

E-scooter response

16 Sept 2020

What are the **positive** impacts and potential benefits of ride share e-scooters in Auckland of most relevance to your organisation / your role, if any?

Please specify who you believe is impacted in each case and why.

We like having a wide mix of transport options available. Each type tends to be suitable for different people doing different things, so that more people can utilise the optimal mode of transport. E-scooters are a part of that mix.

Mission Bay in particular is a tourist destination, and e-scooters provide another appealing activity for tourists to experience the area.

Technically locals could benefit from using these for commuting, going to cafes or just enjoyment, and many have already tried them out. We have no information to suggest whether there is any long term demand from locals or not.

What are the **negative** impacts and risks of ride share e-scooters in Auckland of most relevance to your organisation / your role, if any?

Please specify who you believe is impacted in each case and why.

The biggest problem we see is with the safety of combining activities of very different speeds on a common path. We already have issues with a narrow shared path on Tamaki Drive for cyclists and pedestrians, and adding e-scooters into the same mix is a real issue. Pedestrians and toddlers walk at a very different speed to cyclists already. E-scooters will exacerbate this problem because they are often used for entertainment with riders tending to try out the top speeds or by experienced riders aiming for a fast commute. Because many riders are inexperienced, they tend to be focused more on operating the scooter than having awareness of people around them, leading to high potential for 'collateral damage'. More experienced riders tend to be overconfident in their ability to weave through pedestrians, again leading to safety issues.

It is currently unclear whether e-scooters should be ridden on the road or footpath. If they are travelling at 30km/h then the footpath is not an appropriate place for them, but as relatively unstable and unprotected devices with small wheels and no real suspension they are not a good fit on the roads either. We already have this issue with bicycles, where fast ones are probably best on the road, but slow recreational

sightseers are best on the footpath. There are no laws or regulations which reflect this, allowing fast cyclists to compete with pedestrians on walkways and footpaths.

Perhaps the biggest danger arises from pedestrians not seeing an e-scooter coming from behind and stepping out across their line unexpectedly. This is already a difficulty with cyclists, but e-scooter have less effective brakes and are more likely to flip on hard braking and spill the rider. Again the underlying issue is one of having different modes of transport with greatly varying speeds sharing the same narrow pathways.

The other big danger often overlooked with the Tamaki Drive shared path, is that the cycle lane portion of the shared path is immediately adjacent to the kerb, so that the highest speed riders on bikes and scooters are very vulnerable to doors opening from parked cars.

As we work towards implementing the Tamaki Drive Master Plan's vision of a separated cycleway and pedestrian path the full length of Tamaki Drive, we need to carefully consider the new modes of transport such as e-scooters and e-bikes to ensure these are accommodated safely.

As a partial solution, we would support a speed limit for footpaths of say 15 km/hr while allowing e-scooters and cycles on the footpath. Riders wanting to exceed this would go on the road or cycle paths. If the limit were adhered to, then the disparity of speeds would be much less, reducing the hazard significantly. Of course, not everyone would adhere to such a speed limit without enforcement, reducing it's effectiveness. If e-scooters could be geotagged to enforce this it would be great, but we suspect that is not practical with current technology except for a few off-road paths.

It might be that an engineering solution could be added, particularly to busy paths such as along Tamaki Drive, such as rumble strips that would be relatively unpleasant at higher speeds, but which would not impose a danger to walkers, toddlers or low speed riders. Care would need to be taken to ensure these do not pose a hazard for toddlers or elderly with walkers etc.

One other issue of concern is that riders tend to leave the scooters (and rental bikes) randomly scattered on public areas and footpaths. Even when the chargers recover the scooters and leave them neatly aligned, they typically align them across the footpath rather than parallel to the road, thereby providing a chokepoint on the footpath. We would like to see a requirement that scooters be left in such a way that causes the least impact.

We would not want routine enforcement as this would be an expensive and futile exercise, but maybe there should be regulations with provision for fines so that there is the ability to take enforcement for particularly bad or repetitive cases. This could be against the riders eg for throwing a scooter in the fountain or knocking over a person, or the company itself where they repeatedly block footpaths and won't change. The ride-sharing e-scooters can help with this because they track the cycles and know the identity of the riders, as long as the Council can get access to this data. The fines could even be instant fines, charged directly to the credit card used to rent the scooter.

Overall, what is the opinion of your organisation's members or stakeholders, of ride share e-scooters in Auckland?

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive**
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative
- Don't know*
- Not applicable*

After the trial finishes, should ride share e-scooter operators continue to be granted licences?

If not, why? If so, what conditions should be in the Code of Practice linked to their licence?

Yes.

Limit speeds on footpaths.

Helmets required and supplied (or maybe only for on the road if footpath speeds are limited to 10km/h)

Define where scooters can be ridden and under what circumstances (on the road, in cycle lanes on the footpath etc)

Require that in the event of a complaint, Council can get access to rider data to identify the person.

Provide data to Council on scooter trips to help with future planning

Is there anything else Auckland Council should do to mitigate any negative outcomes and encourage positive outcomes from ride share e-scooters?

Prioritise building a wider separated path for cyclists and pedestrians along Tamaki Drive as set out in the Tamaki Drive Master Plan.

Are there other issues Auckland Council should be taking account of in its evaluation of the current trial?

Many of the same issues relate to ride-share bikes as well as scooters. Bikes are bigger so create more problems if not disposed of properly, and can go faster with more potential for injury to pedestrians around them. They should be considered at the same time.

Council also needs to consider private scooters and bikes with regard to the speed disparity problems raised above.