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UPDATED: Bird Scooters Land in Milwaukee in Time for Summerfest

BY ROB HULLUM JUN. 27, 2018 12:25 P.M.

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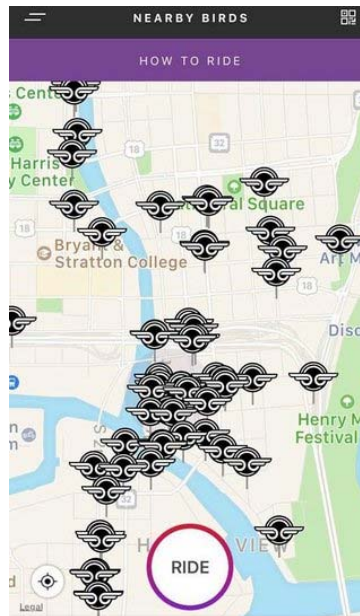
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A pair of Bird scooters on E. Menomonee St. in the Third Ward

A number of black, electric scooters popped up throughout the Third Ward this morning. These scooters are from Bird, a dockless, electric-scooter share company based out of Santa Monica, Calif.

“Today, Bird began offering its fleet of dockless, electric scooters in Milwaukee,” company spokesperson Nicholas Samonas wrote to me in an email. “Bird is beginning with a limited fleet around the Third Ward area, but as ridership increases the company will expand its fleet to serve all of Milwaukee’s residents and communities.”



A screenshot of the Bird app showing available scooters near Downtown

Bird’s launch comes as its competitor **Lime** has been in a months-long effort to work with the city to begin operations, and as some cities across the country restrict dockless bike and electric scooter companies from

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rides cost \$1 to start plus 15 cents per minute."Bird has submitted the necessary paperwork to operate as a business in Milwaukee," a company spokesperson said. "We work closely with the all of the cities in which we operate and look forward to doing so in Milwaukee so that Bird is a reliable and affordable transportation option."

You can find more information about how to access Bird scooters and rules for operating them [here](#).

Update 9:02 p.m.: The *Shepherd* reached out to the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works to ask about Bird's ability to operate in the city. DPW Communications Manager Sandra Rusch-Walton reached out to the City Attorney's office and replied:

"From the City Attorney's Office:

The public should be aware that BIRD's Motorized Scooters may NOT be lawfully operated on any public street or sidewalk in the City of Milwaukee, per current state statute.

Whether defined as a vehicle (Wis. Stat. Sec. 340.01(35)), motor vehicle (Wis. Stat. Sec. 340.01(35)) or a play vehicle (Wis. Stat. Sec. 340.01(43m)), under no circumstances may motorized scooters operate on a public street because they are not designed for on-street use. If motorized scooters were designed for on-street use, they would be subject to federal safety standards and manufacturer certifications. Further, regulations pertaining to operation of motor vehicles apply equally on sidewalks and streets as both are part of the public highway right-of-way.

Consequently, any operator of a BIRD motor scooter on a City street or sidewalk is subject to a \$98.80 citation for Operating an Unregistered Motor Vehicle upon a Highway contrary to

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Bird spokesperson about the city's decision to ticket Bird riders. Their full statement is below:

"Bird scooters are helping cities meet their ambitious goals of reducing carbon emissions and addressing the ever present car traffic crisis. We respectfully disagree with the city's contention that operation of any electric scooter in the state of Wisconsin is unlawful. We look forward to working with the city to create and enforce common sense rules encouraging the safe use of our sustainable transportation option that the people of Milwaukee have begun to adopt enthusiastically."

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Rob Hullum

Rob Hullum is the web editor for the Shepherd Express, where he covers a breadth of happenings going on in the city for the Around Milwaukee section. He has also written feature pieces on the changing East Side and Milwaukee's startup scene. [Read more by Rob Hullum](#)

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