

Agenda Report

September 8, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Municipal Services Committee (August 26, 2025)

FROM: Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: **DIRECT THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO PREPARE AN ORDINANCE WITHIN 60 DAYS AMENDING TITLE 10 (VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC) OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE TO DEFINE ELECTRIC BICYCLES, REMOVE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND UPDATE RIDING REGULATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21065 and within the meaning of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b); and
2. Direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance within 60 days amending Title 10 of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Chapter 10.60 – Bicycles to amend the following items:
 - a. Update the definition of a "Bicycle" to include "electric bicycle" as a type of bicycle according to the California Vehicle Code (CVC);
 - b. Remove bicycle registration and licensing requirements as the CVC prohibits municipalities from having this requirement; and
 - c. Update PMC 10.60.140 - Riding Regulations with speed limits and conditions for when a bicycle may be ridden on a sidewalk.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On May 22, 2025, the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) considered the proposed modifications to PMC Chapter 10.60 – Bicycles. TAC concurred with the recommendations for items (a) to update the definition of a "Bicycle" and add 'electric bicycle', and (b) remove sections related to bicycle registration and licensing requirements. TAC also considered proposed modifications to item (c) Riding

Regulations (Section 10.60.140), and provided recommended changes to the proposed language, which were subsequently researched and reviewed by City staff to incorporate into an updated version. In addition, TAC requested that staff further research speed regulations and speed limits for sidewalk riding and return to TAC at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

On June 26, 2025, City staff presented a recap from the May meeting and research on speed regulations and speed limits on sidewalks that informed staff's recommendations. TAC agreed with staff's recommendations and supported the proposed modifications to Section 10.60.140 and updated version of 10.60 – Bicycles (attached).

BACKGROUND:

Assembly Bill (AB) 1909, the OmniBike Bill, became effective in 2023 and included two bicycle related laws that necessitate updates to Chapter 10.60 – Bicycles in the PMC.

The bill expanded the definition of electric bicycles or “e-bikes”, the classification types in the CVC, and provides for greater access to bikeway facilities. E-bikes classified in the CVC include Class 1 (pedal activated up to 20 mph), Class 2 (throttle activated up to 20 mph) and Class 3 (pedal activated up to 28 mph) that all have an electric motor of less than 750 watts. Before AB 1909, Class 3 e-bikes were prohibited on bike lanes, multi-use paths, recreational trails, and facilities such as the bi-directional cycle-track on Union Street. The law eliminates the statewide ban on any e-bike classification on bikeway facilities by default; however, local agencies retain the discretion to pass subsequent ordinances regulating the use of e-bikes. Some jurisdictions in Southern California have passed ordinances restricting e-bikes (particularly Class 3) on trails that allow mountain biking or bike paths along the beach that are popular for recreation.

In addition, AB 1909 prohibits jurisdictions from requiring any licensing and mandatory registration for a person to operate a bicycle. The purpose of this law was to help remove barriers, make bicycling more accessible and encourage ridership for everyone including vulnerable populations. Advocates have also cited the cost of administering bicycle registration programs, lack of effectiveness, and potential to disproportionately affect certain groups while discouraging a healthy and sustainable mode of transportation, as the reasoning behind this prohibition.

Staff reviewed PMC 10.60 and has recommended updates to the chapter in adherence with AB 1909. Staff also considered changes to Section 10.60.140, Riding Regulations, which outlines the laws, conditions and considerations applicable to bicycling. A person operating a bicycle can ride on the roadways subject to the same rights, duties and responsibilities as a driver of a motor vehicle (CVC 21200). However, with some exceptions as noted in 10.60.140, bicycles can also be ridden on a sidewalk.

ANALYSIS:

Under the City's current regulation on sidewalk riding, a person is prohibited from bicycling on a sidewalk in front of any church, school, or place of public assembly. It is also prohibited in retail districts where posted signs indicate 'riding of bicycles prohibited on sidewalks' are located. With input from TAC, staff recommends removing the prohibition of bicycling on a sidewalk in front of a church, school or place of public assembly because the regulation restricts riding in these areas without regard to the actual presence of pedestrian activity. Instead, staff recommends setting a speed limit for bicycle use on sidewalks that accounts for pedestrian activity and prohibits speeds that endangers the safety of persons or property. TAC was supportive of setting speed limits on sidewalks and conditions for pedestrian safety, as well as bicycle safety.

Staff conducted research on bicycle speed limit restrictions on sidewalks and found limited examples throughout the nation and within the state. Most states and local jurisdictions currently do not have speed limits for bicycles on sidewalks. The results of the research is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Overview of Sidewalk Regulation and Speed Limits

State/Local	Speed Limit	Summary of Conditions Applicable to Sidewalk Riding
Hawaii	10 mph	Ten (10) miles per hour or less on sidewalk/area
Oregon	None	Considered unsafe to approach a crosswalk, driveway, curb cut, or pedestrian ramp faster than a normal walking speed when a vehicle is approaching
Long Beach	15/5 mph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fifteen (15) miles per hour - Five (5) miles per hour where pedestrians are present
Huntington Beach	10/5/2.5 mph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ten (10) miles per hour - Five (5) miles per hour where pedestrians are present - Two and half (2.5) miles per hour, between designated points, when the yellow lights are flashing.
Orange County/ Laguna Woods/ Mission Viejo	5 mph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five (5) mph - Except within a business district, adjacent to school in session, recreation center when in use, church during services, or other sidewalk prohibited by posted signs

DISCUSSION

The recent changes to statutory law have rendered specific provisions and language in the PMC obsolete, outdated, unnecessary and/or unclear. The addition of e-bikes to the definition of a bicycle aims to elevate the awareness of existing laws in the CVC and consistency with the PMC. We expect to see the continued growth in e-bike usage, however, not in the same circumstances as other Southern California cities with significant multi-use, shared path facilities that the City of Pasadena does not have. Rather than prohibiting the use of bicycles on sidewalks, regulating speeds and conditions on sidewalks for all bicycles is a more suitable approach. The City also prioritizes education through community engagement to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety, particularly during annual events such as Bike Month in May and Walktober in October.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

The proposed amendments aim to update the language in Title 10 to be current and consistent with State Law, removing outdated references and practices and provide for enhanced safety for bicyclists and pedestrians on sidewalks.

The recommended changes to the PMC are listed below:

1. Definition of bicycle – Make changes to the definition of “Bicycle” to include “electric bicycle” consistent with California Vehicle Code (CVC) sections 231 and 312.5.
2. The authority for local municipalities to require bicycle licensing for a bicycle to be operated is now prohibited under State law. This change in law requires PMC updates to remove, modify or update language that no longer refers to having mandatory bicycle registration and licensing as a condition of operating.
3. Language Clarification of Requirement or Meaning, Corrections and Additions in Section 10.60.140 – Riding regulations:
 - A. The rider of a bicycle shall yield the right-of-way to pedestrians on a sidewalk and as defined in the California Vehicle Code.
 - B. The rider of a bicycle shall not ride on a sidewalk at a speed greater than ten (10) miles per hour, and no more than five (5) miles per hour where pedestrians are present, or at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property.
 - C. No person shall ride or operate a bicycle in a means violating any existing Pasadena Municipal Code, California Vehicle Code, or other existing law,

- D. This Section shall not apply to a bicycle operated by any law enforcement officer employed by the City while acting within the course and scope of his or her employment as provided under sections 10.08.028,
- E. Based on demonstrated pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety needs, the city council may, by resolution, regulate or prohibit the use of bicycles on specific sidewalks within high congestion retail shopping districts, and shall direct the posting of such regulations and prohibitions as well as any signs or markings determined appropriate to encourage shared use of the streets.
- F. It is unlawful to operate a bicycle on a sidewalk where it has been posted to regulate or prohibit its use pursuant to subsection E of this section or in a manner otherwise prohibited by subsections A, B or C of this section. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an infraction, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished as provided in Section 1.24.025 of this code.

Attachment A includes the draft text of the proposed changes as mark ups to the existing Chapter 10.60. Should the staff recommendation be approved, the final version of the ordinance, which will amend Title 10, will be drafted by the City Attorney within 60 days of that direction by the City Council.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION

The proposed amendments support the General Plan guiding principle that Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars. This proposed action is consistent with General Plan Mobility Element policies to enhance livability and encourage walking, biking, transit, and other alternatives to motor vehicles. These amendments are consistent with the City's goals to improve, maintain, and enhance public facilities and infrastructure, as well as to enhance mobility and accessibility within the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA excludes, from environmental review, actions that are not "projects" as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b). Sections 21065 and 15378(b) define a project as an action which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Section 15378 excludes from the definition of "project" administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. The actions proposed herein, directing the preparation of an ordinance to amend requirements related to bicycles, is an administrative activity, and therefore is not a "project" as defined by CEQA. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

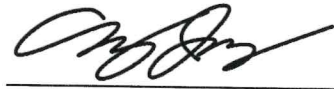
There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action, and it will not have any indirect or support cost requirements as the activities required to implement the PMC changes are already incorporated in the operating budgets of the affected departments. The anticipated impact to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action will be minimal.

Respectfully submitted,



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Planner

Approved by:

for 

MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A – Proposed PMC Title 10 text edits by Chapter and Section