



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: COUNCIL MEMBERS PAT BURNS AND CASEY MCKEON

DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

SUBJECT: DEVELOP PROPOSAL FOR E-BIKE LICENSURE AND USE REGULATIONS

ISSUE STATEMENT

The use of electric bicycles - commonly known as "e-bikes" - has proliferated in our community. E-bikes are ridden by adults and children of nearly all ages and on nearly every type of ground surface - through parks, bike lanes, bike paths, boardwalks, parking lots, streets, etc. Many of the riders of minor age have not received the kind of driver's training, testing, or licensing that adults have and therefore, they are not educated on the rules of the road for handling vehicles, nor are they aware of the dangers. In addition, many e-bikes travel at a rate of 28 mph, and many modified "motorized bicycles" travel at speeds close to 60 mph.

Because of a lack of regulation and oversight at the State level, e-bikes have not only become a nuisance to drivers but those driving the e-bikes have become a danger to vehicles and a danger to themselves. The number of collisions between e-bikes and vehicles has increased in the City, the severity of the collisions and personal injuries has increased, and vehicle traffic has been forced to slow or take alternative paths because e-bike drivers are in the roadways.

While we believe in small, unobtrusive government, regulation and oversight does become necessary when certain conduct, such as unregulated use of e-bikes, causes disorder on our roadways and pathways, and an increase in injuries to those in our community.

As such, we are recommending that the City look at options to implement a new program to require licenses to ride/operate e-bikes in the City, which would require a certain amount of training to obtain, and to update our Municipal Code in ways to allow our Police Department to enforce certain rules of the road for e-bike riders without a valid driver's license.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

While this is a concept in development, direct the City Manager to work with the Police Department and the City Attorney to develop a proposal for e-bike licensure and use regulations. The proposal should return to City Council in November. The following concepts should be addressed, if possible, in the proposal that returns to Council:

- Require a city license to operate an electric bicycle within city limits unless the rider possesses a valid driver's license.
 - Establish a fee for license (akin to a business license)
- Mandate rental businesses to require customers renting e-bikes to view a safety video in order to have a one-day license or show proof of a valid driver's license.
- Explore enforcement options for PD

- Revising current HBMC to assist officers with enforcement efforts - see if our HBMC can "follow" or "borrow" rules and enforcement from the California Vehicle Code.
- New HBMC for “pocket bikes” (Surreys)
- Higher fine structures, bike impounding etc.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Fiscal Sustainability & Public Safety

