

2024-03-19 CC AGENDA
PUBLIC COMMUNICATION - MISC.- E-BIKE ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

From: jackieboy15@yahoo.com <jackieboy15@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, March 8, 2024 11:39 AM
To: ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS <ALLELECTEDOFFICIALS@elsegundo.org>
Subject: E-Bike Enforcement Issues

Hello City Council,

This is Jack Baker. I was hoping to speak the other night during public comment, but there seemed to be big line of people looking to speak on The Plunge, so I had to run out to a previous commitment.

The other reason I'm coming to you is in regards to the new effort into e-bike enforcement from El Segundo PD. I understand that the emergence of e-bikes has created some issues for residents in all the South Bay cities and that some things need to be put in place so there's some order on the streets. Adults, kids and anyone riding a bicycle are active participants in this problem though, so it's not just an issue for teenagers as everyone is making it out to be. In fact, each time ESPD posts about e-bikes on their social media, it seems to bring a lot of hate towards the kids. I see adults constantly rolling through Stop signs on their e-bikes, scooters & golf carts, so it's not just the kids who are the problem. This recent push to restrict e-bikes though has been unfairly burdened onto the kids of this town.

Recently my 13 year old son and 4 of his friends received tickets for going the wrong way down a One Way Street. This is that small stretch of street on Richmond St in front of Richmond St School and behind the library that I imagine is a One Way solely for the purpose of school drop-offs/pick ups. It's essentially a parking lot. This ticket was given out at 5pm on a Wednesday when there's nobody on that street. No warnings were given, no discretion was used by the officer and no education was given, just tickets. The problem with this is that 13 year old kids do not have drivers licenses and do not know all or any of the traffic laws. Currently there is no ordinance or law that says a 13 year old kid *must* have a license to ride an e-bike, so there's no expectation for them to know all the rules of the road. Just like there's no mandate for cyclists to take traffic courses, but we have to deal with them riding 3 across the road slower than the traffic. Sure, there are courses offered up by El Segundo PD, but they're not mandatory, so again there's no expectation that teenagers without a license should know all the rules of the road. I'm 44 years old and I was not aware that you couldn't pedal a bicycle down a one way street. As parents, sure we're expected to educate our children about bike safety and to be safe on the roads and we do our best, but how can we be giving out traffic tickets to someone who's never taken any traffic or driving courses? In fact, this whole incident began when the kids pulled out of the 99 cent store on Richmond St. The officer who issued the tickets followed them on Richmond St for 3 blocks, where the kids all stopped at 3 different STOP signs on Richmond St until they reached Mariposa where the One Way street begins. It was only then when they went down the One Way did the officer pull them over. So this officer observed these kids actually doing the right thing, which was stopping at Stop signs for 3 blocks before he pulled them over. So I ask you the council and the police department, is this what we're doing? Is this the policy that's going to solve our e-bike problems? Following kids around town UNTIL they make a mistake? Is this the precedent we want to set? Are we also giving adults the same treatment on their bikes and golf carts? I know several of you drive golf carts, would you want a cop following you to make sure you stop at all Stop signs and have your seat belts on all the time? I don't think so.

I believe the city just accepted funding to be a part of the South Bay Local Travel Network which encourages people to use electric vehicles to get around town. But we're now going to give out tickets to kids on their electric vehicles getting around town because some habitual complainers are complaining again? That doesn't seem to add up. I wonder where this is going to end if we start giving out tickets to kids. Are we going to ticket everyone who rolls through a Stop sign on July 4th on their beach cruisers on the way to a block party? Are we going to give out tickets to people riding in their golf carts with kids who probably should be in car seats and also have seatbelts on? Are we going to give out tickets to 6 year old kids with training wheels riding on the sidewalk cause "technically" bikes aren't supposed to be on sidewalks? It all sounds ridiculous because it is and that's not the kind of town we are. Those conveniences are what makes our town great. Nobody wants to be giving out or getting tickets for trying to enjoy themselves and making life more convenient for them. And the police department shouldn't be getting pressured to do so. I reached out to this council months ago about my wife and son both being hit by cars at the intersection of Maple & Main and what's been done about that? Have we stepped up enforcement there? I think a speeding car going through a 4 way Stop is more dangerous than a kid on a bike who's merely inconveniencing people (complainers), but I've seen absolutely nothing change about that intersection.

I get it, e-bikes and the kids running wild on them & popping wheelies through intersections has become an issue and we don't want to see anyone get hurt. The truth is, it's a small number of kids who are the problem. The kids know who they are, the parents know who they are and I'm sure the cops know who they are, but it's unfair to target *all* of the kids, without so much as a warning given. But the cart can't come before the horse here. If you're going to give out tickets to kids for *traffic* violations, you need to know that they know *traffic* laws. 13 year old kids don't. So maybe make kids of a certain age or kids that ride certain types of e-bikes get a license or certification to ride in our town. Then there will be no confusion about what they can or can't do and we'll actually be sure, as a town, that the kids are educated to be out on the roads co-existing with cars. But giving 13 year old kids traffic tickets that us parents need to now go handle in the Inglewood Courthouse is not the solution we should be heading towards. In speaking to an officer from ESPD, he's talking about the kids maybe being able to take traffic school if the tickets aren't thrown out. Traffic School! For a 13 year old kid who's never taken any traffic courses! It's absurd to think this is the solution we've come to and ESPD being pressured to do so is disappointing. We have much more important things for our police to be doing than giving out e-bike tickets and I know they agree with that. In fact, I was told by a Lieutenant that the officer who gave these kids the tickets recently helped get a few guns off the streets. As a resident, I'd much rather have him doing that than wasting his time giving out tickets to kids on their bikes.

So I urge you to discuss a better solution than giving out tickets to kids that they have to handle in traffic school. So that means if a kid gets several tickets on his bike, that it could possibly affect his driving record *before* he even gets his drivers license. I really hope that's not where we're heading.

Thanks for your time,
Jack Baker