

## **Bye bye Bird and Lime. New electric scooters arrive in Raleigh this week.**

The Herald-Sun By Anna Johnson August 5, 2019

A new electric-scooter company is set to arrive in Raleigh as Bird and Lime end their rocky relationship with the city.

Gotcha, a South Carolina-based company, will arrive with a fleet of about 150 scooters this week, with plans to add more. It and the city of Raleigh will hold an event from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday at Exchange Plaza, between Fayetteville and Wilmington streets, in downtown to introduce the scooters to the public.

“The most important thing is to give us a shot,” said Sean Flood, CEO of Gotcha. “Whether you’ve had a great experience or not great experience with the last scooters, give us a chance. Be open to the benefits of the product and be open-minded about a new company.”

Bird and Lime arrived unannounced in Raleigh last year, instantly polarizing the city between those who welcomed the new mode of transportation and those who saw the vehicles as a nuisance.

“I think you’ll see how they come into the market, it’s a little bit more thoughtful and measured,” said Michael Moore, the city’s transportation director. “It’s not all shock and awe.”

### **DESIGNATED PARKING ZONES**

Gotcha scooters are similar to Bird and Lime in that it costs \$1 to “unlock” the vehicle and 15 cents per minute to ride. However, riders will be incentivized to park the blue scooters in designated parking zones — Flood said riders may be charged more if they don’t park in one — instead of leaving them wherever they finish their ride. Those zones are still being set up, he said, adding some riders will have to “change behaviors.”

Gotcha doesn’t want to be in every market, Flood said, adding the company plans to work in cities and at universities where they are the exclusive scooter company. They’ve looked at places where there are multiple companies offering scooter services and are pulling back in some, he said. Gotcha left the city of Nashville within the last week.

After Bird and Lime arrived, the city’s staff recommended rules and a \$100 per scooter fee, which the Raleigh City Council increased to \$300 per scooter. It’s one of the highest per-scooter fees in the country.

The fee is high, Flood said, but added that Gotcha is committed to Raleigh and hopes the company and the city will be able to work together to make sure the scooters are affordable to residents while still being profitable.

The two California-based companies, Bird and Lime, did not apply to operate in the city, citing the city’s fees and regulations. They left at the end of July.

The city could have picked four companies to replace Bird and Lime, but only selected Gotcha. The company will be allowed 500 scooters with the potential of 1,000 — though Flood said the company’s standard fleet is normally 250 to 450. If Gotcha is allowed to deploy 1,000 scooters, it would still fall short of the nearly 1,400 scooters that were in the city at one point.

Gotcha will also have local employees who pick up the scooters for charging and maintenance instead of relying on contracting with residents to pick up the scooters.

### **LIME TO REMAIN AT NC STATE**

In an outgoing message to the city, Lime thanked its team of chargers (called juicers) and riders for being apart of the “Lime family” and regrets not being able to stay. The company will still be at N.C. State University.

“After months of conversation and attempts to find a suitable path forward with the city of Raleigh, we were unable to reach an agreement that would allow for the sustainable, well-run scooter program Raleigh residents deserve,” Lime said in a statement. “We regret that we will not be able to serve Raleigh at this time and we thank our riders and our

great team of juicers for being a valued part of the Lime family. We hope to serve Raleigh in the future so residents can enjoy our reliable, sustainable and affordable transportation options.”

In an email to riders, Lime said people should vote for “candidates who value alternative transportation” in the upcoming municipal election if they want Lime scooters to come back.

“Bird is so grateful to our Raleigh community for supporting shared e-scooters and embracing Bird as an environmentally friendly alternative to short car trips,” Bird said in a statement. “Unfortunately, due to burdensome regulations on e-scooter providers, it no longer makes sense for us to provide our service in the city. We thank Raleigh riders and would welcome the opportunity to provide our service again in the future under improved circumstances.”

## **As gas tax withers, how will NC pay for roads, sidewalks and bike paths in the future?**

The Herald-Sun By Richard Stradling July 23, 2019

Most of the N.C. Department of Transportation’s annual \$5 billion budget comes from people who use the state’s roads, through taxes on gasoline and the sale and registration of cars and trucks.

But what if many people — perhaps a majority — don’t pay those taxes, because they drive electric vehicles that don’t use gasoline or because they use ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft and don’t own a car.

The NCDOT is trying to prepare for those and other possible scenarios where the current way of paying for the state’s transportation system may no longer work, because of changes in technology, demographics and travel habits.

The department has formed a committee of business people, politicians, economists and others to explore alternative strategies for paying for transportation. The N.C. FIRST Commission will meet over the next year and is looking for some guidance from the public through an online survey, at [publicinput.com/ncfirst](http://publicinput.com/ncfirst).

Government has built and maintained roads and other transportation systems mostly using fees and taxes paid by the people who use them. The biggest single source of revenue is the gas tax: The state tax of 36.2 cents per gallon accounts for 40% of NCDOT’s budget, while the federal gas tax of 18.4 cents a gallon provides the bulk of the federal money that makes up 25%.

The “highway use tax,” which is essentially a 3% sales tax when a vehicle’s title changes hands, and Division of Motor Vehicle registration fees account for most of the rest of the budget.

The gas tax has already become less dependable as a source of revenue, as improved mileage means people pay less in taxes to drive the same distance. Improvements in battery storage and reductions in cost are expected to make electric vehicles more attractive to consumers in coming years, reducing gas tax revenue even further.

“We’ve always been a user-pay system,” says Burt Tasaico, NCDOT’s director of strategic initiatives and program support. “The challenge is, how can we maintain that in light of all the changes that we see?”

Other changes on the horizon include autonomous vehicles. While Ford CEO Jim Hackett recently said carmakers have been overly optimistic about the development of self-driving cars, the industry still predicts their arrival in years, rather than decades, which could also lead to drastic changes in vehicle ownership.

Tony Seba, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur who heads a think tank called RethinkX, predicts that by 2030 nearly all of the road miles traveled in the U.S. will be provided by on-demand autonomous vehicles owned by fleets, in a new business model he calls “transport-as-a-service.” And those vehicles will all be electric, Seba says.

N.C. Secretary of Transportation Jim Trogdon cites Seba in explaining why he created the FIRST Commission (Trogdon has invited Seba to speak at next year’s transportation summit in Raleigh). He notes that others think the transition to fleets of on-demand, all-electric vehicles will take longer to come about, but the point is the state needs to be ready for some dramatic changes.

“Even if we’re 50% correct, we’re still better off,” Trogdon said in an interview. He added that even some of the most fantastic scenarios for transportation in the future involve pavement.

“Unless everyone is flying in unmanned aerial vehicles, I would anticipate that we’re still going to need roads,” he said.

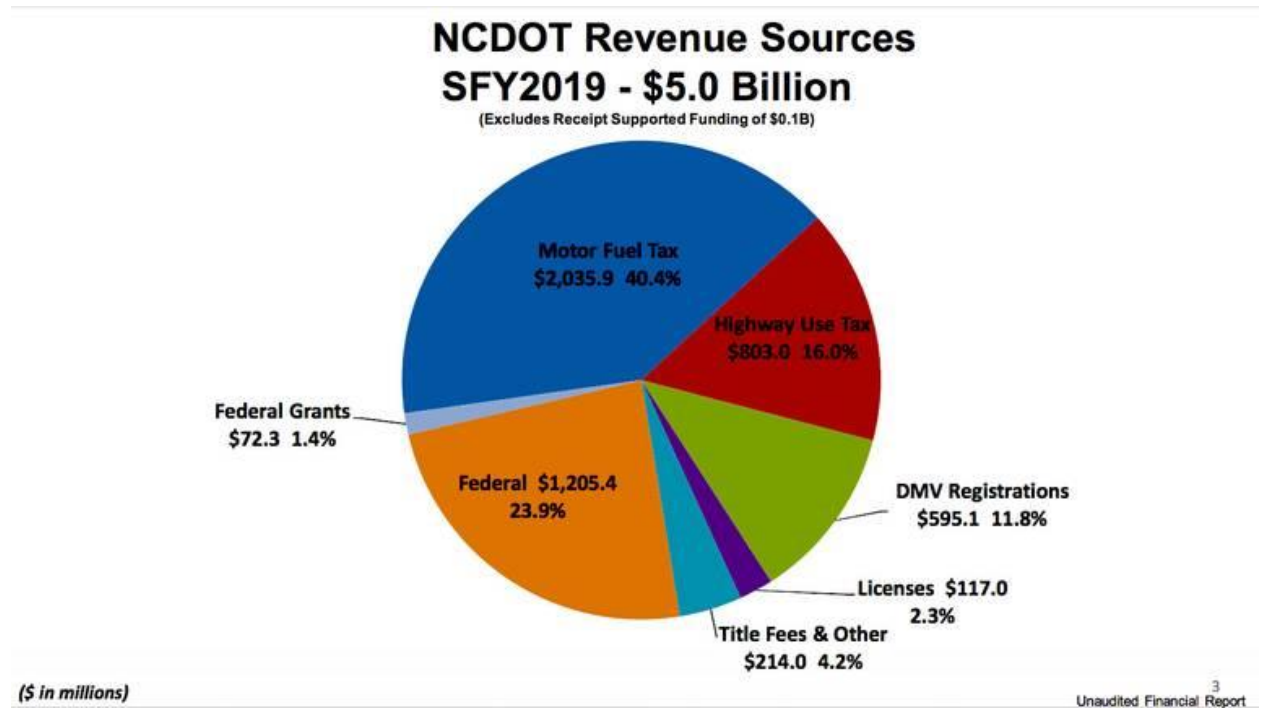
The shift to electric vehicles will likely be gradual, giving the state time to adjust, says Amna Cameron, NCDOT’s deputy director of strategic initiatives and program support. When the FIRST Commission makes recommendations to the General Assembly ahead of the 2021 session, Cameron said, she expects they will include some modest proposals to boost transportation revenue, such as taxes on Uber and Lyft or on electric scooters.

“We are not at a crisis point in terms of any revenue stability,” she said. “This will be a phased-in plan.”

The FIRST Commission’s public survey, which will be open through the end of the month, asks which new sources of revenue the commission should consider and provides six choices: a fee based on vehicle weight; a variable fee based on congestion; a dedicated state sales tax; a fee based on miles traveled; a sales tax on motor fuel; and a tax on electricity.

It also leaves a space for people to suggest their own ideas.

The commission’s name is an acronym: Future Investment Resources for Sustainable Transportation. It is led by Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane and Ward Nye, president and CEO of Raleigh-based Martin Marietta, which provides stone, gravel, cement and other materials for road and other construction projects.



## **Electric scooters are coming to Durham. What you need to know before they land.**

The Herald-Sun By Shelbi Polk June 7, 2019

Durham is about to join the electric scooter craze.

Four companies, [Bird](#), [Lime](#), [Gotcha](#) and Spin, will be allowed to bring up to 200 electric scooters each to the city starting Thursday, June 13.

"We are pleased that residents and visitors in Durham will have a new transportation option to try. Scooters can provide first- and last-mile connections to transit and serve residents who don't have a car or prefer to drive less," Interim Transportation Director Bill Judge said in a statement.

"Ultimately, this is one way we're working to provide equitable, accessible, multi-modal transportation services that meets the needs of our growing community and consumer demands," Judge said.

The length of the trip and each company's policies will affect the cost of each ride, but Evan Tenenbaum with the city's Department of Transportation says all companies charge \$1 to initially unlock a scooter.

"We should have them throughout the central part of Durham, near downtown, NCCU, Duke, Ninth Street area, east Durham, etc.," Tenenbaum said. "We will have a map on our website sometime next week for locations people can expect to find scooters parked in the mornings."

The Durham City Council began preparing for electric scooters last fall. It approved a permitting process for scooters that eventually will also apply to other methods of transportation, like bicycles and electric bicycles.

The city requires scooter companies to keep 20% of their fleet in areas accessible to low- and moderate-income residents and to provide a payment method that doesn't depend on smart phones or credit cards.

Riders, who must be older than 16 and are encouraged to wear helmets, are not allowed on sidewalks, according to the city's rules.

According to Judge, Durham's recent bike-share pilot program showed demand for alternative ways of getting around the city.

Over 61,000 trips were completed when the program was operating, with riders accumulating over 50,000 miles during the pilot period, according to a news release. The operators, Spin and Lime, removed their bikes earlier this year and are now focused on e-scooters, the release said.

### **WHAT'S NEXT**

The city will hold a demonstration of the new electric scooters Tuesday, June 11, starting at 10 a.m. at the Durham Station Transportation Center, at 515 W. Pettigrew St. downtown.