

From: [Sterling Anderson](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Comments on e-bike usage on city bike paths
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Hi There,

I see your next committee meeting on February 28, 2024 has an agenda item to discuss e-bike usage on shared use paths in the city. I would like to comment as a citizen and community member who uses the bike paths regularly.

I, like many people, got back in to biking during the Covid pandemic. Also, like many people I purchased an e-bike. For me choosing an e-bike was the right choice because of three things. First, I was in terrible shape and knew if it was difficult to ride I wouldn't keep it up. Second, I did not want to get to work (commuting to my job on campus was my primary use of the bike) all sweaty. Third, and maybe most importantly, I am prone to migraines and a major contributing factor is when I exert myself without a proper warm up. Since my house is located at the bottom of a hill to the bike path that means the start of my commute would be an exertion, and I was concerned I would trigger a migraine every day.

So, in the more than three years since I started biking again I have seen a lot. Many people on e-bikes. Many on non e-bikes. Walkers, runners, dog walkers, etc. I try to be a good user of the shared paths so I don't go fast. I think I average less than 10MPH, I like to take my time. I have a bell and ring it every time I am coming up behind someone. I give a wide space when passing, I don't pass when there is oncoming traffic, etc. The vast majority of bike path users do the same.

I feel this talk specifically calling out e-bikes is unfortunate and incorrect. Without a doubt I have been passed by a person on an e-bike traveling close to or maybe even greater than 20MPH. However, the single most common occurrence when I am on the bike paths is being passed by a road bicyclist traveling as fast, if not faster than an e-bike rider, and the people riding these bikes overwhelmingly do not announce their presence using a bell or verbal warning. The only other real issue I see regularly on the bike paths is bikers of all kinds running through intersections where the paths cross a city street and completely disregarding stop signs. I am frankly surprised more bikers do not get hit by cars because of this behavior.

My comments are all my own observations and anecdotal.

In my opinion though, if the city wants to make bike paths safer I think there are really only a couple things that should be done. First, inform people they should be staying to the right regardless of their mode of travel, that is a common issue. Also, require bells or horns on ALL bikes. As I said previously the only close calls I have had on the bike paths have been due to bikers speeding past without any warning. If the city were to enforce rules on the paths a speed limit may be the answer, but the city doesn't enforce stop signs the bike paths have at intersections so I don't see them enforcing speed limits.

Sterling Anderson
609 Constitution Ln
Madison, WI 53711
608.239.8387