

Proposed E-Bike Ordinance

Prepared by the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office

History & Recent County Incidents

- Electric bicycles are not new - 1895
- Technology has made them available
- Beginning in the 2000s – battery technology started drastically changing

- E-Motorcycles are just as old – first patents showing about 1869.
- Again, as battery tech changed, we have different machines today.

E-BICYCLE PATENTS >>>



The concept of an e-bike has been known for more than 120 years



December 31, 1895, **Ogden Bolton Jr** patented a battery-powered electric bicycle with a "6-pole brush-and commutator direct current (DC) hub motor mounted in the rear wheel."



1897, **Hosea W. Libbey** was granted the second patent for an e-bike propelled by a double electric motor. The motor was placed inside the crankset axle hub, which is a popular solution today as well.

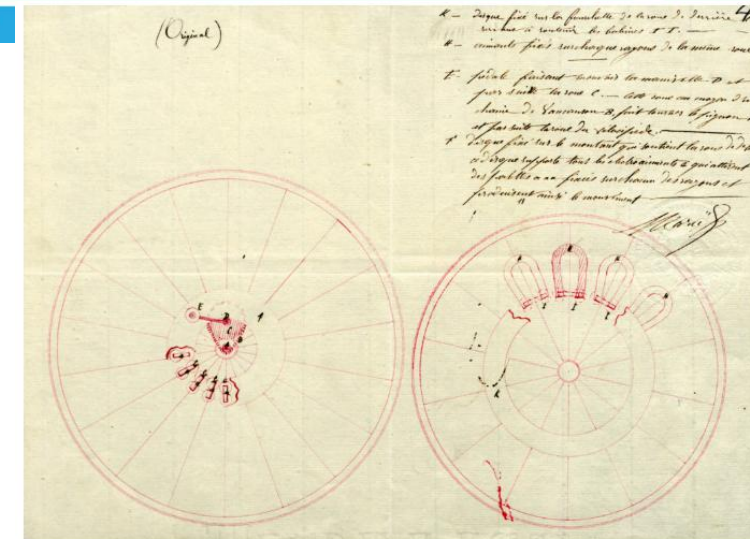


In 1898, a patent was granted to **Matthew J. Steffens** who invented a rear-wheel drive electric bicycle, which used a driving belt along the outside edge of the wheel.



Yet another year after that, **John Schnepf** invented a rear-wheel friction "roller-wheel" style drive electric bicycle.

eBicycles.com/ebike-facts-statistics



Joseph Marie's patent drawing of April 28, 1869, that details an electric motor to power a "Vélocipède magnéto-électrique." This is probably the oldest patent in the world for an engine other than steam to power a motorcycle, according to Steeve Gallizia, an archivist at INPI (Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle) in France. Many thanks to Steeve for his patent research! [Archives INPI]

History & Recent County Incidents

- What is the difference between these two?
- The line between e-bicycles and e-motorcycles is now blurred with technical specifications and pedal drive the only difference.



History & Recent County Incidents

- April 1st through end of October 2025:
 - 81 bicycles stolen in the County (not including the City of Punta Gorda)
 - 35 were e-bikes; 46 non-assisted bicycles
 - 18 of those were recovered during this time period
 - 47 stolen from residences; others from retail stores; one from a park.
- Last 6 months – several complaints from every district in the County regarding adult and juvenile e-bike riding.



History & Recent County Incidents

- June 11 to September 11, 2025:
 - Countywide bicycle and pedestrian accidents (including reporting agencies from PGPD and FHP)
 - 28 accidents which included a bicycle or pedestrian, of which 1 resulted in a fatality.
 - 15 of those accidents occurred along Tamiami Tr.; one resulted in incapacitating injury of a bicyclist; two resulted in non-incapacitating injuries – one a pedestrian, the other a bicyclist.
 - Sept. 24, 2025 – E-bike fatality (single vehicle)
 - Oct. 5, 2025 – E-bike versus motorcycle (gas powered) where a fatality occurred.



Proposed Legislation – HB243 / SB382 (2026)

- Defines E-Motorcycle as having 750W (or more) with speed greater than 28MPH; Adds to registration requirements;
- Adds a descriptor for e-bicycle and e-motorcycle on crash reports;
- Adds penalties for modification of e-bicycles (non-moving \$100 fine)
- Operators of Class 3 e-bicycles must have learner's or operator's license;
- Persons under 16yo cannot operate e-motor of 750W or more;

Proposed Ordinance Key Points

- Regulating behavior versus regulating machines
- Promoting safety and courtesy
- Using statutory guidelines for penalties
- Future-proofing for changing technologies



This e-Bike is literally an Electric Dirtbike with Pedals



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Proposed Ordinance Key Points

- Definitions Section in one place so people don't have to go looking at different ordinances to define wording – this ordinance and Florida statutes are where you will find the definitions.
- Three different sections where regulations are slightly different:
 - Sidewalk
 - Roadway
 - Greenways

Proposed Ordinance Key Points

- Ordinance section 2-4-4(c) – Operation on Public Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Intersections, and Multi-Use Pathways.
 - All e-bikes and similar are authorized to operate on those listed portions.
 - Speed – travel no more than 15mph.
 - Safety Equipment – helmet for all under 16yo (just like bicycle law)
 - Lights – shall have front white light and rear red light between dusk and dawn (just like bicycle law).
 - Yielding Right of Way – e-bike shall yield to pedestrians and give audible signal before overtaking and passing (just like bicycle law).

Proposed Ordinance Key Points

- Ordinance section 2-4-4(d) – Operation on Public Roadways and Bicycle Lanes on Roadways (if present).
 - All e-bikes and similar are authorized to operate on those listed portions.
 - Speed – travel no more than posted or statutory speed limit for that road.
 - Safety Equipment – helmet for all under 16yo (just like bicycle law)
 - Lights – shall have front white light and rear red light between dusk and dawn (just like bicycle law).
 - E-bikes and similar are regulated on roadways just like vehicles.

Proposed Ordinance Key Points

- Ordinance section 2-4-4(e) – Operation on Trails, Greenways, and Greenbelts Prohibited.
 - All e-bikes and similar (not including assisted mobility devices for disabled persons) are prohibited to operate on those listed portions.
 - Utility companies or their contractors and Law Enforcement Agencies are exempt IF performing authorized duties.
 - County may install signage to designate or prohibit operation of certain vehicles as they deem necessary (future proofing).

Proposed Ordinance Key Points

- Ordinance section 2-4-4(h-i) – Enforcement & Penalties.
 - All certified Law Enforcement Officers in the State of Florida have the authority to enforce this section.
 - Penalties:
 - If Sidewalk Operation – non-moving penalty as defined in Florida Statutes.
 - If Roadway Operation – non-moving or moving penalty as defined in statutes.
 - Nothing prohibits law enforcement from effecting an arrest, towing the violating vehicle, or any other statutory action provided in Chapters 316, 318, 320, and 322, Florida Statutes.

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- Questions?

