

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 17-1125-S4
Comments for Public Posting: I respectfully submit for the Council's file the attached August 5 email sent to LADOT. I do so in the hope it may prove useful in evaluating the efficacy and impact of the Dockless Mobility pilot program.

Dear LADOT:

I am writing you concerning problems I've encountered in helping you enforce the rules governing your Dockless Mobility ("scooter") Program.

1. Naughty Operators

I've witnessed employees of Dockless Mobility Operators dropping off scooters in nice rows at red curbs throughout the City. This, as you know, is just wrong. Parking at red curbs is prohibited under the Program rules, which state: "Vehicles shall not be parked in the landscape/furniture zone adjacent to or within...red curb zones." While I'm no expert on landscape/furniture zones, I can identify red curbs with my eyes closed (which accounts for a raft of parking citations in my glove box).

I've tried doing my civic duty by dialing the phone numbers the Operators are required to print on the scooters, anticipating immediate connection to Ms. Lime or Colonel Mustard. Instead, I've found myself strapped to the familiar menu rack, on which satisfaction is not an offered option. On those occasions when something with the vocal characteristics of a human being comes on the line, I am either unable to communicate due to my unfamiliarity with international dockless mobility language or I'm immediately disconnected.

Going to the bottom line, DOT, I strongly urge you to test these Operator-provided reporting systems on a regular basis, and to record your success in reaching someone. You might also have a sundial handy so you can track the time required to reach that someone. After several such trial runs, my own conclusion is that it is absurd to rely upon a reporting system that no citizen other than one pinned beneath a scooter would take the time to employ, particularly if he is within five years of actuarial death..

2. "I'm Pretty Sure It's..."

I have found it maddeningly difficult to use the City's 311 number to report illegally parked or abandoned scooters. First, the automated system inevitably routes me through menus (there they are again) that lead to individuals who have no idea where responsibility lies for such reports. If they believe they do know, they are inevitably wrong, and I find myself in Let-Me-Transfer-You Hell. Many of those with whom I've spoken seemed to believe that Traffic Enforcement had the ball. Others identified you, DOT, as the scooter-removal Wizard, but while I have great respect for your powers, when I was transferred behind the curtain, I was sorely disappointed..

Given these experiences, I am not surprised by reports that you have received only a handful of complaints during a period in which there have been more than a million uses of these devices.

3. The Mind-Your-Body Problem

I don't want to keep you, DOT, so I'll just lay it out: How, exactly, does one report and effect the apprehension of someone who's whizzing past him at 12MPH on the Hollywood Walk of Fame? Does he call the LAPD and help their sketch artist come up with a profile for the Post Office wall, assuming you can find a Post Office? Does he take a picture and post it on ScooterScofflawchan? Or--and this is my preferred solution-- does he just string a wire across the sidewalk and let Nature take her course?

In sum, you've got some problems with this program, DOTty, and I feel compelled to warn you that I'm not going to be around forever to help you out.

Your friend,

Mark Steinberg