

Regulation - §1.14 Motor Vehicles and Traffic

Public Meeting

NOVA Parks
Fairfax County Park Authority

Thursday, February 7, 2019



Background – An Emerging Technology

- E-Bike use has emerged as a viable transportation and recreational option to the traditional bicycle
- Current park regulations define any vehicle with a motor (Gas or Electric) as a motor vehicle, therefore excluding their use on park trails
- E-bikes are not coming, they are here



E-Bikes Defined

Electric Power-Assist Bicycle (E-Bike) –

- A bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor (limited in size, usually 750 – 1000 watts) intended to provide supplemental power or limited full power.
- These bikes can be on-road or mountain bikes



E-Bike Basics - Facts and Information

- The sale of e-bikes has increased 90% from 2015-2017
- E-bike sales can be driven by a desire to replace car trips with a more active mode of transportation
- A typical e-bike rider is between the ages of 45-65
- E-bike motors stop assisting at a certain speed
- Challenges for e-bikes – weight, range, cost

E-Bike Benefits – Recreational and Lifestyle

- E-Bikes can reduce barriers to riding
- Recreational Benefits
 - Provides more inclusive recreation
 - People of all ages and health can ride
- Lifestyle Benefits
 - Great as a commuting option
 - E-bike users ride more often and travel farther

Steps taken to understand the issue as it relates to our parks

➤ NOVA Parks

Worked with Toole Design Group to look at:

- E-bike technology
- Federal and state law and model legislation
- Regular bikes vs e-bikes - behavior and safety
- Reviewed other trail systems policies
- Reviewed park regulations and developed potential alternatives



Steps taken to understand the issue as it relates to our parks

➤ **Fairfax County Park Authority**

Established a staff led E-bike study team

- Reviewed Jurisdictional Practices
- Conducted Stakeholder Outreach
- Considered Potential Impacts
- Consulted with County Attorney
- Developed Recommendations



User Behavior and Safety

- E-bike users exhibit nearly identical behavior as regular bike users
- E-bike speeds were observed to be lower than standard bike speeds on shared trails
- Crash rates tend to be similar to regular bikes
- Most trail users are unaware of the presence of e-bikes when asked



State Law



Park
Regulations



Guidelines



Virginia Law – E-Bikes

	Current Virginia Law
➤ Maximum Speed	25 mph
➤ Maximum Power	1000 watts
➤ Regulated as Bicycles	Yes
➤ Insurance, Licensing and Registration Requirements	None
➤ Labelling/Identification	None
➤ Restrictions on Tampering and/or Modifications	No
➤ Consumer Product Safety Commission Compliance	No
➤ Required Motor Disengagement	No
➤ Allowed on Shared Paths	Yes
➤ Minimum Operator Age	14
➤ Helmet Requirements	No
➤ Speedometer Requirements	No

Park Authorities Act

Virginia Code §15.2-5700, et seq.

- Performing essential government functions providing for the public health and welfare
- Powers include acquisition, purchase, leasing, management and maintenance of parks. **Empowered to regulate uses of all land and facilities under control of the authority**
- **Adopt rules and regulations, not in conflict with the laws of the Commonwealth**, concerning the use of properties under its control as will tend to the protection of such property and the public thereon

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Current Regulation

§1.14 Motor Vehicles and Traffic

(3) Motor-assisted bicycles (commonly referred to as “mopeds”) are permitted only in areas where motor vehicles are permitted.

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Proposed Regulation

§1.14 Motor Vehicles and Traffic

(3) ~~Motor-assisted bicycles (commonly referred to as “mopeds”)~~ Mopeds are permitted only in areas where motor vehicles are permitted.

ADDED

E. E-Bikes. Electric power-assisted bicycles (e-bikes) equipped with pedals that allow propulsion by human power are considered bicycles and non-motorized vehicles for the purpose of these regulations, and are allowed in the same places that traditional, pedal-powered only bicycles are allowed.

Guidelines applicable to Electric power-assisted bicycles are as follows:

What to Ride: For the purpose of these guidelines, NOVA Parks will define e-bikes as: An "Electric power-assisted bicycle" (e-bike) means **a wheeled vehicle equipped with (i) pedals that allow propulsion by human power and ii) an electric motor with an input of no more than 750 watts that reduces the pedal effort required of the rider.** This applies to both road and mountain style (e/MTB) e-bikes. They are not, and do not function like a wheelchair, motorized bicycle, moped, scooter, motorcycle, or ATV.

Where to ride: To protect NOVA Parks' valuable environmental and cultural resources, e-bike riders are strongly encouraged to operate only in areas where traditional (human pedal powered only) bicycles are allowed. Please do not disturb wildlife, livestock, or domesticated animals on park property.

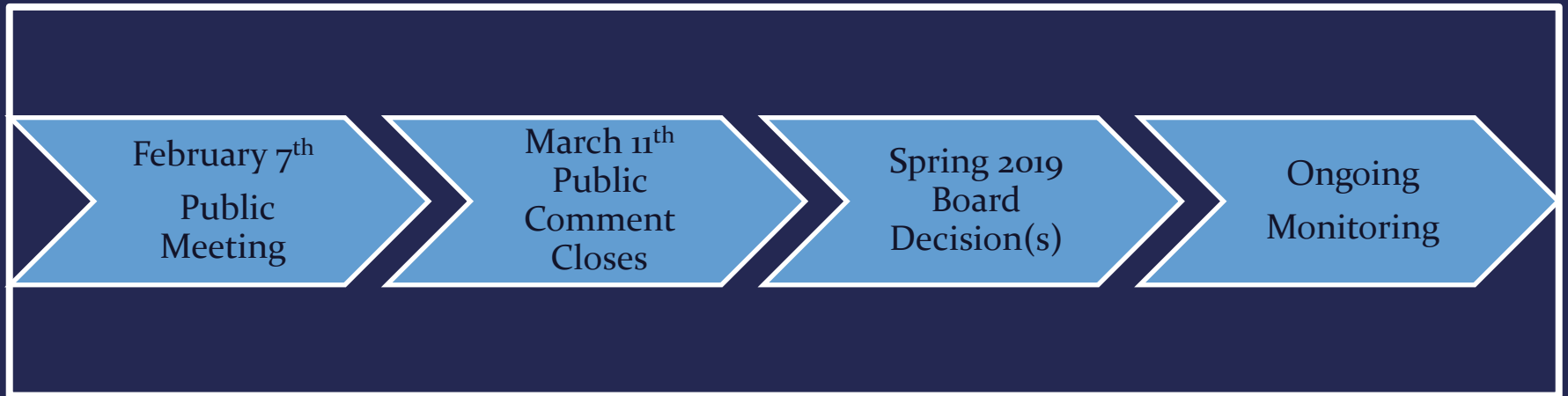
Please ride responsibly: E-bike riders are expected to follow the same regulations and rules regarding access to the parks as other visitors. Please observe the established hours of operation and any posted signage.

Riders assume responsibility for the safe and respectful operation of their e-bike. It is expected that all bicycle riders yield to pedestrians and equestrians. **In consideration of trail conditions and the safety of others, please maintain speeds under 20 miles per hour.**

Reporting a problem: If you see an e-bike being operated in an unsafe or reckless manner, please call local police or park staff. (In case of emergency, call 9-1-1).

For general questions and inquiries about e-bikes in the parks, please contact NOVA Parks at feedback@nvrpa.org

Next Steps



For More Information

➤ NOVA Parks

<https://www.novaparks.com/about/press-releases-financials>

➤ Fairfax County Park Authority

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-news/2019/z-iro03>

➤ Comments or Questions - Contact Us:

NOVAParks@nvrpa.org

or

Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

