Little Electric Vehicles and their integration into walking communities

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GPH 317 Transportation Geography

What is a Little Electric Vehicle (LEV)?

A little electric vehicle is a mode of transportation that is powered by electric motors and batteries. Many of us have seen LEVs in our day to day lives. Some view LEVs as serious modes of transportation and others view them as novelties. LEVs have been around for a long time in the form of the mobility scooter and electric wheelchair. Some things that make LEVs unique forms of transportation are that they require no license to operate either on roadways or walking areas. They have many forms ranging from the E-Bike to the mobility scooter to the Hoverboard.

What is a walking community

A truly walkable community encourages destination walking, not just recreational walking. This means that a wide range of services must be accessible on foot. The design of the streets and pathways encourage pleasant and safe travel. Access to public transportation is another criteria for a walking community. These things are parts of walking communities. In order to integrate LEVs into these communities some things must be assessed. Many LEVs are low riding vehicles with smaller tires, so this means that the surface conditions of the pathway will be key in making this vehicle a serious option for travel. Many walking communities have sidewalks, but they are often not used because they are in disrepair or general bad condition. Look at how people move in your neighborhoods and see if the side walks impact, they way they move and travel. In my neighborhood the elderly are forced to walk on the street becasue e it is a flat even surface opposed to the sidewalk that is warped and cluttered. These conditions impact the ability of LEVs like mobility scooters to operate safely. Some LEVs are robust enough to handle somewhat degraded surface conditions.

Why are LEVs good?

LEVs can maintain and enhance the mobility of people without burning fossil fuels.

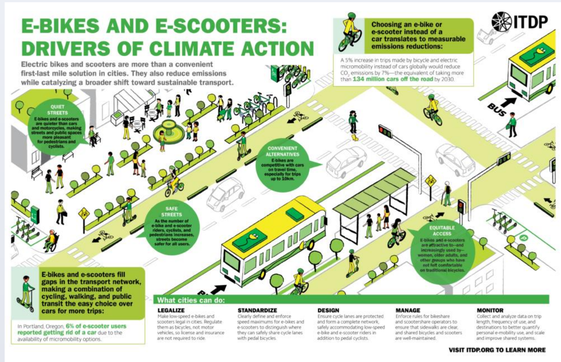
LEVs take up very little room.

Can allow for faster travel in automobile choked environments.

Brings mobility to the disabled or mobility impaired.

Integration into walking communities.

For the integration of LEVs into people's everyday lives to be safe and effective, planners dealing with transportation should entertain the idea of integrating dedicated space for LEVs. Well maintained pathways that can accommodate both pedestrians, bicyclists, and LEV users would be a great place to start.



The use of LEVs could have a huge impact on reducing the amount of carbon dioxide that is produced by individuals if the infrastructure to support them was available.

This infrastructure could be as simple as a bike lane on a road or a well-maintained sidewalk. Since there is no Planet B, LEVs in walking communities could be a huge step in helping us to mitigate the damage of air pollution and traffic wile keeping us mobile. Perhaps it is time to dedicate space to LEVs. the space of a person in the four-wheel car equals the space of 4 LEV users on the road. It's not fair. And in many cases, the 4-seat car takes only 1 person. It's a waste of road, oil & clean air resource and a real booster to the environmental pollution. And the electric LEV rider has the same or even higher speed as the car drivers in the busy city streets.

Conclusion

LEVs are becoming more popular every day because of the obvious benefits. Mobility that is less polluting in various ways is one way we can contribute to healing the damage that is caused by burning fossil fuels. In our communities we should reexamine the way we travel and perhaps start to push for the infrastructure to make waking communities not only walkable but also accommodating for the LEVs. Many locations across the globe are embracing the LEVs. In densely packed cities the LEV is a great choice to commute to public transportation and get around. The personal LEV can be a potent tool to reduce pollution and it dose require the infrastructure and planning to make it realistically viable and more accommodating.

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