

# HAVRE DE GRACE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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February 28, 2020

Re: HB 217

Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chairman  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Barve:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to speak before the Environment and Transportation Committee on Friday, February 21, 2020 regarding House Bill 217 which would allow low-speed electric vehicles owned and operated only by the City of Havre de Grace to operate on roadways within the City without registration.

From a public safety aspect the Havre de Grace Police Department is in full support of the low-speed electric vehicle shuttle services. The implementation of an electric shuttle service will assist the Havre de Grace Police Department in the overall safety plan for the more than 74 annual special events the City either sponsors or approves, as well as the burgeoning tourism activity, and in areas that see large volumes of pedestrians who are sightseeing, shopping or enjoying our City.

During those activities it is the norm to have the City experience large crowds throughout the whole downtown area, in our parks and along the water front. For example, during our July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Celebrations, folks from both Harford and Cecil County take advantage of the family activities to include concerts in our parks, carnival in our yacht basin, fireworks at the lighthouse or enjoy the block party downtown in our business district. This event alone brings in anywhere between twenty-five thousand (25,000) to thirty thousand (30,000) people. It is essentially Harford County's 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.

Another example of heavy pedestrian foot traffic is during our "First Friday" event which takes place every first Friday of each month between the months of April through October. This event is a festival located downtown with street closures and includes retailers, artisans, food vendors, musicians, street performers, a children's play zone, and much more. Each month there are conservatively five thousand (5,000) people from all over the county and surrounding areas to include Baltimore and Philadelphia who attend.

I illustrated just two of the many events to demonstrate the pressing need for the electric shuttle. The shuttle services will reduce the conflict we currently encounter between large numbers of vehicles and persons on foot during the previously mentioned activities. Fewer vehicles operating at the same time and in the same locations as people walking will make it much safer for pedestrians.

The electric shuttle service will only be operated in areas which are clearly marked as designated routes thus promoting overall safety for the general public. It allows for safe, direct shuttle transportation from designated outlying parking facilities to the City's downtown business district, and regulated event location.

The electric shuttle service will reduce the chance of motor vehicle crashes since fewer vehicles will be operating at one time in the same location as pedestrians. Frequently, people coming into our city to attend events or shop will drive around traffic control devices such as barricades or traffic cones and even patrol vehicles because they become distracted while driving due to the traffic congestion. This has caused accidents and close calls with drivers entering streets that are closed and crowded with folks enjoy events. The shuttle will alleviate both parking and congestion issues thus allowing for better, more effective traffic direction and control.

It will also assist persons of all abilities to travel uninhibited within the city during those times. Which again, helps to alleviate parking issues.

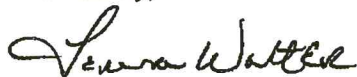
The electric shuttles will be equipped with all standard safety mechanisms and available technology, and the operators will be properly trained to ensure the safest service is available and provided.

Finally, the electric shuttle service will reduce vehicle emissions and improve the air quality from idling vehicle that may be parked or traversing in the immediate area of those events.

The City of Havre de Grace is eager to implement an electric shuttle service to transport visitors and residents around the City in an environmentally responsible manner. As Chief of Police for the City of Havre de Grace I absolutely support the electric shuttle service not only for the positive eco-friendly advantages but from a public safety standpoint. Anytime we can improve our overall public safety operation plan that makes it safer for pedestrians and drivers PLUS help our environment at the same time, is a success for everyone.

Sir, I respectfully asks for the support from your committee for House Bill 217.

Sincerely,



Teresa Walter  
Chief of Police

Cc: Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, Chairman Motor Vehicle and Transportation Committee  
Delegate Mary Ann Lisanti, District 34 Harford County  
Delegate Steve Johnson, District 34 Harford County