September 23, 2025

WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

Cortney Geary, Active Modes Manager
Dave “DK” Kemp, Senior Trails Planner
Rachel Ruhlen, Transportation Planner

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

Which Wheels Go Where? – Project Update and Exploration of Rule Changes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the Which Wheels Go Where? (WWGW) project which explores updating the rules governing the operation of human powered and lightweight electric vehicles, such as e-scooters, skateboards, and e-skateboards on city facilities, i.e. streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, and paved trails to support mode shift.

This project aligns with:

- Council Priorities: “Advance a 15-minute City by accelerating a shift to Active Modes” and “Modernize and update the City Charter”.
- Strategic Plan: Transportation and Mobility 1: Make significant progress toward the City’s Vision Zero goal to have no serious injury or fatal crashes for people walking, biking, rolling or driving in Fort Collins.
- Active Modes Plan, Our Climate Future, the Strategic Trails Plan, and the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Beginning May 2024, staff have collected data, administered a community questionnaire, and explored the issue internally within the city organization, and externally with community organizations and other municipalities.

Community engagement efforts occurred July 2024 through June 2025 and included outreach and listening sessions at several boards and commissions. Community members who use human and lightweight electric powered vehicles generally prefer facilities separated from vehicular traffic, while other people, specifically those with disabilities, older adults, and children, desire an environment safe and conducive for walking and slower biking, particularly on sidewalks and paved trails.

To improve safety, staff suggest a continued investment in separated infrastructure for people walking, rolling, and bicycling, as well as a safety education approach to address undesired behavior on streets, sidewalks, and trails. Updating rules to accommodate human powered and lightweight electric vehicles will promote mode shift, a goal that supports Our Climate Future.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Does Council have feedback on new definitions: human powered vehicles and lightweight electric vehicles?

2. Does Council have any concerns with expanding behavior rules to riders of additional human powered and lightweight electric vehicles?

3. Does Council have feedback on options staff are exploring regarding the operation of human powered and lightweight electric vehicles on city facilities, including streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, and paved trails?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Current rules governing the operation of micromobility are complex and sometimes confusing. Creating two new definitions will allow us to make consistent and predictable rules:

- Human powered vehicles are those propelled primarily by human power, including bicycles, skateboards, and Class 1 and 2 e-bikes (which are intended to be primarily human powered).

- Lightweight electric vehicles are those with a top speed equal to or less than 20 mph, including e-scooters, one wheels, and electric skateboards. Electric vehicles that can go faster than 20 mph are not considered lightweight electric vehicles.

Community engagement and research

Public engagement during Fall 2024 was conducted to identify existing problems, opportunities, and concerns. Internal staff, external agencies, and advisory boards provided feedback. Staff researched other communities' experiences.

1. Public engagement

A questionnaire was provided in English and Spanish to better understand concerns about human powered and lightweight electric vehicles on sidewalks, paved trails, bike lanes, and streets. A little more than half (55%) of the 1,478 respondents did have concerns about riding unsafely, speeding on sidewalks and paved trails, conflicts with motor vehicles and not following the rules of the road. Themes of the 718 comments included:

- Accommodating more kinds of vehicles encourages mode shift
- The system is comparatively safe already
- The rules are complicated and confusing
- Real and perceived safety issues, specifically on trails
- Protect pedestrians, people with disabilities, seniors, and children
- Behavior, not type of vehicle, is the problem
- Paved trails concerns include speed differentials between people walking and biking (unsafe speeds) and no audible warning when passing slower moving people.
- Desire for paved trail speed limit with enforcement

2. Feedback from internal staff, external agencies, and advisory boards

Groups engaged include:

- Internal: Parks and Recreation, Natural Areas, FC Moves, Traffic Operations, Streets, Police Services, City Attorney's Office, Communications and Public Involvement Office.
- External: Colorado State University (CSU) Police, CSU Transportation, and Downtown Development Authority.
- Boards: Active Modes Advisory Board, Disability Advisory Board, Senior Advisory Board, Transportation Board, Youth Advisory Board, and a Super Issues meeting.

Key themes heard were:

- Simplify regulations
- Continue educational outreach regarding the prohibited use of electric-assist bikes or other e-powered devices on soft surface trails in Natural Areas
- Increased safety education efforts
- More signs
- Create a culture of safety and mutual respect, courtesy and etiquette
- Safer separated infrastructure and maintenance of infrastructure
- Audible signals on paved trails
- Not all devices have speedometers

3. Lessons from other communities

The City of Boulder has allowed human powered and lightweight electric vehicles on streets and paved trails, but not lightweight electric vehicles on sidewalks, since 2021. Boulder police reported expecting more crashes on streets with this rule change and have not observed increased crashes. The City of Boulder chose a safety education approach rather than relying on enforcement measures.

Communities that allow e-scooters on paved trails include Boulder, Denver, and Loveland, Colorado; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Columbus, Ohio. Boulder and Loveland also allow other lightweight electric vehicles on paved trails.

Addressing safety & enforcement

Safety education strategies can be effective in modulating behavior and creating expectations of behavior, while resources for enforcing correct behavior are limited and can have a short-term effect.

The Strategic Trails Plan recommends a Trail Safety Education Campaign to address a range of safety concerns on paved trails. Input from the community and internal and external partners as well as research has identified the following considerations to inform decision making:

- People walking, people with disabilities, seniors and families with younger children perceive a lack of safety on paved trails today.
- Some lightweight electric vehicle users feel safer using paved trails than they do on streets shared with motor vehicles, with or without bike lanes.
- Some vehicles and riders may lack safety equipment, such as helmets, lights, or brakes.
- Lightweight electric vehicle users currently account for a small percentage of overall self-reported paved trail users.
- Concerns center more around e-bike and illegal electric motorcycle use on paved trails and specifically, the speed differentials between people walking and people biking.

Enforcement perspective (Police Services and Parks/Natural Areas Rangers)

Considerations expressed by police officers and rangers included:

- Resources for enforcing behavior and equipment rules,
- Resources and responsibility for conducting outreach and challenges in reaching new students and residents each year,
- Potential for increased crashes and injuries due to speed differential with motor vehicles, ability to maneuver or stop, and lack of safety equipment.
- Suggest a comprehensive safety education approach over traditional enforcement efforts to improve safety on trails over the long-term.

Outstanding questions

At this time, some questions remain about safety, definitions, rules, and data.

Safety

- Potential for increased crashes on streets due to the speed differential between motor vehicles and other riders
- Some communities experienced an increase in certain types of injuries when e-scooters were introduced
- Speed bumps could be barriers to some vehicles like e-scooters (currently allowed on streets) and skateboards (not currently allowed on streets)
- Some vehicles and riders may lack safety equipment, such as helmets, lights, or brakes
- Some vehicles have different maneuverability than others

Definitions

- Differences in definitions between communities may create confusion for travelers and enforcement

Expanding where devices are allowed to operate

- Challenges to enforcement
- Differences between municipal code and state code could create issues in civil court

Data

- Crash data is limited if it doesn't involve a motor vehicle.

Exploring options

This project explores rules governing behavior of people operating human powered and lightweight electric vehicles as well as how these vehicles can be accommodated.

Behavior

Existing rules govern the operation of bicycles, e-bikes, and e-scooters on streets, sidewalks, and paved trails. Their intent is to protect other users of these facilities and include obeying traffic laws, yielding right of way, yielding to pedestrians on sidewalks, and prohibition of reckless or careless riding. The rules also require safety features such as lights and brakes.

Accommodating vehicles

This project explores the option to simplify the rules to allow the operation of human powered and lightweight electric vehicles on the same facilities where bicycles are allowed to operate. Bicycles are

allowed to operate on paved trails, streets with bike lanes, streets without bike lanes, and sidewalks. Bicycles are not allowed to operate on sidewalks within the dismount zone.

Staff are exploring the following scenarios to accommodate human powered and lightweight electric vehicles:

Sidewalks				
	Human powered vehicle		Lightweight electric vehicle	
	Bikes and e-bikes	Skateboards, roller skates, etc.	E-scooters	E-skateboard, one-wheel, etc.
Current regulations	Allowed (except dismount zones)		Require code refinement	Allowed
Staff is exploring	Allowed (except dismount zones)			

Crosswalks				
	Human powered vehicle		Lightweight electric vehicle	
	Bikes, e-bikes	Skateboards, roller skates, etc.	E-scooters	E-skateboard, one-wheel, etc.
Current regulations	Ride (except dismount zones)	Dismount		
Staff is exploring	Ride (except dismount zones)			

Streets with or without bike lanes				
	Human powered vehicle		Lightweight electric vehicle	
	Bikes and e-bikes	Skateboards, roller skates, etc.	E-scooters	E-skateboard, one-wheel, etc.
Current regulations	Allowed	Not allowed	Allowed	Not allowed
Staff is exploring	Allowed			

Paved trails				
	Human powered vehicle		Lightweight electric vehicle	
	Bikes, e-bikes	Skateboards, roller skates, etc.	E-scooters	E-skateboard, one-wheel, etc.
Current regulations	Allowed (except Class 3 e-bikes)		Not allowed (except on Mason Trail)	
Staff is exploring	Allowed (except Class 3 e-bikes)			

NEXT STEPS

- Based on Council feedback, staff will prepare recommended modifications to traffic and municipal code.
- Advisory boards will review recommendations.
- Draft ordinance will be presented for Council consideration in 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Active Modes Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2025 (excerpt)
2. Disability Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, March 17, 2025 (excerpt)
3. Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, June 18, 2025 (excerpt)
4. Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes, December 4, 2024 (excerpt)
5. Senior Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, April 9, 2025 (excerpt)
6. Transportation Board Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2025 (excerpt)
7. Youth Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, February 6, 2025
8. Police Services Statement, September 6, 2025
9. Which Wheels Go Where Community Engagement Summary
10. Which Wheels Go Where Report
11. Presentation