

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Ordinance amending Section 11.48.210 of the Bellevue City Code, to revise the City's regulations related to the operation of motorized foot scooters for consistency with state law; and establishing an effective date.

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Transportation Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**ACTION**

On July 22, following a Study Session discussion on the Bellevue City Code Amendment (BCCA), Council directed staff to bring back this Ordinance for final action. The Ordinance updates the City's regulations on motorized foot scooters to align more closely with state law.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 6855

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

At the July 22 Study Session, Council reviewed proposed updates to Bellevue City Code (BCC 11.48.210) regarding the definition and regulation of "motorized foot scooters"—commonly known as e-scooters—and directed staff to bring the Ordinance back for Council action. A strike-draft is included as Attachment A. Key updates include:

- Amending the definition of motorized foot scooter: Updates and clarifies the definition of e-scooters by specifying characteristics such as the presence of a floorboard, wheel size, and number of wheels, aligning with state law. Outdated references to gas-powered engines are removed.
- Expanding permitted operating areas: Authorizes e-scooter use on roadways, in bicycle lanes, on shared-use paths, along paved trails, and in city parks—except where prohibited by signage. To enhance pedestrian safety, sidewalk riding is prohibited unless no safe alternative exists, consistent with state law. A new "dismount zone" provision empowers the City Traffic Engineer to post signage restricting e-scooter riding on designated sidewalks.
- Amending the helmet requirement: Removes the legal mandate to wear a helmet, aligning Bellevue's regulations with current state and county laws, which do not require helmet use. Helmet use will continue to be encouraged as a recommended safety practice through the City's website and outreach materials.
- Extending allowable operating hours: Allows e-scooter use at all hours, including nighttime, provided the scooter is equipped with reflectors to improve visibility, in accordance with state law.
- Raising the minimum riding age: Increases the minimum riding age to 16, aligning with state law and supporting efforts to promote safer riding behavior.
- Establishing a maximum speed limit: Sets a maximum speed limit of 15 miles per hour for e-scooters, consistent with state law.

This BCCA establishes a safer, more consistent framework for the use of personally owned e-scooters in Bellevue, aligning with state law and reflecting input from the Transportation Commission and the community. It also authorizes the Transportation Director to set consistent regulations for e-scooters and e-bikes within a shared micromobility program.

Pending Council's adoption of the BCCA Ordinance, the potential timeline for a shared micromobility program, including e-scooters and e-bikes, is:

- Summer-Winter 2025: City staff will determine vendor permit requirements.
- Spring 2026: A Right of Way Use Permit may be issued by the Transportation Director.
- Post permit issuance: City staff will monitor adherence to permit conditions.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan aims to "maintain and enhance a comprehensive multimodal transportation system to serve all members of the community" (Transportation Element Goal). Policies direct the City to:

- TR-13. Evaluate and facilitate car-sharing and micromobility-sharing programs.
- TR-31. Monitor and implement as appropriate, emerging technologies that are intended to improve mobility, safety, efficiency and people-moving capacity on existing and planned transportation network facilities.
- TR-105. Support the establishment and operation of a shared micromobility service in Bellevue.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with amending BCC 11.48.210.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Ordinance amending Section 11.48.210 of the Bellevue City Code, to revise the City's regulations related to the operation of motorized foot scooters for consistency with state law; and establishing an effective date.
2. Do not adopt the Ordinance and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

A. BCCA Final Strike Draft
Proposed Ordinance No. 6855

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A