



MEMO

TO: City Council

FROM: Mark Goodman, Chief of Police

DATE: March 26, 2026

RE: Update - Proposed Amendments to City Code – Sidewalk Use and Pedestrian Safety

SUMMARY

The City Council is considering proposed amendments to the City Code related to the operation of mobility devices, including bicycles, electric bicycles, scooters and similar devices. These amendments are intended to enhance public safety, provide clear operational expectations, and address the increasing presence of these devices within the community.

At the March 3, 2026, City Council meeting, staff presented the proposed amendments. During that discussion, Council requested the addition of a requirement that juveniles wear helmets while operating applicable devices. That provision has since been incorporated into the ordinance language and reviewed by the City Attorney. Additionally, the city conducted public outreach to gather community input, and this report provides a summary and analysis of that feedback.

BACKGROUND

The use of mobility devices has increased in recent years, both nationally and within the City of Maricopa. These devices provide convenient and accessible transportation options but also introduce new considerations related to roadway safety, pedestrian interactions, and rider behavior. The proposed amendments are designed to promote safe and responsible operation, reduce conflicts between riders, pedestrians, and motorists, and establish enforceable standards that can be applied consistently.

The amendments are also intended to proactively address safety risks associated with increased usage and evolving transportation trends within the community. During the March 3, 2026, Council meeting, staff presented the proposed ordinance and received direction from Council to incorporate a juvenile helmet requirement. That provision has been added to the proposed code and reviewed by the City Attorney for legal sufficiency.

Public feedback regarding the proposed amendments to city code was solicited and received by city staff. While the feedback was not collected through a formal survey instrument, a qualitative review of the submitted comments provides a reasonable indication of overall sentiment. Based on that review, staff estimates that approximately two-thirds of respondents were supportive or conditionally supportive of allowing mobility devices to operate on sidewalks, while roughly one-third expressed concerns or opposition.

Support was frequently tied to the perception that riding in the roadway, particularly along higher-speed arterial corridors, poses a greater safety risk, and that sidewalk use, when conducted in a careful and controlled manner, offers a safer alternative. Conversely, the concerns raised were largely centered on pedestrian safety, including the potential for conflicts related to speed, proximity, and unpredictability, as well as the preservation of sidewalks as pedestrian-priority spaces.

Many comments recognized the value of helmets in reducing the risk of serious injury. At the same time, a portion of the feedback raised concerns focused less on the safety objective itself and more on the implementation of the helmet requirement. These concerns centered on questions of enforceability, consistency in application, practicality of compliance, and whether helmet use should remain a matter of parental responsibility rather than a legal mandate.

Several respondents emphasized the importance of education and outreach as a primary tool for achieving compliance. Importantly, the feedback did not reflect significant opposition to mobility devices themselves, but rather a desire to ensure that their operation of these devices is governed by clear, enforceable standards that prioritize pedestrian safety.

From an operational perspective, the proposed amendments provide clearer expectations for both the public and law enforcement, which supports consistent application and improved compliance over time. The addition of the juvenile helmet requirement aligns with widely accepted injury-prevention practices and reflects a proactive approach to reducing the likelihood and severity of head injuries among younger riders.

As with other safety-focused regulations, staff anticipates that implementation would emphasize education, voluntary compliance, and proportional enforcement, particularly during the initial rollout period.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no significant fiscal impact associated with the proposed amendments. Implementation and enforcement will be managed within existing departmental resources.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council approve the proposed amendments to the City Code related to mobility devices, including the requirement that juveniles wear helmets while operating applicable devices.