

# Bird scooters still on streets after Indianapolis service suspension

**Ethan May and Thomas Leyden, Indianapolis Star**

Published 9:30 p.m. ET June 19, 2018 | Updated 4:59 p.m. ET June 20, 2018



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(Photo: Tom Leyden / IndyStar)

Four days after Bird electric scooters [launched in Indianapolis \(/story/news/2018/06/19/coming-indianapolis-mobile-transit/705060002/\)](/story/news/2018/06/19/coming-indianapolis-mobile-transit/705060002/), the city's Department of Business sent Bird Rides Inc. a letter requesting that the company suspend operations

The letter, signed by Interim Director Brian Madison and provided to IndyStar "outlining public safety, legal, and regulatory concerns" that "have been raised by neighborhood residents, business owners, and the Office of Corporation Counsel."

Bird spokesman Kenneth Baer released a statement Wednesday afternoon that "the city is working to address the concerns" [\(/story/news/2018/06/20/bird-scooters-not-suspend-service-indianapolis/718500002/\)](/story/news/2018/06/20/bird-scooters-not-suspend-service-indianapolis/718500002/) city.

In part, the statement read, "We look forward to continuing to serve our new Indianapolis customers and working with city leaders to create a regulatory framework that works best for the people of Indianapolis and achieves

their goals."



**Tom Leyden**  
@newshawk

Bird scooters stand ready in Downtown Indianapolis on Wednesday, one day after the city asked the app to suspend service.

City asks Bird electric scooters to suspend service for 30 days  
[indy.st/2ystT6E](https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-electric-scooter-se...)

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The city's Tuesday night letter cited a pending ordinance it said would address these concerns:

"While the City of Indianapolis continues to research how Bird's business model fits within the existing Code, the City will exercise all available rights and remedies under it, it is important to note that the City is in the process of exercising its authority to directly address and regulate the operation of businesses such as Bird."

Introduced to the City-County Council on April 9, the referenced [pending ordinance \(http://www.indy.gov/eGov/Council/Files/2018/PROP18-120.pdf\)](http://www.indy.gov/eGov/Council/Files/2018/PROP18-120.pdf) seeks "to prohibit dockless bicycle share or hire programs in public rights-of-way."

Brandi Pahl, chief communications officer for the department, said in an email Tuesday evening that "a final version of the letter should be available by the end of the week."

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As introduced in April, the ordinance read: "It shall be unlawful for a person to operate a dockless bicycle share or hire program on any other city-owned property or rights-of-way."

**How to ride the scooters:** [An IndyStar reporter tries it out \(/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-electric-scooters-indianapolis-w](http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-electric-scooters-indianapolis-w)

**Bird electric scooters in Nashville:** [Bird agrees to suspend operations, wait for scooter regulations \(/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-electric-scooters-nashville-thursday/681281002/\)](http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-electric-scooters-nashville-thursday/681281002/)

The city's letter stated that the ordinance would be up for a vote of the Public Works Committee on June 28 before facing final passage on July 16.

This isn't the first time the dockless scooters have left cities scrambling to create regulations. Nashville [requested a similar ordinance \(/money/2018/05/09/nashville-tells-bird-scooter-service-cease-and-desist-after-two-days/594466002/v\)](http://www.money.com/story/news/2018/05/09/nashville-tells-bird-scooter-service-cease-and-desist-after-two-days/594466002/v) two days after Bird city impounded more than 400 scooters before the company [agreed to suspend service \(/story/news/2018/06/07/bird-scooter-service-suspended-thursday/681281002/\)](http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/06/07/bird-scooter-service-suspended-thursday/681281002/).

Bird scooters recently launched in Memphis, where the City Council [created a 30-day operating agreement \(/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-scooters-memphis-4-things-know/714342002/\)](http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/06/19/bird-scooters-memphis-4-things-know/714342002/) with the company until the city could regulate the service.

The Indianapolis letter said that Bird's voluntary suspension of operations would "ensure its full compliance with local regulations and enforcement actions."

You can read the full letter sent from Indianapolis to Bird here:



June 19, 2018

Mr. Cameron Kilberg  
Bird Rides, Inc.  
Governmental Affairs  
406 Broadway #369  
Santa Monica, CA, 90401-2314

Via email to:

Dear Mr. Kilberg:

On Thursday, June 14, 2018, Bird scooters were observed by the City of Indianapolis employees on the public sidewalks. On Monday, June 18, 2018, The City of Indianapolis received your email of Introduction acknowledging Bird's present use of your scooters on the City's sidewalks. Subsequently, a number of public safety, legal, and regulatory concerns as to your business operations have been raised by neighborhood groups, local business owners, and the Office of Corporation Counsel.

As a result, this letter is to serve as the City's request that Bird suspend operations in Indianapolis for 30 days to allow for the resolution of these questions.

While the City of Indianapolis continues to research how Bird's business model fits within the existing Code, and preserves its right to exercise all available rights and remedies under it, it is important to note that the City is in the process of establishing an ordinance that will directly address and regulate the operation of businesses such as Bird. This ordinance was introduced on April 9, 2018, and is currently pending before the City-County Council's Public Works Committee. It is expected that this ordinance will be voted on at a committee meeting on June 28, and this new regulatory framework would then be up for final passage before the full City-County Council on July 16.

By voluntarily suspending operations in Indianapolis for 30 days, Bird will be able to ensure its full compliance with local regulations and avoid any enforcement actions. We are happy to provide a copy of the pending ordinance to you for your review and comment, and assuming passage on July 16, the City is prepared to be responsive to whatever rights Bird may possess under the new Code provisions.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

*Ethan May is a digital producer for IndyStar. Follow him on Twitter @EthanMayJ.*



**A Bird electric scooter sits on a sidewalk on East Georgia Street on Friday, June 15, 2018. The scooters launched in Indianapolis a May / IndyStar)**

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