



City of Oceanside

300 North Coast Highway,
Oceanside, California 92054

Staff Report

File #: 25-1170

Agenda Date: 1/14/2026

Agenda #: 13.

DATE: January 14, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Police Department

TITLE: INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING OCEANSIDE CITY CODE CHAPTER 5 - BICYCLES AND MOBILITY DEVICES

RECOMMENDATION

Staff and the Police and Fire Commission recommend that the City Council introduce an Ordinance amending Chapter 5 of the Oceanside City Code to update enforcement provisions related to the unsafe operation of electric bicycles and mobility devices.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Since the adoption of the current Chapter 5 regulations in March 2024, community complaints and police calls for service involving e-bikes-particularly those ridden recklessly, operated in prohibited areas, or used to carry unauthorized passengers-have continued to increase.

Oceanside Police Department data show a marked increase in e-bike-related calls for service:

Year	Calls for Service	Increase % From Prior Year
2021	69	-
2022	185	168%
2023	341	84%
2024	449	32%
2025	844* projected (758 as of 11/24/25)	88%

This reflects a significant increase in e-bike-related calls for service from 2021 to 2025. A substantial portion of reported incidents involve younger riders operating e-bikes in groups or in prohibited areas, creating safety hazards for pedestrians and other roadway users.

The City's 2024 ordinance created an education-first enforcement model through the addition of Section 5.17, allowing violations to be resolved through attendance at a bicycle safety course. Staff initially adopted an education-first approach with the new additions to the Municipal Code by issuing warnings and informing the public of the new ordinance when violations were observed. However, as complaints continued to rise, enforcement efforts commenced, and special details addressing these complaints were conducted. Since September of 2024, Staff has issued at least 135 citations for

bicycle and e-bike related offenses. At least 50 of those citations have been resolved through the educational diversion program (OCC 5.17). To date, staff has also hosted 14 free bicycle safety courses, averaging approximately 12 attendees per course.

While the 2024 ordinance provided important baseline rules and an education-based alternative to monetary fines, experience has shown that some repeat and reckless offenders, particularly youth, are not sufficiently deterred through the current adjudication process, or by the prospect of a court fine they may not personally pay.

The proposed amendments are narrowly tailored to address the two most persistent and dangerous behaviors observed since 2024:

1. Addition of Section 5.18 - Seizure of Electric Bicycles. This section would authorize the Chief of Police or designee to temporarily seize a Class 1, 2, or 3 electric bicycle when the operator is cited for reckless operation, failure to exercise due regard for safety, or two or more criminal violations of Chapter 5 within a 12-month period. The e-bike would be held as evidence until final case adjudication and released to the lawful owner upon presenting proof of ownership with no storage or impound fees assessed. This provision is intended to reduce the likelihood of repeated unsafe operation while the associated criminal case is pending and to provide a practical enforcement tool that encourages safer riding behavior without imposing additional financial hardship on families.
2. Addition of Section 5.19 - Prohibition on Unauthorized Passengers ("Double Riding"). This section would explicitly prohibit carrying a passenger on an e-bike unless the device is designed and equipped with a separate passenger seat, consistent with California Vehicle Code § 21204. This behavior contributes to unsafe riding, loss-of-control collisions, and near-miss incidents with pedestrians.

Both new sections maintain the education-first philosophy adopted in 2024, as cases may still be resolved by:

- Completing the Police Department's free Bicycle/E-bike Safety Educational Program (offered every other month), or any comparable course;
- Paying the court-imposed fine; or,
- Traditional adjudication in court.

The seizure authority in Section 5.18 applies only to offenses which meet the expressed criteria of the amendment which are described as: (1) reckless operation in violation of this Chapter or the California Vehicle Code; (2) failure to exercise due regard for the safety of persons or property; or (3) two or more criminal violations of this Chapter within a twelve (12) month period. This narrowly tailored application ensures the amendment remains proportional and consistent with state law. These enhancements are consistent with the City's authority under California Vehicle Code sections 21200 (applicability of traffic laws to bicycles), 21206 (local regulation of bicycle operation), 21207.5 (local authority over certain mobility devices), and 23103 (reckless driving, as applied to bicycles), as well as the City's general police power under Government Code section 37100In.

If adopted, Staff intends to implement these changes methodically through internal training and

community education prior to enforcement. Staff intends to partner with local School Districts (OUSD & VUSD) to inform students and families of the circumstances under which an e-bike may be subject to seizure. Staff also intends to leverage social media to further educate the public about the change in laws prior to enforcement. If adopted, the ordinance will take effect 30 days after final passage, and enforcement may begin at that time, consistent with the Oceanside City Code.

FISCAL IMPACT

None. The Police Department will store seized e-bikes at existing facilities, and no additional staffing or General Fund appropriation is required.

COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REPORT

The Police and Fire Commission recommended approval of this item at its regular meeting held on December 9, 2025. The Commission voted 6-3 in favor of recommending approval.

CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the proposed ordinance and determined that it is legally sufficient and within the City's authority. The ordinance is consistent with the City's police power under Government Code section 37100 and applicable provisions of the California Vehicle Code governing local regulation of bicycles and electric bicycles, including sections 21200, 21206, 21207.5, and 23103.

The proposed amendments are narrowly tailored, preserve the City's education-first enforcement framework, and are structured to avoid conflict or preemption under state law. As drafted, the ordinance provides clear enforcement authority while minimizing legal and operational risk to the City.

Prepared by: Scott Garrett, Police Captain
Reviewed by: Taurino Valdovinos, Chief of Police
Submitted by: Jonathan Borrego, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff Report
2. Ordinance