Recommendation on E-Scooters
Complete Streets and Transportation Commission
June 9 2022

Summary:

The Complete Streets and Transportation Commission has been reviewing our options for E-Scooters in Los Gatos. We do not see a compelling reason to move forward with a Pilot program for E-Scooters for Los Gatos.

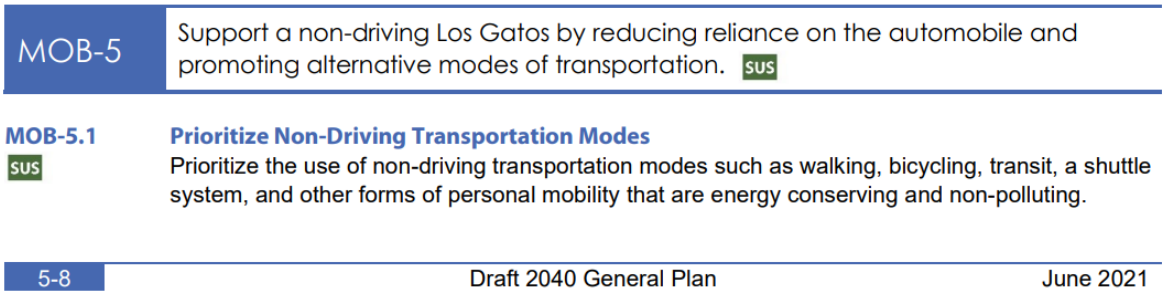
1. Our belief is that rental scooters would not reduce the reliance on automobiles in Los Gatos.
2. E-Scooters would not be close enough to homes to be used for errands, coffee, or a meal, or for employees commuting to Los Gatos. Residents are more likely to use their own bikes or E-Bikes or buy their own E-Scooter to get to downtown.
3. E-Scooters would not be used to provide transportation for gaps in other mobility modes.
   a. Buses are not used very much and the one line goes all the way to Downtown LG.
   b. Campbell Light Rail is too far away to get much use for downtown Los Gatos.
   c. Downtown LG is not that large an area. Most people park their cars and walk where they need to go.
4. E-Scooters work best when there is robust infrastructure of bike lanes coming into Los Gatos and in the downtown area. Highway 9, Winchester/N Santa Cruz, University, and Los Gatos Blvd do not have robust bike lanes in various locations coming into Los Gatos.
5. The Commission has concerns regarding Rental E-Scooter parking, speeding, and riding on sidewalks. Some mitigations do exist for some of these potential problems.
6. In order to run a proper E-Scooter Pilot Program, significant work will be needed from Town Staff. The additional work could take away from other priorities that staff is working on.

Activities:

The Commission assigned an Ad Hoc Committee to look into the use of E-Scooters. The Ad-Hoc Committee participated in the following activities.

1. Met with a representative of Bird, an E-Scooter Rental Company. Attachment A.
2. Met with the person in charge of the E-Scooter program in downtown San Jose. Attachment B.
3. Reviewed Pilot Program Slides from Fairfax, VA, a city with somewhat similar demographics to Los Gatos. Thanks to Town Staff for finding these presentations. Helpful Slides included in Attachment C.

4. Reviewed the Mobility Section of the Plan 2040 for Los Gatos. For reference:



MOB-5 Support a non-driving Los Gatos by reducing reliance on the automobile and promoting alternative modes of transportation. SUS

MOB-5.1 Prioritize Non-Driving Transportation Modes

SUS

Prioritize the use of non-driving transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, transit, a shuttle system, and other forms of personal mobility that are energy conserving and non-polluting.

Additional Thoughts:

1. E-Scooter Rental companies have some helpful features:
   a. "Geo-fencing" limits the rental E-Scooters to prevent riding outside a geographic area, limits speed in a geographic area, and in some instances prevents riding on a sidewalk.
   b. Rental E-Scooters have an overall programmable speed limit.
2. Designated parking areas would need to be created for E-Scooters to encourage proper parking.
3. The CSTC would not recommend riding rental E-Scooters on the Los Gatos Creek Trail due to the already heavy usage by pedestrians, bicycles, e-bikes, and privately owned e-scooters and e-skateboards. A fallback position would be to limit the speed of rental E-scooters to <10 mph while on the trail.
4. A few details of possible Town responsibilities for running a Pilot Program are included in attachment C.
5. Future Considerations:
   a. If south parking lots were full, maybe people would park in the north lots and use an E-Scooter to get to E Main St or Town Plaza Area.
   b. Scooters might be used to travel from the North 40 to Downtown.
   c. If light rail come to the Vasona Area, E-Scooters could be used from the Vasona Station to Downtown.

Attachment A: Bird Electric Scooters Meeting with Los Gatos CSTC Ad Hoc 3/3/2022

Summary

Benefits of Electric Scooters

1. Electric Scooters are an alternative to cars to reduce traffic congestion and car parking concerns.

2. Electric Scooters are faster than walking.

3. Bird appears well organized and experienced with Electric Scooters in 350+ cities/towns. They provide incentives for users to wear a helmet and park the scooter in a designated parking area. They employ fleet managers who re-distribute scooters several times per day.

4. Cost is $1.00 to unlock + ~$0.40 per minute

Concerns with Electric Scooters

1. Potential ugly crowded parking areas. This could discourage pedestrians.

2. Los Gatos is not being guaranteed side walk detection from Bird where the scooters would be prevented from operating on a sidewalk. This could be a big deal because a scooter going 15mph on the sidewalk downtown next to pedestrians where it is crowded would be dangerous.

3. Concerns of adding to the congestion of the creek trail via electric scooters.

4. Will Electric Scooters provide an overall net benefit to the town?

Next Steps

1. Talk with nearby towns with similar demographics to Los Gatos who have implemented Electric Scooters to get their experience and concerns.

2. Suggestions from the Commission?

Questions and Answers with Bird

Michael Covato – Bird - Territory Manager 16 States

Program Design

- How many scooters would you anticipate stocking in a town like Los Gatos?
    - Bird uses an algorithm that would predict 375-400. But actually practically start with 70-100.
    - No cost to city or business.
    - Dashboard available with location of scooters and tracking/heat map data.
    - How are scooters moved around: Use machine learning based on data tracking. Fleet managers collect scooters from wherever their end point ends up and place them dispersed where the best use location is. Rebalancing occurs multiple times per day.
    - Users should be 18 or older (legal age).
- Have other towns our size had problems with scooters blocking streets and sidewalks?
- Where are these scooters generally parked in an older town like Los Gatos? On the side walk? What does this look like for walkers?
    - Town can designate scooter parking areas. Bird will offer incentives to end a ride at a parking area.
    - Fleet managers can be contacted at 24/7 phone number with photos to resolve issues with improper parking quickly and easily.
- Can someone ride to other Cities?
    - Yes, depending on permission from neighboring cities. Programmable (geo-fencing) to limit travel locations.
    - Scooters can be programmed for locations they can be used for a specific event as well as speed limits.
- What are the Cities that have signed on? See Bird's website.
    - 350-400 cities.
- What kind of complaints do other similar older towns report?
    - New change: People not expecting scooters. Do press release to mitigate this issue.
    - Improperly parked scooters would probably be a complaint.
    - Limit speed to 15 mph? or slower?. Programmable per location (geo-fencing). Don't ride on sidewalk would be education issue. Need to consider reasonable limits on speeds relative to cars and bicycles. Newer scooters have sidewalk detection, but LG probably won't have this tech to start with.
    - Use of scooters Los Gatos Creek Trail? Programmable geo-fencing available, but restriction would be frustrating for scooter users.

- Is the business model centralized around making these work for a town or is this a fancy marketing for purchase items?
    - Primary business is scooters, Bird has to make this work for the town.
- What is the cost of a ride?
    - $1 to unlock + $0.39-0.42 / minute.
    - Incentives to reduce cost: helmet, parking in approved spots, etc.

Places You Can Ride

- What would prevent the scooters from being used on sidewalks esp. in downtown?
    - Preventing riding on sidewalk would be education issue.
    - Newer scooters have sidewalk detection, but LG probably won't have this tech to start with.
- Would scooters function like cars in downtown as there is no bike lane?
    - Paradigm would be to think that scooters can go where bikes go.

Safety

- Can you share safety statistics from a town comparable to the size of Los Gatos?
- Do you collect data on others (walkers) injured by Bird scooters? If so how often does this occur? What kind of injuries are most common?
    - About the same as a bicycle. Very low percentage of collisions/ride.
- Helmet safety has really taken off for bikes. How do helmets become feasible in this model?
    - Bird will provide helmet for $~10. Or provide for bulk helmets for town purchase and distribution.
- How do e-scooters safely pass bikers? Pass on side of cars?
    - All have running lights, bells. Same issues as bicycles. Lane splitting is however, legal in California.

Questions and Answers with Bird Ying Smith's notes in blue

Program Design

- How many scooters would you anticipate stocking in a town like Los Gatos?

375 to 400 to start. Would come in with a smaller number, 65 – 70 units.

Distribution: partner with the field manager, fleet managers.

deploy and rebalance are dynamic, based on machine learning. Rebalance multiple times per day.

- Have other towns our size had problems with scooters blocking streets and sidewalks?

Typically between the sidewalk and parkstrip (?).

If a user doesn't park properly to take a picture, they would incur a CC charge. Bird is responsible for removing Birds parked at the wrong places (24-hour contact number).

- Where are these scooters generally parked in an older town like Los Gatos? On the side walk? What does this look like for walkers?
- Can someone ride to other Cities?
- What are the Cities that have signed on? See Bird's website.
- What kind of complaints do other similar older towns report?

Not the same types of complaints as the older models. Most common: scooters parked in wrong places.

- Is the business model centralized around making these work for a town or is this a fancy marketing for purchase items?

The shared scooter side is much bigger than the retail scooter side.

- What is the cost of a ride? Estimated around $4.75 on average in LG.
- Parking: can designate parking area and restrict no parking areas (like sidewalk).

Management: real time dashboard to track usage

Special event deployment

Speed: capped at 15 mph, can be reduced at certain locations. For the most part, the State Laws treat it as a bicyclist.

Reservation function

Places You Can Ride

- What would prevent the scooters from being used on sidewalks esp. in downtown?

Some scooters have the sensor for sidewalk, but not all at the beginning. Can only promise a small number to Los Gatos at the beginning. Currently, the tools are education and fine.

- Would scooters function like cars in downtown as there is no bike lane?

Safety

- Can you share safety statistics from a town comparable to the size of Los Gatos?

City safety studies and an independent study, will send.

- ∉ Do you collect data on others (walkers) injured by Bird scooters? If so how often does this occur? What kind of injuries are most common?
- Helmet safety has really taken off for bikes. How do helmets become feasible in this model?

Provides an inexpensive helmet and free distribution.

Attachment B: Electric Scooters Meeting with San Jose and CSTC Ad Hoc 4/22/2022

Attending: Craig Dittmer (manages e-scooters for City of San Jose), Cheri Binkley, Gillian Verga, Jeff Thompson

How many rentable escooters are there from suppliers in San Jose.
6000 pre-pandemic, 2200 now.

What companies are you using?

Bird 2/3 and Lime 1/3. Spin for sidewalk detection trial, several other smaller companies.

What are the benefits San Jose sees from allowing electric scooters?

Stop gap solution, 15 minute solution. Escooters provide transportation between gaps in other modes. Ie. Gaps between transportation types.

What concerns do you see with Electric Scooters.

If bike infrastructure doesn't exist (eg. Bike lanes), then there can be problems. Eg. Riding on sidewalks.

Who uses escooters? Many locals use once, but may not be regular users. Occasional and tourist users. 3 tiered plan might be worth investigating: local, tourists, low income. Use the contact info on credit card.

What safety concerns do you have with escooters. Speeding? Running stop signs/stop lights?
Ongoing issue. Helmet not required for riders. Hard to mandate helmets. Biggest issue: additional scooters overwhelming infrastructure at an intersection. Collisions with Peds or cyclist are rare.

Do you allow escooters on sidewalks?, in bike lanes?, in car lane? Issues with any of these?

Not on sidewalks, not in SJSU,

Do you have problems with escooters being parked improperly ie. On sidewalks or in front of businesses or in parking places, etc.

Not normally, now that designated parking places are put in place.

What are the main resident complaints you receive?

Sidewalk riding is biggest complaint. Clearly defined parking areas help with complaints for parking escooters.

Do you have any issues with getting escooters distributed to where they are needed?
It works fairly well. The permit has provisions for $ Charges to the supplier if rebalancing gets out of whack. Ie $500 ticket.

What is the cost to rent an escooter? Do residents think this is reasonable?
OK for occasional users and tourists. Not OK for commuters.

Do you allow them on the Guadalupe Trail. How is this working?

They are allowed on GRT, but problem if they go 18 mph. Craig would not recommend escooters on LGCT. Maybe limit speed to 10 mph.

Do you use geo-fencing? How does this work out?

Yes, geofencing used. Spin has trial going on using sidewalk detection. Bird working on sidewalk detection by end of 2022. Lidar makes maps very accurate, GPS not so accurate.

Do incentives offered by suppliers effective? ie to wear helmets and park where directed?
Craig was not aware of incentives offered by suppliers to reduce cost.

How do you control private escooters vs supplier offered escooters.

No regulations for private escooters. Less likely to be reckless at $1500 per scooter. They are < 0.5% or lower of the total escooters.

Any recommendations on which escooters supplier to use?

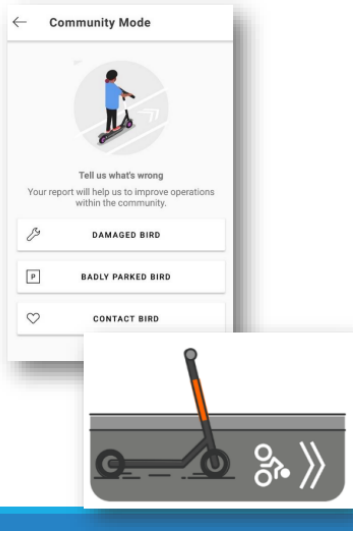
Moving target. Scalability can be an issue. Need 750 scooters on ground to make it work for a supplier. Bird is fine, not so sure about Lime. Spin is good but exclusive. Useful for LG, Sara, Campbell, Cupertino if they could share suppliers, it might work better. As far as Craig knows, other towns in the area are unregulated so far.

Final Thoughts: Think about feasibility. SJ barely big enough for 2 providers. Try a trial period to gage public interest. Craig is only staff member for escooters in San Jose: 1500 hours/year, ¾ FTE. $97/year/escooter permit fee. Consider per trip fee, although this would provide variable funding. Berkeley has 0.3 FTE on staff. Work with others who have done this before. Craig is willing to continue to be a resource for us. This is very much appreciated.

Attachment C: Key Details of an E-Scooter Pilot Program from City of Fairfax, VA

Pilot Program: Key Permit Requirements

- Business License
- User Agreements
- Insurance and Indemnification
- Device Inspection and Safety Compliance
- Safety and Operations Response Plan
- Operations center and customer service resources
- Ongoing communication with City
- Community Engagement Plan
- Community Education
- Maintenance and Recharging Plan
- Data sharing & reporting requirements
- Regional coordination



City Responsibilities

- Review permit applications
- Test scooters and approve to deploy
- Respond to citizen comments
- Establish preferred parking corrals
- Monitor usage data
- Conduct neighborhood outreach
- Communicate with residents, businesses, vendors
- Approximately 0.25 FTE to maintain program