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HOW TO MAKE UKRAINIAN CITY FRIENDLY WITH A SCOOTER

Vernyhora O., student

Ye. Voronova, Associate Professor

Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University

At the beginning of the summer of 2021, a new problem appeared in Ukrainian cities, the most unexpected of all: the electric scooter.

This attitude is caused by the behavior of many users when driving on sidewalks, they can be extremely unpredictable indeed. emotional tension has indeed reached a certain peak.

The micro mobility of future cities sounds almost revolutionary, so it's time to discuss what scooters and other micro mobility devices can do to help and hinder.

There is one problem in the transportation system of any large enough city that has not yet been solved in our country. This is especially the problem of the so-called last mile, the very distance that makes you refuse to travel by public transport. Because no matter how fast, convenient, comfortable, and modern the subway is, you still have to drive or walk to the station, and then from the station to your destination.

A person's natural ability to solve the last mile problem is limited to about 15 minutes of walking. This is the maximum time a person is willing to travel on their own. The solution was found in the form of electric scooter sharing, which instantly flooded our cities, but the cities themselves were not ready for it.

In China in 2017, there were similar problems, where cities could not withstand the rapid development of bike-sharing systems and bicycles were simply dumped in piles on the streets. In California, where massive scooter sharing appeared in 2017, thousands of scooters immediately flooded the cities, leading to the service's immense popularity in some and hatred in others. Rallies were held, scooters were run over by

cars, smashed, and drowned in the ocean. As a result, San Francisco authorities banned scooters for some time until clear rules of the game were developed.

But no matter how this explosive growth of scooter sharing in China, the United States, or Europe may look, it is not actually the cause of the problems, but rather a side effect. On the contrary, they can solve the problem of the last mile.

First, let's define what micro-mobility means.

In general, the term does not have a single answer, so we need to start from the tasks that these means are supposed to perform. The conditional last mile is a maximum of 4 kilometers and 10-30 minutes of travel time. These are the distances at which mainline public transportation and private cars are ineffective. To cover such distances, an average speed of 10-15 kilometers per hour is sufficient.

And micromobility vehicles are types of individual transport with physical dimensions and speed characteristics comparable to a regular bicycle. These are the parameters that a good old bicycle and most modern scooters meet.

So what will happen if more people start using such transportation? Obviously, there will be a shift from other modes of transportation.

In 2019, the consulting company McKinsey took up this issue by calculating a model based on the example of Munich, which has a population of one and a half million. They studied how the share of micromobility in the city will change in 10 years and by what means of transport.

In 2019, about half of all trips are made by private cars, the share of public transport is also significant, and micromobility takes no more than 10 percent, with sharing taking a fraction of a percent.

But by 2030, the share of public transport will change only slightly, and micromobility will reach thirty percent, mainly at the expense of automobile transport. People will switch from cars, and there is a fairly simple explanation for this. Today, cars are not convenient in the city in almost all respects. It takes a long time to drive, it is expensive, and driving is very stressful. But it is the only mode of transportation that solves the problem of the last mile.

60 percent of all car trips in the city do not exceed 8 kilometers per hour, and many of these trips are concentrated in the city center. In this way, last-mile transport can completely replace the car all the way from point A to point B and free city centers from cars.

And what does all this shift from cars to micromobility mean for cities and their residents?

First, it means reducing traffic congestion.

Second, an increase in the share of micromobility vehicles will lead to a radical improvement in the environmental situation.

In today's cities, more than 80 percent of all pollution comes from cars. Reducing motorization has a tremendous effect, and literally saves lives. For Munich, for example, this will lead to a reduction in CO₂ emissions by 80 thousand tons per year, which means 40 thousand cars that will no longer pollute the city.

This also includes the thesis of improving the health of society.

This is less true for electric scooters, but a regular bike helps burn calories and improves heart function. According to a study conducted in the Netherlands, mass cycling can reduce mortality by 15,500 people annually, which has an economic effect of 19 billion euros. And this effect is the opposite of what hours spent in traffic jams take away from our health.

And fourthly, when we talk about the danger of an accident with a scooter, we completely forget that in a collision at their speed, you can get light injuries, but in a collision with a car, people die.

These are all great benefits that we can gain from progress, but there are indeed problems, or rather one problem: organizing urban space in such a way that micromobility is efficient and safe.

There is a solution, and most cities have already followed it, namely bicycle infrastructure, which is ideally suited to the last mile challenge.

Separate bike lanes, which in Ukraine are still perceived as a means of flirting with progressivism, but do not solve real transportation problems.

In the Netherlands, they also appeared for a reason, based on the understanding that due to the difference in speed, a bicycle may not be safe enough in the general traffic with pedestrians and on roads.

This is how an intermediate option emerged: a bicycle lane separated from pedestrians, which allows for efficient speed and significantly reduces the risk of collisions.

Micromobility has the potential to revolutionize the transportation system of our cities. It allows people to switch from cars, which will reduce congestion, improve the environment, save money, and improve people's health.

However, for micromobility to be truly safe and effective, bicycle infrastructure is needed. A smart approach to implementing micromobility in the city can be a step towards a more convenient, environmentally friendly, and safe life for citizens.

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