

# **COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

CITY OF FORT COLLINS· BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

## **MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 7, 2019

To: Mayor and City Councilmember

From: Terry Schlicting, Commission on Disability Chair

Re: FC Moves – Electric Bike Pilot Program

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The Commission on Disability has discussed the use of electric bikes (“e-bikes”) on Fort Collins bike paths and have some concerns. There may have been some miscommunications that all boards and commissions are on board with e-bike riders using the city trails.

We are uncomfortable with this issue being promoted as one that enhances access for people with disabilities. As it stands now, the ADA already allows motorized devices, or other types of personal transportation, as a form of mobility for those with disabilities.

Furthermore, we feel that Fort Collins bike trails are already crowded, and in many locations, too narrow for the amount of traffic. There are many turns and corners where visibility is limited and an individual traveling in excess of 25 miles per hour creates numerous safety concerns. Being a wheelchair user myself, I use the bike paths on a daily basis to travel throughout Fort Collins. They allow wheelchair users to get around town free of the dangers that vehicular traffic and crosswalk present. On many occasions I have had near collisions with bicycle riders traveling too fast to be able to safely maneuver around pedestrians. In addition to limiting the number of higher-speed bikes, we strongly encourage the creation and enforcement of speed limits.

The Commission on Disability has the following questions/ recommendations:

- While we understand that Class-3 bikes are not allowed, will their prohibition be enforced?
- There are no age requirements for class 1 and 2 e-bikes. We recommend an age requirement;
- We recommend a speed limit be created and enforced;
- We recommend that e-bikes are required to be registered and licensed;
- We recommend a well-marketed platform that citizens may use to provide feedback/complaints specific to this issue.

If the City of Fort Collins chooses to move forward in granting permission for e-bike riders to use trails, we request that they be limited to trails such as the Mason Trail that is relatively straight

with high visibility, and also heavily utilized by commuter traffic. We feel that allowing their use on trails with many turns would be a tremendous safety risk. Some examples are the Spring Creek and Poudre Trail bike paths, where there are many twists and turns, and numerous tree branches that block visibility.

The Commission on Disability is not completely against the use of e-bikes in our community; we are simply asking that you move forward with thoughtful consideration and caution regarding the implications and possible conflicts created by their use.