



## MICROMOBILITY'S MACRO APPEAL

**Urban congestion** is only worsening. In Bogotá, Colombia, for instance, drivers lost 272 hours in 2018 because of congestion. In the U.S., congestion costs the country \$87 billion annually, an average of \$1,348 per driver. Making matters worse: The percentage of the world's population living in cities will climb from 55% in 2018 to 68% by 2050, according to the United Nations.

The burgeoning micromobility industry—electric-powered scooters, skateboards and bicycles—could move cities forward. Micromobility generally refers to transportation over a short distance, typically less than five miles. In the U.S., for instance, 60% of all trips are of that length or less.

The benefits from new mobility offerings go beyond just faster commute times. For cities, building out new infrastructure,

like a new rail line, is hugely expensive.

Plus, electric micromobility vehicles offer to reduce gas-related emissions and even promise better efficiency than electric cars. But there are still bumps in the road. For the micromobility sector to disrupt the transportation status quo, cities will need to invest in it—for example, by allowing e-scooters but not cars in certain congested areas. Urban areas will also need to clarify and develop regulations. And rising concerns around rider safety will need to be addressed; some U.S. cities have banned e-scooters and e-bikes outright. “This whole industry will rise and fall with the basic infrastructure of safety,” Ori Blumenthal, the co-founder and chief technology officer of Israeli-based startup RideWatch, told CityLab.

