



Wellington E-scooter Review submission

January 2020

Executive summary with recommendations

We are in a climate emergency. Wellington must make *urgent* steps towards encouraging climate-friendly modes and discouraging private car travel. Safe, reliable and equitable transport options within a liveable city is our aspiration for Wellington.

In principle, Generation Zero supports e-scooters. They provide transport that is low cost, low emissions, convenient and can integrate with public transport. However, their current implementation is not acceptable. It is unsafe for the general public, especially the less-abled.

Our current experience highlights the lack of space and resources given to climate-friendly and space-efficient transport options. We urge the Council to roll out segregated infrastructure, parking and review how companies can operate e-scooters.

Recommendations:

R1. We urge the council to use the *survey data* wisely and understand whether e-scooters are *actually substituting away from private car travel*.

R2. E-scooters in Wellington are *unacceptably unsafe* for users and the general public. This is particularly so for those who are *less-abled*.

R3. E-scooters and bikes need comprehensive and connected *segregated lanes* away from cars and pedestrians in combination with lower car volumes and pedestrianisation. The Council should accelerate its 2015 Cycle Masterplan. This infrastructure can be *rolled out now on a trial basis*.

R4. *Dedicated e-scooter parking* is required, every 100m within the centre city. This space can be taken from car parks and enforced by council wardens.

R5. *Strategic thinking* is needed in integrating e-scooters with other modes of transport. To make e-scooters work best we need to implement the Cycle Masterplan, mass transit, walkable streets and fix golden mile congestion. E-scooters should *complement* other modes of transit.

R6. We recommend that *20 km/h speed limit* is the maximum limit that e-scooters are allowed to achieve. This allows for *safer interactions* with pedestrians and *reduces serious harm* when collisions occur (often without a helmet). 20 km/h speed limit with segregated infrastructure still allows users to quickly traverse the city.

R7. *Safer, higher spec e-scooters are required*. Mechanical, rather than purely regenerative, braking systems with a brake handle, not button. Batteries in the bottom of

the scooter, not only in the stem (which makes for a 'tippy' design). Larger wheels (minimum 9 inch).

R8. The Council should consider better *long-term licencing arrangements*. This could include infrastructure contributions, dynamic caps, product sustainability, restricting the number of operators, and company ethics.

Why Generation Zero is submitting on this

1. Generation Zero is a non-partisan, youth-led climate organisation that champions solutions towards a carbon neutral Aotearoa. Urgent action on climate change is needed and the Government has made a commitment to make Aotearoa New Zealand carbon zero by 2050 or earlier.
2. Transport is a large and growing proportion of New Zealand's and Wellington's emissions profile. Zero-emissions transport options in combination with dense, walkable and liveable cities is the way forward for our great little city. Liveable cities with transport choice also represent a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Micro Mobility and its benefits

3. Emissions reduction
Electric bikes and scooters produce only around [1-3% of the emissions](#) of comparable car trips. They also contribute to reduced noise and air pollution in often loud and dirty inner-cities.
4. Convenience and connectivity
Provides highly personalised point-to-point travel at the touch of a button without the need to own an e-scooter.
5. Cost
Transport is New Zealanders' third largest expense category. These services are comparably very cheap and there are [arguments](#) that they help address mobility poverty.
6. Multimodal transit
E-scooters can allow for integration with other modes of transit. Transfers from bus and train stations increases the attractiveness of public transit. This can help solve the 'last-mile problem' with public transit in an affordable way.
7. But evidence is needed

Most of these benefits require e-scooters to be substituting for private car journeys, instead of simply inducing new leisure trips or substituting from public and active transit.

R1. We urge the council to use the *survey data* wisely and understand whether e-scooters are *actually substituting away from private car travel*.

The downfalls of e-scooters in Wellington

8. Speed and safety

E-scooters currently reach speeds of 20-30 km/h which can be very dangerous when mixed with pedestrians or general traffic. Users are required to wear helmets, but the vast majority (understandably) do not. The risk of injury and death and distress for pedestrians is serious.

9. Accessibility

Wellington ought to be truly accessible and enjoyable for less-abled people. Users at speed weaving through pedestrians and leaving scooters poorly parked on the footpath present a massive [barrier to mobility](#) for these people.

R2. E-scooters in Wellington are *unacceptably unsafe* for users and the general public. This is particularly so for those who are *less-abled*.

E-scooters need the segregated infrastructure

10. Segregated infrastructure

E-scooters and bikes need comprehensive and connected segregated lanes from cars and pedestrians. This needs to be comprehensive and connected network of high quality surfaces, Copenhagen-style.

The law urgently needs adjusting, as the safest place to operate a scooter is currently in a cycle lane – however, currently the law says that the only place an e-scooter is banned, is a cycle lane.

We need space given to the most equitable and climate-friendly modes -- walking, cycling and micro mobility. Lowers car volumes in the centre city and pedestrianisation. Trialling this infrastructure in a 'tactical urbanism' style allows for people to experience the benefits of the infrastructure with little political capital expended. Feedback can be received and learnings can be incorporated into a final design.

The Council's 2015 Cycle Masterplan plans the infrastructure needed with funding allocated in the current Long Term Plan. It is too slow and needs to better address city

centre cycle infrastructure. The [Let's Get Welly Riding](#) vision proposes to bring forward all major routes by 2028 and additional routes.

R3. E-scooters and bikes need comprehensive and connected *segregated lanes* away from cars and pedestrians in combination with lower car volumes and pedestrianisation. The Council should accelerate its 2015 Cycle Masterplan. This infrastructure can be *rolled out now on a trial basis*.

11. Parking

Currently, parking is a mess. E-scooters are strewn across narrow footpaths and at the railway station. Dedicated parking spaces are needed. These can be enforced by council parking wardens within the centre city. Have penalties in the licencing agreements for infringements of e-scooters by operating companies.

R4. *Dedicated e-scooter parking is required, every 100m within the centre city. This space can be taken from car parks and enforced by council wardens.*

Strategic thinking is needed

12. Wellington City Council should align its e-scooter strategy with its general transport thinking.

The high e-scooter usage around the train station and waterfront indicates that

- There is a high demand for quick, quality mass transit that connects from the railway station
- The golden mile is very slow
- The waterfront is one of the only truly safe places for people to ride a bike, skateboard or e-scooter. More infrastructure along the streets adjacent is needed.

However, without those investments, e-scooters currently feel like an awkward half-baked solution to a city crying out for better public transit and walkability. They are not a solution to actually improving buses, mass transit

R5. *Strategic thinking is needed in integrating e-scooters with other modes of transport. To make e-scooters work best we need to implement the Cycle Masterplan, mass transit, walkable streets and fix golden mile congestion. E-scooters should *complement* other modes of transit.*

E-scooter hardware

13. Speed

Currently some e-scooters can reach 30 km/h. This is out of line with best practice for safe collision speeds from Vision Zero. We must recognise that humans make mistakes, and design accordingly.

R6. We recommend that 20 km/h speed limit is the maximum limit that e-scooters are allowed to achieve. This allows for safer interactions with pedestrians and reduces serious harm when collisions occur (often without a helmet). 20 km/h speed limit with segregated infrastructure still allows users to quickly traverse the city.

14. Hardware

E-scooters smooth surface with much less surface roughness than a bike lane or footpath. They are particularly susceptible to crashes with small obstructions such as pebbles or small kerbs.

Many units are still the unsafe 'tippy' design because their batteries are all in the stem, not in the floor of the vehicle like more modern shared scooter designs.

have insufficiently powerful regenerative brakes for the hilly terrain of Wellington (vs. mechanical brakes available on other shared scooter designs)

R7. Safer, higher spec e-scooters are required. Mechanical, rather than purely regenerative, braking systems with a brake handle, not button. Batteries in the bottom of the scooter, not only in the stem (which makes for a 'tippy' design). Larger wheels (minimum 9 inch).

Both Lime and Jump [already operate](#) scooters that meet these criteria in other geographies, as do many of the other larger operators who would likely bid to participate in Wellington for a longer term permit.

Licencing models

15. Operator contributions to cycle lanes

E-scooter companies [do better](#) when there is more cycle-lane infrastructure. Licencing arrangements could include operators contributing profits towards cycle-lane costs.

16. Dynamic caps

Consider moving away from a quota system to a dynamic cap system. The council determines a utilisation rate (e.g. 4 rides per day) and the amount of e-scooters adjusts to allow that utilisation rate. This provides incentives for operators to not have excess units clogging up footpaths or being left in far away suburbs.

17. Restricting the number of operators

Having too many operators can lead to confusion for consumers (multiple apps) and can lead to excess units on our footpaths. Consider limiting the number of operators to 2 so there is some competition but operators can invest for the long-term

18. Product sustainability

E-scooters that are damaged or replaced often represent a large amount of waste. The council should ensure its operators use robust hardware that is not being sent to landfill every few weeks.

19. Company ethics

Uber has been in the spotlight for tax evasion, sexual harassment and worker pay. The council should engage in ethical procurement and ensure operators are scrupulous companies that the electorate would be proud to be operating in the city.

R8. The Council should consider better *long-term licencing arrangements*. This could include infrastructure contributions, dynamic caps, product sustainability, restricting the number of operators, and company ethics.