

September 9, 2026

TO: Public Safety & Welfare Committee Members

FROM: Dana Davis, Chair

RE: eScooter and eBike Ordinance Revision and Enforcement

Electric bike and scooter crashes involving Wisconsin children have increased dramatically over the past four years ([‘A real concern’ June 24, 2026](#)).

- From 2022 to 2025, crashes in WI involving an e-bike and a motor vehicle increased by 194% according to WI DOT.
- Crashes involving an e-scooter and a motor vehicle increased by 260% and injuries increased by 240%.
- In 2025, WI riders younger than 20 years accounted for 44% of individuals involved in e-scooter crashes as compared to 18% in 2024.

Watertown residents have growing concerns about the rapid increase of e-bikes and e-scooters.

State Laws

According to [WI DOT](#), E-bikes are defined in [state statute](#) as bicycles equipped with fully operative pedals and an electric motor of 750 watts or less. Wisconsin law categorizes e-bikes as class one, two or three according to their features. Class three are the most powerful, with throttle power reaching up to 28 mph. Class three e-bikes are the only ones with age restriction, requiring operators to be at least 16 years old.

According to state statute, e-bikes and e-scooters are considered vehicles on Wisconsin roads, which means they must follow the same traffic laws although WI DMV does not require a driver's license or registration for either one. State Law allows e-scooters on roads, but all bicycle traffic rules must be followed. Local ordinances may have additional rules for e-bikes and e-scooters.

Watertown Code

Watertown ordinances prohibit e-scooters on both streets and sidewalks. E-bikes are allowed on roadways but must follow all bicycle traffic rules. NOTE: Bicycles operated by children under 12 years of age are allowed on sidewalks, except for the Central Business District, where no bicycle is allowed on the sidewalk at all.

C. Motorized vehicles prohibited on sidewalks. [Added by Ord. No. 02-17]

(1) Definitions.

(a) "Motorized vehicle" shall mean a vehicle which is used for the transportation of persons and/or property, including but not limited to the following, irrespective of size, weight, number of wheels, and whether or not having a seat: moped, motor bicycle, motorbus, motorcycle, motor home, motor truck, motor vehicle, snowmobile, and all-terrain vehicle, and also means motorized skates, motorized scooter and motorized skateboards. Motorized wheelchairs and similar medical assisting devices are specifically excluded from this definition.

(b) All other words and phrases shall be given their meaning provided in the Wisconsin Statutes.

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person to:

(a) Operate a motorized vehicle on a public sidewalk, except for crossing a sidewalk to reach an area where operation is lawful. This prohibition does not apply to motorized vehicles used for construction or maintenance purposes or used to access the site of construction or maintenance work.

(b) Operate any type of motorized skates, motorized scooter or motorized skateboard, whether gas- or electric-powered, on a public street or highway.

Many WI communities have recently passed ordinances to address the increase of e-bikes and e-scooters.

Sample e-Bike and e-Scooter Ordinances from WI Municipalities

[West Bend](#)

[LaCrosse](#)

[Neenah](#)

Possible Questions for Discussion

- Should the City consider updating its ordinances to address the use and operation of e-bikes and e-scooters within Watertown?
- What additional information does this Committee need to obtain before determining whether changes to the current ordinance are warranted?
- Should the City Attorney and/or Police Department be asked to review potential ordinance changes and bring recommendations back to the Committee?