



Tuesday, March 5, 2024

City of East Lansing
Attn: Council Members
410 Abbot Road
East Lansing, MI 48823

Dear City of East Lansing Council Members,

The problem of Spin lithium-ion powered scooters being tossed and abandoned in Red Cedar and Grand rivers has been a conversation of the greater Lansing community for years.

Aware of this problem, we first met with Spin in January 2023 to offer our assistance with the search recovery of their scooters. They declined our offer of support. When we discovered in July of 2023 the enormity of the problem was far greater than we ever imagined, Spin did not respond to any of our subsequent attempts to connect.

The problem was so great and worrisome, in the absence of leadership and engagement by Spin, MSU, and City of East Lansing, for 17 consecutive weeks volunteers took it upon themselves to search and retrieve electric scooters, and other objects, tossed and abandoned into our Red Cedar River. When done, 225 scooters, 120 bicycles, and many other items, were retrieved from the Red Cedar River.

To improve our understanding and help solve this problem going forward, we:

- Conducted consumer research to seek the thoughts and opinion of the general public.
- Invited community leaders and student groups from across the region to create a comprehensive program to help solve this problem.

The above learnings and program recommendations have been shared with all those who participated and anyone who wished to receive them. If you wish to review yourself, please [click here](#).

While we have received compliments and words of encouragement from the general public, among those key stakeholders it has proven to be a long and torturous journey. We were surprised by the general lack of anger, desire to learn more, offers of support, or willingness to solve. Our attempts to meet and discuss went unanswered. We were regularly met with defiance, deflection, obstruction, and even worse.

We proudly promote the Red Cedar River as treasured natural asset. It is in the first line of the MSU fight song and often featured on-line and in promotional materials. But it soon became evident that its actual care by those key stakeholders was a much lower priority than thought. Clearly, we were ill prepared to respond to and manage the unexpected consequences of poor management and irresponsible usage of leased electric scooters.

We, Michigan Waterways Stewards, are not against micromobility. In fact, we encourage the usage and enjoyment of our waterways, the riparian zone, and adjoining river trails, by everyone, in any way or form

of transportation. But, we ask that all stakeholders act in a reasonable and responsible manner to ensure proper oversight, management, and usage.

Oversight: City of East Lansing & Michigan State University.
Management: Spin, Bird, Lime, or other branded of leased micromobility.
User: MSU students, city of East Lansing residents, their guests, or any other.

From our own discovery, comments from area residents, government and university officials, the problem of poor oversight, management, and usage of Spin scooters is far greater a worry than just those environmental health and personal safety matters as they relate to the Red Cedar River. Thus the reason why this matter has been put in front of you for your review.

We are encouraged by recent discussions and actions being taken, and hopeful of continued improvement. But, we are not confident that a collaborative approach and comprehensive program has been accepted to solve for those once unforeseen, but now known, challenges related to the usage of leased micromobility.

Until a time when the City of East Lansing, Spin, and the user is prepared to accept full responsibility, to be held accountable, for their actions to be timely, transparent, and measurable, we cannot support any recommendation for the continued leasing and usage of Spin, or any brand, of electric scooters. To proceed in any other manner it is our thought it would be premature and irresponsible.

We thank you for your careful consideration. We encourage you to act in a manner that is in the best interest of our treasured and vulnerable waterways and for the greater community.

Sincerely,

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