

FLISS Transportation

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Introduction

With technology evolving, it is hard for everyone to keep up sometimes. The same can be said for transportation. With new apparatuses being invented at a quickening pace, from electric skateboards to “hoverboards,” it’s harder to keep up with transport choices.

Bicycles have been a popular mode of transportation for over a century, and bike lanes have been built all over the world to accommodate them. However, recent advancements have led to the creation of various apparatuses that have similar attributes as a bicycle but that are not bikes. However, we believe that they should be treated the same as bicycles and be allowed to share the same infrastructure.

It is important to make the distinction that these apparatuses are not toys. There is a stigma that follows some of these products that should be changed, to encourage more people to travel in ways that promote a healthy lifestyle while being financially conscious. All levels of government put a stigma around these apparatuses by inconsistent treatment of safety standards and rules of the road.

More than five years ago, my colleague Michael Kilcullen thought it would be important to use a term that can be used to encompass all forms of transportation that fit within the bicycle infrastructure—and not finding a word, he developed a new one: FLISS. A couple of years later, the urban planning system finally coined this as the concept of “micromobility.”

But “micromobility” does not fit on road signs, and while descriptive, it is unlikely to become everyday usage in society. Fliss, which rhymes with “bliss” and is etymologically related to the French word “glisser” (to glide), is a short and easy word for road signage, maps, and daily speech.

It derives from an 1800s British English word: *flys*, which was a four-wheeled, human-powered, horseless carriage. Since today's concept can denote any number of wheels, and “human”-powered can also mean a slight electric boost, changing the spelling is appropriate to differentiate it from its original transportation vehicle.



In an article written by Rasheq Zarif, who is a managing director for Future of Mobility Technology at Deloitte, describes the same concept as his definition of micromobility: “Forms of Transport that can occupy space alongside bicycles.” While the technological standards of micromobility are still being defined, the apparatuses generally have:

- Average operating speed of 5-25 mph

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- Weight less than 500 kg
 - Human-powered or small electric booster engine
 - Varying number of wheels (or even no wheels at all)
 - Single-width
 - Most other attributes of a bicycle - and including bicycles

Someone who would be using one of these apparatuses would be called a “Flisser” and some examples would include: Bicycles, Kick Scooters, Electric scooters, “Hoverboards”, Segways, Skateboards, Roller Blades, Onewheels, and so many more.

The word Fliss could tremendously help improve signage and rules in urban areas. Instead of having a few different signs or rules for various modes of transport, one sign could be posted saying ‘No flissing” and this would include all modes of transport that fit in that. This also future-proofs the area, so new signage or rules don’t have to be passed every time a new form of transportation is invented. This can help cut down on the multiplicity of signs and the visual clutter that comes along with that.



This would also help local lawmakers who struggle to keep up with all these advancements to be able to pass legislation that includes everything. This will become ever more important with the rise of new electric scooter, docked and dockless shared bike services popping up almost overnight in some cities.

Fliss can also help with inclusivity within the transportation community. Since Fliss vehicles would be occupying the traditional “Bike lanes or trails” in a way that was not originally intended for they should be called “Fliss lanes or trails” instead. This would be more inclusive to include all the different forms of transportation as well as make sure that all

future evolutions in transport are represented. However, the most inclusive name for these would be Bike/Hike/Fliss paths. This allows for these paths to be used by the majority of the general public no matter what mode they select.

More than ever, today we see and hear that #WordsMatter. We want roller bladers and skateboarders to be in “bike” lanes when they exist. Speeding people on apparatuses on sidewalks can cause injuries to pedestrians and disabled people, and frequently results in police interactions that we don’t want.



People use other apparatuses at a “skateboard” park. Using the word FLISS, such as fliss lanes, the fliss park, will go far for inclusiveness for all non-car users to have a community and to share expensive infrastructure that the government provides to all.

The proper term for curb cuts is a ramp, not a “wheelchair ramp”, because families with strollers, injured people on crutches and canes, and tourists with rolling suitcases, all get benefits from a ramp at a crosswalk, it is not just for wheelchair users. A fliss lane is most inclusive, and includes bicycles and all other apparatuses that have similar enough attributes to use the same lanes and improve the transportation network for all.

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