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Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:48 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Support bicycling #26-0377

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Dear City Council Members,

I am not a member of the City's Bike-Ped Advisory Committee, but as a member of the MTU board, and a transit, transportation cycling, and climate action advocate, I try to listen to as many of their meetings as possible. For the past several months, the committee has discussed and learned more about the issues communities around the country are having with electric mopeds marketed as bicycles and bought, often for children, by people who don't understand the safety and liability issues these higher speed vehicles can have. The committee has heard from local and national experts, looked at other communities' work, and spent a lot of time working out a proposed city ordinance that will help define and clarify the line between electric bikes which use a motor to assist someone pedaling, and higher speed electric mopeds which have a throttle to drive the engine even when there is no pedaling.

The updates they have recommended recognize these difference and take into account our city's goals of making biking more convenient and safer for people of all ages and abilities to encourage more to use cleaner, less polluting, lower-carbon modes of transportation when possible.

Bicycles are the most efficient vehicle, and [electric bicycles are making a big difference in lowering carbon emissions](#), reducing vehicle miles traveled, reducing pollution and life-threatening car crashes, and helping families lower their transportation budgets. Improving bike access and infrastructure and inviting more to bike for errands, social engagements, shopping and recreation is a good thing. But, you cannot do that if you don't provide high quality safe bikeways and if you prohibit bikes from accessing places people need and want to go.

The council recently nixed protected bike lanes downtown, for example, but at the same time, bicyclists are prohibited from riding on sidewalks, away from dangerous moving traffic. In effect, you have made it impossible for many to bike downtown, and especially to invite and encourage more people to bike exactly where more people *should* be biking, and where it would benefit businesses for more to walk and bike. Further restricting cyclists' ability to ride in our parks discourages biking even more. This is just the opposite, again, of what our plans say our city should be doing.

Worse, when children and youth are not allowed to use their bikes as transportation because they can't ride to the movies or to hang with friends at a restaurant or bookstore or shop, you are essentially condemning them to a life of unhealthy, unaffordable car dependence. [Children who are driven everywhere](#) can have lower sense of place, lower cognitive abilities, and lower sense of autonomy. [Bicycling children feel happier](#), powerful, able to do things on their own, and part of their communities. When we prioritize cars and even car *parking* over bicycling or arbitrarily prohibit cyclists from riding where they have always ridden, we are sending a powerful negative message about biking.

It's not clear to me whether Council Member Kahlow's amendment would further restrict sidewalk riding for non-electric bicycles and in other places than downtown, but since there is literally no other safe place to ride in many parts of our city such as the Losey/Green Bay area, any restrictions like this block children's and youth's abilities to develop as transportation cyclists and discourage those who would like to ride but don't feel safe riding in traffic from making the switch. I can cite many studies and examples, but these haven't seemed to make a difference in past similar situations. If you are interested, please let me know and I can supply some.

We want more people to cycle. We want more children and youth to develop good cycling skills and use their bikes for transportation. We want more adults and families to have safe places to enjoy biking together. There is such a thing as [motonormativity](#), an unconscious bias that creates and reinforces car dependency while ignoring and downplaying the risks and dangers of cars.

I encourage you to approve the proposal from the Bike-Ped committee and not the amendment at this time. The scope of the BPAC proposal, which has been worked on for several months, is limited to addressing electric bikes and e-bike look-alikes while

maintaining a welcoming and encouraging attitude toward those who want to cycle. More information and public input is required before further restricting bicyclists from public spaces.

Thank you.

Cathy Van Maren