



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

November 4, 2025
Agenda Item No. 10

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Ordinance No. 2025-35 and Resolution No. 2025-78: Adding Provisions Related to Bicycle and Electric Bicycle Activity in the Public Right-of-Way

ABSTRACT:

At the October 14, 2025 City Council meeting, Councilmember Barto brought forth a Council Policy A1 item requesting consideration of amending the Newport Beach Municipal Code to enhance enforcement of bicycle safety by incorporating several modifications to the existing code. The Bicycle Safety Working Group has now developed and recommends a proposed ordinance to update the City of Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC) Bicycles – Registration and Regulations, and a resolution to add more street corridors where sidewalk cycling is allowed. The proposed ordinance and resolution are in response to heightened safety concerns related to the recent proliferation of electric bicycle activity in the public right-of-way and a need to better accommodate individuals of all cycling experience.

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;
- b) Introduce 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*, and pass to second reading on November 18, 2025; and
- c) Adopt Resolution No. 2025-78, *Resolution of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Designating Sidewalks for Riding Bicycles and Electric Bicycles Pursuant to Section 12.56.030 of the Newport Beach Municipal Code and Rescinding Resolution No. 82-148*.

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 (with new models continuing to evolve), 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 (Attachment A), and a proposed update to the Sidewalk Cycling Allowed Map (Attachment B) 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 four 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. Specifically, 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.

Proposed Resolution Amend Resolution No. 82-148

NBMC Section 12.56.030 establishes where bicycle riding on a sidewalk is currently allowed in the City pursuant to Resolution No. 82-148. Since its adoption, Newport Beach has experienced further growth. These sidewalks that allow bicycle riding are generally located on major arterials, collector roads, and dual pedestrian and bicycle paths. As some streets allowing sidewalk cycling have since been updated with on-street bicycle lanes as well, inexperienced cyclists still feel more comfortable riding on the sidewalk and not on the street adjacent to heavy traffic and high-speed roadways. Staff has identified an additional 23 miles of street segments that would be appropriate for sidewalk cycling

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.

as an alternative to cycling in the street. An updated map that shows all the street segment sidewalks where cycling will be allowed is attached to the proposed resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no significant fiscal impact related to this item. Some additional minor signage and markings will need to be installed to identify the new sidewalks where cycling is allowed or not allowed. The adopted Capital Improvement Budget includes sufficient funding for this purchase. It will be expensed to the Traffic Signage, Striping and Marking project account in the Public Works Department, 01201927-980000-25T03.

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 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).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Ordinance No. 2025-35

Attachment B – Resolution No. 2025-78

Attachment C – Chapter 12.56 Redline