers, and event organizers to make riding a dockless vehicle easier. PSA ad placements are also being contracted to air information about sharing the road. *Fees allocated to outreach: \$18,000*



## **Vendor Updates**

*Three operators are active in Baltimore City: Lime, Link, and Spin. The companies have adjusted operations to meet challenges and are gearing up for spring! Check out the latest projects shared by permit holders below.*



We are excited to have one of the largest fleets in Baltimore, serving

more residents and visitors with 1,700 e-scooters throughout the city. Our new S-100 7th Edition provides a better rider experience and additional safety features like a double kickstand to prevent tip overs.

In August 2020, we launched our Preferred Parking Spot program, which incentivizes safe, acceptable parking throughout Baltimore. Since program launch, we have increased the number of preferred parking spots in Baltimore, providing more opportunities for monetary incentives to help reduce sidewalk clutter and improve ADA accessibility.

We are also proud to announce our investments in Baltimore through:

- Our Everyday Heroes Program, which provided discounted rides to essential healthcare workers. To date, we have given thousands of rides in Baltimore;
- Exceeding 25 monthly Spin Access user signups, our equity program that provides discounted rides to low-income Baltimore residents; and
- Devoting staff resources to attend and supply events such as Bikemore, Highlandtown Artwalk, and NFL games.



In July 2021, Superpedestrian launched its LINK shared scooter service in Baltimore. LINK has participated in events such as

Lake 2 Lake Play Day and the Mayor's Christmas Parade and partnered with Arc Baltimore and Baltimore Womxn in Tech, distributing helmets and providing safe riding instruction.

To support our operations in Baltimore, we've hired an entire W-2 workforce, including a full-time Community Engagement and Marketing Lead dedicated to reaching local communities.

In mid-December, LINK introduced the first of our brand-new seated scooter fleet, which traveled 1,000 miles before January 1st. Since our launch, riders in Baltimore have traveled more than 6.5 million miles using our stand-up scooters.

Since their introduction, Baltimore riders have ended at least 1% of all rides in incentivized parking zones, earning discounts on trips, and they continue to use preferred parking zones that do not provide incentives.

LINK continues to expand access to our shared scooter fleet throughout Baltimore with our LINK Up equity program and regular deployments in all areas of the City.

### **Did you know that there are open and public Dockless Vehicle meetings?**

The Dockless Vehicle Committee meets Quarterly to review data, report issues, and discuss ongoing improvements to the program. The committee meets quarterly; upcoming meeting dates are April 13, July 13, and October 12, all at 10:00 a.m. via Teams teleconference.

**For more information about the BCDOT Dockless Vehicle program meetings, please visit:**

<https://transportation.baltimorecity.gov/dockless-vehicle-committee>

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