



112th STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Passed
12/4/18

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Executive Summary

J.R. 4: In Support of Scooter Safety and Parking Guidelines on Campus

Summary: Dockless ridesharing vehicles, most acutely *Bird* and *Lime* scooters, have steadily increased in usage on the UT campus over the past year, and are now a popular means of transportation for students who need to travel across campus in a short time. However, their popularity has not come without consequences. Unlike traditional bicycles, few students seem aware of existing rules on where scooters or electric bicycles should be parked, and have left vehicles blocking pedestrian paths and entryways to buildings. Also unlike traditional bicycles, which require considerable exertion to go even 15 miles per hour (15 mph), the campus wide speed limit, dockless electric vehicles can reach 15 mph with minimal effort. This results in higher speeds, which correlate with more accidents. Scooter riders have more accidents with road obstacles, other vehicles, and pedestrians, a rate roughly ten times that of traditional bicycles. The worst offenses occur on Speedway Mall, a zone designated with a 5 mph speed limit and a blanket ban on vehicle parking. Some measures have been taken to ensure compliance with existing rules, but more action is needed. Rather than an outright ban, which is plausible if the situation deteriorates, dockless scooters can be brought under existing parking and speed rules so they can remain accessible to all students.

J.R. 4

In Support of Scooter Safety and Parking Guidelines on Campus

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Sponsors: REPRESENTATIVE NEHA MURALY (*College of Natural Sciences*) AND CHAIR VINIT SHAH (*Academic Affairs*)

WHEREAS, Student Government, the Graduate Student Assembly, and the Senate of College Councils serve as the official voice of students at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin); and,

WHEREAS, A number of ridesharing companies, including *Bird* and *Lime*, introduced electric, dockless ridesharing scooters to the City of Austin in 2018, and now have a fleet numbering over 3,300 such scooters¹, and said scooters have become a popular mode of transportation for students of UT Austin to commute across campus; and,

WHEREAS, The introduction of ridesharing scooters has lead to high-speed accidents involving scooters and obstacles, other vehicles, and pedestrians. 58 Scooter related injuries were reported to University Health Services between September and October 2018², nearly ten times the number of bicycle related injuries reported over the same period; and,

WHEREAS, Section 4-11 of the University of Texas at Austin Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) Regulations states that all scooters (non-motorized and motorized) may only park at bike racks and are subject to the same parking regulations as bicycles.³ Furthermore, that all vehicles are prohibited from blocking stairwells, ADA ramps, or doors; and,

WHEREAS, Ridesharing scooters have frequently parked in violation of stated parking rules, both on Speedway and across campus, and that in 2018, PTS impounded 77 scooters in violation of parking regulations, imposing a \$150 fine on the ridesharing company when impounding each scooter, which the ridesharing company then then imposes on the offender⁴; and,

¹ http://austintexas.gov/docklessmobility?fbclid=IwAR27Ay421wMSF3dMtq6pkKXDbjz87_IdVHQ2Apd-cArRyTC8N_0v3XCCcCA

² October 31st, 2018 email between Kate Nolan, Safety and Quality Coordinator and GSA Representative Kaila Parker

³ <https://parking.utexas.edu/parking/rules/section-IV-traffic-regulations>

⁴ October 24th, 2018 email between PTS and GSA Representative Aliza Stein

WHEREAS, UT PTS designates Speedway Mall as a “pedestrian priority” area.⁵ Traffic regulations for a pedestrian priority area include a speed limit of 5 miles per hour for any vehicle, a mandate to yield to pedestrians, and a prohibition of parking without proper permit; and,

WHEREAS, The top speed of *Bird* and *Lime* scooters is approximately 15 miles per hour without restriction.⁶ However, such top speeds can be modified by ridesharing companies and geocoded. *Bird* has already capped the top speed of its electric scooters to 10 miles per hour on Speedway Mall, and both *Bird* and *Lime* have introduced “No Parking Zones” in specific areas on campus; and,

WHEREAS, UT PTS has posted signs at either end of Speedway Mall, which advise students to follow scooter safety rules and parking guidelines, which are also listed on the dedicated Electric Scooter rules page of the PTS website.⁷; and,

WHEREAS, The addition of transportation options on campus should be welcomed, and encouraged to operate in such a way that they do not risk injury to others, or violate rules which apply equally to other pre-existing vehicles; now,

BE IT RESOLVED, Student Government, the Graduate Student Assembly, and the Senate of College Councils, the 3 Legislative Student Organizations (LSOs) of UT Austin, applaud the efforts of UT Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) to impound dockless scooters which violate parking guidelines, and encourage PTS to devote more resources towards enforcing parking rules on dockless scooters parked on or near ADA ramps, building entrances, and pedestrian only paths such as Speedway Mall; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, To encourage compliance with parking guidelines set out in Section 4-11, the Student LSOs call upon PTS add painted parking zones around bike racks on the UT Austin campus, which would delineate appropriate areas where dockless scooters should be parked; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UT Austin LSOs support the continued education of the student body by PTS and UTPD on parking rules, and the cost of non-compliance with said rules, for dockless scooters, bicycles, and other such vehicles; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UT Austin LSOs welcome *Bird*, *Lime*, and other dockless ridesharing companies to designate the whole of Speedway Mall as a “No Parking Zone” on their mobile applications, and furthermore the administration of UT Austin should communicate with all dockless vehicle companies on no parking policies in pedestrian zones; and,

⁵ <https://parking.utexas.edu/parking/rules/section-VI-controlled-access-pedestrian-priority-areas>

⁶ <https://www.digitalnomadfoodie.com/blog/review-which-is-better-lime-or-bird-electric-scooters>

⁷ <https://parking.utexas.edu/electric-scooters-0>

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UT Austin LSOs ask for an increase of signage designating “Scooter Parking” on Speedway and central campus next to bike racks; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UT Austin LSOs encourage UTPD to post a resource, like a uniformed officer, to patrol Speedway Mall during the weekdays at peak school hours, so that vehicles can be flagged, warned, or cited for exceeding the 5 mile per hour speed limit on Speedway; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UT Austin LSO support the administration of UT Austin engaging with ridesharing companies, such as Bird and Lime, on speed limits across the UT Austin campus, particularly Speedway Mall, and furthermore supports any efforts on the part of Bird, Lime, and other dockless vehicle companies to cap the speeds of their dockless vehicles to 5 miles per hour on Speedway Mall and other pedestrian priority areas; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UT Austin LSOs support the installation of further signage across campus stating the responsibilities of scooter and bicycle riders on campus, in particular on the necessity to yield to pedestrians and to park in designated parking zones, and furthermore support additional efforts of PTS, UTPD, and the administration of UT Austin to educate students, faculty, employee, and guests of the University of Texas Austin on the usage of dockless vehicles; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Copies of this resolution be sent to the Office of the President; the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly; the Director of Parking and Transportation Services, Bobby Stone; the Assistant Director of Parking and Transportation Services in charge of Fleet and Enforcement, Mark Kaligan; the UTPD Chief of Police, David Carter; Director of the Counseling and Mental Health Center, Chris Brownson; *Bird*, *Lime*, and *The Daily Texan*.