

August 15, 2018

Date: 8.15.18
Submitted in PWGR Committee
Council File No: 17-1125
Item No.: 3
Deputy: public

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Public Works and Gang Reduction Committee
City of Los Angeles

Attn: Bob Blumenfeld, Joe Buscaino, Nury Martinez, David Ryu, Monica Rodriguez
Re: Council File 17-1125

Honorable Councilmembers,

While motorized scooters leave a carbon footprint demonstrably dirtier than that of human-powered "last-mile" vehicles, they can still help to relieve urban traffic congestion and, thereby, help reduce fossil fuel emissions. There is no question about their positive potential.

Recent introduction of dockless electric scooters (e-scooters) into many cities has raised many questions - safety, accessibility and well-regulated motoring topping the list. Human enforcement of personal transport regulation, both with autos and other vehicles - including human-powered ones, is always an overwhelming challenge. The beauty of pre-installed safety and regulatory tools is self-evident, both as to their effectiveness and the relief they provide from undue burden on law enforcement and emergency medical service providers. Automobile mirrors, seat belts and other protective and preventive tools serve as universal examples.

Corporate e-scooter operators know that existing software can protect riders and the public while accurately preventing violations from occurring. So do thousands upon thousands - millions - of information technology professionals, any number of whom can easily and timely develop relevant protective tools. LADOT appears to understand this as well. Indeed, it's already been done: In the above-referenced Council File today sits a July 12 submission by a purveyor of just such technology. That letter's illuminations affirm the public benefit that relevant software can provide today - if only e-scooter operators would deploy it.

Just as government was called on to require automobile manufacturers to deploy safety tools, you are called on today by public safety and necessity to require safety tool deployment from e-scooter operators. **E-SCOOTER OPERATOR LICENSING ENTITLEMENTS MUST DEPEND ON OPERATOR PROVISION OF SELF-REGULATING SAFETY TOOLS.** There is no question about their viability and their positive potential.

Los Angeles wants to be a leader in diverse alternative transportation. The way to do this is not to run headlong into a divisive abyss of frustration and inevitable lawsuits but to define and implement a plan. At least half a dozen US cities have imposed temporary bans on e-scooters until such time as relevant regulation could be crafted. To lead, Los Angeles must draw from the experience of others. I say this understanding how far-reaching LADOT's research has been to date.

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As our elected representatives, you are responsible to do justice to that work.

Mr. Koretz's recent motion provides breathing room to do that planning. **NO ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PASS 17-1125 UNTIL MR. KORETZ'S MOTION IS FULLY CONSIDERED.**

What's currently wrong with 17-1125? The public comment process (gulp!) is a good place to start with a reminder: During my past service on Venice Neighborhood Council's (VNC's) Land Use and Planning Committee, I learned the fallacy of "straw votes." Hundreds of virtually identical comments tell only the convenience with which someone can click on a keyboard or keypad. Buried in the Council File's mountain of repetition are several individually-crafted comments, with positive regulation considerations.

Among them is one from VNC's Ocean Front Walk Committee Chair, Colleen Saro - a real-life expert in the issues of e-scooter safety, rider behavior, enforcement practice and overall use. Her six recommendations are on-target. Some of them are ideal for software implementation.

Russell Howe's letter expresses obvious and astute observations shared by hundreds or thousands of your constituents.

Comments from helmet user David Brundige and Obie Garcia also provide valid and valuable input that is worth folding into your considerations, as is expertise from such organizations as Los Angeles Walks, Walk Long Beach, California Walks, Walk San Francisco and others.

You may be aware of Santa Monica's newly-released recommendations relating to its pilot program

(https://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/PCD/Transportation/Shared%20Mobility%20Selection%20Committee%20Memo_09072018_Final.pdf). I strongly recommend that you assign committee staffers to review and report on it - again, **BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION TO PASS 17-1125.**

Finally, please refer to several attached photos, selected from a document which can be viewed via the following link: http://www.veniceworks.net/scooters/1807_Scooters.pdf

The first of the document's two photo sets presents examples of witnessed violations of one or more municipal, state and/or Federal safety, public right-of-way and/or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements along the following Venice, CA, route: Venice Blvd. west from Oakwood Ave. to Ocean Front Walk; Venice Beach and its bicycle path; Ocean Front Walk and other prohibited areas between Windward and Venice Blvd.

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The second photo set documents approximately ten percent of an estimated two thousand-plus violations witnessed and documented along similar routes between July 4 and July 25, 2018.

For every documented violation witnessed, at least three that were witnessed went undocumented. For every violation or combination of violations witnessed, some unknown higher number is believed to have occurred inside and outside the subject area.


These and additional images were obtained during several one-to-two-hour walking tours through the subject area; they represent a significantly small sample of safety and regulatory violations occurring each day in that area.

N.B.: While the referenced photo material may help facilitate review for pending regulation, it simply displays examples of the broad range of violations along one general walking route, and should not be construed to represent the ratio of, say, tandem riding instances to unsafe scooter parking instances - much less an estimated percent of total violations (absent aggregation of available data from e-scooter operators and their customers). Only a well-monitored, pre-licensing pilot program can do that.

Updates to this catalog can be requested by contacting e.scooter@veniceworks.net.

Thank you for your public service. Please help to restore the necessary balance between public benefit and private enterprise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jed Pauker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jed Pauker
Venice

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7/9/2018 3:37 PM



7/21/2018



the scooter on the left required repositioning to enable wheelchair passage.

7/22/2018 12:57 PM



7/15/2018 8:44 AM

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7/4/2018 2:38 PM



7/25/2018 2:02 PM



7/6/2018 7:45 PM



7/27/2018 7:09 PM