

By: ctvbc.ca

Date: Thursday Oct. 13, 2011 1:52 PM PT

**The City of Vancouver has been creating new parking spots for scooter and motorbike riders and up until recently many spots were not metered, giving riders free parking. But that's coming to an end.**

Michael Rose bought a gas scooter three years ago as a fun, cheap and green alternative to getting downtown to work. The free parking was an added incentive.

"They brought in the dedicated scooter parking, which was fantastic, and then a few weeks later they started putting meters on the parking spots and it looked really just like a cash grab," said Rose.

Last fall the city designated 200 parking spots for scooters and motorcycles and announced plans to add 100 more per year. Riders used to be allowed to squeeze into the spots for free, but that's starting to change.

"Wherever the vehicle spaces are, we will be putting in a meter for the motorcycles and scooters," said Peter Judd, Vancouver's general manager of engineering services.

Judd is a scooter rider himself and says the parking was never intended to be free; the city just hadn't gotten around to metering the spots. Pretty soon only electric scooters will be allowed to park for free with no time limits. That doesn't sit well with Michael Rose.

"I think the city is missing the point. We're trying to get people out of their cars – and not nitpicking between the slight variations between what's greener between electric and gas," said Rose.

Rose argues electric scooters are too expensive, too slow, not good on hills and can't carry as much weight as their gas counterparts. And even though gas scooter and motorcycle owners can get half price parking if they pay by phone, he still thinks it's a cash grab by the city.

"We're not doing it for revenue reasons. We haven't projected the revenue, my hope is we won't get much because there will be a lot of electric scooters and it will be free," said Judd.

Michael Rose thinks that until electric scooters get less expensive and more powerful the city should stop playing favorites when it comes to two wheeled commuters.

"I think they should have more dedicated parking for scooters than what they have now and really send the message that the city really embraces scooter ownership, gas or electric and lets get people out of their cars," said Rose.

Michael went comparison shopping the other day and says that to match the speed of his gas scooter, the electric machine he would have to buy would weigh 100 pounds more and would need an upgraded lithium battery to match the top speed of 70 kilometres an hour. That would cost him around \$6,000.

*With a report from CTV British Columbia's Lynda Steele*