

Car congestion outweighs scooter scourge on city streets

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Nicholas Klein, assistant professor of city and regional planning, next to an improperly parked car in Collegetown. Credit: John Munson/Cornell University

"Scooter clutter" has been a concern amplified by media reports in urban areas where micromobility has entered the landscape, with large numbers of dockless scooters and shared e-bikes on city streets and sidewalks. But a recent study finds that motor vehicles are still the main offender by far when it comes to blocking access by other travelers.



Research co-authored by Nicholas Klein, assistant professor of <u>city</u> and <u>regional planning</u> at Cornell University, offers data on the impacts of scooters and bikeshare vehicles in five American cities.

The research is translatable and replicable, to help inform cities' efforts in reimagining public streets and sidewalks. Some cities are considering new parking regulations and seeking other planning and policy solutions for these shared scooters and bikes, which have been introduced to more than 100 cities since 2018.

A paper, published in *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, investigated <u>scooter</u>, bike and car parking behavior in Austin, Texas; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco and Santa Monica, California; and Washington, D.C. The research was led by Anne Brown of the University of Oregon School of Planning, Public Policy and Management.

Researchers collected 3,666 observations of e-scooters, bikes, motor vehicles and "sidewalk objects" such as sandwich boards. Research assistants recorded parking behavior on both sides of a busy commercial corridor for three days, eight hours each day. They observed parked cars, scooters and bicycles, as well as sidewalk furniture including advertising, construction materials and sidewalk-mounted elevator or stair-access doors.

The study found that parking noncompliance rates across the five cities were far higher for motor vehicles (24.7% of 2,631 motor vehicles observed) than for micromobility vehicles (0.8% of 865 scooter and bike observations).

Food delivery and ride-hailing vehicles accounted for a disproportionate number of improper parking incidents impeding access or mobility for other travelers, Klein said. Most of these violations occurred while



dropping off or picking up people or food, including double parking, occupying "No Parking" or restricted areas and blocking driveways.

The findings suggest that the presence of micromobility companies and other technology-enabled transportation services should motivate cities to rethink their parking policies, the researchers said.

More information: Anne Brown et al, Impeding access: The frequency and characteristics of improper scooter, bike, and car parking, *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2020). DOI: 10.1016/j.trip.2020.100099

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