



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

December 9, 2025
Agenda Item No. 3

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Ordinance No. 2025-35: Repealing and Replacing Chapter 12.56
(Bicycles – Registration and Regulations) of the Newport Beach
Municipal Code – Second Reading

ABSTRACT:

At the November 18, 2025, City Council meeting, a second reading was held on Ordinance No. 2025-35 Repealing and Replacing Chapter 12.56 (Bicycles – Registration and Regulations) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC). At the meeting, the City Council amended the Ordinance by removing proposed NBMC 12.56.030.B.4 and passed it to a second reading. The ordinance updates the NBMC to heighten and enhance bicycle safety in the public right-of-way. For the City Council's consideration is the adoption of the attached ordinance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Conduct a second reading and adopt Ordinance No. 2025-35, *An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Repealing and Replacing Chapter 12.56 (Bicycles – Registration and Regulations) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code.*

DISCUSSION:

An informal Bicycle Safety Working Group comprised of Mayor Stapleton, Councilmember Weigand, Councilmember Barto and City staff recently undertook review and discussion of bicycling issues in the City. The major issues discussed include the increase in the use of electric bicycles, ways to enhance bicycle and electric bicycle safety and coordinating education efforts with schools operating within Newport Beach. The working group collaborated over several meetings to develop proposed ordinance changes to Chapter 12.56 (Bicycles - Registration and Regulations) of the NBMC, and a

proposed update to the Sidewalk Cycling Allowed Map, which will add additional street corridors where sidewalk cycling is allowed.

Proposed Ordinance Changes to NBMC 12.56

Chapter 12.56 of the NBMC provides registration and general regulations on cycling within Newport Beach. Chapter 12.56 was adopted in 1972 with the most recent amendments in 1997. A summary of the areas covered by Chapter 12.56 include definitions limited to bicycles, pedicabs, and surrey cycles; voluntary licensing of bicycles; limitations on cycling on sidewalks; limitations on the operation of surrey cycles and/or pedicabs; and a general obligation to obey signage. Since that time, a number of changes have occurred in the area of cycling as identified by the Orange County Grand Jury Report on E-Bikes that was presented to the City Council on August 27, 2024. In that report, the Grand Jury made a number of findings including recognition that the majority of Orange County's 34 cities do not have ordinances or policies in place regulating electric bicycles; the need for consistent and accurate tracking by law enforcement and first responders due to the increased incidents of electric bicycle injuries; and the need for streamlined training and education on electric bicycle use and safety.¹

The Bicycle Safety Working Group has worked to identify areas of enhancements to the NBMC Chapter 12.56 intended to capture electric bicycles within its regulations and improve safety. Specifically, the proposed ordinance would apply to electric bicycles and other motorized conveyance devices to specifically delineate behavior that is unsafe while riding, require helmets for all riders under the age of 18 years old, and provide additional penalties for violations by minors in particular. At the discretion of the citing officer, all varieties of bicycles and electric bicycles may be impounded with release only to a responsible adult. Additionally, the penalty provisions would now provide a diversion program directed towards minors who are cited for violations of the chapter. If a bicycle safety training program is successfully completed, the citation may be dismissed.

On November 4, 2025 City Council meeting, the City Council introduced Ordinance No. 2025-35, which enhances bicycle safety and identifies the sidewalks cyclists are allowed to ride on. A second reading took place on November 18, 2025 and the City Council amended the ordinance (Attachment A) by removing proposed NBMC 12.56.030.B.4 which removed the exception allowing sidewalk riding in front of residential properties in residential neighborhoods and passed it to a second reading.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA

¹ This year, the City has undertaken a number of code amendments related to bicycles and electric bicycles including Ordinance Nos. 2025-6 and 2025-29 which prohibits bicycles and electric bicycles on City beaches and at Newport Elementary School.

Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – Ordinance No. 2025-35