



DATE: April 16, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: John R. Gillison, City Manager

INITIATED BY: Erika Lewis-Huntley, Management Analyst III

SUBJECT: Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance No. 1039, to be Read by Title Only and Waive Further Reading, Adding Chapter 10.84 to Title 10 of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code Regulating the Use of Bicycles and E-Conveyances in Public Areas. **(ORDINANCE NO. 1039)** (CITY)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council conduct first reading of Ordinance No. 1039 to be read by title only and waive further reading, adding Chapter 10.84 to Title 10 of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code Regulating the Use of Bicycles and E-Conveyances in Public Areas.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Rancho Cucamonga, like many cities throughout California and the country, has experienced a significant rise in the use of electric bicycles (e-bikes) and other electric conveyances (e-conveyances), such as electric scooters and skateboards, on city streets, sidewalks, and other public places. While these devices provide sustainable and accessible transportation alternatives, they have also led to an increase in safety concerns—particularly around their operation in public areas where they may conflict with vehicles and pedestrians.

In recent months, community members have increasingly expressed concern regarding unsafe behaviors associated with e-conveyance use. These behaviors include riding at excessive speeds, performing stunts or wheelies in active traffic, ignoring traffic signals and signs, riding without helmets, and carrying multiple riders on a single device. These actions increase the potential for collisions and injuries and have raised significant public safety concerns. National data reinforces these community concerns and local trends. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), injuries associated with e-bikes, e-scooters, and similar devices have increased by more than 20% each year. From 2017 to 2022, the CPSC reported 233 related fatalities nationwide, underscoring the urgency for cities to adopt regulations that help mitigate risk and protect all users of public spaces. In addition to safety concerns, the City has observed damage to public property, particularly in parks and open spaces where e-conveyance users ride over grass, landscaped areas, and pedestrian paths. These activities not only pose risks to pedestrians but also increase maintenance costs and negatively impact the overall experience for other park users.

In response to these challenges, the City is exploring strategies to balance the benefits of e-conveyances with the need to ensure safety, accessibility, and the preservation of public property.

The proposed ordinance is a proactive step toward addressing these issues through clear regulations, which are part of the City's comprehensive approach to enhancing safety and supporting the quality of life for all residents.

ANALYSIS:

In California, e-bikes are regulated under the California Vehicle Code (CVC) as conventional bicycles and must obey most all of the same regulations as non-motorized bicycles. E-bikes are defined by the CVC as bicycles with an electric motor of less than 750 watts and fully operable pedals. There are three classes of e-bikes codified in section 312.5 of the CVC:

- Class 1: Pedal-assist only, with motor assistance up to 20 mph
- Class 2: Pedal-assist and includes a throttle, with motorized assistance up to 20 mph
- Class 3: Pedal-assist only, with motor assistance up to 28 mph (all operators must be at least 16 years old, must wear a safety helmet, and must not transport passengers)

It is important to distinguish these devices from electric “off-highway motorcycles,” which are becoming increasingly common. Despite their off-road-only classification, they are frequently mistaken for standard e-bikes, complicating enforcement and increasing risk. Electric off-highway motorcycles (e.g., Sur-ron, Talaria, E Ride Pro) are not classified as e-bikes because they do not have operable pedals and often exceed power limits outlined in the California Vehicle Code. As such, they are not street legal and may be subject to impoundment and citation if operated on any publicly-owned property, including but not limited to a public street, sidewalk, public right of way, park, bicycle path or trail, or any other public area open for vehicle or pedestrian travel. They are only permitted in areas designated for off-highway vehicle recreation or on private property with the owner's permission. These vehicles are not eligible for highway registration and cannot be modified for on-road use unless they were originally manufactured and certified for dual-purpose operation.

The California Vehicle Code provides express authority to cities to enact ordinances regulating time, place and manner of bicycles and e-conveyances 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. The proposed ordinance includes the following key provisions designed to enhance public safety and address concerns related to the use of bicycles and e-conveyances on public property:

- Prohibits riding a bicycle or e-conveyance in an unsafe manner on any publicly-owned property.
- Defines “unsafe manner” to include violations of state or local traffic laws, as well as behaviors that endanger the operator, passenger, motorists, other riders, pedestrians, or public property. Examples of unsafe behavior includes as riding against traffic, disobeying signs, carrying passengers on single-rider devices, racing, performing stunts or wheelies, or operating without proper control.
- Prohibits the use of handheld wireless devices while riding unless operating hands-free and voice-activated devices.
- Restricts riding areas, including prohibiting use on sidewalks (with limited exceptions), parks (except on designated paths), landscaped areas, fields, and in City-owned parking lots.
- Clarifies rules for off-highway electric motorcycles (e.g., Sur-Ron, Talaria), which are not street legal and are prohibited on all public property unless in a designated off-highway vehicle area.

- Reinforces helmet requirements, including state-mandated helmet use for operators under 18 years old and all operators and passengers of Class 3 e-bikes, regardless of age.
- Reaffirms requirements to always yield to pedestrians when emerging from an alley, driveway, bicycle path, building or otherwise approaching upon a sidewalk or sidewalk area.
- Requires riders to ride in single file, and not more than two abreast except on paths or parts of a roadway set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles.
- Requires all bicycles and e-conveyances to comply with equipment standards outlined in CVC Section 21201.
- Prohibits parking bicycles and e-conveyances in a manner that obstructs pedestrian pathways or violates posted parking regulations.
- Outlines enforcement protocols, including penalties and fines, and allows for the impoundment of devices operated by minors in a dangerous manner.
- Holds parents or guardians accountable for violations committed by minors, including potential civil liability for property damage.

These provisions aim to promote responsible use, enhance public safety, reduce property damage, and preserve equitable access to public spaces for all community members.

The proposed ordinance is part of a broader, proactive strategy that includes infrastructure improvements to ensure all users can safely share public spaces. The City has made substantial and ongoing investments in its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to support safe riding and encourage active transportation. In recent years, the City has completed several key projects, including protected bike lanes, shared-use trails, and a cycle track to expand its network of safe paths for cyclists and pedestrians. The City's long-range transportation plan, *Connect RC*, outlines more than 50 proposed bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements throughout the city. This plan was developed with extensive community input and reflects the City's commitment to improving safety and connectivity across the transportation network. Several of these improvements are already being implemented, with more to follow as funding is secured.

The City is also committed to education and outreach efforts. In 2024, the City received a \$200,000 California Office of Traffic Safety grant to expand bike safety programming, including safety equipment giveaways and the development of Safe Routes to School mapping resources. The City has also launched a range of citywide safety campaigns, including the "Look, Look, Look" campaign across digital billboards, social media, and print, to promote awareness among drivers and riders alike. Additionally, in partnership with the Rancho Cucamonga Police and Fire Departments, the City has produced safety videos and hosted bike rodeos for children and families in schools and neighborhoods. Further, the City's Connect RC Bicycle Subcommittee actively organizes and participates in local bike rides, community outreach efforts, and citywide events to promote bicycle safety, increase ridership, and encourage public input on active transportation planning.

Overall, the proposed ordinance is part of a comprehensive strategy to promote the safe shared use of public areas. It is aligned with a broader vision that seeks not only to regulate and enforce, but also to educate and empower residents to travel safely. Enforcement will be paired with education and awareness campaigns to help both riders and drivers better understand the rules and responsibilities of operating bicycles and e-conveyances within the community. These combined efforts address safety concerns through effective regulation while fostering a safe and active transportation environment for all.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact related to the adoption of this ordinance

COUNCIL MISSION / VISION / VALUE(S) ADDRESSED:

This ordinance helps realize the City Council's core values of "Providing and nurturing a high quality of life for all" and "Promoting and enhancing a safe and healthy community for all" by regulating the use of bicycles and e-conveyances to ensure community safety in public areas.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Ordinance No. 1039