

Mode Shift Board

Mode Shift Omaha
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Council Members,

First of all, thank you for being such vocal supporters of better transportation and mobility equity during the recent election cycle. We're excited that you have an opportunity today to stand behind those statements. Mode Shift Omaha strongly supports Spin's application to operate under the upcoming electric shared scooter program and we encourage you to vote yes today on agenda item #75.

In our discussions about how we might work together if they are selected to operate in Omaha, Spin has demonstrated a strong commitment to safety, equity, and economic development. We believe their partnership approach to designing and deploying micro mobility programs will serve our community well.

We also support their proposal of using Spin Hubs to gather and charge the scooters. This will result in less sidewalk clutter that can become an obstacle for people walking or using mobility devices. We also encourage thoughtful placement of these hubs. We should *not* remove vital public space from people and Hubs should only be installed on sidewalks with ample room for both pedestrians and scooters. If there is not enough space on sidewalks, we recommend flexibility with car parking space by utilizing curb adjacent street spaces for Spin Hubs, and perhaps additional bike parking there as well. We believe it's time to revisit the conversation about on-street parking for more than just cars; bike parking, bike share, and scooter hubs should be considered viable options moving forward, not banned as they are currently.

Along those lines, we appreciate Spin's dedication to not just scooters, but livable spaces and want to make note of some of their suggestions when it comes to placemaking: "Spin Hubs are most effective when paired with features that enhance a city's livability. These include placemaking elements like seating, lighting, interactive design, parklets, sheltered waiting areas, local artwork, and pop-up protected lanes."

Over the past year, we have seen cities across the globe change the way they view their streets from strictly moving cars to places for people. This pilot is a perfect opportunity to take meaningful action. We should now reconfigure portions of our street network to create spaces

where people want to be, where people can move about, dine outdoors, and shop, feeling safe from both a pandemic and that they won't be hit by people in cars.

Finally, we have learned a lot from the previous two scooter pilot projects. We have learned that people on scooters don't feel safe in the street and, as a natural consequence, choose to ride on the sidewalks. We also know that people on scooters make pedestrians feel uncomfortable when sharing the sidewalk. People will always make rational decisions to stay safe even if it technically breaks a law, so reactionary fines won't address the issue of sidewalk riders. Design should be prioritized over enforcement in most cases, and this is certainly one of them.

Providing safe places for people to ride scooters and bicycles is a proactive solution and aligns with Omaha's commitment to Complete Streets & Vision Zero by accommodating all road users and prioritizing safety over speed. Since there are few ideal places for a person traveling 10-15 MPH, the same speed as a person on a bicycle, we recommend expanding the network of micro mobility lanes. These spaces are crucial during the scooter pilot and the biking boom, and using the data collected, Omaha can make permanent improvements to its multimodal network. We have a lot of work to do when it comes to updating our transportation system and voting yes today is a good small step.

Mode Shift Omaha is a transportation nonprofit organization advocating for mobility equity that enhances quality of life and opportunities for everyone to live, work, and play.

Best,

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