

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: E-bikes on sidewalks: a necessary recourse
Date: Sunday, November 17, 2024 11:51:18 AM

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Dear Transportation Commission,

I urge you not to ban e-bikes on sidewalks, for many reasons, including:

1. We have paths that are technically sidewalks

The new facility on Mineral Point Rd is a prominent example of this, but it's a pattern we'll be forced to repeat under current state law. Or the recently reconstructed stretch of University Ave, where we were told that the sidewalk on the south side is intended for multi-use travel.

2. E-bikes don't necessarily travel faster

I'm not a particularly fast cyclist, but I rarely get passed by e-bikes, and I often end up passing B-cycles, for example. This has been shown in other cities and here in Madison.

3. Twenty really is plenty

If e-bikes are currently subject to the city's default limit of 25 mph, then when the city moves to 20 mph as the default, e-bikes will automatically be subject to that. Let's keep moving on Twenty Is Plenty, rather than creating more complexity in the meantime.

4. Enforcement should be focused on safety

The police department is already challenged with enforcing speed limits on roads, and when they set up radar on 30-35 mph roads, they routinely observe speeds of >50 mph. Those speeds are much, much, much more deadly than an e-bike going 23 mph. For cars, colliding with a pedestrian at 23 mph carries a 10% risk of death, while at 50 mph, the risk is 75%. However, this is also based on the weight of a car, so an e-bike collision at 23 mph poses much less risk (1%?). We should be prioritizing enforcement that actually saves lives.

5. It's not realistic

Monona Dr has signs saying "no bikes on sidewalk"; those always make me laugh because they're so often factually incorrect. We still have a lot of streets where people ride on the sidewalk because we haven't built a viable alternative. I'm a confident cyclist, but there are places in Madison where even I have to do this. When the bike facility is separated from the sidewalk, cyclists often need to use the sidewalk to reach a mid-block destination. B-cycle stations are often at sidewalk level. It's not like e-bike riders will choose a sidewalk over a bike path or a safe street-level option. Let's not make Monona's mistake. We should focus on providing that better option first.

Can we put this to rest now please?

Thank you,

Nick Davies
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