

Mammoth Lakes Recreation Commission Agenda Action Sheet

Title: E-bikes and Town Multi-use Path (MUP) Safety Program

Commission Meeting Date: 8/6/2024

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Recommended Motion: Receive presentation and provide consensus comments or direction to Town staff.

Summary: The safety and well-being of all residents and visitors in Mammoth Lakes is a high priority for the Town. E-bike incidents on the Town-wide MUP system has instigated an E-bike safety program, spearheaded by the Office of Outdoor Recreation and Mammoth Lakes Police Department. The following is a summary of the work efforts to date to ensure the safety of all cyclists on the Town's MUPs.

Prior to summer, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department partnered with the Town's Office of Outdoor Recreation to author a new ordinance that limits bicycle speed in the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Chapter 10.24 of the Town's Municipal Code (Vehicles on Trails, Multi-Use Pathways (MUPS) and Sidewalks) establishes regulations and guidelines for the use of alternative transportation devices on trails within the Town of Mammoth Lakes. This will allow our law enforcement officers to cite violators for speeding or users who exhibit reckless behavior on bicycles that will hopefully reduce the e-bike speed issues we are seeing throughout Town.

As stated in Chapter 10.24 of the Municipal Code (Reckless Operation of Alternative Transportation Devices on Trails): *"No person shall operate any alternative transportation device on Town-owned or operated trails in a reckless manner. For purposes of this section, "reckless" shall mean operation of a device in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property, the natural environment."* In addition, *"The speed limit for any device shall not exceed 15 miles per hour, but in no instance shall the speed allowed be greater than is reasonable and prudent under the existing conditions having due regard for terrain, weather, visibility, including time of day, pedestrian, and vehicular traffic on or crossing the trail, and condition of the device."*

In the State of California, as per the California Vehicle Code (section 760), a motorized vehicle is a vehicle that is propelled moved, or drawn upon a highway, excepting a device moved exclusively by human power. Examples of this would be a car/truck, lawnmower, go-cart, motorcycle, electric motorcycles (ie: Surrón, which looks like a bicycle without pedals), etc.

E-bikes, if they have pedals, are considered bicycles regardless of what class they fall under.

Operators of a bicycle can be arrested/cited for operating a bicycle under the influence of alcohol or drugs per California Vehicle Code Section (CVC) 21200.5: *"Notwithstanding Section 21200, it is unlawful for any person to ride a bicycle upon a highway while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug, or under the combined influence of an alcoholic beverage and*

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any drug. Any person arrested for a violation of this section may request to have a chemical test made of the person's blood, breath, or urine for the purpose of determining the alcoholic or drug content of that person's blood pursuant to Section 23612, and, if so requested, the arresting officer shall have the test performed. A conviction of a violation of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250). Violations of this section are subject to Section 13202.5."

Bicyclists can also be held liable for a hit and run under California Vehicle Code Section 21200(2): *"A person operating a bicycle on a Class I bikeway, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 890.4 of the Streets and Highways Code, has all the rights and is subject to all the provisions applicable to the driver of a vehicle pursuant to Section 20001, except those provisions which by their very nature can have no application."*

The Mammoth Lakes Police Department and Office of Outdoor Recreation has taken the following action and introduced several initiatives to address e-bike safety throughout the community of Mammoth Lakes.

- We have actively participated in community events such as Kidapalooza, SEMBA bike events, and Town Clean-Up Day to promote bicycle safety. At these events, we distributed bike safety items including lights, bells, and helmets.
- Our traffic messaging trailer has been deployed in high-incident areas to convey bike safety messages, urging cyclists to slow down and exercise caution.
- Officers have been assigned overtime shifts specifically targeting e-bike and pedestrian safety, ensuring enhanced patrol, education and enforcement.
- We are collaborating with the Office of Outdoor Recreation to develop and deploy bike safety signage along the Town-wide Multi-Use Path System (MUPS).
- Our officers patrol the MUPS on e-bikes, which enables us to directly engage with cyclists in areas that are not accessible by police cars.
- We are participating in and continuously explore further opportunities for community bike rides.
- Our department is preparing bike safety presentations for schools scheduled to commence in August.
- The department sends and shares multiple e-bike education posts on our social media channels.
- We are also exploring the introduction of a bicycle safety class for violators issued citations for infractions, aiming to educate and promote responsible cycling behavior.
- Utilizing a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety, we purchased bike bells and are in the process of developing sandwich board type signage to deploy in high-incident areas along the Town-wide MUPS.
- The Office of Outdoor Recreation painted appropriate e-bike safety messaging on the MUPS. These stencils include messaging to "Slow Down" & "Share the Trail".
- Where possible, Town-wide MUPS are being widened to the maximum width of 12 feet. Any existing 8-foot wide sections of MUPS are being widened to at least 10 feet.

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- To increase awareness of an e-bikers speed, three flashing slow signs have been installed between the Mammoth Pack Station and the junction of Minaret Road on the Lake Mary Road MUP. In addition, six new radar speed monitors with electronic messaging have been ordered and will be placed along high-speed/incident areas.
- To maintain visibility, new regulatory signage is being ordered to replace any faded signage along the MUPs.
- To increase e-bike user interactions and rider education, the Office of Outdoor Recreation is expanding the Host program to include e-bike hosts who will patrol the MUPs and provide appropriate-use and wayfinding services to visitors.
- To improve e-bike safety and increase awareness of regulatory information, a new summer recreation map was recently completed and will be widely distributed throughout the Town and to local bike shops.