



July 27, 2023

TO: City of East Lansing Mayor and City Council
Spin Great Lakes Regional Manager
CC: City of Lansing Mayor and City Council,
Meridian Township Supervisor and Township Board
FR: Mike Stout
RE: Unacceptable Rate of Discarded Scooters and Other Objects Tossed In Our Rivers

75 scooters, 32 bicycles, 1 welders box, and 1 grocery carts were recently retrieved from under a single Red Cedar River bridge. Nearly all the scooters were from our local scooter company Spin. If you haven't seen the WLNS news story [click here](#), and to better understand the scope of the problem view photos on page four.

This entire collection of twisted metal was retrieved from a single location over a two day period. It is known that much more remains.

It is generally accepted that Spin, like any other transportation services company, is responsible for the care and management of their fleet. Spin doesn't dispute that. In fact they tout it. To help Spin with their inventory control each e-scooter is fitted with GPS so they know their exact location and know when and where their scooters become obsolete; either due to a drained battery, theft, or having been tossed into a river.

From our recent discovery, Spin's loss rate is far greater than many imagined and what Spin has previously inferred. Sadly, the severity of this problem may not have been revealed if it weren't for the tireless effort of a few professional magnet fishermen.

It is evident from our recent findings that Spin has inadequately addressed an inconvenient reality of their business. That being the reasonable management of scooters tossed into our rivers. I suspect Spin has chosen to ignore, or attempt to avoid this problem, because of the greater effort and costs required to retrieve this product. It's an understandable practicality, but it does not demonstrate best practices, good judgment, or civic responsibility as they self proclaim.

Only Spin knows how many of their scooters have been tossed into our rivers. While we now know of over 80 recently retrieved from a single location, with many more remaining, I am aware of three separate campaigns that have yielded over 110 scooters from the Red Cedar River this year alone. This is unacceptable and should be considered intolerable.

Rather than accept responsibility for their lost product in our rivers and put in play a plan to mitigate this problem, Spin deflects and boasts about the work and services they provide.

Spin's head off government partnerships, Jim Gilman, tells, "Our team has relocated more than 12,500 scooters in the past year in the Lansing program to **keep our scooters neat and orderly** in the city." It was also said, "It can't control the actions of students that damage its products."

In the first sentence found on their company's website it reads, "...committed to being the **best possible partner for cities** while building **the safest**, most equitable, and **most sustainable** mobility solution..."

This is all great messaging, and very good deflection, but we know from our recent leanings and their past practices that they are falling short of their promise.

It is reasonable to infer from our recent discovery of a large pile of Spin scooters recovered from the Red Cedar River and Spin's official response, that this problem is not a high priority of theirs. Based on their current practice, they are deferring the responsibility, work, and cost to retrieve their scooters to others.

Because of this Spin is putting personal safety at risk and creating an environmental problem. No to deflect from Spin's responsibility, I believe that we can all agree, they are not the only ones underperforming with regards to this problem. We'll save this thought for another time.

I am reaching out to you to:

1. Make you aware of the enormity of the problem that we have with Spin scooters (bicycles and other objects too) being tossed into our Red Cedar River.
2. Call out Spin's lack of accepting personal and corporate responsibility for their lost inventory to our rivers, putting personal safety at risk, and creating an environmental problem.

The retrieving e-scooters, bicycles, grocery carts, and other evidence of campus and urban living is only a part of the challenge. It's actually the easiest to do and we do it well. The greater need, and the bigger win, is our working toward changing attitudes and behavior, habits and practices, of our student and young adult population to stop this from occurring in the first place.

I envision our:

- Accepting a zero tolerance of such behavior.
- Undertaking a collaborative effort with the city, University, environmental conscious organizations like ourselves, and Spin.
- Creating an awareness building campaign to educate others about impact that such acts of theft, destruction of property, and polluting our rivers creates.
- Implementing a multi-media approach including print and digital media, social media, PSAs, and leveraging community leaders and influencers.
- Enforcing the laws and implementing other punitive measures.
- Conduct well coordinated, regularly scheduled, and well manned river cleanups.

If you too think this problem is unacceptable and that we can do better, we all have the capacity to immediately begin fielding awareness building campaigns and support other related activities. Each city, their respective departments, environmental groups, and Spin has the ability to make an impact now and let a greater coordinated campaign evolve over time.

To help identify the scope of the problem that we have in front of us, I ask that Spin reveal:

- Their total inventory loss rate to our rivers, by location, since they began providing their transportation services to the greater Lansing and East Lansing area.
- Adjust that total number by those that e-scooters that:
 - They have retrieved on their own
 - They have retrieved that others have pulled on their behalf

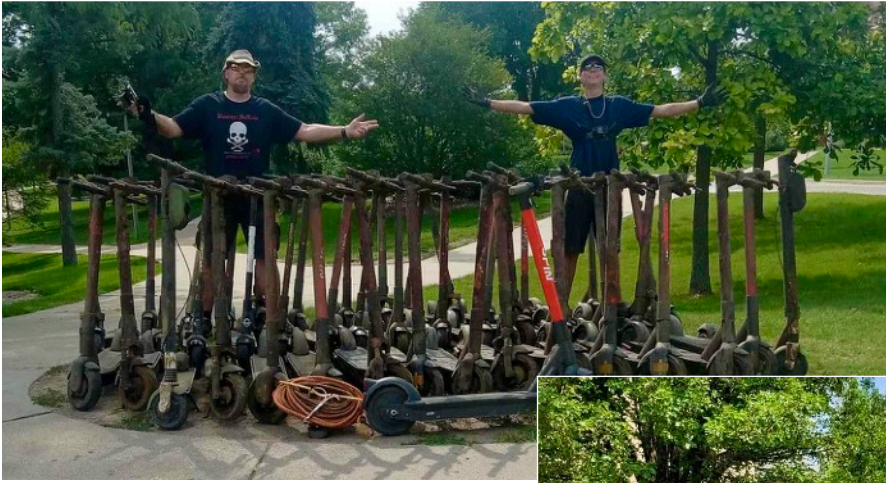
In advance, I appreciate your support to help stop this mindless activity of our students and young adult population from tossing e-scooters, bicycles, grocery carts, and other objects into our rivers for fun and sport. We can do better. We must.

To learn more about myself and Michigan Waterways Stewards, attached is our most recent newsletter. For additional insights, please visit our website at www.MiWaterwaysStewards.org

Thank you for interest and all that you do all to protect and improve our treasured waterways. I look forward to speaking and meeting with you to explore what more we can do.

Mike Stout
President and Founder, Michigan Waterways Stewards
Protecting and Improving our Treasured Waterways.
mstout@MiWaterwaysStewards.org | (952) 239-3943

attachment



Inventory retrieved at one
Red Cedar River location
over two days:
75 Scooters
32 Bicycles
1 Grocery Cart
1 Welder's Box



Michigan Waterways Stewards
In Action

