

Keeping Our Trails Safe in the Age of E-Bikes and Battery-Powered Recreation

In recent years, battery-powered scooters, bicycles, and dirt bikes have surged in popularity. What was almost unheard of just a few years ago can now be ordered online with the click of a button and delivered to your doorstep within days.

While these devices offer fun, convenience, and an exciting new way to get around, they've also created new challenges—particularly on Town-owned property and our bike trail system. Our current rule is simple: “No Motorized Vehicles” on the trails. However, with feedback from our consultants and residents, we've recognized the need to refine those rules to reflect today's technology.

In July, I introduced a local law amending Section 143 of the Town Code to give law enforcement the tools they need to address unsafe behavior on our trails. This week, the Town Board passed that amendment. It now allows officers to take action—and, if necessary, impound a bike gas or electric and or recreation vehicle—when riders put themselves or others at risk.

Unfortunately, we've seen too many cases where young riders, especially on nearly silent electric dirt bikes, speed recklessly past pedestrians without showing courtesy or concern. Some have been stopped at night without lights, without helmets, and without regard for their own safety. Even sending someone home in those conditions could end in tragedy.

It's important to note that e-bikes themselves are not the problem. In fact, when used responsibly, they can be a great way to commute, enjoy the outdoors, and stay active. Many riders follow the rules, show courtesy to others, and operate their e-bikes safely. The issue arises when any type of motorized bike—whether it's an e-bike, scooter, or dirt bike—is ridden recklessly, without safety equipment, or in areas where higher speeds create hazards for other trail users. Our goal is not to ban e-bikes, but to ensure that all riders use them in a safe and respectful manner.

Parents also play a critical role in keeping our young riders safe. Too often, law enforcement encounters minors riding high-powered e-bikes or scooters with no lights, no helmet, and no awareness of the dangers involved. It's essential that parents know what their children are riding, where they're riding, and that they're following basic safety rules. A few extra minutes spent ensuring your child's bike is equipped and your child is protected can prevent a lifetime of regret.

In the coming weeks, the Town will be posting updated rules for trail use. E-bikes will still be allowed, but will likely be required to have functioning pedals. Helmets will be mandatory—powered or not—in line with New York State law. The recent loss of a young member of our community is a heartbreaking reminder of why these precautions matter.

As someone who has ridden motorcycles for over 50 years, I can tell you: wearing protective gear is not optional—it's essential. Whether you ride a scooter, a traditional bicycle, or an e-bike, at a bare minimum, wear a helmet.

These updates are about one thing—keeping our trail system safe, enjoyable, and welcoming for everyone. I thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we move forward with these changes.