



## **Scooters in Nashville**

### **Recommended Policies for Scooting More Safely**

Walk Bike Nashville believes scooters could be a hugely beneficial mode of transportation for Nashville. We believe the responsibility for making this new form of transportation safe, depends on the actions of the scooter companies and on the actions of Metro Nashville government.

All transportation policies, including regulation of scooters, should focus on achieving our city's transportation goals:

According to Nashville Next, our city's transportation goals are:

1. Create place with efficient community form and transportation choices
2. Offer meaningful transportation choices
3. Sustain and enhance the economy
4. Increase safety and resiliency
5. Improve human health and the environment
6. Ensure fiscal responsibility
7. Make decisions equitably
8. Address transportation regionally

**Given that over 1.8 million scooter trips have occurred in Nashville since their arrival, an average of over 10,000 trips per day,** scooters are clearly providing a popular transportation option. Some Nashvillians are relying on scooters for transportation. Over 60,000 scooter users have taken more than five trips on scooters over the past year.


Nashville currently has construction permits out that will add 40,000 workers to downtown. We cannot fit more cars downtown, so scooters could be a critical part of how we move people around our urban areas, tourists and locals alike. However, Walk Bike Nashville shares concerns expressed by Mayor Briley and other elected officials regarding people riding scooters on sidewalks, people parking scooters so that they obstruct sidewalks and generally we are concerned about the safety of everyone using our streets and sidewalks.

The responsibility to keep everyone safe lies both with the companies and with the city. The introduction of scooters onto our streets has simply shed light on the fact that **our streets are not safe**. Our city needs to follow through on plans to build long overdue infrastructure projects that will increase safety for everyone and encourage biking, walking and, yes, scooting too. If we want people on scooters to operate responsibly on our streets, we need to give them the infrastructure needed to do so safely and easily.



While much is being said about scooters, little is known about who is actually scooting. In June 2019, Walk Bike Nashville contacted all of the scooter companies and asked for data about how their scooters are being used. Six of the seven companies provided data which we then analyzed and considered while formulating our policy recommendations.

# SCOOTERS IN NASHVILLE



This report is intended to be a snap-shot of scooter usage over the past 12 months. Information was gathered by Walk Bike Nashville from Bird, Jump, Gotcha, Lime, Lyft, and Spin, six of the seven active scooter providers in Nashville.



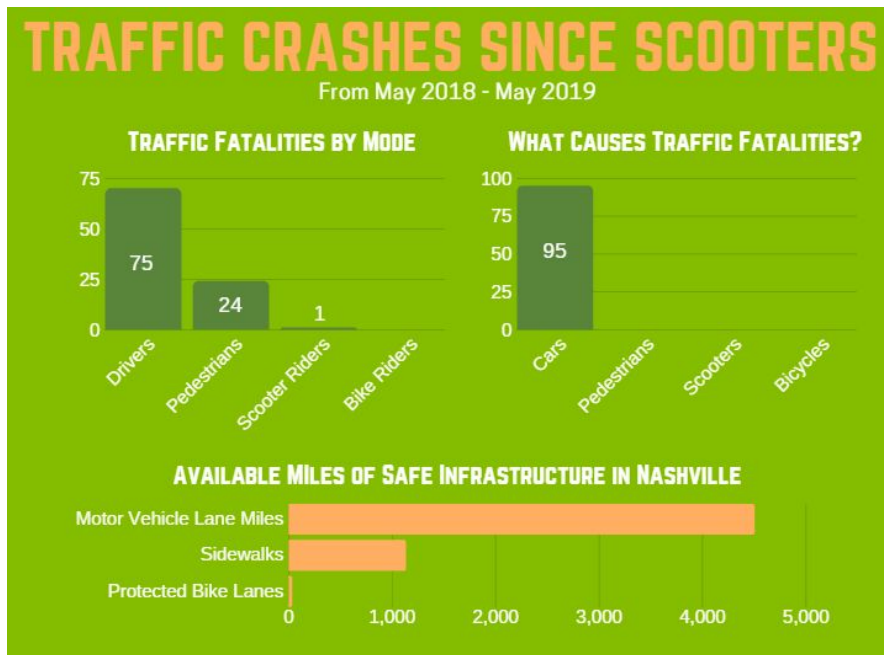
## WHO RIDES SCOOTERS?



- Over 60,000 people have taken more than 5 trips on one of the 6 apps. These are likely frequent, local users.
- One company reports much higher chance of repeat riders during the week, indicating repeat users are likely local.
- Less than 15% of all scooter trips occur at night, with much higher percentages at night on the weekend, indicating these are more likely tourists.
- According to the Scooter Pilot study by Portland, OR roughly 71% of trips were for transportation. 48% of visitors took an e-scooter instead of driving a personal car or using Uber, Lyft, or taxi. This research should be done in Nashville!

Road safety decisions should be made based on data, and prioritize severe and fatal crashes. It is clear from data that cars are the primary cause of severe and fatal crashes for all road users, so money, enforcement and other resources (all of which are finite) should be primarily focused on protecting all road users from people driving cars.

We also strongly discourage making judgements based on anecdotal data. We don't yet know what the impact of scooters on safety is, and we should be asking our city leaders to analyze this. We do know that **less than 15% of scooter trips in Nashville occur at night but that data from other cities show that almost all of the people who have died riding scooters nationwide, were riding at night.**





## Scooter Policy Recommendations

Based on our analysis of the data provided to us by the scooter companies, our knowledge of traffic safety policy and our understanding of how scooters have been regulated in other cities, we are making the following policy recommendations to Metro Nashville government.

We support updating the regulations to ensure we're holding the scooter companies accountable to a high standard. But rather than discussing a ban on one of the relatively few transportation choices Nashvillians have, we need to also ensure our mayor and our elected officials are held accountable for enforcing existing laws and regulations and building infrastructure like bike lanes that will make our streets safer for everyone.

### Short Term Regulatory Updates

- **Metro Actions:**
  - **Increase Fees:** Metro should increase fees per scooter in order to cover the cost of hiring additional staffing at the transportation licensing commission (TLC).
    - **Hire Staff for TLC:** Metro Council should move hire support staff to enforce the current regulations.
  - **Shorten the Pilot and Sunset Permits:** Metro Council should add an automatic sunset of current permits to October 1 so that the city can proceed with an RFP process and limit the number of scooter providers.
  - **Maintain 6-foot Clearance on Sidewalks:** Metro Council should ban scooters from parking on sidewalks unless the scooters are parked in a furnishing zone, at a bike rack, or in such a manner that there is at least 6 feet of clearance maintained at all times.
  - **Auditable Maintenance Operations:** Metro Council should require auditable (by the TLC) record keeping of operators' inspections and maintenance operations.
  - **Ticketing Riders:** Metro Council should require operators to self-enforce parking requirements, and provide auditable record-keeping to demonstrate that they are regular reviewing, and where applicable, ticketing users for incorrectly parking scooters.
- **Scooter Company Actions:**
  - **Reduce Multiple Users on One Account:** Metro Council should require only one active account per permit per drivers license.
  - **Add Red Rear Lights:** Metro Council should require both a front and rear light on all scooters -- visible to 300 feet.
  - **Warning Riders about Tickets:** All scooter companies should be required to show riders a warning before parking that incorrectly parked scooters will result in a fine assessed to the rider.
  - **Downtown Cap:** City should have a cap on the number of scooters per company within a defined "downtown" zone. ( e.g. no more than 33% of total fleet).



### Short Term Non-Regulatory Steps to be Taken by Metro Nashville Government

- Metro Nashville should work swiftly to increase enforcement and oversight capacity by hiring additional staff for the TLC.
- Metro Police should partner with all scooter companies for select dates of well-publicized enforcement blitzes.
- Metro Public Works should direct car-parking meter maids to ticket incorrectly parked scooters, in addition to incorrectly parked cars.
- Metro Traffic and Parking commission should create a permit for scooter companies to use on-street parking spots for scooters (just like the valet permit)
- More corrals should be added downtown by Metro Public Works.
- The city should move ahead with the construction of protected bikelanes in the downtown core -- which is where the majority of scooter trips take place, and a part of the city with no protected bicycle/scooter infrastructure. A demonstration project to pilot protected bike lanes on Commerce Street and on 3rd avenue was set to begin in May but after a few honky-tonk owners raised concerns about moving their loading zones a few feet, the project has since been delayed and a new timeline for the project has not yet been released.

### Long Term Steps

- **RFP Process and Limited permits:** City should limit permits to 2-3 and use an RFP process to award permits
- **Reduce car-lanes downtown:** City should move towards adding more pedestrian only zones downtown, add bus-only lanes, and add scooter/bike lanes.

With these changes, we believe scooters usage can continue to grow, providing a much needed new transportation option for Nashvillians.

### **Conclusion**

We, as a city, are missing half the conversation: this isn't just about scooters, it's about making our streets safe. **Let's start from the vision zero principle that nobody should die in a traffic crash and that we must design our roads so that human mistakes are not fatal.**

Walk Bike Nashville believes that scooters could be a hugely beneficial mode of transportation for Nashville. The sky-high usage numbers indicate this is already the case (we get far more scooter trips than Music City Star trips each day). We believe the responsibility for making this new form of transportation safe and work towards our transportation goals depends both on the companies and the city.