



# E-BIKES & YOUTH: SAFETY

April 10, 2025



## E-Bikes: Pros & Cons




### **Community Benefits:**

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote active transportation and accessibility
- Alleviate traffic and lowers transportation costs
- Convenient for families & youth independence

### **Challenges:**

- Young riders unfamiliar with road rules
- Unsafe riding behaviors
- Vehicle design misuse (e.g., overloading)
- Speeds up to 28 mph!

# Safety Concerns

	 <b>CLASS 1</b>	 <b>CLASS 2</b>	 <b>CLASS 3</b>
Pedal Assist	✓	✓	✓
Throttle		✓	
Max Speed	20 mph	20 mph	28 mph

## Class 2

- No age restriction
- Throttle + speed = *potentially less rider engagement*

## Class 3

- Age restricted to 16+

## Safety Concerns:

- No permit or test required for any Class ebike
- Local regulation is challenging, given Capitola's size

# Capitola PD Initiatives

## Education & Outreach:

- Annual presentation at New Brighton Middle School
- “Bike Rodeo” with CHP at Capitola Mall
- Social media safety campaigns

## Youth Engagement:

- *Capitola Star Card* incentives for safe riding
  - Connects Capitola Village businesses & youth



# Capitola PD Enforcement

## Special 2-week operation: early 2025

- **13 Warnings issued**
  - Minor traffic violations (riding on sidewalk)
- **13 Citations issued**
  - No helmet
  - Unsafe turns
  - Stop sign violations
  - Cell phone use
  - Failure to obey traffic signs/signals
- **Two Illegal e-motorcycles impounded**



# Advocacy

## **Challenges with Local Regulation:**

- Capitola's small size (2 sq. miles) limits effectiveness
- Consistency across jurisdictions

## **Proposed State Laws to Support:**

- 1. Minimum Age 14** for Class 2 e-bike riders
- 2. DMV Written Test/Permit** for under-16 Class 2 users
- 3. Traffic Safety Education in School Curriculum:** core subject, like in many other countries

# Recommended Action

- 1. Direct Mayor to sign and send a letter of support for proposed State legislation to:**
  - Assemblymember Dawn Addis
  - Assemblymember Gail Pellerin
  - Senator John Laird

# Proposed Language:

- 1. Establish a minimum age of 14 for Class 2 e-bikes:** Class 2 bikes have a throttle and require no user pedaling input. Based on observations of rider behavior, the availability of a throttle on the Class 2 e-bikes can lead to less rider engagement and greater overall risk. Currently, there is no minimum age to ride a Class 2 e-bike. The minimum age to ride a Class 3 e-bike (assist up to 28 mph) is 16.
- 2. Establish a written test/permit administered by the DMV for users less than 16 years old to use Class 2 e-bikes:** Currently, there is no test or permit required for use of an e-bike for any age/person.
- 3. Require traffic safety education as essential core curriculum for schools:** In some other countries traffic safety education is integrated into school curriculum and community practices. In the US, drivers education is the only required traffic training and it's for people to drive a car, but comprehensive education on how to be a pedestrian, a bike rider, a transit user, etc. are relegated to elective educational opportunities.