

Seattle Department of Transportation

YEAR END SCOOTER SHARE UPDATE



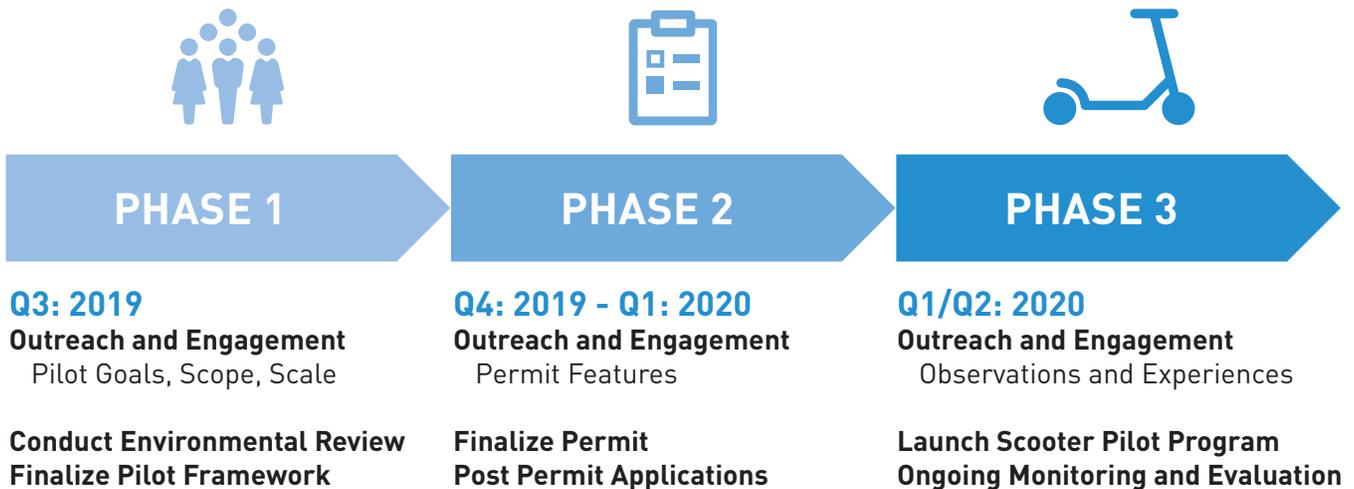
Seattle
Department of
Transportation

INTRODUCTION

As 2019 draws to a close, we're excited to share our year end progress update for a Spring 2020 scooter share pilot launch. This update outlines what we've heard in the first phase of outreach and engagement, and where we are headed next.

Following Mayor Durkan's announcement that [scooters would be coming to Seattle](#), we began preparations for a scooter share pilot. Our goal is to make sure that the program works well for everyone in Seattle, so that scooter share will be safe, equitable, and not become a barrier to other people walking or rolling in our city.

Over the summer, we researched scooter share pilots and programs in peer cities, and reached out to our colleagues in Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and many more across the county. We began a 3-phased approach to prepare for a spring scooter share pilot launch.



Schedule subject to change

Figure 1: SDOT 3 Phased approach to a Spring launch for the scooter share pilot

PHASE 1: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The first step of Phase 1 was outreach to ensure stakeholder and community involvement from the beginning. We had open and wide ranging conversations with several key partners, including the following organizations:

SCOOTER SHARE PILOT STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH LIST			
 <p>Safety and Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King County Public Health • The University of Washington Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center • Seattle Police Department 	 <p>Modal Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board • Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board 	 <p>Public Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Parks and Recreation • King County Metro • Sound Transit 	 <p>Disability Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Federation of the Blind • Rooted in Rights • The University of Washington Disability Center • Commission for People with disAbilities • Pedestrian Access Advisory Committee
 <p>Transportation Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cascade Bicycle Club • Seattle Neighborhood Greenways • Feet First 	 <p>Transportation Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDOT Racial Social Justice Initiative Change Team • Puget Sound Sage 	 <p>Downtown District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Seattle Association • Alliance for Pioneer Square • West Edge Neighborhood Association • Building Owners and Managers Association 	

Figure 2: Scooter Share Pilot Stakeholder Outreach List

Stakeholder meetings primarily focused on the following issues: Riding Location, Parking, Overall Safety, Education & Enforcement, Equity & Accessibility. Notes from the meetings were recorded and we pulled out the most common themes that are shared below.

Riding Location

Seattle Municipal Code states, “motorized foot scooters may be operated on roadways, shoulders, and alleys, but not on sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or public paths” [11.46.010]. We wanted to understand if Seattleites felt that domain should be revisited. Stakeholder riding location feedback summarized as follows:

Sidewalks: We heard mixed feedback about scooters riding on sidewalks. We heard that scooter riding on sidewalks caused a lot of concern about sidewalk comfort and safety—especially for people with disabilities. We also heard that there were safety and equitable access concerns if we did not allow scooters on sidewalks, and instead required them to be ridden alongside cars.

Bike Lanes: The consensus, including transportation advocacy groups, agreed that riding scooters in the bike lane, multi-use trails, and along the bike network was appropriate—especially if e-scooter speeds operate at similar speeds to bikes and e-bikes. Some expressed a need for more and wider bike lanes to support the influx of new users.

Arterial Streets: Some expressed concerns for the safety of people on scooters traveling at much lower speeds than vehicle traffic.

Parking Activities

Stakeholder parking feedback is summarized as follows:

Unsafe/Incorrect Parking: Conversations with disability rights groups highlighted the negative impact (blocked access, reduced comfort of travel, or injury) that incorrectly parked bikes/scooters have on the blind, vision impaired, or

those experiencing other physical disabilities. Stakeholders in the downtown district expressed concerns regarding sidewalk parking in areas with high pedestrian traffic and limited sidewalk space.

Parking Infrastructure: Many expressed a desire to see an investment in additional bike/scooter parking, above and beyond the 1,500 bike and scooter spaces delivered as part of the 2019 program year.

Education and Enforcement: Many expressed a need for more education around proper parking and riding, as well as some sort of enforcement directed at both operators and riders.

Overall Safety

Stakeholder safety feedback summarized as follows:

Head Injuries and Helmets: We heard concerns regarding possible head injuries as a result of scooter share operations and support for programs that increase helmet usage and educate the public on safe riding etiquette.

Education and Enforcement: Consensus supported ongoing safe riding education. Several stakeholders supported enforcement tactics directed at riders, rather than just scooter share operators.

Safety Study: Safety experts were interested in a study that explored the safety impacts of a scooter share pilot.

Equity and Accessibility

Stakeholder equity and accessibility feedback is summarized as follows:

Equitable Distribution of Devices: Transportation equity groups emphasized the need for equitable fleet distribution in neighborhoods with limited access and communities with socioeconomic and health disadvantages, where new forms of transportation can potentially create the most access to opportunity.

Equitable Enforcement: Transportation equity stakeholders and safety experts cautioned the use of enforcement that might inequitably target people of color and people riding in areas with limited safe infrastructure.

Low Income Access: Some voiced a need for low income plans and access for those lacking mobile data and/or credit cards, like strategies implemented as part of the Bike Share program.

Disability Access: When speaking with disability groups about access, we often heard that standing scooters are primarily focused on moving people without disabilities. However, several people acknowledged that certain types of seated scooters could increase the mobility for people with limited mobility.

We wish to thank all of those that participated in the stakeholder engagement process. The insights gleaned are invaluable in helping us design a pilot that aligns with the needs and concerns of the city. We look forward to meeting with more stakeholders in Phase 2 to receive feedback on pilot framework features.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Public feedback was gathered through surveys and open comment. Surveys were distributed both physically and online. Open comments were gleaned from the survey comment section and comments emailed to scootershare@seattle.gov. Below, we detail the process and results.

Survey Results

The most important question to ask before starting a new program is “What does success look like?” Between October and December, 776 Seattleites completed an SDOT survey, which asked respondents to rank the importance of a list of factors in evaluating the success of the scooter share pilot.

Understanding how Seattleites prioritize these indicators of success will inform our pilot development process. The following list is ranked based on the mean average of each respondent’s rating (highest to lowest):

1. Safety for riders and non-riders
2. Good scooter parking and riding behavior
3. Scooters get people to and from transit
4. Scooters replace car trips
5. Scooters are available to everyone including people living with disabilities and/or low-income individuals
6. A positive and fun experience for riders
7. A lot of trips are made on scooters

Public Feedback Open Comments

Seattleites emailed comments to scootershare@seattle.gov and provided additional comments in the survey. The following word cloud weights reoccurring keywords used within the open comment section of the survey.



Figure 3: Word cloud capturing Seattleite open comments on scooter share

We aggregated the wide range of feedback from emails and the survey comments and distilled it into the following categories: benefits, concerns, requests (Tables 1-3). Please note that not everyone provided comments. The following rankings are an informal view of the frequency topics were mentioned.

Benefits

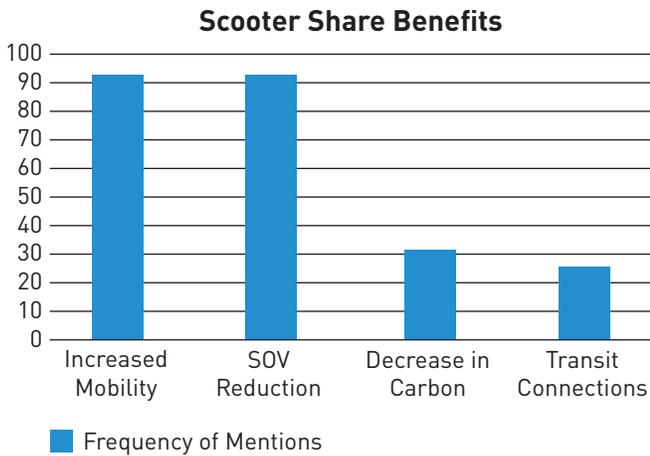


Table 1: Public Open Comment Feedback on Scooter Share Benefits

Sample Comments on Benefits:

“Fantastic opportunity for more mobility. Should be used to implement the bicycle master plan, vision zero, and other plans and policies that improve mobility for people using many alternative forms of transportation (walking, biking, scooting, transit). Safe connections between these events are critical and infrastructure is a key part of the connectivity.”

“This city needs scooters! When traffic is so bad that you cannot get a rideshare or bus, scooters would be a viable and great transportation option. They’re small, user friendly and easier than bikes for people who don’t have the endurance.”

Concerns

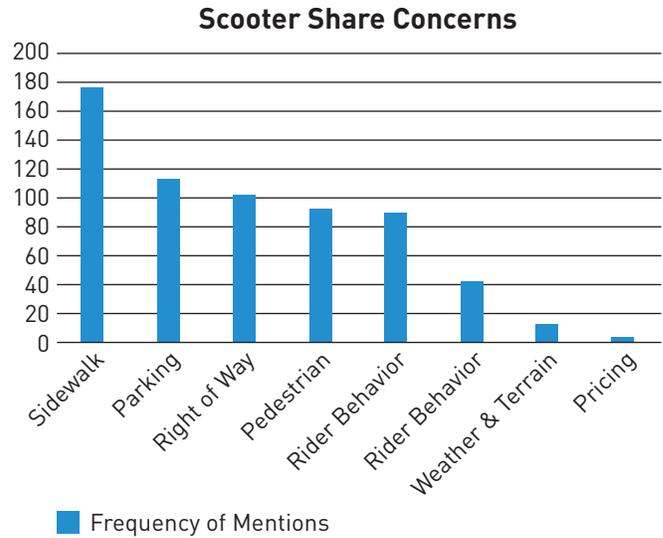


Table 2: Public Open Comment Feedback on Scooter Share Benefits

Sample Comments on Concerns:

*“I have concerns about scooters ending up on sidewalks. As someone who walks to work, and often walks her dog on our sidewalks, pedestrian traffic downtown can be tough enough with just tourists not sharing the sidewalk. Adding scooters would be a safety issue. If we are going to have scooters, it’s needs to *not* be ok sidewalks - in both theory and practice. Personally, I think we need to improve bike lane infrastructure before we even consider adding scooters.”*

“I’m really concerned about the parking of them. The bike schemes are creating a lot of issues with parking/sidewalk space and public spaces. Will the scooters just add to this?”

“As a person who does not have a car and is therefore often a pedestrian or on public transit, the major issue is sidewalk safety. I think powered vehicles should be banned from sidewalks. I think that there should be strict rules for scooter parking so that everyone, including people in wheelchairs, people with strollers and elderly people can safely get around.”

“Lots of people who now walk to the crowded bus stops on 3rd Avenue will now hop on scooters positioned around downtown, walk away from them at the bus stop, and hop on the bus? What would that actually look like?”

“Because of my disability if I were to be hit by a bicycle the extent of my injuries would be much greater than injuries sustained by a person with a normal body. I need to be someplace safe for me. I am concerned that you will make choices based on able-bodied people and wanting scooters to be used in place of cars rather than the traditional use of scooters, for mobility for people with disabilities.”

“Scooters must be well-maintained to have any chance of handling Seattle’s downhill topography and wet climate, and even if they are, downhill on a wet day on a small wheeled with small breaks e-scooter poses a risk far greater than a large wheeled bike with more robust breaking. Specifically, scooters’ small traction patch, high center of gravity, and awkward braking mean they aren’t sufficient to stop on wet and hilly roads.”

Requests

Scooter Share Requests

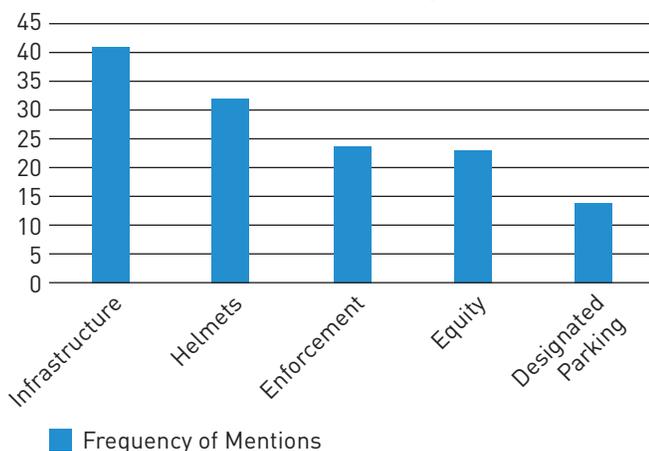


Table 3: Public Open Comment Feedback on Scooter Share Requests

Sample Comments on Requests:

“Passing a safety training course in person and wearing helmets should be required.”

“Provide designated scooter parking in popular locations. Keep pricing low enough to make it affordable for short connections to transit and for lower income population.”

“The city should require scooter companies to place a certain number of scooters in historically underserved/low income areas.”

“Think about limiting scooters in popular areas. The geofencing of scooter speeds in san Diego should be considered for high-density areas like the waterfront.”

We would like to thank all who participated in the survey and emailed comments. The feedback and personal stories reinforced some of the key themes already identified through the stakeholder engagement process. In Phase 2 Outreach, we will visit neighborhoods and communities across the city to share proposed features of the permit and gain insight on local concerns. If you have further comment, please email scootershare@seattle.gov.

PHASE 1: PILOT – GOALS, SCOPE, AND SCALE

Guided by the Mayor’s key objectives for scooter share (a pilot that is safe, equitable, accessible, protects the city, and compliments bike share), the pilot framework below incorporates our learnings from the Phase 1 Outreach and Engagement process. Although we are still in the process of developing additional features of the permit, below, we provide insight into how we are approaching the scope, scale, and framework of this pilot.

PILOT FRAMEWORK

The final step of Phase 1 was to develop a pilot framework. We incorporated feedback and insights from stakeholders and the community and developed a framework that will ensure the scooter share pilot will work well for everyone in Seattle. Below is our outline of that framework.

GOALS

The main purpose of this pilot is to determine if scooter share can further SDOT’s mission of providing safe and affordable access to places and opportunities. Here are the goals that we are considering for pilot evaluation:

- Encourage safety and advance our Vision Zero objectives
- Support an active, healthy, and people-first use of Seattle’s streets
- Ensure affordable and equitable service – particularly for cost-burdened communities of color
- Fill mobility gaps and improve connections to transit for all, including people living with disabilities
- Provide a low-carbon mobility option as part of Seattle’s effort to reduce carbon emissions

- Manage public space to ensure sidewalks are organized and free from obstructions, and do not lessen mobility for blind or low-vision people and other people living with disabilities
- Establish clear rules for scooter share vendors and users with clear and consistent enforcement standards

SCOPE

As we learned with our bike share pilot in 2017, a citywide service area provides real-world insight into how scooter share might support a wide variety of use cases and may be affected by a range of land uses and topographies. While we intend to launch a citywide pilot, we will geo-fence certain areas of the city as low-speed, no-ride, and/or no-park zones including high-pedestrian areas like Pike Place Market, etc. Feedback gleaned from Phase 2 Outreach and Engagement will influence decisions on the locations of these geofenced no-ride and no-park zones, or further refine the scope.

SCALE

The scale of the scooter share program will complement the bike share program and not exceed the total number of micromobility devices dictated by the 2018 bike share environmental review—a total of no more than 20,000 scooter and bike devices. There have always been significantly fewer devices on-street than are permitted at any given time. The scooter share program will likely launch with a fraction of allowable devices, and we will only allow fleet sizes to grow in a safe and manageable way as key metrics of success are met by operators.

We also intend to limit the number of scooter operators in Seattle. Based on learnings from peer cities, limiting the number of operators can have a positive impact on the City's ability to responsibly manage the pilot and provides a market in which operators can thrive.

RIDING LOCATION

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) only allows operation of "motorized foot scooters on roadways, shoulders, and alleys, but not on sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or public paths" ([11.46.010](#)).

Sidewalks: We did not hear a consensus in favor of sidewalk riding to change the existing SMC ban on sidewalk riding. Many pedestrian and disability-rights advocates expressed concern that sidewalk riding could create an unsafe and uncomfortable sidewalk environment for pedestrians and people with disabilities. However, others mentioned the health and safety risks of adding scooter riders into streets shared with cars and the potential issues around inequitable enforcement on sidewalks. Due to several factors, we will not propose a code change and will monitor safety, equity, and compliance throughout the pilot.

Bike Lanes and Public Paths: Based on consensus from the general public and bike advocates, we intend to request a SMC Chapter 11.46 amendment to the City Council to allow motorized foot scooters to operate on bicycle lanes and public paths (multi-use trails).

Streets: While the current SMC allows for scooter riding on "roadways, shoulders, and alleys," SDOT's Vision Zero team and external safety organizations expressed concern for the safety of scooter riders in areas where streets 25 miles per hour and higher do not include bike or public path infrastructure. The Mayor's recent announcement to [begin lowering speeds on the rest of Seattle's major streets to 25 miles per hour](#) increases the areas in which people can safely ride bikes and scooters and aligns with the city's [Vision Zero goal](#).

No Ride Zones: Based on feedback about special areas of the city that may not be appropriate for scooter riding, we reserve the right to geofence no-ride zones in certain areas or streets within the city, such as Pike Place Market.

SCOOTER SPEEDS

Shared motorized foot scooters will not be allowed to provide propulsion above 15 miles per hour. This aligns with our bike share permit and scooter speeds allowed in peer cities.

SCOOTER SAFETY FEATURES

Based on concerns regarding Seattle's unique topography and riding conditions, we will require operators to deploy scooters with robust braking systems, front/rear lights, and encourage larger wheels, seats, integrated helmets, and other features.

PARKING

Parking was one of the biggest concerns for stakeholders and the public. We are considering the following elements to address concerns around safe parking.

Parking Location: Like bike share, scooters must be parked upright on hard surfaces in the landscape/furniture zone of sidewalks when parked in the public right-of-way. If there is no sidewalk, scooters must park in a location that does not impede street use or obstruct pedestrians.

Parking Infrastructure: By year-end 2019, we will be within the final stages of delivering an additional 1,500 bike and scooter parking spaces across the city. We plan to continue investing in additional parking infrastructure with funds from scooter share permit fees.

No Park Zones: We reserve the right to geofence no-park zones in certain areas or streets within the city, like around ferry terminals, on moveable bridges, or heavy use areas.

Parking Enforcement: We will conduct audits to ensure that scooters are properly parked and is exploring ways to equitably issue fines to riders that park scooters incorrectly. This aligns with peer city approaches to enforcement, e.g. the City of Portland.

Find-It-Fix-It: In response to feedback regarding the difficulty of reporting incorrectly parked bike share bikes, we plan to integrate scooter and bike share parking reporting into the Find-It-Fix-It mobile application.

EDUCATION

The [CDC and Austin Public Health](#) joint 2018 study revealed that one third of scooter injuries happened during a users' first ride. This is most likely due to rider unfamiliarity with this new form of mobility and a lack of safe riding knowledge. While most cities mandate that operators provide safety education, it is often limited to the early stages of the pilot and lacks a citywide approach. We plan to utilize part of the permit fee to cooperatively facilitate ongoing rider education programming throughout the city, with a focus on safe riding and parking etiquette.

SAFETY STUDY

Due to interest from safety experts, we are exploring ways to conduct a safety study on the impacts of the scooter share pilot on users and non-users of the devices.

EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Transportation equity groups expressed a desire to see more alternative forms of transportation in underserved areas. Like the existing bike share permit, we will require a similar geographic distribution requirement of scooters throughout low-income and communities of color in our city.

Low-Income Plans and Access to Unbanked and No-Data Populations

Like current bike share permit requirements, the scooter share pilot will require low-income plans, access for the unbanked, and those without mobile data plans. We will assess the "ease of access" of operator programs within their application process.

DISABILITY ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

We intend to continue investment in successful programs that provide access to people living with physical disabilities, like [Outdoors for All](#). Additionally, we will encourage deployment of scooters with seats that can be used by people who cannot ride a traditional foot scooter.

PRESERVATION OF BIKE SHARE

Finally, we want to preserve Seattle's successful bike share program- the largest permitted, free floating bike share system in the country. Recognizing that the bike share industry is evolving, scooter share should act as a complement and not a substitute for a bike share system. We intend to use the permit process to encourage the operations of both bikes and scooters and Seattle.

As previously noted, we have yet to finalize the permit requirements and application. We hope this information provides insights into how we are approaching the design of the pilot permit.

The staff here at SDOT thanks everyone for their participation in the process, thus far, and looks forward to releasing a scooter share permit that speaks to the needs of the city. Should you wish to provide additional comments, please email us at scootershare@seattle.gov.