The City of Santa Ana

Electric Scooter Pilot Program

Background & Problem

In the late Fall of 2018 electric scooter company Lime dropped off a handful of electric scooters on the streets of Santa Ana. The following morning Public Works employees scrambled to impound the scooters. Shortly after another scooter company, Bird, did the same. Although these companies were operating illegally without the proper permit their tactics proved effective at beginning a conversation among policymakers at the City, who were forced to respond. Santa Ana had no existing laws to regulate electric scooters and had to make changes to its municipal code. Meanwhile scooter companies continued to operate without licenses posing safety risks to riders, pedestrians, and motorists. New rulemaking authority was delegated to the Public Works Department that began to draft a regulatory framework. Public Works looked to other cities across the country that too had dealt with the emergence of electric scooters.

City Council Approves a Pilot Program

After a review of city government responses to electric scooters the programs set up in Santa Monica, CA and Portland, OR which served as models for Santa Ana. Public Works sent a proposal to the City Council and a resolution was passed on December 18, 2018 updating the municipal code and establishing a pilot program to achieve the following goals:

- Economic sustainability through revenue sharing
- Positive community outcomes to serve the mobility needs of Santa Ana Residents
- Data sharing agreements for program evaluation and rule enforcement

Scooter Quick Facts

- No Helmet Required to Ride
- No Riding on the Sidewalk
- Usually costs $1 to rent and $0.15 for every minute after.

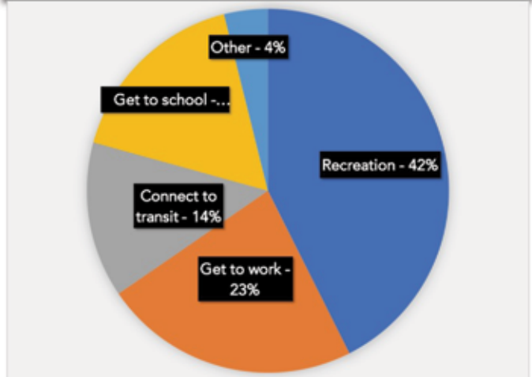
Pictures: Cory Wilkerson

A Survey to Evaluate the Pilot

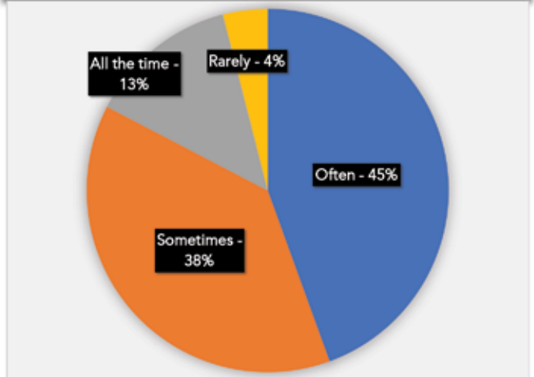
Partnering with Lime and Bird, Public Works developed a survey in both Spanish and English to gain a qualitative measure of the pilot program. According to electric scooter companies and their advocates: scooters provide an environmentally friendly alternative to cars and support mass transit by providing a means to close the first/last mile gap. The survey set out to test these claims. Of particular interest to Santa Ana, the 4th most densely populated city in the country, was the rate at which scooters were replacing car trips and reasons for scooter use.

Survey Results

Reason for Scooter Use

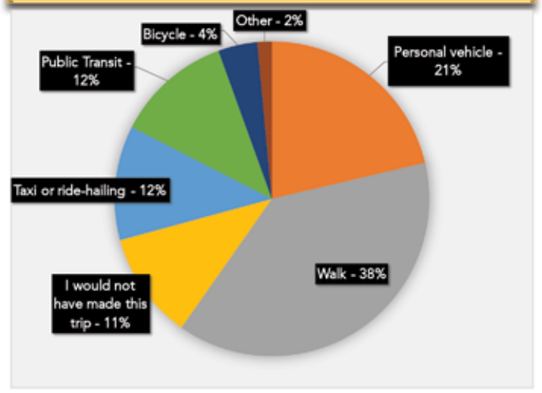


Future Car Trip Replacement

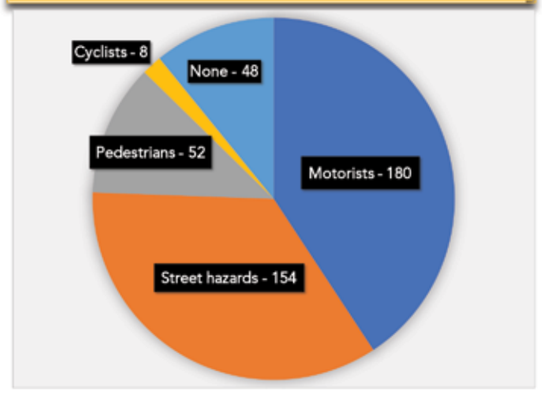


Data: Lime & Bird

Trip Completion Without Scooter



Primary Concern When Riding



The results of the survey suggest in the future a number of Santa Ana residents would adopt electric scooters as a mode of transportation with varying frequency. When asked about personal safety residents responded positively to bike lanes and other forms of active transportation infrastructure. Limitations of this data come from the brevity of the pilot and survey period, 3 months and about 10 days respectively. This resulted in a small sample size of a little over 500 respondents per question which is ≈ 1.5% of Santa Ana's total population. Prolonging the pilot to collect more data is encouraged to obtain a more representative sample. Related to representation, only about 10 respondents opted to take the survey in Spanish. This indicates a large portion of Santa Ana's population did either not participate in the pilot, report their experience, or both. Overcoming this gap in representation could be achieved through targeted outreach. Despite these shortcomings, this data provides insight to policymakers in Santa Ana and beyond whose goals are to reduce traffic fatalities and vehicle emissions. Electric scooters may be effective as part of a larger strategy in meeting these goals.

Prepared By: Maurice Tafolla-Cunningham