


Scooter Share Policy Directive



To: Powered Scooter Share Program Staff and Interested Parties
From: Jeffrey Tumlin, Director of Transportation 
Date: July 30, 2020
Subject: Powered Scooter Share Permit Program

This policy directive provides updated guidance for staff regarding the expansion of Powered Scooter Share fleets to allow for growth based on success meeting key service, compliance and equity goals. These updates are particularly important at this time, as we plan for recovery of San Francisco’s transportation system from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Micromobility will play an increasingly important role in the transportation network, as San Francisco emerges from the Public Health Officer’s Order issued on March 16, 2020 requiring that residents remain in place, with the only exception being for essential needs (Shelter in Place or SIP). The SFMTA wants to create the conditions for safe and equitable Powered Scooter Share expansion that aligns with our [Transportation Recovery Plan](#). The revised expansion guidelines will allow scooter share permittees to serve more neighborhoods and provide a higher level of service, while maintaining a focus on equity, safety, rider accountability, service quality, and customer service. Additionally, while all scooter share permittees have submitted cleaning plans, as required by the Permit Terms and Conditions, because sanitizing has taken on even more significance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff is seeking additional guidance from the SFMTA’s Departmental Operations Center and other City public health experts. Permittees will be required to update their plans, as applicable, based on any additional guidance.

Background and Current Powered Scooter Share Program:

When scooters appeared on San Francisco streets in the spring of 2018, public concerns initially focused on how scooter programs negatively impacted safety and accessibility of San Francisco’s sidewalks due to illegal sidewalk riding and scooters left in locations that impeded pedestrian access and created tripping hazards.

Based on observations, community concerns, and the potential for operational conflicts, along with San Francisco’s past experience regulating shared mobility systems, the Board of Supervisors and the SFMTA initiated regulation of scooter services. The Board of Supervisors passed legislation that authorized the SFMTA to implement a 12-month Powered Scooter Share Pilot Program to address the significant concerns observed during the initial scooter deployment.

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The 2019-2020 Powered Scooter Share Permit Program incorporates lessons learned from the 12-month Powered Scooter Share Pilot as well as the SFMTA's 18-month Stationless Bikeshare Permit Program with the goal of create a more useful, safe, and equitable citywide program.

The current program provides strong guidance and clear requirements regarding key issues such as the parking requirements, distribution of devices, operational sustainability, community engagement processes and data sharing and rider accountability.

As directed in the 2019-2020 Powered Scooter Share Permit Program memorandum dated September 27, 2019, the current Powered Scooter Share Program began on October 15, 2019, when the SFMTA issued permits to four companies, Spin, Scoot, Lime, and Jump, to operate for a one-year term. Key requirements of the Powered Scooter Share Program include:

- All scooters must have a lock-to device
- Clear parking guidelines and parking enforcement
- Complaints database
- Low-income plan
- Bike rack fee
- Adaptive Scooter Pilot
- Community Engagement Plan
- Labor Harmony Provision

Micromobility and Transportation Recovery Planning:

All permittees are currently authorized to operate up to 1,000 devices. From the beginning of the program until the Shelter In Place (SIP) order went into effect (10/15/19-3/16/20), on average there were 6,700 total rides taken per day.

With the SIP in effect, Powered Scooters were deemed to be an essential service and were therefore able to continue operations. Of the four permittees, only Spin continued operations throughout the entire period, although Lime and Scoot have recently resumed operations. The impact of the SIP resulted in a 90% drop in total rides, down to about 730 scooter rides/day.

The widespread effects related to the COVID-19 emergency has drastically affected all modes of transportation, including personal vehicles, transportation network companies, public transportation and the taxi industry. Most estimates report revenue across all transportation modes is down approximately 90%.

With physical distancing and sanitization being of the utmost importance, a micromobility sector that provides access and minimizes transmission will take on an even more important role in the coming months. Along with the anticipated changes in transportation,

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such as increased private automobile traffic and reduced Muni service and ridership, micromobility will offer an important transportation option. Therefore, as part of SFMTA's Transportation Recovery Planning process, staff has updated the Distribution Guidelines, including fleet expansion requirements (see revised Appendix 5). The Distribution Guidelines have been updated to allow for expansion based on metrics that have been revised to reflect the new operational environment due to COVID-19 and will be incorporated into the permits.

Scooter Share Fleet Expansion Update:

The scooter fleet expansion criteria have been adjusted to adapt to current realities and to bolster the potential for scooter share service as part of the Transportation Recovery Plan. All expansion requests are conditioned on the permittee's continued demonstrated compliance with permit terms and conditions as determined by the SFMTA.

The scooter fleet expansion criteria include the following key changes:

- Minimum fleet deployment – permittees must deploy at least 70% of their permitted fleet size for 15 out of 30 consecutive days (changed from a minimum of 80% permitted fleet size for 25 out of 30 days).
- Elimination of the trips per scooter per day requirement - Given the uncertainties during the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership may fluctuate based on status of recovery. Also, there is an inherent incentive for scooter companies to maximize their ridership, and therefore this is not considered essential to regulate as part of fleet expansion.
- Complaint Database compliance – Provision of monthly complaint database, with a particular emphasis on meaningful complaint resolution information (subject to SFMTA audit rights).
- Compliance with permit terms - Provision of quarterly compliance reports to the SFMTA, which document compliance with the permit Term and Conditions to the Agency's satisfaction, with a particular emphasis on rider accountability requirements.
- Adaptive Scooter Pilot data– demonstration of increased number of users and/or trips as a result of the Adaptive Scooter Pilot.

The fleet expansion process has been designed to ensure that as more scooters are approved for service, more San Francisco neighborhoods will be served. We continue to work to ensure that scooters are not clustered in the downtown core. Details of expansion include:

- Service expectations are defined at different fleet sizes, specifically for expanded fleets of 1,500, 2,000, and 2,500 scooters
 - Minimum thresholds in Key Neighborhoods scale with expanded fleet sizes

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- Fleet cap in downtown core scales with expanded fleet sizes (400 device caps per 1,000 permitted scooters, increasing by 100 for each additional 500 permitted scooters)
- Service area expands with larger fleet sizes; Key Neighborhoods with their own minimum thresholds will be added as fleet size/service area expands
 - New Key Neighborhoods for permittees with 1,500 scooters: Inner/Central Richmond (west of Divisadero) and Inner/Central Sunset & Haight
 - Citywide service area (excluding Presidio) begins at 2,000 scooters
 - New Key Neighborhoods for permittees with 2,000 scooters: Richmond District (entire), Sunset District (entire)
 - New Key Neighborhoods for permittees with 2,500 scooters: Presidio (pending agreement with Presidio Trust)

Scooter Share Enforcement:

As the SFMTA considers expansion of scooter share service, we know that robust enforcement and increased transparency of SFMTA's oversight functions are important tools to continue to manage the scooter share program effectively. Scooter share enforcement is critical for public safety and accountability, and I am directing staff to:

- Better utilize existing enforcement tools, such as compliance audit of permit terms and conditions
- Increase on-street enforcement
- Target on-street enforcement based on complaint data, including analysis of complaint patterns rather than only responses to individual complaints.
- Perform enforcement sweeps of targeted locations
- Publish enforcement statistics monthly

Staff may adjust the above enforcement activities, as necessary, to address changing conditions.