

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**  
**SUPPORT AMENDING LAMC SECTION 56.15 BICYCLING RIDING – SIDEWALKS TO READ:**  
**NO E-BICYCLES ON SIDEWALKS OR BOARDWALKS IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**(updated May 17, 2025)**

**MTC PROPOSED MOTION:**

The \_\_\_\_\_ NC/CC, a member of the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC), supports banning all classes of e-bicycles (e-bikes) from riding on a sidewalk or a boardwalk in the City of Los Angeles, to address serious public safety concerns and reports of rising accidents, injuries and deaths from collisions between e-bikes and pedestrians.

To accomplish this objective, the \_\_\_\_\_ NC/CC supports the Los Angeles City Council passing, and the Mayor approving, an ordinance updating Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 56.15. BICYCLE RIDING – SIDEWALKS to read (*additions in italics/underlined*):

1. No person shall ride, operate or use a bicycle, unicycle, skateboard, cart, wagon, wheelchair, roller skates, or any other device moved exclusively by human power, on a sidewalk, bikeway or boardwalk in a willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property. (Amended by Ord. No. 166,189, Eff. 10/7/90.) *No person shall ride, operate or use any class of electric bicycle (e-bike) on a sidewalk or boardwalk in the City of Los Angeles. (Amended by a new Ordinance passed by the LA City Council.)*

2. No person shall ride, operate or use a bicycle, *electric bicycle (e-bike)* or unicycle on Ocean Front Walk between Marine Street and Via Marina within the City of Los Angeles, except that bicycle, *electric bicycle (e-bike)* or unicycle riding shall be permitted along the bicycle path adjacent to Ocean Front Walk between Marine Street and Washington Boulevard. (Amended by Ord. No. 153,474, Eff. 4/12/80.) *(Amended by a new Ordinance passed by the LA City Council.)*

3. No person shall operate on a beach bicycle path, or on an area of a beach which is set aside for bicycle, *electric bicycle (e-bike)* or unicycle use, any bicycle, *electric bicycle (e-bike)* or tricycle which provides for side-by-side seating thereon or which has affixed thereto any attachment or appendage which protrudes from the side of the bicycle, *electric bicycle (e-bike)* or tricycle and is used or designed to carry another person or persons thereon. *(Amended by a new Ordinance passed by the LA City Council.)*

Reference: [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los\\_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-138429](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-138429)

**BACKGROUND**

**A. Electric Bicycles (E-Bikes) Treated as Bicycles Under State Law**

[California Chaptered Bill AB 1096 \(2015\)](#) treats Class 1 and Class 2 electric bikes (e-bikes) as regular bicycles under the law. This means they share the same rules of the road as bicycles and don't require special licenses or registration.

AB 1096 defines e-bikes as bicycles with fully operable pedals and a motor of less than 750 watts. Class 1 e-bikes offer pedal assistance up to 20 mph, while Class 2 e-bikes can use throttle power up to 20 mph. While Class 1 and 2 e-bikes have no age restrictions, Class 3 e-bikes require riders to be 16 years or older. In addition, riders of Class 1 and 2 e-bikes under 18 must wear helmets and all riders of Class 3 e-bikes must wear helmets.

AB 1096 primarily focuses on defining and regulating e-bikes in California. Whether or not bicycles, including e-bikes, are permitted on sidewalks and boardwalks is determined by local ordinances and regulations, not by AB 1096.

[Los Angeles Municipal Code \(LAMC\) section 56.15](#) deals with bicycling riding on the sidewalk. Currently, this Code has not been updated to include a specific mention of e-bikes. It has, however, been amended by Los Angeles City Council Ordinances on several different occasions, to address other concerns, like riding bicycles on Ocean Front Walk in Venice.

A new Ordinance to further update this section of the LAMC to specifically address what e-bikes can or cannot do is within the purview of the Los Angeles City Council. The Mayor of Los Angeles can also submit a proposal to the City Council to amend LAMC 56.15 to address e-bikes. Having the new Ordinance apply to all classes of e-bikes will make enforcement of the new Ordinance easier for law enforcement. Clearly defining who is liable in an e-bike collision on the sidewalk or boardwalk will benefit pedestrians involved in these collisions.

The Cities of [Santa Monica](#), [Inglewood](#), [West Hollywood](#), [Beverly Hills](#) and [Manhattan Beach](#) have all passed ordinances banning e-bikes from riding on the sidewalks in their jurisdictions.

### **B. Electric Scooters (E-Scooters) are Already Banned from Sidewalks**

In contrast to e-bikes, [California Chaptered Bill AB2989 \(2018\)](#) states that it is illegal to ride the motorized scooters (e-scooters) on sidewalk, except when it is leaving or entering a property and needs to traverse the sidewalk to do so. In addition, the bill also reiterates that existing law prohibits a person from operating a motorized scooter at a speed in excess of 15 miles per hour.

So in 2018, the California legislature perceived e-scooters to be a greater threat to pedestrians on the sidewalk than e-bikes. But are they, really?

### **C. E-bikes versus Pedestrians**

E-scooters typically weigh between 20 and 40 pounds, while e-bikes are typically heavier, on average between 40 and 70 pounds. Given that e-bikes are allowed to travel 20 miles an hour, 5 miles an hour faster than the e-scooters, this makes them potentially more dangerous in a collision with a pedestrian than an e-scooter. This is especially true when operated by less experienced riders, who

aren't as skilled in calculating the distance it takes to bring an e-bike to a stop or interacting with pedestrians on the sidewalk.

It is clear that in a collision between an e-bike and a pedestrian, the pedestrian is the most vulnerable to injury, disability and death.

#### **D. E-bike Accidents and Injuries on the Rise**

The main concern addressed by this motion is accidents and injuries as the result of collisions between e-bikes and pedestrians on a sidewalk or boardwalk. Unfortunately, a brief review of the scholarly literature did not result in finding a study that examined this specific concern.

However, in the article [Comparing injuries from e-scooters, e-bikes, and bicycles in the United States](#) by Hannah Younes in the June 2025 edition of the **Journal of Cycling and Micromobility Research**, the author discusses a the current rise in e-bike related injuries:

*The database includes nearly 14,000 micromobility-related injuries: 11,911 bicycle injuries, 1166 e-scooter injuries, and 655 e-bike injuries for 2021 and 2022 (Table 2). For both years, bicycle injuries make up the majority of micromobility injuries, which is in line with usage. What is interesting is the growing proportion of e-micromobility-related injuries, and particularly of e-bikes. E-bike-related injuries doubled from 2021 to 2022, an indication of uptake in usage in recent years.*

On the [KTLA 5 News website](#), they quote a 2024 article from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network that stated, overall:

*...e-bike injuries more than doubled every year, going from 751 in 2017 to 23,493 in 2022.*

*Injuries from riding e-scooters rose 45% over the same period, from 8,566 in 2017 to 56,847 in 2022, researchers found.*

*Prepared by Selena Inouye, WRAC MTC Chair  
for the 5/19/25 WRAC Board meeting*

Note: the following friendly amendment to the MTC motion has been made by WRAC Vice-Chair C.Spitz and accepted by the maker of the motion at the WRAC meeting, B. Broide (member of the MTC; WNC alt. rep):

“ \_\_\_\_\_ NC/CC further requests that Councilmembers representing WRAC member councils (Park, Yaroslavsky, Hutt and/or Raman) bring a motion in Council requesting amendment of Municipal Code Sec. 56.15 as set forth above.”