

RE: December 16th AGENDA ITEM: 10-B 2025-5599 – eBike 15 Speed Limit Proposal

Dear Councilmember Daysog, Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Pryor, and Councilmembers Boller, and Jensen, and City Staff,

We're a group of Alameda parents with young children writing against a proposed blanket 15 MPH speed limit for bicycles and ebikes on city-owned paths and parks. This proposal misses the mark and would create unintended consequences that undermine rather than advance our shared safety goals.

Electric bikes are an excellent alternative mode of transportation on the Island

At any school drop-off in the morning, you'll see many parents choosing this mode to bring their children to school in electric cargo bikes. Go to one of our ferries and you'll see that frequently they reach max capacity for bikes. Many of us explicitly forgo a second car because of the flexibility, ease of use, speed, and cost-effectiveness that ebikes enable. *Your work on enabling biking in Alameda is having its intended effect and creates a community that enables a car-free lifestyle. This proposal would stymie that impact..*

We share your concern about safety, but this proposal addresses the wrong problem

We've read similar articles about a [new type of electric motorcycle](#). *But these are high-powered mopeds masquerading as ebikes.* These vehicles can exceed 30 MPH, lack pedals, and present genuine dangers to pedestrians, children, and legitimate cyclists when on sidewalks and bike paths. This issue deserves serious attention. But this safety threat comes from vehicles that shouldn't be on bike paths, not from classified ebikes and traditional bicycles operating at normal speeds. Limits on sidewalks where pedestrians and bikers intermingle makes total sense. Creating a blanket 15 MPH limit doesn't distinguish between someone on an electric cargo bike and someone on an electric motorcycle on a bike path. A limit like the one proposed on major backbones for bike travel like the Cross Alameda Trail would hamper reasonable usage.

Our state already has sufficient regulations for legal ebikes

California law establishes clear classifications for ebikes ([Class 1, 2, and 3](#)) with appropriate speed limits, minimally this proposal should align to those guidelines (20 MPH for Class 1 and 2 for example – often these have governors that prevent going any faster). The issue isn't a gap in regulations; it's enforcement of existing laws against illegal vehicles. On the other side of the equation, as bikers, we've seen a lack of enforcement of the city-wide 25 MPH speed limit for cars, and vehicles in bike lanes, often forcing cyclists and our kids to ride in the main traffic lane to go around them. *Regulations are only as good as their enforcement.*

The 15 MPH limit is impractical, will reduce ebike adoption and increase car traffic

A cyclist on a traditional bicycle can easily exceed 15 MPH going on Alameda's flat paths. This is not an ebike-specific issue. Forcing bikes to move at a slow pace undermines this choice and contradicts our city's goals around climate action, traffic reduction, and sustainable transportation. *Making biking less practical and appealing will push people to drive.*

Better solutions exist that address the actual problem

- Enforce existing laws against illegal motorized vehicles on paths (vehicles without pedals, exceeding Class 3 specifications...)
- Educate riders about what qualifies as a legal e-bike and helmet usage
- Add signage reminding all path users to ride at safe speeds

We have invested significant resources in cycling infrastructure. Let's use our efforts to preserve the utility that makes biking a genuine car alternative for Alameda families.

Thanks for making Alameda a bike-friendly city,

Thushan Amarasiriwardena

parent of two in Central Alameda, with thousands of miles on their ebike,
and President of the Alameda Free Library Board

Nick Ksiazek

parent of three in Western Alameda, with over 10,000 miles on their e-bikes in Alameda,
and the city appointed Trustee of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District Board

Kate Stirr

parent of two in Central Alameda, that commutes to The Alameda Point on ebike

Robin Oliva-Kraft

parent of three in Central Alameda, frequent ebike chauffeur and bike commuter to the ferry, regularly (safely)
hitting 15-20 MPH.

Jason Purdy

parent of three in Central Alameda, founder of The Bay Ride, and appointed member of the Alameda County
Transportation Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Andy Wang

parent of two in Fernside,
and Planning Board member

From: Mitch B <mitchaball@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 11:14 AM
To: CITYCOUNCIL-List
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written comment for item 10B of 12/16/25 City Council Meeting

Hello,

I will be making a public comment on item 10B for the 12/16/25 City Council Meeting and wanted to share a written copy with linked citations.

I think this is a decent referral but could use some revision before implementation. First off, I think we need to just acknowledge that the problem we're trying to solve is not e-bikes. E-bikes have a strict legal definition and while some of these two-wheeled vehicles that are putting children and others in danger have pedals, they do not fit this definition. These dangerous vehicles are either not e-bikes at point of sale or are designed to be easily modified with after market motors or easily hacked to disable software controlled speed limits. They are at this point, legally mopeds or motorcycles that are being ridden without proper licensing and registration. Now, given that Alameda can only do so much to limit what people can buy online, I appreciate that speed limits are something that Alameda has the capacity to do.

I do not own a car or an e-bike. For my day to day life, I own a regular bike that does not naturally inform you of your speed. When I learned about this referral, I got concerned that I had the potential to be breaking the law without realizing it. So, in order to learn what 15 mph on a bike truly is, I took a trip down the new greenway pilot on Pacific Ave to Alameda Bicycle to purchase a bike speedometer.

The first thing I learned when I installed my speedometer is that my natural speed on residential streets like 9th st is between 12-15 mph. I think this speed is a reasonable maximum for shared multi-use paths and parks as described in A1b-c. In my opinion, going faster than this on these spaces shared with pedestrians would be inconsiderate, reckless, and dangerous. If enforcement needs a new tool in addition to current tools to protect pedestrians in these areas, then I take no issue with it. You do not need a speedometer to know going faster than 15 mph on pedestrian shared paths is too fast.

What I do take issue with is a 15 mph limit on bike-designated paths as described in A1a. What I learned with my speedometer is that I naturally go up to 20 mph while commuting on the Cross-Alameda Trail. Additionally when I bike for the purpose of exercise rather than getting to work, I can even reach up to 25 mph on long stretches like Jean Sweeney Park and Ralph Appezzato Parkway. I've never considered this to be unsafe as this is bike-dedicated infrastructure with very high visibility and bidirectional striping to prevent head on collisions with other cyclists. People have been safely riding non-motorized pedal bikes at these speeds for decades, so it's no different if those who ride e-bikes want to match these speeds.

As a final point, the Cross Alameda Trail transitions between bike lanes and bike paths at many locations, but other than the presence of a median, these sections look no different. There are even sections of bike path that have signs labeling them as bike lanes, such as the section west of Entrance St.



This is not really a big deal unless different laws are applied to bike paths and cyclists are tricked into exceeding the speed limit. While multi-use paths are for both bikes and pedestrians, bike paths and bike lanes are designed for bikes and the law should reflect this.

Lastly, before any final decisions are made on this topic, I strongly encourage council members to do what I did and get a bike or e-bike with a speedometer to learn what 15 mph means on different pieces of bike infrastructure.

Thank you,
-Mitch Ball

From: [Robert Prinz](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Alameda City Council public comment, 12/16/2025 meeting
Date: Friday, December 12, 2025 2:40:59 PM
Attachments: [ATT00001.png](#)

Hello, this is a public comment on behalf of Bike East Bay for the December 16, 2025, Alameda City Council meeting agenda item 10-B: City Owned Paths 15 MPH Speed Limit

Bike East Bay is in agreement with our local partners at Bike Walk Alameda that a 15 MPH trails speed limit for city owned trails is generally in line with similar limits for other trails around the East Bay, including the Bay Trail and most East Bay Parks facilities.

However, we also agree with Bike Walk Alameda that this limit should not be applied to facilities like the Cross Alameda Trail which have separately striped or otherwise delineated bicycle lanes.

We also encourage the City of Alameda to investigate “green wave” implementations along major bikeway corridors.

This would involve coordinating signal timing such that bike riders traveling within a certain speed zone (say 10 to 15 MPH) will get green lights by default. This could encourage calmer travel speeds while simultaneously reducing overall delay for bike traffic. Similar installations already installed around San Francisco could be used as a model.

Lastly, we also encourage Alameda to investigate 15 MPH posted speed limits on neighborhood streets, not only trails, with a priority for shared lane cyclist/driver bike routes.

Cities in California are now allowed to lower posted speed limits to 15 MPH on any local (non arterial / collector) road without the need for a speed survey or any other justification. Not many cities have taken advantage of this opportunity yet, but UC Berkeley SafeTREC has confirmed that it is available.

If 15 MPH is a good idea for trails that people on foot and on bike share, then it certainly follows that it’s also a good idea on neighborhood streets around town that people in cars and on bikes share, when there’s no dedicated bike infrastructure. These shared-lane bike/car streets are associated with much more significant traffic safety issues compared to multi-use trails.

Thank you,



Robert Prinz | Advocacy Director

Pronouns: he/him

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We mobilize by bike to build thriving communities that are joyful, safe, and inclusive. Help us create safe streets for all and [make a year end gift today!](#)

From: [Sam Rosenthal](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Item 10-B — Proposed 15 mph Limit on Bike Paths
Date: Friday, December 12, 2025 9:29:26 AM

RE: Item 10-B

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as an Alameda resident who regularly and responsibly uses a legal e-bike to travel around our city, including on dedicated facilities such as the Cross Alameda Trail. I share the concerns expressed by the Board of Bike Walk Alameda regarding Item 10-B, and I want to respectfully voice my opposition to applying a blanket 15 mph speed limit to all city-owned paths and parks.

I understand and appreciate the intent behind this referral—improving safety and addressing concerns about high-speed electric devices. Those concerns are legitimate, especially when it comes to unregulated electric motorcycles and mopeds (many of which are frequently mistaken for legal e-bikes). Much of the alarming injury data cited in public discussions actually involves these unclassified electric motorcycles, not the e-bikes that people like myself use safely and responsibly.

While safety on our paths is essential, a universal 15 mph limit is not likely to address the real sources of the problem and could create unintended negative consequences.

I would not oppose a 15 mph speed limit on shared, mixed-use paths where people walking and biking interact closely; such a restriction is a common and reasonable practice in many cities. However, applying the same restriction to dedicated bike facilities (such as the Cross Alameda Trail) would penalize safe, ordinary travel. Even on conventional bicycles, let alone legal e-bikes, people routinely and safely exceed 15 mph on these transportation corridors. Further, Class 1 & 2 e-bikes already limit the speed at which motor assistance is provided to 20 mph (and Class 3 e-bikes, which may assist up to 28 mph, are typically regulated separately from Class 1 & 2 e-bikes). Criminalizing normal riding behavior on core parts of our bike network runs counter to Alameda's goals around sustainable transportation, mode shift, and climate action.

There are more effective and targeted solutions available. For example, state legislation like SB 455, which would clarify the distinction between legal e-bikes and electric mopeds or motorcycles, directly addresses the devices and behaviors that are contributing to safety concerns, and does so without penalizing those of us who are using legal bicycles and e-bikes appropriately.

More broadly, I hope we can remain focused on the primary causes of serious traffic injuries and deaths. Local and national data consistently show that the most dangerous behaviors involve motor vehicles: unsafe speed, failure to yield, and improper turning. Alameda's Vision Zero and Active Transportation plans highlight these priorities clearly. Redirecting scarce planning or enforcement resources away from the factors that cause the vast majority of severe crashes would undermine the City's safety goals.

I also want to thank you for your ongoing support of Alameda's expanding low-stress bike

network. These facilities make it possible for residents like me to choose safer, greener transportation options, and they are essential to our city's climate and mobility objectives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Samuel Rosenthal

From: [Elena Ferri](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 10-B (ebike speed limit) - opposition letter
Date: Thursday, December 11, 2025 12:20:03 PM

Dear City Council,

I am writing to express opposition towards a 15 mph limit for ebikes on city-owned paths (Item 10-B at next week's city council meeting).

I live in Alameda for many reasons, and one is certainly the amazing job of the Mayor and recent administrations to make it as bike friendly as possible. I ride the cross-Alameda trail daily. This is a specialized trail where pedestrians and bikes travel separately. There is no need to limit speed on such a wonderful riding experience for all, especially noting that, on such a trail, conventional bikes can easily reach speeds higher than 15 mph. Of note, I actually encounter pedestrians walking the bike lane all the time and that's frustrating. I wonder if better signage or actual physical separations may be needed.

Pedestrians and bike accidents in my direct experience are due to cars being disrespectful or distracted, and lack of infrastructure that make biking and walking easier and protected. I often feel invisible to traffic lights and cars when biking. On the cross-Alameda trail, I don't. Traffic lights know I'm there and I have a clear way to call for green without dismounting, cars see the bike lane clearly highlighted, pedestrians know where they should walk (although they choose to ignore it occasionally), and left turns are restricted for cars at traffic lights. That allows me to safely bike faster. Thank you for this initiative! More of this, more education to the larger public around this, and fewer restrictions around the ability to conveniently substitute a car for a bike. Without this convenience, folks will always choose a car.

Ebike-specific accidents are not caused by type 1-2 ebikes, but by motorized bikes and ebikes with throttle abilities. I believe these vehicles belong on the road, not on a bike lane. If you purchased such a vehicle, you are looking for high speed, you can match a car limit speed, and that puts you on the road, in my opinion. I would support an Alameda-wide restriction to road travel for ebikes/motorized bikes that can travel at >30 mph.

Thank you,

Elena Ferri



Board of Directors

December 10, 2025

Denyse Trepanier
President

RE: **Item 10-B** – **Consider Directing Staff to Analyze and Make Recommendations regarding Establishing a 15 Miles Per Hour Speed Limit for Bicyclists and E-Bikes on City Owned Paths and Parks. (Councilmember Daysog)**

Brian Fowler
Treasurer

Tim Beloney
Secretary

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft and Members of the City Council,

Cyndy Johnsen
Board Member

We appreciate the intent behind this referral and understand from Exhibit A that the motivation is trail safety and concerns about high-speed electric devices. We share these concerns, particularly regarding electric motos that are frequently—and inaccurately—conflated with legal e-bikes. As this recent article explains, much of the alarming injury data involves unregulated electric motorcycles, not e-bikes:

Maria Piper
Board Member

E-Bike Injuries Are Up 1,800%, But It's Not Actually E-Bikes: It's Electric Motorcycles

Lucy Gigli
Founder, non-voting

<https://velo.outsideonline.com/ebike/ebike-culture/e-bike-injuries-alarming-rise-urbanist-update/>

While the problem is real, we are concerned that a blanket 15 mph speed limit is unlikely to address it and could create unintended negative consequences.

We do not oppose a 15 mph limit on shared, mixed-use paths where bicyclists and pedestrians interact closely—this is a common and reasonable practice in many cities. However, **applying the same limit to dedicated bi-directional bike facilities such as the Cross Alameda Trail (referenced in section A of the referral) would penalize safe, ordinary cycling behavior, so we oppose it.** On these transportation corridors, people on conventional bikes routinely and safely exceed 15 mph. Criminalizing normal, safe travel on our primary bike network contradicts the City's goals of enabling biking for transportation and achieving mode shift and climate targets.

There are also more effective and targeted strategies available. Bike East Bay recently highlighted several in this article:

Active Transformation: Youth Cyclists and E-Bikes

<https://bikeeastbay.org/active-transformation-youth-cyclists-and-e-bikes/>

One key strategy is supporting state legislation such as SB 455 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB455), which would more clearly distinguish legal e-bikes from electric mopeds and motorcycles, and restrict devices that do not fit any legal category. This approach directly addresses dangerous behaviors

without penalizing people using legitimate bicycles and e-bikes appropriately.

More broadly, as we allocate very limited transportation planning and enforcement resources, it is essential not to lose sight of the primary causes of traffic violence. Local and national data consistently show that severe injuries and deaths stem from motor vehicle behaviors: failure to yield, unsafe speed, and improper turning. Our Vision Zero and Active Transportation Plans clearly identify these priorities. Diverting attention or enforcement away from the factors that cause the vast majority of serious crashes would undermine those efforts.

Finally, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of Alameda's expanding network of bike paths. These facilities are foundational to our Low Stress Network and indispensable to both safety and climate progress.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bike Walk Alameda Board