

BART to crack down on LimeBikes left at stations

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LimeBikes are left — some scattered and some parked — at the South San Francisco BART station in this undated photo by BART's bike program manager, Steve Beroldo. (Courtesy BART)

With the growing popularity of shared, dockless bikes in the Bay Area comes a new problem for BART: bicycles carelessly strewn at stations, discarded on platforms or left in front of entrances.

The transit agency is cracking down on the growing phenomenon, said Steve Beroldo, BART's bike program manager, by forcing LimeBike and similar companies to remove recklessly discarded or broken bikes, paint bike parking areas at stations so it's clear where users should leave them and ensure the companies have enough insurance in case someone trips over a bike and wants to sue BART.

Although dockless bikes are relatively new to the United States and the Bay Area, the trend has exploded in China, where [heaps of bikes](#) clutter sidewalks and public parks.

Since it rolled out in 2017, LimeBike has launched in [Alameda](#), South San Francisco, [Walnut Creek](#), Albany and El Cerrito and is looking to [expand elsewhere](#). The company introduced [electric bikes](#) earlier this year and began offering electric kick scooters this month.

Unlike the baby blue Ford GoBikes, which require users to return the bikes to a designated docking station, the bright green self-locking LimeBikes can be left anywhere.

That's led to 20 to 30 bikes left at stations at any given time, sometimes in an orderly fashion, and sometimes not, Beroldo said. Robert Raburn, a BART board director, said he's seen an increasing number of incidents at the Fruitvale and MacArthur stations with the dockless bikes being left on station platforms or right in front of fare gates.

“There haven’t been any incidents where someone has tripped over a bike yet,” Beroldo said. “But I think it’s potentially a problem, and we need to operate the stations in a way that’s safe and orderly.”

But that doesn’t mean BART wants to block the dockless bikes from parking at stations — after all, Beroldo’s main goal is to increase the number of people ditching their cars and opting for alternative modes of travel to and from the transit system.

For it’s part, LimeBike say it’s happy to cooperate. Jack Song, a spokesman for the company, said it’s been “a positive, collaborative effort” working with BART.

“This partnership allows more convenience to the riders who are looking for additional transportation options,” Song said in a statement.

The pending contract between BART and LimeBike comes on the heels of news from the shared scooter company, [Bird](#), that is deploying roughly 350 dockless, electric kick-scooters Tuesday in San Francisco and San Jose, adding [another provider to the shared mobility mix](#).

Bird CEO and founder Travis VanderZanden on Tuesday appealed to other shared bike and scooter providers to take his “Save our Sidewalks” pledge: a promise to pick up discarded bicycles daily, not increase the number of bikes or scooters unless they’re actually being used, share usage information with cities and return \$1 per bicycle or scooter to cities where they operate to help those cities “build more bike lanes, promote safe riding, and maintain our shared infrastructure.”

“We’ve all seen the results of out-of-control deployment in China,” VanderZanden said in a letter to the leaders of shared bike and scooter companies LimeBike, Ofo, Mobike, LimeBike and [Jump](#). “We cannot let this happen to our cities here in the U.S.”

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