



# The Future of Micromobility in Denver

Denver Streets Partnership

Policy Position

1/30/2020

## Micromobility in Denver

For decades, people in Denver have traveled through the city using micromobility, from bicycles to skateboards, scooters to roller blades.

In 2010, the City and County of Denver became a national leader when the non-profit Denver Bike Share launched the Denver B-cycle program, offering shared, non-electric bicycles that people could rent using kiosks scattered around Denver's downtown core. Between 2010 and 2018, Denver B-cycle provided 2.5 million trips and riders traveled 5.3 million miles, the equivalent of nearly 215 trips around the equator<sup>1</sup>.

Recent technological advancements have created the opportunity for additional shared micromobility options to launch in Denver including electric-assisted bicycles (e-bikes) and electric-powered scooters. These options have provided a lot of trips just in the last year. According to the City and County of Denver, between August 1, 2018 and November, 30 2019<sup>2</sup>:

- Shared electric scooters provided 3.4 million trips, totaling 4.3 million miles traveled. That's an average of 7,822 trips per day using an electric scooter
- Shared electric-assisted bicycles (e-bikes) provided 254,656 trips, totaling 435,000 miles traveled. That's an average of 560 rides per day using an electric-assisted bike.

## Micromobility's Critical Role in Denver and the Benefits These Options Bring

Micromobility devices, including traditional pedal bikes, electric-assisted bikes (e-bikes), electric scooters and the latest emerging technologies, play an important role in our city's transportation system and our goal of building safe, healthy, and equitable communities.

- **Moving People Not Just Cars** - [19% of trips are 1 mile or less](#) and [43% are less than 3 miles](#). These shorter trips can easily be done via a micromobility option, reducing the number of vehicles on the road. This in turn can reduce the amount of space needed for parking and for vehicular travel lanes. Micromobility options are critical for meeting [Denver's Mobility Action Plan goals for reducing single-occupant vehicle commuter trips to 50% by 2030](#).

---

<sup>1</sup> Denver Bike Sharing annual reports 2010-2018.

<sup>2</sup> City and County of Denver. *Denver Dockless Micromobility Pilot Program Update*. Presentation to INC Transportation Meeting 1/9/2020



- **Air Pollution and Climate** - Replacing motor vehicle trips with zero emission pedal bikes or other electric-powered modes, which consume far less energy than motor vehicles, will reduce particulate matter and the kinds of emissions that form deadly ozone pollution and poor air quality. Doing so will bring Denver closer to achieving our city's goals for tackling our climate crisis.
- **Safety** - In 2019, according to data from the Denver Police Department, all but four traffic fatalities in Denver involved at least one motor vehicle. Because motor vehicles travel faster and are significantly heavier than micromobility devices, crashes involving motor vehicles inherently increase the likelihood of serious injury and death. By expanding transportation options for Denverites we can reduce the number of people driving and make our streets safer.
- **Affordability** - Providing micromobility options can reduce the need for Denverites to own and operate their own vehicle, a significant cost for most people. Smart pricing policies can ensure those Denver residents who need it can access it for free or with subsidized membership programs.
- **Health** - Between April 22, 2010 and December 31, 2018, Denver B-cycle riders burned more than 160 million calories on their trips<sup>3</sup>. Having accessible, active transportation options, like pedal bikes and e-bikes can help Denver residents improve their health and increase the amount of physical activity they are getting each day. [A recent report on e-bikes from the National Institute for Transportation and Communities](#) finds many e-bike users bought an e-bike for fitness reasons. In addition, e-bike users reported e-bikes make it easier to leave their cars at home.

### **Micromobility in Denver Moving Forward: A Vision**

Sometime after Denver B-cycle ceases operations on January 30, 2020, the City and County of Denver is expected to call on micromobility providers to submit proposals to bid on the chance to serve Denver in the near future.

We are looking forward to micromobility providers submitting bold visions that result in the kind of services that make it easy and convenient for all Denver residents to use different modes to access daily destinations. This is critical for increasing the percent of travel done in Denver without a car, which can bring safety, affordability, health, choice, and environmental benefits. To maximize these benefits, we recommend that any proposal for Denver's future micromobility system include the following principles:

- **Be accessible to every Denver resident** - Micromobility services and devices should be provided in every neighborhood in Denver and micromobility providers should ensure a minimum level of service for all neighborhoods so everyone has access. In addition,

---

<sup>3</sup> Denver Bike Sharing annual reports 2010-2018.



providers should offer models that are senior friendly and can be used by people with varying abilities

- **Offer a variety of connected modes** - Ridership data from B-cycle and Denver's micromobility pilot program shows that Denver residents value choice when it comes to how they get around. Denver's micromobility system should include a variety of options, including pedal bikes, electric-assisted bikes (e-bikes), adaptive bikes, electric scooters, and other emerging technologies, for all demographic groups. These options should all use a similar sign-out and payment system so people can transition from one to the other with ease (and ideally also connect to RTD and other transit modes).
- **Low cost or free access to Denver residents** - Incentivise the use of micromobility by keeping per-ride costs affordable and/or free to all Denverites, regardless of income. If fare structures require income verification, connections need to be made with existing affordable transit programs such as RTD's LIVE program to create a consumer friendly approach to mobility while reducing stigma and unnecessary duplication of income verification. In addition, providers should also identify ways to allow users who do not have a credit card to access their micromobility options. In [Los Angeles](#), scooter companies provide a low-income fare option, a cash payment option, and a non-smartphone option.
- **Clear and enforceable zones for using and parking bicycles and scooters** - Micromobility providers should outline how they will work with the City and property owners, as well as how they will use technology to ensure there are clear areas where users can ride and roll safely and abundant designated parking areas to ensure streets and sidewalks are unobstructed.
- **Share travel data** - Micromobility data can support planning processes to enhance the connectivity and safety of the network so it is critical that data is shared with the appropriate agencies and partners.

#### **Recommendations for the City and County of Denver:**

- **Support micromobility transit with city funding** - Denver should not assume a sustainable and long-term system can be operated completely dependent on the private market. Micromobility should be considered a public good that meets city goals and needs, similar to bus and rail transit, and Denver should follow the lead of cities around the country, like Chicago, Los Angeles, and Memphis, by providing public dollars.
- **Build out the rolling and walking infrastructure including dedicated micromobility parking spaces if necessary to meet more demands from bicycles and scooters** - A connected network of sidewalks and bike lanes will create a safer and more predictable experience for micromobility users and everyone else, and can encourage more "interested-but-concerned" Denverites, [a category identified by DRCOG and used](#)



by [DOTI](#), which make up 59% of Denverites, to switch trips from a motor vehicle to a micromobility device, reducing single occupancy vehicle trips.

For the last decade, between our nonprofit bike share program and multiple for-profit micromobility providers, Denver has been on the cutting edge of offering residents and visitors different pedal bike, e-bike, and electric scooter options, mostly in downtown. These options provide tens of thousands of trips per week.

Now is the time for micromobility services to be expanded to every neighborhood in the city making it easy and accessible for everyone to choose this option. Pairing a robust micromobility network with an aggressive build out of the bike, rolling and pedestrian infrastructure can play a critical role in reducing single occupancy vehicle travel, which will bring safety, affordability, health, and environmental benefits to everyone.

###

The [Denver Streets Partnership \(DSP\)](#) is a coalition of community organizations advocating for people-friendly streets in Denver. **The DSP mission** is to reclaim Denver's streets for people walking, rolling, biking, and using transit, and to build safe, healthy, and equitable communities. The steering committee is composed of the nonprofit policy advocacy organizations AARP Colorado, All In Denver, American Heart Association, Bicycle Colorado, CoPIRG, Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition, Groundwork Denver, Mile High Connects, YIMBY Denver and WalkDenver.

Our vision for Denver: On people-friendly streets, walking, rolling, biking, and transit are the first choice of transportation for all people. Streets for people are living public spaces that connect us to jobs, schools, services and each other, and are designed to foster health, happiness, and opportunity for all. For more information, visit [www.DenverStreetsPartnership.org](http://www.DenverStreetsPartnership.org)