



CITY OF CORONADO

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

October 15, 2024

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ELECTRIC BICYCLES (E-BIKES) POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update on e-bike safety strategies and provide direction to staff as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

Like many communities in our region, over the past few years the City of Coronado has experienced a rise in the number of electric bicycles (e-bikes) operating on City streets and bike paths. The City continues to receive concerned messages and complaints from residents about operation of these vehicles. Concerns ranged from e-bike operators' lack of helmets, to use on sidewalks with potential for pedestrian collisions, to reckless speeds, to inattention and carrying too many passengers. The City's Mobility Commission likewise took up the issue again in July 2024.

E-bikes are regulated under the California Vehicle Code as conventional bicycles and must obey most all of the same regulations as non-motorized bicycles. E-bikes are divided into three classes and must not exceed 750W and 28 mph on level ground. Assembly Bill 1096 adopted by the California Legislature in 2015 created the current legal framework governing the use of e-bikes in the State.

In response to growing community and City Council interest, staff initiated several actions in 2022 and 2023 to examine e-bike use and develop potential policy solutions to increase safety last year. On December 6, 2022 and May 2, 2023 City Council received a report on enforcement, public outreach and various Safety Strategies as recommended by the City's E-Bike Task Force. The ad hoc E-Bike Task Force comprises staff from the Police, Fire, Public Services & Engineering, Recreation and Golf Services and Community Development Departments and the City Manager's Office to research and explore policy options. The task force examined existing law, current practices and past experience and the policies and programs in other jurisdictions to generate ideas that would fit Coronado's geography, improve safety and be readily administered.

On May 2, 2023, City Council approved the following strategies recommended by City staff and the Mobility Commission:

1. Continue with targeted enforcement for the safe operation of e-bikes, including monitoring speed for safety, by the Police Department.
2. Continue to provide e-bike/bicycle rodeos to educate riders on safe operation and enhance operator skills.
3. Continue to impound e-bikes for serious offenses.
4. Continue, refresh and expand the recently launched E-Bike and B-Safe Coronado campaign as necessary for greater reach and impact.
5. Request the City Council representatives to the City and CUSD Joint Committee to convene the Joint Committee and discuss e-bike safety strategies and outreach to students and parents.
6. Consider engineering improvements (surface, signage, design) as future road projects are developed to increase bicycle safety.

7. Provide small incentive funding for Police Officers to “cite” youth e-bike operators for good behavior with gift certificates to local pizza or ice cream when observing responsible operation of e-bikes in the community.
8. Expand promotion of voluntary bike registry to include e-bikes to ensure recognition of e-bike owners and timely return of stolen e-bikes. Online registry located here: <https://bikeindex.org/>

This report will provide information on the continuing implementation of the adopted strategies since May 2023 by the City’s E-Bike Task Force, provide recent data on bike and e-bike citations and accidents, an overview of new recommendations by the Mobility Commission, and information on potential options to continue to help educate residents and visitors on the safe operation of e-bikes within the community.

ANALYSIS:

E-Bike and Bicycle Safety Statistics Update

The Fire and Police Departments continue to enhance their tracking of e-bike and bicycle safety statistics to enable a more comprehensive view of trends. Below is a summary of combined e-bike and bike data, as well as a summary of e-bike only trends for accidents.

Total E-Bike and Bike Data: 2021-2024 (as of July 2024)

- The total number of bike and e-bike collisions annually since 2021 remain stable around 26.
- Adults and older adults caused 78% of all bike and e-bike collisions with adolescents causing 19% of collisions.
- Drugs and alcohol are not significant contributing factors in bike and e-bike accidents.
- In approximately 27% of all bike/e-bike accidents, helmets were not utilized when required by age or e-bike classification.

E-Bike Only Data: 2021-2024 (as of July 2024)

- The total number of e-bike collisions annually remain stable around 11 after an uptick in 2023.
- Adults and older adults caused 52% of all e-bike collisions with adolescents causing 48% of collisions.
- E-bike operators were the cause of majority of e-bike accidents at 72%. 25% of accident reports are due to unsafe speed by the e-bike operator.
- E-bike accidents are roughly evenly distributed over the period between the Strand and the Village. Review of data does not show hotspots of concern in specific geographic locations.

In 2022, Fire Department data showed two medical responses for known e-bikes and 13 for unspecified bicycle types. Eleven of those incidents were characterized as mild medical severity, two as moderate medical severity and two acute medical severity (major trauma).

In May 2023, the Fire Department updated their reporting to capture e-bike statistics. From May 2023 to July 2024, 46% of e-bikes accidents have been mild in nature, compared to 39% moderate and 15% acute. There have been no fatalities.

E-Bike Safety Enforcement and Positive Recognition

Since May 2023, the Police Department issued 162 warnings and 23 citations to e-bike operators. The Police Department continues to diligently enforce our existing regulations and to work collaboratively with the public and other community partners to focus on the proper operation of e-bikes through education. Police officers have also seized 9 e-bikes for unsafe operation and/or illegal modification. The Police Department has also secured small gift certificates for pizza that are being distributed to youth in the community when they are observed safely operating their e-bikes to positively reinforce the rules of the road.

Saturday School Youth Diversion Program

The Police Department previously partnered with the Coronado Unified School District to implement a diversion program for youth who are observed violating e-bike and bicycle regulations in the City. Those in violation while enroute to school are required to complete a Saturday school within 90 days in coordination with CUSD. If they are observed in violation outside of school hours, they are assigned an essay by the Police Department with the School Resource Officer following up with the student and their parents, when necessary. Since May 2023, there have been 14 students that have completed the program, and 8 students that have not completed the diversion, resulting in fines.

Public Outreach Update

In October 2022, the City launched an e-bike safety campaign “E-Bike and B-Safe Coronado.” The campaign includes a Comment Coronado webpage dedicated to resources, videos, information and FAQs about e-bike safety located at: <https://commentcoronado.org/e-bike-b-safe-coronado>. The City also produced an educational video which airs on Coronado TV. Informational flyers and brochures were produced that outline the rules of e-bike operation. These flyers and brochures were distributed to bicycle and rental shops, hotels, CUSD, the U.S. Navy and other community partners such as Coronado MainStreet, Discover Coronado and the Chamber of Commerce.

The City has built upon the success of the program in raising awareness of existing regulations and safety protocols by expanding messaging this year in a variety of ways throughout the community:

- Digital Message Board Displays on Orange Ave, Ocean Blvd and Community Center marquee
- Ads placed on Summer Shuttle buses and Summer Concert Series programs
- Ads in CUSD Back To School Magazine, including the E-Bike pocket guide
- Over 1,000 pocket guides distributed via community events
- Distributed pocket guides and handouts to bike shops and rentals and City facilities
- Social Media (posts and video)
- CTV and YouTube safety videos (E-bike Safety and Rules of the Road)
- Regular updates to Project Coronado E-bike B-Safe webpage

We will continue to look for new opportunities to provide information to the public on the safe operation of e-bikes.

Bike Rodeos

The Police Department previously coordinated bicycle safety rodeos in partnership with the Coronado Unified School District (CUSD), Coronado MainStreet, Mobility Commission and Bike Coalition-San Diego County. The rodeos were held at Coronado Middle School, Village

Elementary School and Strand Elementary School. While no bicycle safety rodeos have been conducted within the last year due to staffing transitions, the Police Department is currently in the planning stages of coordinating two more bike rodeos in the coming months which will be promoted by the City and CUSD.

October 2024 E-Bike Recommendations

The growth of the use of e-bikes locally along with other forms of motorized personal transportation may merit adoption of additional regulations in order to protect the safety of pedestrians in certain environments as outlined below with a continued focus on public education.

1. Consider an ordinance regulating “Motorized Mobility Devices”

California law (CVC 21282, 313 and 21125) allows cities to enact ordinances regulating time, place and manner of the operation of personal assistive mobility devices for the purpose of assuring the safety of pedestrians, including persons with disabilities and others using sidewalks, bike paths, pathways, trails, bike lanes, streets, roads and highways.

“Motorized Mobility Devices” is defined as electric bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, electrically motorized boards, motorized scooters and other similar vehicles. While they provide recreational opportunities, their popularity increases the probability, likelihood, and gravity of potential injuries to persons and property that warrants reasonable measures and enforcement mechanisms to avoid conflicts.

Staff has reviewed areas of the community for intensity of pedestrian use and potential level of conflict with pedestrians. Based upon this analysis, staff recommends a prohibition on use of Motorized Mobility Devices (MMD) at the following locations, requiring users to dismount and walk their MMD like e-bikes, etc. or utilize them at nearby roadways:

- All City sidewalks
- The Paseo (near the Hotel del Coronado) and the Boardwalk (near the Coronado Shores)
- The Promenade along the Glorietta Bay Marina between Glorietta Bay Park and the Bluewater Grill

Motorized vehicles, which include e-bikes, are already prohibited under Coronado Municipal Code 56.18.040 upon any public beach, park, golf course, median strip, traffic island, or parkway except for parking areas and access roads. No further action is required at this time to regulate those public spaces.

Staff does not recommend enhanced regulation of e-bikes on the Bayshore Bikeway, as it is a designated Class 1 Bikeway intended for use for multi-modal transportation purposes connecting various parts of the island; however, the City retains the ability to enforce safe operation of e-bikes on the bikeway including yields at roadway intersections.

Recommendation: Direct staff to prepare an ordinance regulating motorized mobility devices with exemptions for public agency personnel and disability accommodations.

2. Consider Municipal Code Fine increase (effective 2026)

Under CMC 56.08.090, fines for bicycle violations are \$50 for a first violation, \$100 for a second and \$250 for three or more in one year. The Council could consider an increase in fines to deter violations. Any changes would not be effective until 2026.

Recommendation: Should Council wish to increase fees, may direct staff to prepare that for inclusion in the 2026 fee change schedule.

3. Implement AB 2234 (Boerner) “Vehicles: Electric Bicycles” Prohibiting E-Bike Use by those Under 12 Years Old

AB 2234 (Boerner) was chaptered into law as an amendment to California Vehicle Code 21214.7 and will be effective January 1, 2025. The bill establishes a “San Diego Electric Bicycle Safety Pilot Program” until January 1, 2029 that authorizes a local government in San Diego County to adopt an ordinance or resolution that would prohibit a person under 12 years of age from operating a class 1 or 2 electric bicycle (note that class 3 bicycles can be only operated by those 16 years and older under the Vehicle Code). The jurisdiction must administer a public information campaign of the resolution or ordinance for at least 30 days before enactment. For the first 60 days after enactment, only warnings of violations may be issued. After 60 days, the violation shall be \$25.

Recommendation: If desired, direct staff to prepare a Resolution or Ordinance to prohibit operation of class 1 or 2 electric bicycles by those under 12. Direct staff to prepare the education campaign and warning system in compliance with the law.

4. Consider an E-Bike Training and Registration Program with CUSD

In a program recently introduced by Poway Unified School District, middle and high school students are required to attend an e-bike safety course on campus with a parent and register their e-bike’s make and model, VIN number with their student ID. They are issued a registration sticker allowing it to be parked on the school campus. The classes are led by the school resource officer and encourage riders to be aware of potential dangers and inform students of their civil liability for damage they cause to other vehicles or property. The City could approach CUSD about partnering on a similar program.

Recommendation: Direct the Council representatives on the 2x2 City / Schools Committee to discuss this concept.

5. Consider Mobility Commission E-bike Task Force Recommendations

At their July 11, 2024 meeting, the Mobility Commission provided a list of new recommendations to the City Council for consideration. Their recommendations are summarized below.

	E-Bike Task Force Recommendation	Comment
1	Assist schools with announcing and explaining the new laws governing E-Bikes. It is important that students and their families are informed of potential consequences for violations of law.	Coincides with recommendation 4. Would be explored in 2x2 Committee meeting.
2	Offer free E-Bike training class for ALL ages.	If the City Council desires, staff can explore existing programs or funding opportunities for training. Otherwise, City would need to develop curriculum and training and fund training classes.
3	Establish a program in which students can possess an "Approved E-Bike Rider" designation.	Coincides with recommendation 4. Would be explored in 2x2 Committee meeting.
4	Reinforce/reward students that are following the law and making good choices on E-Bikes.	Coincides with recommendation 4. Would be explored in 2x2 Committee meeting. Also, Police Department has existing incentive program to reward responsible riding behavior.
5	Offer incentives to kids over 12 yrs of age for attending E-Bike classes.	Could coincide with recommendation 4. Also if training classes occur, could consider ways to incent participation.
6	Announce and explain new laws (AB 2234, AB 1774) governing E-Bikes on City Platforms that inform the public. It is important that the public is informed on the potential consequences for violations of the law.	City will include in updated "E-Bike and B-Safe Coronado" campaign
7	Acknowledge E-Bike rental companies that require renters to review rules.	City provides e-bike safety information to bicycle sale and rental shops. Could consider acknowledgement of these businesses.
8	Acknowledge E-Bike sale companies that inform customers of news law governing age limits for E-Bike usage.	Similar to the above, City will include new laws in e-bike information materials that are distributed to bicycle shops and could acknowledge shops that educate on these new laws.
9	Create signage for new law. Post copies of law at elementary schools, library and middle school. Consider strategic location on Orange.	If the City Council desires additional signage, staff can explore possibilities.

10	Consider sanctioning E-Bike users that have modified bikes to exceed 20 mph speed limit.	Under existing law, it is illegal to tamper with an electric bicycle to exceed the legal speed capability. AB 1774, chaptered into law as an amendment to California Vehicle Code 24016 prohibits the sale of devices that illegally modify the speed capability. The Coronado Police Department enforces this law.
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Recommendation: Review the recommendations of the Mobility Commission for potential implementation and provide direction to staff.

Next Steps

If City Council chooses to direct staff to explore implementation of the any of the recommendations listed above, staff will return at a subsequent meeting with the associated implementing ordinance and/or updates on feasibility of program initiatives.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Police Officer time to staff Saturday School Diversion program is \$80 per Saturday School and will be drawn from the existing Police Department overtime budget.

ALTERNATIVE:

The City Council may direct staff to pursue all, none or alternate policy recommendations.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT:

Not Applicable.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

No notice required.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Text of AB 2234
2. E-Bike and B-Safe Coronado Educational Materials

Submitted By: City Manager's Office / E-Bike Task Force