

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**City Council**  
**Services, Safety & Parks Committee**

6:30 PM  
August 26, 2025

**MINUTES**

Council Chambers, 135 E.  
Sunset Way, Issaquah WA

**COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Committee Members:*  
Tola Marts, Chair  
Chris Reh  
Barbara de Michele

*Administration/Staff:*  
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator  
T. Cassidy Mueller, Deputy City Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Marts called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comment was provided:

- John Rittenhouse, resident, spoke in support of proceeding with building the Opportunity Center without a currently identified tenant/service provider.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

a) **COM 0172 - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Opportunity Center Options**

*Presented by:*

*Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator*

After staff presentation, the Committee heard public comment on the topic.

- John Rittenhouse, resident, spoke regarding the Together House.

The Committee recommended to proceed with building the Opportunity Center without a currently identified tenant or service provider.

Other comments included:

- How to maximize funds to best meet human services needs in the City.
- Comfort level and preference with one service provider or multiple.
- Whether the Opportunity Center is the best option for a human services campus.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS - None**

No announcements were made.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:19 PM.

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Tola Marts, Chair

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T. Cassidy Mueller, Deputy City Clerk



# Staff Report

## COM # 0180 – E-Bike Briefing

**Meeting Date**      September 30, 2025  
**Department**      Police Department  
**Staff Lead**        Paula Schwan, Police Chief  
                              Gillian Straub, Management Analyst

### Attachments

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### Direction Needed from Committee

The Administration is providing information on the use of e-bikes and e-motorcycles in Issaquah and presenting the proposed next steps for Committee feedback.

### Recommendation

The Administration recommends:

1. Develop city code to define and regulate e-motorcycle use by minors and on public streets
2. Add support for efforts to better define and regulate e-motorcycle use in state law to the legislative policy manual.

### Background

#### Definitions

E-bicycles are well defined by state law; with [RCW 46.04.169](#) establishing three classes of e-bikes based on maximum speed and the level of pedal assistance and [RCW 46.61.710](#) governing where they can be operated. Electric dirt bikes and electric motorcycles have more general [definitions](#) and regulations in state law, but are generally vehicles that can exceed 28 miles per hour, which is the top speed for e-bikes.<sup>1</sup> These operational guidelines are what Issaquah uses to regulate and enforce e-bike and e-motorcycle use.

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<sup>1</sup> E-dirt bike and e-motorcycle will be used interchangeably in this report. Both are vehicles that exceed the 750 watts that e-bikes have and can exceed the 20/28 mph that e-bikes max out at. E-dirt bikes are not street legal, while e-motorcycles can be if the rider has the proper licensure, motorcycle endorsement and more.

## Trends

The last five years have seen an increase in sales and use of e-bikes in general, as it became a safe form of outdoor recreation and exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift saw injury rates among older Americans rise; however, as e-bikes became more affordable, [recent trends](#) indicate greater rates of injury amount youth.

Injury rates correspond to regional and local trends seen among law enforcement and usage of e-bikes and e-motorcycles. Multiple cities in the Seattle metropolitan area have reported issues with dangerous and illegal e-bike and e-motorcycle usage, including minors riding these vehicles, riding in areas where they cannot be used and near-misses and collisions with vehicles due to unsafe riding. Cities reporting these issues include Mercer Island, Kirkland, Bothell, Snoqualmie, North Bend, Vancouver and Seattle.

Issaquah is seeing this trend play out as well, with inexperienced youth riders operating e-motorcycles illegally on city sidewalks. The speed of these vehicles and the inexperience of the riders poses danger to pedestrians and drivers.

The City has seen 2 collisions between e-motorcycles and vehicles since 2023, numerous calls from residents and more than 30 stops related to dangerous and illegal riding.

## Enforcement

When an Issaquah Police Department (IPD) officer initiates a stop due to suspected illegal e-bike or e-motorcycle usage, they encounter issues at the stop and ability to pursue penalties. This assumes that riders will stop for IPD and many do not. Pursuit poses risk to other drivers, the rider and IPD, and e-bikes and e-motorcycles can access trails and off-road areas where pursuit in a car isn't possible. This leads to few stops being made, and limited opportunities to educate riders.

When stops are made, given that most issues concern youth riders, especially those under 16, there is limited ability to fully address such incidents. King County Juvenile Court will not pursue civil penalties for those under 16 for this type of incident, so there is limited value in the officer issuing the infraction. In some circumstances, IPD officers may impound an e-motorcycle, and IPD is exploring other impoundment options, like impounding at the station.

## Issues

A key issue driving illegal and dangerous e-bike and e-motorcycle use in Issaquah is parental understanding. Many parents purchasing these vehicles for their children largely do not understand

what vehicles or classes of vehicles are legal and safe for their child to have and do not understand or educate their child on where these vehicles can be used. Clearer regulation is a secondary, but related, issue. While e-bikes are clearly defined in state law, e-motorcycles could benefit from clearer definition and usage guidelines to better inform potential riders of the regulations.

## Analysis

There are two recommended courses of action; first, to develop a City code amendment to define and regulate e-motorcycle use by minors and on public streets, and second, to support efforts to better define and regulate e-motorcycle use and purchase in state law.

## City Code

Staff reviewed approaches taken by other cities, including Mercer Island, Bothell and Snoqualmie, to develop proposed City code to better define e-motorcycle use and impoundment processes to ensure appropriate penalties are assessed and to explore other educational opportunities.

Staff has been working on draft City code that will likely note what vehicles qualify as e-motorcycles and the needed licensure, endorsements, and age restrictions to operate them, and where they can be operated. Portions of this, like licensure requirements, will be based on existing state law. In addition, the City is looking at adding guardian responsibility and fines and impoundment procedures to ensure that enforcement is tailored to the problems seen in Issaquah and offers opportunities for education.

## Support for RCW Changes

As many cities are experiencing these same issues, the Association of Washington Cities and several member cities are gathering information and may lobby their legislators for definition and operations changes in state law to improve enforcement and education efforts by law enforcement agencies across the state. A state-wide definition would update law that doesn't account for the existence of e-motorcycles comprehensively, and reduce a patchwork effect, as cities pursue similar, but not identical, ordinances defining these vehicles. A state-wide definition also would aid in education efforts, as definitions would not change from city to city.

An initial interest group made up of cities experiencing these issues also indicated a need at the state level for purchase and registration requirements that cannot be enacted by cities. Conversations on RCW changes for definitions and purchasing/registration are ongoing and will be addressed through the City's legislative agenda adoption, scheduled for November 10. Staff are closely tracking the requested changes and will review for alignment with City goals.

### **Impacts – Financial, Policy & Community**

There are no budgetary impacts anticipated as a result of the anticipated code proposal or support for state changes. The City is looking at establishing an impound process at the IPD station to supplement the existing impound lot option. Establishing an impound process at the IPD station may result in nominal fees, but the goal is to educate parents on the dangers of underage, illegal e-bike/e-motorcycle usage.

There are no anticipated policy impacts. The Sustainability Division has plans to pursue grant programs for community members to afford e-bikes and for staff use of e-bikes, and the Administration will coordinate educational material with the Division to ensure the City is leading on this issue through enforcement and education.

The desired outcome of this work is decreased dangerous and illegal e-bike and e-motorcycle usage, which is certainly a community impact, given the public safety threat that dangerous behavior can have. However, it should be noted that the proposal does not resolve the issue of rides not stopping for IPD officers when pulled over, nor is a revision to the pursuit policy being considered at this time.

### **Timing & Next Steps**

Committee feedback will inform the City code revision is being drafted by staff and the addition to the legislative policy manual around better definitions and purchase/licensure processes for e-motorcycles. If the Committee supports these recommendations, the code revision will return to the Committee and then the City Council in 2025 or early 2026, and the legislative policy agenda will be discussed and adopted by City Council in November 2025. If definitions are established in city code or state law, a communications or education campaign may follow this work.



CITY OF  
**ISSAQUAH**  
WASHINGTON

# E-Bike Briefing

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SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 | SERVICES, SAFETY & PARKS  
COMMITTEE

PAULA SCHWAN, POLICE CHIEF

# Purpose

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Provide detail on use of e-bikes and e-motorcycles in Issaquah, steps to address illegal and dangerous riders and request policy direction on next steps.