

**The Graduate Student Assembly
The University of Texas at Austin**

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Sponsors: Austin Cole, GSA Finance Director
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Resolution: J.R. 18 (F) 3 - Resolution In Support of Scooter Safety and Parking Guidelines on Campus

Executive Summary: Dockless ridesharing vehicles, most acutely *Bird*, *Lime*, and *Uber* electric scooters, have steadily increased in usage on the UT campus over the past year, and are now a popular means of transportation for students traveling across campus.

However, their popularity has not come without consequences. Unlike personal bicycles, few students seem aware of where rented electric scooters and bicycles should be parked. These vehicles can frequently be seen blocking pedestrian paths, the pedestrian right of way, and entryways to buildings. Also unlike traditional bicycles, which require considerable exertion to reach the campus speed limit of 15 miles per hour (mph), dockless electric vehicles reach 15 mph with minimal effort. This results in higher speeds on both roadways and sidewalks, thereby making potential accidents more serious. Furthermore, scooter riders encounter roughly ten times more accidents with road obstacles, other vehicles, and pedestrians than traditional bicycles. It is the sentiment of the authors that the worst offenses occur on or near 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, we encourage three courses of action: 1) further educational materials be dispensed by Parking and Transportation Services, 2) more abundant signage be posted throughout campus, and 3) existing rules be enforced with rigor. It is the opinion of the authors that taken together, these approaches can ensure dockless, electric scooters remain accessible and safe for all students.

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WHEREAS (1): 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 (2): A number of ridesharing companies, most visibly *Bird*, *Lime*, and *Uber* introduced electric, dockless ridesharing scooters to the City of Austin in 2018. Their fleets within Austin now exceed 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 (3): The introduction of ridesharing scooters has led to high-speed accidents involving scooters and obstacles, other vehicles, and pedestrians. There were 58 Scooter related injuries 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 (4): 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 (5): Ridesharing scooters are picked up each evening, charged by members of the Austin community, and then placed in specified areas on campus the following morning, by companies like *Bird*, *Lime*, and *Uber*; and,

WHEREAS (6): Ridesharing scooters are 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, as of the writing of this resolution, imposing a \$150 fine on the ridesharing company

¹ "Using Dockless Mobility Services" Department of Transportation. City of Austin, Texas. Accessed 10 Nov 2018. 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 "Section IV: Traffic Regulations" Parking and Transportation Services. University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 10 Nov 2018. <https://parking.utexas.edu/parking/rules/section-IV-traffic-regulations>

when impounding each scooter⁴. Then, the ridesharing company fines the offender⁵, but at a higher rate: \$300 from *Bird* and \$250 from *Lime*⁶, and,

WHEREAS (7): UT PTS designates Speedway Mall as a “pedestrian priority” area.⁷ 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 (8): The top speed of *Bird* and *Lime* scooters is approximately 15 miles per hour without restriction.⁸ However, such top speeds can be modified by ridesharing companies in specific areas, a policy known as “geofencing.” *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 (9): Both *Bird* and *Lime* have historically complied with community requests to restrict or limit scooter use in specific zones.^{9, 10, 11} In two such scenarios within Texas—one in Austin at the capital and one in Dallas—*Bird* designated no ride zones. Similarly, the *Lime* app clearly identifies Katy Trail and Klyde Warren Park in Dallas as restricted zones. Warning scooter users away from high traffic areas on campus such as Speedway Avenue is possible; and,

WHEREAS (10): UT PTS has posted signs at either end of Speedway Mall advising students to follow scooter safety rules and parking guidelines, which are also listed on the Electric Scooter rules page of the PTS website¹²; and,

WHEREAS (11): New transportation options on campus should be welcomed, but consistent with existing transportation etiquette, best practices should be actively encouraged to both reduce injury risk and avoid violating rules that apply equally to other pre-existing vehicles; now,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1): 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 electric scooters which violate parking guidelines, and encourage PTS to devote more resources towards enforcing parking rules on dockless electric scooters parked on or near ADA ramps, building entrances, and pedestrian only paths such as Speedway Mall; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (2): 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 electric

⁴ Norwood, K. “UT Imposing Fines for improperly parked scooters on Austin Campus.” 6 Sept 2018. KVUE ABC.com. <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/local/ut-imposing-fines-for-improperly-parked-scooters-on-austin-campus/269-591467144>

⁵ October 24th, 2018 email between PTS and GSA Representative Aliza Stein

⁶ Conversation between Blanca Gamez and Dennis Delaney, Assistant Directors of PTS and the Shuttle Committee on November 9th, 2018

⁷ “Section VI: Controlled Access Parking Areas” Parking and Transportation Services. The University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 10 Nov 2018. <https://parking.utexas.edu/parking/rules/section-VI-controlled-access-pedestrian-priority-areas>

⁸ “Review: Which is better? Lime or Bird Electric Scooters? (Updated 11-9-18).” Digital Nomad Foodie. Published 8 May 2018. Updated 9 Nov 18. <https://www.digitalnomadfoodie.com/blog/review-which-is-better-lime-or-bird-electric-scooters>

⁹ Nelson, L.J. “In response to complaints, Bird creates ‘no-go zones’ where its scooters aren’t welcome.” 14 Sept 2018. LA Times. <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-bird-red-zones-20180914-story.html>

¹⁰ Sparber, S. “Thinking of renting an electric scooter? Pay attention to these new guidelines.” 27 Apr 2018. The Daily Texan. <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2018/04/27/thinking-of-renting-an-electric-scooter-pay-attention-to-these-new-guidelines>

¹¹ Glaze, T. “Scooters New Fad in Dallas, Park Cities.” 28 Aug 2018. ParkCitiesPeople.com.

<https://www.parkcitiespeople.com/2018/08/28/scooters-new-fad-in-dallas-park-cities/>

¹² “Electric Scooters.” Parking and Transportation Services. The University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 10 Nov 2018. <https://parking.utexas.edu/electric-scooters-0>

scooters should be parked. Furthermore, these suggested parking zones should be marked within the *Bird* and *Lime* apps; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (3): The UT Austin LSOs support the continued education of the student body by PTS and UTPD on parking rules, and the monetary and social costs of non-compliance with said rules for dockless electric scooters, bicycles, and other such vehicles; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (4): 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,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (5) The UT Austin LSOs welcome *Bird*, *Lime*, *Uber*, and other dockless ridesharing companies informing their hired scooter chargers of the campus parking guidelines; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (6): 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,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (7): The UT Austin LSOs 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,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (8): 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,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (9): The UT Austin LSOs support the installation of further bike racks and parking areas to allow space for more bikes and scooter parking to prevent congestion; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (10): Copies of this resolution be sent to the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of the President, the Office of Executive Vice President and Provost, 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; *Bird*, *Lime*, *Uber*, the *Austin-American Statesman*, and *The Daily Texan*.

PASSED by the Graduate Student Assembly, November 28, 2018.

Signature of the GSA President: 