

April 7, 2020

Members of San Marcos City Council,

MoveSM is motivated by the knowledge that convenient alternative transit, paired with safe infrastructure for people of “all ages and abilities,” empowers residents and visitors to contribute to civic life, the local economy, and an environmentally responsible future. We write today to address recent efforts aimed at limiting or restricting the use of scooters in San Marcos, and to recommend AGAINST implementing a blanket ban on scooters.

Since appearing in major cities in 2017, shared e-scooter services—such as Bird, Lime, or Spin—have attracted both enthusiastic support and scornful ire. We are cognizant that concerns within our own community mirror those expressed in other localities around the globe: unsafe riding behaviors, conflicts over limited street space, vandalism, and sidewalk cluttering are concerns for us all. (Gössling, pg. 6)

At the same time, as traffic and population within the Austin-San Antonio corridor continues to surge, and roadway deaths caused by automobiles increase every year, it is crucial for our city to promote alternative (non-automobile) transportation options that are safer, more affordable, sustainable, and accessible than cars. Scooters, whether they are privately owned or publicly shared, are one such alternative.

Many cities have mitigated concerns about scooters by implementing smart policy solutions that promote scooter use while minimizing automobile conflicts and traffic safety violations. (Gössling, pg. 7-8) They include: reducing urban speed limits (to better align with scooter, electric wheelchair, and cycling speeds), geofencing (to establish maximum scooter speeds in pedestrian-dense areas or prevent scooter use in certain areas), providing designated scooter parking zones (to reduce sidewalk clutter and offer reliable pick-up points), lock-out of scooter use during specific times (i.e., late night hours and during big events), and improving/expanding cycleways and multi-use paths (to provide safe, off-street transit arteries).

**MoveSM strongly supports implementing these and other “best practice” solutions for scooters** in the City of San Marcos, particularly if and when a commercial scooter share service becomes available. Likewise, **MoveSM strongly opposes blanket efforts to prohibit the use of micro transit**, including privately-owned or commercial scooters, on public streets and sidewalks.

Scooters provide an important “last mile” option for transit riders, as well as a viable first-choice transit solution for short distance trips. Research even suggests that, during peak travel hours, scooters and bicycles provide faster and more space-efficient urban transit than cars. (McKenzie, pg. 7-8) By improving transit infrastructure and policy, our city can become a leader in the region: empowering transit choice, promoting health and wellness, and reducing the need for cars (and the demand for parking).

While scooters are a relatively new urban mobility option, it is clear that limiting choice by restricting all scooter use is a step in the wrong direction. Banning scooters *will not* solve transportation issues in San Marcos, but it *will* further limit access to safer, affordable, and environmentally-sound transit for residents of and visitors to San Marcos. **We urge you to oppose a blanket ban on scooters** and instead put in place best practice solutions that can be used by private scooter users today and commercial scooters in the future.

Sincerely,

The Members of MoveSM

#### References

Gössling, Stefan. “Integrating e-scooters in urban transportation: Problems, policies, and the prospect of system change.” *Transportation Research Part D* 79 (2020): 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2020.102230>

McKenzie, Grant. “Urban mobility in the sharing economy: A spatiotemporal comparison of shared mobility services.” *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems* 79 (2020): 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compenurbsys.2019.101418>