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Nashville Officials Want to Track People on Scooters in Real Time

October 19, 2019 Chris Butler



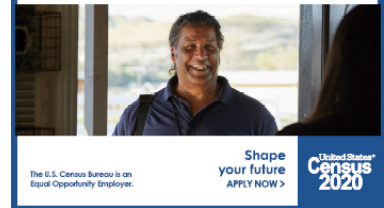
NASHVILLE

48°

heavy intensity rain
93% humidity
wind: 17m/s NE
H 51 • L 46

48° 47° 46° 49°
WED THU FRI SAT

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Nashville officials are demanding scooter companies turn over GPS and route information that would allow the government to track people who ride scooters in real-time.

Scooter companies can already track their customers' movements, but officials at the Nashville-based Beacon Center of Tennessee say government officials ought not to have the same privilege.

Members of the City's Transportation Licensing Commission are the ones who want the real-time GPS data, according to a letter Beacon President Justin Owen sent Mayor John Cooper this week.

Beacon Vice President Stephanie Whitt elaborated on Owen's letter in a call with *The Tennessee Star* Friday.

"The city has put out an RFP saying that 'In order to operate a scooter company in Nashville you have to apply, and we're only going to allow so many scooter companies to operate.' As



part of that application you have to agree as a company to give over that information," Whitt said.

"We found that alarming because (with) real-time data given over to the city, they don't have the capability to maintain that privacy and we also find it alarming that they would want that information. Usually if there is some crime that has happened or some incident that has occurred (then) they would have to go through a police investigation or court order in order to get that information from, say, Uber, if there was an incident in a ride. Uber does not just give all of that information over to the company, no matter if there was no incident or not."

No one at Cooper's office responded to *The Star's* requests for comment this week.

In his letter, Owen told Cooper that the city's proposal is "unconstitutionally invasive."

"With growing regularity, even the most well-equipped private companies from Sony to Equifax have still faced hacks. The City has no institutional knowledge when it comes to cybersecurity of this magnitude," Owen wrote.

"If done with scooter data, Nashvillians could see their most intimate data dumped into the public sphere," he added. "Nashville should not open itself up to the massive responsibility and liability that will follow the accumulation of this data."

Chris Butler is an investigative journalist at *The Tennessee Star*. Follow Chris on [Facebook](#).

Email tips to chrisbutlerjournalist@gmail.com.

Photo "Lime S Scooter" by [Baldesteinmanuel326](#). CC BY-SA 4.0.



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🕒 November 17, 2019 at 12:06 am

[...] recently, Nashville's Transportation Licensing Commission want scooter companies to hand over tracking data so the city can track people in [...]

Reply

Dyspeptic Curmudgeon

🕒 October 22, 2019 at 11:18 pm

In 2012 SCOTUS held that the govt needed a warrant to put a gps tracker on a suspect's car. It warms the heart to learn that the Nashville legal department is totally ignorant about 4th amendment law.

Reply

Paul

🕒 October 22, 2019 at 8:51 pm

Police, by their very nature SPY on people. They just can't help themselves.

Since the company already spies on those that rent the scooters... the Police ask why can't they snoop to!

The only thing standing in the way is that pesky CONSTITUTION. Who cares!

Reply

Pissed Off Nashvillian

🕒 October 19, 2019 at 3:36 pm

The real nuisance is alcohol. Track alcoholic beverage drinkers in real time. Taxpayers would be shocked if they ever found out how many hours are spent by the police dealing with drunks.

Reply

83ragtop50

🕒 October 20, 2019 at 1:49 pm

Sure cannot argument with you about alcohol. But Nashville leaders are proud to Nash Vega.

Reply

83ragtop50

🕒 October 19, 2019 at 1:16 pm

These nuisances need to be eliminated from Nashville streets.

Reply



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