ORDINANCE 25-2026

AN ORDINANCE CREATING ARTICLE VII WITHIN CHAPTER 25 OF THE OWENSBORO MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO ELECTRIC BICYCLES, SCOOTERS AND SIMILAR VEHICLES.

WHEREAS, there has been a noticeable increase in the use of electric bicycles, scooters and similar vehicles on the streets and sidewalks of the City of Owensboro; and

WHEREAS, the current Code of Municipal Ordinances does not address the use of electric bicycles, scooters and similar vehicles, and there is a need to properly regulate their use in order to ensure the safety of pedestrians and vehicle drivers; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners desires to create a new article in chapter 25 of the Owensboro Municipal Code to address the use of electric bicycles, scooters and similar vehicles on streets, sidewalks, and in the City's parks, and provide penalties for violations of the ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That Chapter 25, Article VII of the Owensboro Municipal Code be, and the same is hereby adopted, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 25 – TRAFFIC

Article VII. – IN GENERAL

Sec. 25-231. – Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings:

(a) *Electric Bicycle.* A bicycle equipped with operable pedals and an electric motor that provides assistance to the rider.

(b) *Class 1 Electric Bicycle.* An electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of twenty (20) miles per hour.

(c) *Class 2 Electric Bicycle.* An electric bicycle that may be powered solely by the motor and is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of twenty (20) miles per hour.

(d) *Class 3 Electric Bicycle.* An electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of twenty-eight (28) miles per hour.

(e) *Electric Scooter.* A device weighing less than one hundred (100) pounds, equipped with handlebars, a floorboard or platform designed to be stood upon, and powered by an electric motor and human power, which is designed to transport one person.

(f) *Electric Mobility Vehicle.* Any electric or electric assisted vehicle, including electric bicycles and electric scooters, designed to be ridden by sitting or standing, regardless of how many wheels are in contact with the ground, that could not otherwise be defined as a moped, motorcycle, or motor vehicle.

Sec. 25-232. – Use on Streets or Roadways.

(a) No one under the age of fifteen (15) may operate an electric bicycle, electric scooter or other electric mobility vehicle on streets or roadways located within the City of Owensboro.

(b) All traffic rules contained in Kentucky Revised Statutes and Chapter 25 of the Owensboro Municipal Code apply to riders of electric bicycles, electric scooters, and other electric mobility vehicles.

(c) Every person operating an electric bicycle, electric scooter or other electric mobility device upon a street or roadway shall ride as near to the right-hand side as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction.

(d) Where there are two (2) or more persons operating electric bicycles, electric scooters or other electric mobility devices on a roadway or bike path, they shall ride single file.

(e) Weaving through traffic is prohibited.

Sec. 25-233. – Use on Sidewalks.

(a) Anyone age (12) or younger can operate a Class 1 electric bicycle or electric scooter on sidewalks.

(b) No one can operate a Class 1 electric bicycle or electric scooter in excess of fifteen (15) miles per hour.

(c) The rider shall yield the right-of-way to pedestrians using the sidewalk. When approaching a pedestrian on the sidewalk, the rider shall reduce his or her speed to that rate which is no greater than necessary to continue operation without dismounting, and shall not be increased until the pedestrian has been passed.

(d) No Class 2 or Class 3 electric bicycles may be operated on sidewalks.

(e) No one thirteen (13) years of age or older may operate an electric bicycle, electric scooter or other electric mobility vehicle on sidewalks; provided, however, an individual with significant mobility limitations may operate an electric mobility vehicle on sidewalks, subject to the fifteen (15) mile per hour speed limit.

Sec. 25-234. – Use in Parks.

(a) Subject to the exception in paragraph (b) below, electric bicycles, electric scooters and other electric mobility vehicles are not allowed in city parks.

(b) Class 1 electric bicycles may be operated on the Greenbelt and on Rudy Mine Trails, subject to a fifteen (15) mile per hour speed limit.

Sec. 25-235. – General Provisions.

(a) Anyone under eighteen (18) years of age must wear a helmet to operate an electric bicycle, electric scooter, or other electric mobility vehicles.

(b) All electric bicycles, electric scooters, and other electric mobility vehicles must be equipped with front and rear lights if they are operated at night or when visibility is limited, in accordance with the standards set forth in KRS 189.030.

(c) All local retailers of electric bicycles, electric scooters, and other electric mobility vehicles shall provide purchasers with a copy of this ordinance at time of sale.

Sec. 25-236. – Penalties.

(a) Any person violating any provision of this article may be punished as follows:
   (1) Written warning for a first violation;
   (2) Fine of twenty-five dollars ($25.00) for a second violation; and
   (3) Fine of up to one hundred dollars ($100.00) for a third or subsequent offense, and impounding of the electric bicycle, electric scooter, or other electric mobility vehicle for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days.

(b) Parents or guardians of any child who has violated any provision of this article are deemed responsible for any fines imposed.

INTRODUCED AND PUBLICLY READ ON FIRST READING, this 3rd day of November, 2026.

PUBLICLY READ AND APPROVED ON SECOND READING, this the 17th day of November, 2026.

_____
Thomas H. Watson, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____

Beth Davis, City Clerk