

Benado, Tony

From: George Porter <georgeporter@earthlink.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 11:54 AM
To: All Council
Subject: Commission On Aging stance on 12/4, consent item #8 (adopt an electric shared scooter program)

Councilmembers,

Please find below the letter the CoA crafted and passed regarding item 8 on 12/4 consent calendar. It has already been sent through our secretary, just making sure.

George Porter, Chair

To: City Council
 From: The Commission on Aging
 Re: Support for Scooter Share Pilot Program but only within limitations and if well regulated.

Honorable Councilmembers,

We on the Commission on Aging (the CoA) support Scooter Share Programs in general - it is a very useful addition to the transportation toolbox - and a local pilot program specifically, but only within carefully defined limits and conditions. We have serious public safety, equal access as well as economic concerns surrounding e-scooters presence on our streets, the most troubling of these being that (according to data now coming in from various sources) those demographics which have the least to directly gain from these particular EPTDs - elders, the disabled, school aged kids and parents with young children in tow - are the same ones that, as pedestrians, have the greatest risk of being injured by a scooter itself or in some scooter related chain-of-events accident. This is particularly distressing in the case of elders, the disabled and young children where the possibility that the accident could be "life-changing" is much greater.

Since the likelihood of these accidents and everyday inconveniences increase greatly where there is heavier vehicular and pedestrian congestion, we strongly feel that certain areas and streets should simply be off limits to scooters for the time being - our Downtown area, the North Shattuck corridor and the Elmwood commercial strip the most notable among these. We sincerely fear that without these restrictions the groups mentioned above will not only be put at risk, but will begin shunning those areas out of concerns for personal safety or simply because going there is no longer "worth the trouble". Over time these groups could essentially be driven out of places core to quality of life and this is a serious equal access problem. And what about scooter rider's rights? The vast, vast majority of those able to ride scooters can easily walk a block or two to a destination or find alternative routes around geofenced areas or thoroughfares and this minor inconvenience is far outweighed by public safety concerns and the need to protect our "commons".

Though public safety and equal access are our primary concerns, we on the CoA are also concerned about the cost to the municipality of enforcing the traffic laws and municipal rules surrounding scooter usage. Moving violations will, of course, always be the province of our police and the resulting tickets the responsibility of the scooter rider, but we strongly feel that parking violations and un-ticketed intrusions into geofenced areas (this can be tracked) and the resulting fines should be the responsibility of the scooter-share companies themselves and any remuneration from renters for these violations be determined by the companies' own policies (violators' identities are kept private except in the case of hit-and-run accidents or other instances that might lead to suit).

Our list of concerns goes on and we will continue to present these to the Transportation Commission in the hopes that we can work together to have these addressed. For now - and in general terms - we urge the Council to err on the side of caution in this instance, to provide strict regulations that at some later date may be relaxed. In addition, the proposed Scooter-Share Pilot Program is not like some computer program that can be launched and the unexpected glitches worked out - the actual health and safety of Berkeley Citizens (including the scooter riders) is at stake - and we believe it more than just prudent for the Transportation Commission to be given the time necessary to carefully consider all the possible problems before launching it. We also feel that input from the community is necessary and that the issue be brought up in "Berkeley Considers" on the City's website as well as providing opportunities for face to face discussion in "townhall" venues.

Thanks for taking what we've expressed here into consideration,

Commission on Aging