



September 25, 2020

Re: Public comment for the Committee on Pedestrian Traffic Safety meeting on October 1, 2020

Good afternoon.

My name is Jeremy Glover, and I'm an associate at the Metropolitan Planning Council, an 85-year-old nonprofit urban planning and public policy organization. Through research, technical assistance, and advocacy we work to make the Chicago region more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous.

The widespread shelter-in-place orders and continued restrictions to in-person shopping throughout the country drove record growth in online shopping this year, which has already been growing steadily since 2006. It's estimated that US consumers will spend \$710 billion on ecommerce in 2020, an 18% increase over last year. This represents 14.5% of total US retail sales, also an all-time high. Those numbers are only expected to continue growing, hitting nearly \$860 billion by 2022.

That growth requires parallel growth in warehousing and delivery. As recently as June, Amazon announced the addition of two new fulfillment centers in the South Suburbs, adding to the half a billion square feet of existing warehouse space in our region, one of the largest concentrations in the world. FedEx has estimated that package delivery in the US will double from 50 million daily deliveries to 100 million by 2026.

Given the impact that trucks are already having on our region, we can't afford to stick with business as usual. According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, trucks account for 7% of all urban travel in the US, but 11% of the total congestion costs. In the Chicago region, truck-related congestion costs us \$753 million annually measured in increased travel time, operating costs, and extra fuel consumed. That's the third highest of any metropolitan region in the country, and has increased by 42% since 2007. In 2017, trucks in the region were delayed 14.8 million hours due to congestion, which represents 30.7 million excess gallons of diesel consumed. That equates to an extra 688 million pounds of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere, according to the US Energy Information Administration. City Council's recent climate emergency resolution reinforced the need to make meaningful progress to reduce climate impacts at every opportunity.

Trucks are also a danger on our busy streets. The city's crash data shows that tractor-trailer and single-unit "box" trucks were involved in 5.9% of recorded crashes from 2015 to the present, but were involved in 7.7% of crashes involving a fatality. Crashes involving a truck were 1/3 more likely to cause a fatality than crashes without trucks during that time period. City Council has rightly recognized this danger before, by passing an ordinance in 2017 to require side guards on the city's truck fleet, and on any trucks operated by city contractors.

E-cargo bikes are a last-mile freight delivery solution that will help us accommodate the inevitable growth in ecommerce and mitigate negative impacts of additional truck traffic for local package delivery. This is a proven effective strategy that is currently being employed in several U.S cities, including New York, Seattle and Portland, and has been used in Europe for years. Allowing – and encouraging – the use of e-cargo bikes will help mitigate congestion, avoid greenhouse gas emissions, and improve street safety. And they're also great for business. Studies have found that there are many instances where e-



cargo bikes are more cost effective than truck deliveries. In congested areas, e-cargo bikes enable more quick and efficient deliveries. One of the most important benefits is that these small vehicles are easier to park. We need last-mile package delivery to occur via the most sustainable and space-efficient modes possible. E-cargo bikes have great potential for helping Chicago manage limited curb space and addressing the daily challenge of delivery trucks double parking on crowded city streets, often in bike lanes. For these reasons, MPC supports the proposed ordinance to amend Titles 4 and 9 of the Municipal Code to allow for e-cargo bike operation in the city.

Thank you.

Jeremy Glover
Transportation Associate, Metropolitan Planning Council