



CITY OF MENIFEE

SUBJECT: First Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Establishing Regulations for Electric Bicycles, Electric Scooters, and Electric Skateboards

MEETING DATE: February 19, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Denise Keith, Lieutenant

REVIEWED BY: Chris Karrer, Police Chief

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Introduce an ordinance adding Chapter 12.30 to Title 12 of the Meniffee Municipal Code establishing regulations for electric bicycles, electric scooters, and electric skateboards.

DISCUSSION

The City of Meniffee is proposing the adoption of an ordinance which would add Chapter 12.30 to Title 12 of the Meniffee Municipal Code. This ordinance aims to regulate bicycles, electric bicycles ("E-Bikes"), electric scooters ("E-Scooters"), and electric skateboards ("E-Skateboards") (collectively referred to as "E-Conveyances"), in response to increasing safety concerns. Over the last couple of years, the City has experienced a rise in the number of E-Conveyances operating on City streets and bike paths. The City continues to receive concerned messages and complaints from residents regarding these devices. Common concerns include a lack of helmets by E-Conveyance operators, reckless speeds, inattention, carrying too many passengers, and the increased potential for collisions due to use on sidewalks and roadways. The proposed ordinance establishes operational rules, safety requirements, penalties, and enforcement measures to improve public safety and address the risks associated with E-Conveyance use in the community.

Prior to preparing this ordinance, the Meniffee Police Department thoroughly researched local regulations pertaining to E-Conveyances and contacted other neighboring jurisdictions. Staff found that multiple jurisdictions throughout Southern California were either in the process of implementing similar ordinances, had already adopted them, or were amending existing ordinances to improve safety for their communities and to address the rising concerns related to E-Conveyances. These findings assisted in the development of the proposed ordinance, ensuring alignment with regional safety efforts and incorporating best practices.

E-Conveyance-related incidents have risen sharply in recent years in the City of Menifee. In 2023, there were six reported E-Bike collisions in Menifee. By 2024, this number had substantially increased to sixteen reported collisions. Injuries associated with these collisions range from complaint of pain to severe injury. This represents an alarming increase in reported collisions between 2023 and 2024, highlighting the urgent need for expansive and improved safety regulations.

The proposed ordinance introduces several key provisions to ensure the safe and responsible operation of bicycles and E-Conveyances. Riders would be required to comply with all traffic laws and traffic-control devices, including stop signs and traffic signals. Helmets would be mandatory for riders under the age of 18, and the use of headphones, earbuds, or other similar audio devices while operating E-Conveyances would be prohibited, ensuring riders could maintain focus and attentiveness. E-Conveyances must also be equipped with essential safety features, such as a front-facing white light for night riding, as well as reflectors on both wheels and the rear of all bicycles and E-bikes. Riders would be required to park responsibly, avoiding obstructions on sidewalks or public rights-of-way, and utilize designated parking areas. Additionally, riders would be required to stay as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or utilize designated bike lanes.

The ordinance would prohibit operating bicycles or E-Conveyances with more passengers than the device is designed to carry, directly addressing safety concerns related to instability caused by overloading. Riders are restricted from operating bicycles or E-Conveyances at speeds greater than what is reasonable and prudent under the conditions and must avoid endangering people or property. Operators would be prohibited from traveling over 20 miles per hour on public highways, trails, paths, parks, or other public property within the City. The ordinance would make it unlawful to tamper with or modify an E-bike to increase its speed capability without appropriately replacing the classification label. Operating a modified E-bike that exceeds 28 miles per hour on roadways, sidewalks, trails, or public property would be strictly prohibited. The ordinance also addresses sidewalk and path usage and would allow riding unless explicitly prohibited by posted signage, with an emphasis on yielding to pedestrians. Engaging in unsafe actions or reckless behavior is strictly prohibited.

Violations of these provisions would be classified as infractions and would be punishable by fines of up to \$500. Additionally, the ordinance may also be enforced through administrative or civil actions as authorized by the Municipal Code. These penalties align with California Vehicle Code standards, ensuring consistent enforcement across the City. These measures collectively aim to enhance public safety, reduce risks to riders and pedestrians, and ensure the responsible use of bicycles and E-Conveyances throughout the City.

To further complement enforcement efforts, the Menifee Police Department is collaborating with local schools and stakeholders, including the Menifee, Romoland, and Perris Union School Districts to implement training and education programs. A central element of this initiative is the California Highway Patrol's (CHP) online E-Bike safety and training program, launched in response to Assembly Bill 1946. Effective January 1, 2023, the bill required CHP to develop a training platform that provides safety information, emergency maneuver skills, rules of the road, and laws pertaining to E-Bikes. The training program features interactive tutorials, videos, quizzes, and an easy-to-follow format, ensuring it is both engaging and practical. Designed to

promote safe riding practices for commuters and recreational cyclists alike, the program is accessible directly on the CHP's website.

To enhance the accessibility of this program, the Menifee Police Department is creating educational resources on their website, including a direct link to the CHP's training platform. Additionally, the Police Department is collaborating with our schools to integrate the training into school safety initiatives. Students who complete the online certification would receive a certificate, which schools may use to distribute stickers as proof of completion. These stickers could be affixed to E-Bikes or regular bicycles, serving as visible confirmation that the student has received proper safety training.

The program also addresses traditional bicycle safety, ensuring that students who ride regular bicycles benefit from the same safety education. To further reinforce these efforts, the Menifee Police Department's traffic unit is partnering with schools to deliver safety presentations at schools. These presentations would supplement, but not replace, the online training requirement and would provide additional guidance on safe riding practices and traffic rules.

In addition to collaborating with schools, the Menifee Police Department will engage with school districts, parents, and teachers through open forums and discussions. These forums provide an opportunity to educate stakeholders, address concerns, and gather feedback about E-Bike safety and the implementation of the ordinance. By fostering open dialogue, the Department aims to build community support, ensure a shared understanding of safety requirements, and address any challenges in real time.

This ordinance aligns with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), as it will not result in any physical changes to the environment. In conjunction with education and outreach efforts, the ordinance would establish a comprehensive framework for safer operations of bicycles and E-Conveyances, helping to reduce collisions, enhance public safety, and address the alarming rise in vehicle versus E-Bike collisions in Menifee.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE

Safe and Vibrant Community

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. Other outreach and enforcement efforts can be achieved within the existing budget.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance