

**CITY OF COLUMBUS
ORDINANCE NO. 823-26**

**AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND RECREATE ARTICLE VII OF CHAPTER 98
OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS CODE OF ORDINANCES CONCERNING
ELECTRIC SCOOTERS, ELECTRIC BICYCLES AND BICYCLE REGULATIONS**

The Common Council of the City of Columbus, Columbia County, Wisconsin, does ordain as follows:

1. Article VII of Chapter 98 concerning bicycles is repealed in its entirety.
2. Section 98-221, Electric Scooter, Electric Bicycle and Bicycle Regulations is created to read as follows:

Sec. 98-221. – Electric scooter, electric bicycle and bicycle regulations.

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the safe and enjoyable use of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle ways within the City of Columbus by restricting the use and prohibiting reckless or unsafe operation of bicycles, electric bicycles, and electric scooters.
- (b) Definitions.
As used in this chapter:
 - (1) “Bicycle” means every device propelled by feet or hands acting upon pedals or cranks and having wheels, any two of which are not less than 14 inches in diameter.
 - (2) “Electric bicycle” (e-bike) means a bicycle that is equipped with fully operative pedals for propulsion by human power and an electric motor of 750 watts (1 horsepower) or less and that meets the requirements of any of the following classifications:
 1. “Class 1 e-bike” is an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.
 2. “Class 2 e-bike” is an electric bicycle that may be powered solely by the motor and is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.
 3. “Class 3 e-bike” is an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.
 - (3) Electric Motorized Device or e-moto means any electric-powered device designed for transportation without fully operable pedals, including electric dirt bikes, electric motorcycles, one-wheeled devices, or similar devices. E-Moto does not include any motor vehicle that would be classified as a motorcycle per Wis. Stat. § 340.01(32) or otherwise be required to be

registered pursuant to Wis. Stat. Ch. 341.

- (4) “Electric scooter” (e-scooter) means a device weighing fewer than 100 pounds that has handlebars and an electric motor, is powered solely by the electric motor and human power, and has a maximum speed of not greater than 20 miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered solely by the electric motor. “Electric scooter” does not include an electric personal assistive mobility device, motorcycle, motor bicycle, electric bicycle, or moped.
- (c) State laws applicable. Every person using a bicycle, e-scooter or e-bike upon a public roadway shall be subject to the provisions of all ordinances and state laws applicable to the operator of any vehicle, except the provisions thereof applicable to the equipment of vehicles and other provisions that, by their nature and context, would have no application.
- (d) Where prohibited and Restricted. No bicycles, e-scooters or e-bikes shall be operated on any roadway, trail, path, or property where a sign is erected indicating that bicycles and/or e-scooters and/or e-bikes are prohibited or otherwise restricted. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection “f” hereof, at the locations indicated below, bikes, e-scooters and e-bikes must be walked, with the rider off the device, guiding it along by hand while walking along side:
 - (1) Ludington Street from Mill Street to Harrison Street.
 - (2) Harrison Street from Water Street to Dickason Boulevard.
 - (3) James Street from Dickason Blvd to Water Street
 - (4) East side of Dickason Boulevard from W Harrison Street to Mill Street.
 - (5) Any other location or place where regulatory signage so indicates.
- (e) Riding on roadway.
 - (1) Every person using an e-scooter or e-bike upon a two-way public street shall ride as near as practicable to within five feet of the right curb or edge of the roadway, except when passing another vehicle or making a left-hand turn; and when riding in groups, users of e-scooters or e-bikes shall ride in single file, except on residential streets which are not divided by painted or other marked extra lines where they may ride two abreast. On one-way streets, the user may ride as near as practicable to within five feet of the left-hand or right-hand curbs or edges of the roadway.
 - (2) Persons using e-scooters or e-bikes shall not impede the normal movement of motor vehicle traffic.
 - (3) No electric scooter may be operated on any roadway having a speed limit of more than 25 miles per hour.
- (f) Bicycle ways. Operation of e-scooters or e-bikes shall be permitted on any ways, lanes, trails, paths, or other property designated for the use and operation of bicycles.
- (g) Electric Motorized Devices or e-moto’s may not be operated on any streets, sidewalk, or anywhere within the city other than private property.
- (h) Additional restrictions on bicycles, e-bikes, and scooters:
 - (1) Disorderly and Reckless Operation of a Bicycle, e-bicycle, or e-scooter: No one may operate a bicycle, e-bicycle or e-scooter in a manner that endangers the safety of any person or property by negligent operation or

- causes body harm or great bodily harm to another by negligent operation.
- (2) Unsafe operation. No person shall operate an e-scooter or e-bike in the City of Columbus clinging to other vehicles. No person using an e-scooter or e-bike shall cling to, attach themselves to, or in any manner permit themselves to be pulled or towed by any moving vehicle.
 - (3) Towing of persons, vehicles, trailers. Except as provided in subsection (g)(8) hereof, no person using an e-scooter or e-bike shall tow, drag, or cause to be drawn behind the e-scooter or e-bike any coaster wagon, sled, toy vehicle or any similar vehicle, trailer, person on in-line or roller skates, or any other type of conveyance.
 - (4) Contests with other electric devices or vehicles. No person using an e-scooter or e-bike shall participate in any race, speed, or endurance contest with any other e-scooter or e-bike or moving vehicle on a city roadway.
 - (5) Stunt riding. No person using an e-scooter or e-bike shall practice any fancy or acrobatic riding, wheelies, or other stunts, while operating such e-scooter or e-bike.
 - (6) Trick riding. No person shall operate an e-scooter or e-bike without having manual control of the handlebars or in any other manner which necessitates the element of unusual, extraordinary skill and involves unnecessary risk.
 - (7) Carrying of passengers. No person shall operate an e-bike with another person upon said e-bike unless e-bike is so designed and equipped to carry more than one person. No person shall operate an e-scooter with a passenger.
 - (8) Speed. No person shall operate an e-scooter or e-bike at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under existing conditions or in excess of any posted speed limit.
 - (9) The above restrictions of subsection (h)(3) notwithstanding, nothing in this section shall prohibit the safe and lawful towing of bicycle trailers for the transportation of minor children, pets, and cargo, in compliance with either the Advancing Standards Transforming Markets (ASTM) International standard F1975-15 (2023), or the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards, as from time to time amended.
 - (i) Observance of traffic regulations and speed limits. Every person using a bicycle, e-scooter or e-bike upon a public roadway shall obey all the instructions of official traffic-control devices, signs, and signals applicable to motor vehicles and shall not operate an e-scooter or e-bike at a speed greater than the posted or otherwise applicable speed limit.
 - (j) Yielding to traffic. The operator of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to a person using an e-scooter or e-bike in the same manner as for bicyclists and pedestrians. When using an e-scooter or e-bike, every person shall, upon entering a public roadway, yield the right-of-way to motor vehicles, except a person using an e-scooter or e-bike shall be subject to the same regulations as bicyclists and pedestrians. Operators of e-scooters or e-bikes shall offer the right-of-way to bicycles in bike lanes, ways, trails, and on bike paths.
 - (k) Age limits. Operators of a class 3 e-bicycle shall be 16 years of age or older.
 - (l) Headphones prohibited: No operator of an electric scooter or electric bicycle shall

- wear headphones, earphones, or earbuds covering or inserted into both ears while operating an electric scooter or electric bicycle.
- (m) Cellular phones: No operator of an electric scooter or electric bicycle while riding shall operate a cellular phone.
 - (n) Equipment regulations; lamps and reflectors. Every person using e-scooters or e-bikes between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise shall be equipped with a lamp firmly attached to the front of such electric scooter exhibiting a white light to the front, and with a reflector or lamp mounted on the rear of the vehicle visible at a distance of 500 feet. The reflector shall not be fewer than two inches in diameter.
 - (o) No bicycle, electric bicycle, or electric scooter shall be operated that is not in safe mechanical condition and equipped with any required safety device(s). It shall be the responsibility of persons 16 years of age or older, or a parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age, to inspect such bicycle, electric bicycle or electric scooter to determine if it is in safe mechanical condition and legally equipped.
 - (p) Registration and Licensing: No registration or licensing shall be required for bicycles, e-bicycles, e-scooters, or motorized bicycles. Owners are encouraged to register them with the Columbus Police Department.
 - (q) Special Events regulations. In addition to the restrictions of subsection (d) hereof, by the authority of the Columbus Police Department or the Director of Parks and Recreation, any area of the City whereupon a special event is present, signage may be temporarily placed to further restrict or prohibit e-scooters and e-bikes from being ridden, operated or present in such designated areas for reasonable periods of time before, during or after such special events.
 - (r) Penalties. For a violation of any provision of this section the offender shall pay a forfeiture, exclusive of court costs, in an amount not greater than \$100 for a first offense, and not greater than \$100 for any second and subsequent violations.
3. Section 98-222, Mandatory Helmet Use for Persons Under 16 Years of Age is created to read as follows:

Sec. 98-222. – Mandatory helmet use for persons under 16 years of age

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote public safety, reduce the risk of head injuries, and establish clear guidelines for the mandatory use of helmets by individuals under the age of 16 who are involved in the operation of bicycles, electric bicycles (e-bikes) or electric scooters (e-scooters) under the jurisdiction and control of the City of Columbus.
- (b) Definitions. As used in this section:
 - (1) “Helmet” means a properly fitted and fastened protective head covering designed for bicycle safety that meets or exceeds the impact standards set either by the Advancing Standards Transforming Markets International (ASTM) or the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
 - (2) “Bicycle” means every device propelled by feet or hands acting upon pedals or cranks and having wheels, any two of which are not less than 14 inches in diameter.

- (3) “Electric bicycle” (e-bike) means a bicycle that is equipped with fully operative pedals for propulsion by human power and an electric motor of 750 watts (1 horsepower) or less and that meets the requirements of any of the following classifications:
 - 1. Class 1 e-bike is an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.
 - 2. Class 2 e-bike is an electric bicycle that may be powered solely by the motor and is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.
 - 3. Class 3 e-bike is an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.
 - 4. “Scooter” means a device powered by human effort or by an electric motor, having a handlebar, deck, and wheels, that is designed to be stood upon or sat upon by the operator.
- (c) Helmet required. Any person less than 16 years of age operating or riding on an e-bike or scooter on a public roadway, public sidewalk, public bicycle path, trail, bicycle way, or any other public right-of-way under the jurisdiction and control of the City of Columbus shall wear a properly fitted and securely fastened helmet.
 - (1) A person under 16 years of age shall not operate a bicycle, unicycle, skateboard, or scooter, nor shall any person wear in-line or roller skates, nor ride upon a bicycle, unicycle, skateboard, scooter, in-line or roller skates as a passenger, at a public skate park under the jurisdiction and control of the City of Columbus unless that person is wearing a properly fitted and fastened protective helmet.
- (d) Operators of a bicycle, electric bicycle, electric scooter, and/or parents or guardians of such operators, shall be fully liable for any damage caused to public or private property as a result of purposeful, negligent or illegal actions in conflict with this Section, and thus shall be responsible for complete and full restitution of all costs associated with such damage, in addition to any forfeiture for such violation.
- (e) Enforcement. This ordinance shall be enforced by the City of Columbus Police Department. Enforcement shall emphasize education and awareness in addition to violations.
- (f) Penalty. Except as provided herein, violation of this section is punishable by a forfeiture of not more than \$100. The parent or legal guardian having control or custody of the minor whose conduct violates this section shall be jointly and severally liable with the minor for the amount of a forfeiture imposed pursuant to this subsection.
- (g) The city may request the court waive any forfeiture for such person found guilty of violating the provisions of this section if the person supplies the court with proof that between the date of the violation and the appearance date for such violation the person purchased or otherwise obtained a helmet that meets the requirements of §98-222(b)(1).

4. **Severability.** In the event any section, subsection, clause, phrase or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held illegal, invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance. It is the legislative intent of the Common Council that this ordinance would have been adopted if such illegal provision had not been included or any illegal application had not been made.
5. **Repeal and Replaced and Effective Date.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances and resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby repealed. This ordinance shall take effect from and after its passage and publication.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2026.

CITY OF COLUMBUS

By: _____
Joseph Hammer, Mayor

By: _____
Susan L. Caine, Clerk