



# ELECTRIC SCOOTER POLICY

*Adopted July, 2019*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WABA supports electric shared scooters as a transportation option in the Washington region that provides riders with a low-emission, affordable and on-demand travel option as an alternative to private or shared cars. WABA will continue to advocate on behalf of the bicycling public and take positions on electric scooters in the framework of this policy that enhance bicycling. WABA's goal is to improve the conditions and safety for people who walk, bike, and scoot throughout the region, and this policy will inform future policy positions and advocacy work.

## MISSION RELEVANCY

The mission of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is to create a healthy, more livable region by:

- promoting bicycling for fun, fitness, and affordable transportation;
- advocating for better bicycling conditions and transportation choices for a healthier environment; and

- educating children, adults, and motorists about safe bicycling.

The vision for a healthier and more livable region means promoting safe and environmentally sustainable modes of transportation. WABA promotes bicycling which compliments walking and transit ridership. A region where biking, walking and transit ridership are fully prioritized would benefit from healthier residents, a cleaner environment, and an efficient and safe transportation system. It is within this greater context that WABA established this policy to guide future decisions about the role of light, low speed motorized vehicles as a new form of available transportation.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

WABA developed this policy over the first half of 2019 and adopted the policy in July 2019. WABA gathered policies and positions from other local and national advocacy organizations. A public survey was distributed to WABA members and supporters with 232 people providing feedback. Corporate partners and

business members, including those businesses who operate dockless vehicles, were not involved in developing this policy. A proposed policy was developed with input from the staff and board members and the final version was adopted by the Board of Directors.

#### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Light, low speed motorized vehicles, or defined as “personal mobility devices” (“PMD”) in the District of Columbia are lightweight, electric battery powered, vehicles which have a low top speed limit. Currently, the most common PMD for public usage is an electric scooter as operated by Lime, Spin, Bird, Skip, Jump or similar company.

- The District of Columbia defines a PMD as “a motorized propulsion device designed to transport one person or a self-balancing, two non-tandem wheeled device, designed to transport only one person with an electric propulsion system”, D.C. Official Code § 50-2201.02 (12).22
- In Maryland and Virginia, PMDs are defined as “Electronic Personal Assistive Mobility

Device” -- Maryland Code § 21-501.1 and Virginia Code § 46.2-908.1

- Compared to large, gas-powered trucks or cars, PMD are a more space efficient, safer and sustainably powered vehicle for transporting people or goods.
- PMD usage may increase public support for safer streets designs, increased public funding for walking and biking infrastructure which benefits people who ride bicycles and walk.
- PMDs may provide a more inclusive transportation mode to individuals with a disability as compared to bicycling, walking or driving.
- PMD usage may reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips or ride-hailing trips but also may replace walking, biking and transit trips.
- Poor public policy, operation, and usage of PMDs can create barriers to people with disabilities and people walking.



## WABA'S ELECTRIC SCOOTER POLICY:

We support programs, policy and regulation that create equitable access to PMDs for historically, transportation-disadvantaged populations.

We support research with the goal of injury reduction and prevention for riders and safe operation of PMDs.

We support programs, policy and regulation that requires public data sharing from operators that protects the privacy of users.

We support increased infrastructure that would support the demand for both bicycling and other personal mobility devices.

We support personal mobility device policy and regulations that provide for safe and efficient operation:

- PMDs should be allowed to operate in all places that bicycles are legally allowed to operate such as, but not limited to, public streets, trails, bike lanes, shared-use paths.
- PMDs should be prohibited from riding on sidewalks where bicycle riding is also prohibited.

PMDs and bicycles should not be barred from safely using sidewalks adjacent to high speed streets and roads.

PMDs should operate under the same rights and responsibilities as bicyclists with regards to the rules of the road including, but not limited to:

- Obligation to yield the right of way to pedestrians and persons with disabilities at crosswalks and in shared public spaces such as trails and sidewalks where it's legal to ride.
- Operation in a safe manner
- Ride in the direction of traffic

The electric propulsion systems should be designed to propel PMDs to operate at a safe and prevailing average speed for the place in which they are intended to operate:

- Maximum speed of 10 mph for sidewalks and other pedestrians places
- Maximum speed of 15 mph for shared trails, multi-use paths, bike lanes, and streets.

Publically available PMDs should be safe and well-maintained including

- Operating brakes, front and rear lights, and with no structural deficiencies
- Timely repair of damaged PMDs or removal of inoperable devices, including easy-to-report systems for the public
- Policy and infrastructure for safe parking of devices to maintain public rights of way for pedestrians
- Well-built vehicles to withstand a minimum of one-year of heavy usage

PMDs should be considered a category of vulnerable road user with the associated rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, PMDs should be added to the District of Columbia Motor Vehicle Collision Recovery Act of 2015 and possible changes to Maryland and Virginia legislation regarding recovery standards.