



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Candelas
Mayor Mahan
Councilmember Campos
Councilmember Cohen
Councilmember Kamei

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 04/24/26

Approved

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SUBJECT: Spring 2026 Intergovernmental Relations Report

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the staff recommendations and direct staff to increase advocacy for state regulations of electric bikes under the City's Legislative Priority to "*Enhance Community Safety and Realize Vision Zero Initiatives*." This advocacy should support measures to improve safety, including reasonable limits on speed, age requirements for riders, and accountability standards for both manufacturers and users.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the U.S Department Energy¹ found that over 1.1 million electric bikes were sold across the United States, 4 times more than the total sold in 2018. Electric Bikes are becoming a more popular mode of transportation in San Jose as they offer a cheaper and faster form of personal transportation. These bikes can have a top speed of 28 mph and riders often use these bikes on sidewalks, bike lanes, and on the main road. This new mode of transportation highlights a gap in

¹ Department of Energy, "FOTW #1321, December 18, 2023: E-Bike Sales in the United States Exceeded One Million in 2022", Date Accessed 4/20/24, <https://www.energy.gov/cmei/vehicles/articles/fotw-1321-december-18-2023-e-bike-sales-united-states-exceeded-one-million>

the California Vehicle Code as they utilize a motor up to 750 watts but are not impacted by regulations placed on traditional motor vehicles.

The City Council has approved its Vision Zero Policy with a focus area of eliminating bike fatalities. The Department of Transportation has implemented Class IV protected bike lanes and configured streets to allow for multimodal transportation to co-exist safely. However, the prevalence and advancements of electric bikes necessitate a re-evaluation of existing legislation to more effectively address traffic safety issues.

The fatality of a Quimby Oak Middle School student on March 19, 2026, was caused by high speeds and “piggybacking” (two riders on one bike). This was a tragedy that could have been avoided if regulations were put in place to address the dangers of electric bikes. Protecting our children should be a core component of community and traffic safety. The fatality was a wake-up call that this is a serious issue that deserves a greater focus from our City.

This is not just an isolated incident, but part of a growing trend of e-bike related injuries and deaths. From 2017 to 2022, e-bike injuries nationwide doubled every year reaching a high of 23,493² in 2022. This is an opportunity to advocate for additional legislation to mitigate the dangers of this mode of transportation.

We are asking staff to advocate for legislation that enhances regulations on electric bikes including but not limited to speed limits on bikes, age restrictions for e-bike use, and imposing additional fines for manufactures and riders who commit infractions. These bills can include but are not limited to AB 2346 — imposing manufacturing and speed limit regulations on electric bikes that would improve rider safety, AB 1557 — reclassifying the vehicle code to require electric bikes to adhere to stricter regulations, licenses, and implement greater penalties for non-compliance, and AB 1614 — limiting one rider to an electric bike to reduce the risks of accidents.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member’s staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer’s staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member’s staff.

² Fernandez, Elizabeth, “Electric Scooter and Bike Accidents Are Soaring Across the U.S.” University of California San Francisco, 7/23/24, <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2024/07/428096/electric-scooter-and-bike-accidents-are-soaring-across-us>