

PIEDMONT POST

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING THE CITIZENS OF PIEDMONT

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In August, Police Chief Shavies gave a presentation to the City Council on the issues he's seeing with e-bikes in the community. He was concerned about the lack of education around purchasing e-bikes and, in turn, the increased injury risk to younger riders if they've purchased an e-bike far more powerful than expected. What is your personal experience with e-bikes and your perspective on whether the city should regulate e-bikes in addition to what the state does?

eBikes make up two-thirds of all bicycle sales in the United States and their popularity is growing. My friends who are advocates proclaim the electric assist has allowed them to enjoy biking at an age when others typically stop.

California law classifies eBikes by their speed and motor yet designates them as bicycles and not motor vehicles. I believe the current regulatory framework for eBikes is sufficient for operator-safety — but only if laws are understood and followed. For that reason, I see this as a communication challenge as opposed to a legislative issue.

I support Chief Shavies efforts in educating Piedmont parents about the age-appropriate class of eBike for their family as well as the potential for more severe injury from the additional power eBikes feature.

When I worked at UC Berkeley, the most serious injuries involving eBikes on campus were not to operators but to pedestrians with whom the eBikes came into contact. If you have never had an eBike silently whiz by you at 25 miles per hour, it can be unsettling. I would welcome study and discussion from Piedmont Police if there are locations in town where eBike restrictions would minimize potential for pedestrian injury.