

17. DISCUSS THE REGULATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES IN PUBLIC SPACES
WITHIN THE CITY.

Applicable Area:

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: April 9, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS THE REGULATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES IN PUBLIC SPACES WITHIN THE CITY.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends consideration of stricter regulations for electric bicycles in public spaces to enhance safety for all road users. This includes exploring the designation of specific riding zones for e-bike users to reduce potential conflicts with pedestrians and improve overall traffic organization. The Administration further notes that the State of Florida may introduce future requirements for the registration and licensing of high-speed e-bikes, which should be taken into consideration when evaluating local regulatory measures.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the February 3, 2025 City Commission Meeting, at the request of Commissioner Laura Dominguez and subsequently co-sponsored by Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt, the Mayor and City Commission approved a referral (C4 L) to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC") to discuss the regulation of electric bicycles in public spaces with the city.

ANALYSIS

Electric bicycles (e-bikes) are generally legal in public spaces, but their use is regulated under Section 70-67 depending on the specific location. As of recent, e-bikes were prohibited on sidewalks in the City of Miami Beach and the State has also recently joined multiple municipalities in examining proper enforcement.

Accurate enforcement statistics regarding micromobility devices on public roadways remain difficult to quantify due to current limitations within the Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC) system. Specifically, there is no designated field or checkbox to identify infractions involving micromobility devices, significantly hindering the ability to track and analyze related violations. This data gap challenges developing a comprehensive understanding of enforcement trends and the scope of micromobility usage.

In response to increasing safety concerns, the State of Florida is considering legislation that would classify electric bicycles and e-scooters capable of exceeding 30 miles per hour as motor vehicles. Under the proposed language, such devices would require formal registration, and operators would be obligated to hold a valid driver's license with a motorcycle endorsement. These changes would also include enforcement of helmet requirements. This proposed legislation is anticipated to contribute to a safer environment for both motorists and micromobility users. Support at the state level will be instrumental in facilitating a smooth transition as new requirements for micromobility devices are introduced. It will prove imperative that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD) continue to proactively collaborate to effectively educate the public.

Park Rangers within the City of Miami Beach encounter significant operational challenges when attempting to enforce regulations related to electric bicycle usage in public spaces. Due to the legal limitation that Park Rangers are not authorized to detain individuals, enforcement actions heavily rely on voluntary compliance. In many instances, e-bike riders either refuse to stop or avoid interaction altogether by dismounting and walking their devices upon sighting a Park Ranger or exiting the regulated area entirely. Some individuals claim that their device qualifies as an ADA mobility aid, further complicating enforcement efforts. In alignment with public safety protocols, Park Rangers and Police Officers are instructed not to pursue violators, mirroring standard practices for traffic infractions on public roadways. These limitations emphasize the need for additional legislative and regulatory support, designated enforcement authority, and more explicit legal definitions to enhance compliance and ensure safe shared use of public pathways.

The Police Department believes that more designated riding zones would create a safer environment for e-bikes, micromobility, and pedestrians; however, creating dedicated areas, including bicycle lanes, and segregating modes is challenging given the City's highly urbanized environment and constrained public rights-of-way. Furthermore, establishing stricter legislation at the state level and local regulations will support the Police Department's efforts in terms of enforcement.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Financial impact is yet to be determined.

CONCLUSION

The Administration supports continuing interdepartmental collaboration under the guidance of the City Attorney's Office to develop a comprehensive strategy and legal grounds to effectively educate the public when riding e-bikes in public spaces.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

No

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Police/Transportation

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Laura Dominguez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

Condensed Title

Regulation of Electric Bicycles in Public Spaces.



COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Commissioner Laura Dominguez

DATE: February 3, 2025

TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE REGULATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES IN PUBLIC SPACES WITHIN THE CITY.

RECOMMENDATION

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

ANALYSIS

Please place on the February 3, 2025 agenda a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to discuss the regulation of electric bicycles in public spaces within the City and any supplemental regulations that may be necessary.

The City has implemented various regulations to ensure the safe and equitable use of public spaces, including those regarding electric bicycles. Presently, electric bicycles are prohibited on the Beachwalk, the Baywalk, sidewalks, and the interior pathways of certain parks. These measures aim to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and e-bike riders, address safety concerns, and maintain the peaceful enjoyment of public areas. However, with the growing popularity of electric bicycles, particularly among younger riders, there is increasing debate about whether additional regulations are necessary to further restrict their use in parks and other public spaces. To that end, I have received resident complaints concerning the reckless and careless usage of electric bicycles in various public spaces.

While electric bicycles and other micromobility options are often favored for their convenience, sustainability, and role in reducing vehicular (car) dependency and associated traffic congestion, their integration into public spaces is not without challenges. Younger riders, who may lack experience or adhere to safety practices, can inadvertently create dangerous situations for themselves and others, particularly in spaces where pedestrians and families gather. The potential for accidents underscores the need for careful consideration of potentially expanded restrictions in parks and other recreational areas. Striking a balance between promoting alternative transportation and protecting public safety requires thoughtful planning, including better enforcement of existing rules, public education on electric bicycle use, and the continued creation of designated riding zones to ensure harmonious coexistence in Miami Beach's shared spaces.

Accordingly, I would request that the City Administration be prepared at Committee to discuss the regulation of electric bicycles in public spaces within the City, along with any supplemental regulations that may be necessary to enhance the usability of the City's parks and public spaces, while maintaining a safe environment for all.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate? (FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on:
See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notices/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

Applicable Area

Citywide

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Department

Office of Commissioner Laura Dominguez

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Laura Dominguez
Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Ref: PSNQLC - Regulation of Electric Bicycles in Public Spaces. (Dominguez/Bhatt)

Previous Action (For City Clerk Use Only)