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EYES ON MILWAUKEE

Dockless Scooters Debut Here

Company called Bird drops approximately 60 scooters on city streets; is it legal?

By Jeramey Jannene - Jun 27th, 2018 05:05 pm

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Bird scooter in Milwaukee. Photo by Jeramey Jannene.

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Dockless scooters have arrived in Milwaukee.

Bird, one of many entrants into the upstart market, dropped off a number of electric scooters in the [Historic Third Ward](#) today. A representative of the for-profit company declined to identify how many scooters were deployed, but a quick scan of the available scooters shows approximately 60 available.

The scooters, which can be unlocked using a smartphone for \$1.00 plus 15 cents per minute, are intended for short trips around urban areas. To use the scooters, the Bird app can be found in both Android and iOS in the app stores.

Unlike dock-based systems like [BublR Bikes](#), the scooters can simply be left wherever the ride ends. The company contracts with individuals to pick up the scooters every night to be charged.

The ability to leave the scooter wherever one wants will likely be something the city seeks to regulate.

A representative of Bird tells Urban Milwaukee the company is complying with all regulatory requirements for deploying the scooters. The [Department of Public Work's Sandra Rusch Walton](#) says the city is still investigating the legality of deploying the

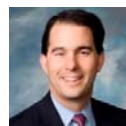
scooters.

Bird does offer a "Save our Sidewalks" pledge that says the company will collaborate with city officials wherever they deploy scooters, including revenue sharing, but no such agreement was in place when the company dropped off its scooters today. Alderman [Robert Bauman](#), who chairs the [Public Works Committee](#), told Urban Milwaukee he supports the city taking possession of the scooters if they're found to be in violation of city ordinances.

Bird isn't the only company eyeing the Milwaukee market. Discussions are underway with dockless bicycle and scooter provider Limebike with regard to creating a regulatory framework for the new technology.

The issue of regulating dockless bicycles and electric scooters is still

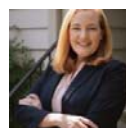
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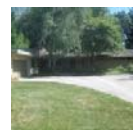
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unsettled and has mixed results across the country. The bikes and scooters can pile up on the sidewalks, blocking access for pedestrians. They can also become abandoned as many of the companies rely on a large infusion of capital and simply drop the bikes off in a city. Other cities like Chicago have attempted to address equity issues as part of regulation by requiring bikes be deployed only in certain areas.

At a Bike to Work press conference held in early June, council president **Ashanti Hamilton** biked to City Hall on a Limebike and described his ride as a positive experience. He told Urban Milwaukee that representatives from his office and other city departments intended to engage Limebike in a discussion about how the company's technology could be deployed across the city.

The city will also have to grapple with how to create an ordinance that reflects its investment in the non-profit, socially-minded BublR Bikes. The docked bike share organization routinely rebalances its stations to ensure bikes are available, including a large staff presence at Summerfest and other major events. The non-profit, in a partnership with the city, has also invested in stations at Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee buildings and extremely low-cost memberships for low-income residents.

BublR, which relies on Trek's B-Cycle technology, is exploring the use of dockless decks to augment its fleet.

However the regulatory framework shakes out, the scooters are yet another option making it easier for people to ditch their car and seek a more flexible form of transportation. As with BublR Bikes, it won't be long before you see people actually enjoying their commute rather than stuck in traffic in their Lexus cages.

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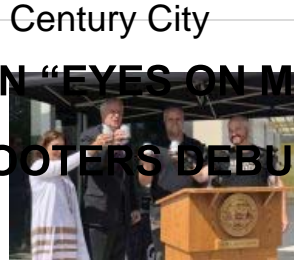


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Jul 26th, 2018 by Jeramey Jannene
1. snowbeer says:



Jul 24th, 2018 by Jeramey Jannene

June 28, 2018 at 6:03 am
 Jul 26th, 2018 by Jeramey Jannene

Is it really any faster than walking fast?

2. TransitRider says:

June 28, 2018 at 7:41 am

These things have a top speed of 15 mph, much faster than walking (around 3 mph) and even 3-speed bicycles (perhaps 10 mph), so where should they be allowed? I think 15 mph (5 times typical walking speeds) is *far* too fast for sidewalks, but they look inappropriate for streets, especially at night when they would be nearly invisible.

In California, this company (Bird) is demanding the legal right to use them at 15 mph on sidewalks. Do we really want that?

<https://qz.com/1257229/electric-scooter-startup-bird-wants-to-make-it-legal-to-ride-scooters-on-the-sidewalk/>

3. 2fs says:

June 28, 2018 at 8:23 am

I had to laugh at the comment about "enjoying the commute."

Sure, on many days that's true...but, uh, not when there's a sudden thunderstorm and the temps drop 20 degrees in ten minutes...

4. Bill Sell says:

June 28, 2018 at 9:07 am

Allison, you rock!

5. Duane Snyder says:

June 28, 2018 at 11:15 am

From what I have gathered, Travis VanderZanden (who worked at Uber and Lyft) and venture capital firm Craft Ventures are behind this ground breaking scooter technology. (There must be a sea of money floating around America looking for something unproductive to do). Craft Ventures also seems to be involved in cryptocurrency, another "great" idea.



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6. Comfy Chair says:

June 30, 2018 at 7:19 pm

If I see one of these sitting unattended on public property, it will become mine, I mean I will remove it as a hazard and take it to a police station as abandoned property.

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