

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-001**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MASTER ORDINANCE  
TO PERMIT THE USE OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES  
AND TO ESTABLISH A BICYCLE SPEED LIMIT**

November 19, 2021

THIS ORDINANCE is adopted with reference to the following facts and circumstances which are found and declared by the Board of Directors:

1. The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (“District”) has observed that the use of bicycles as a means of transportation for commuters and recreational visitors is increasing and a significant share of this growth is attributable to the rising popularity of electric bicycles. Steady advances in energy storage and propulsion systems technologies have made lighter, speedier, longer range and more affordable electric bicycles available to a broader market that are being used for transportation and recreation in ways that exceed the capabilities of traditional bicycles.

2. Section 312.5 of the California Vehicle Code, added by AB 1096 (2015), defines an electric bicycle as a bicycle that is "equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts." The Code further sets out three classifications of electric bicycles:

(a) “Class 1” or “low-speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle,” which is a bicycle with an electric motor that only provides assistance when the rider is pedaling at a speed of less than 20 miles per hour;

(b) “Class 2” or “low-speed throttle-assisted electric bicycle,” which is a bicycle with an electric motor that does not require the rider to pedal and which ceases to provide assistance once the bicycle reaches 20 miles per hour; and

(c) “Class 3” or “speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle,” which is a bicycle with an electric motor, equipped with a speedometer, that only provides assistance when the rider is pedaling at a speed of less than 28 miles per hour.

A Class 3 electric bicycle generally may not be operated on a bicycle path or trail, bikeway, or hiking or recreational trail, unless permitted by the public agency having jurisdiction over the path or trail.

3. As a multi-modal transportation agency, the District desires to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation while maintaining a sharp focus on its overarching responsibility to ensure maximum safety for all persons who use the Golden Gate Bridge (“Bridge”).

4. In support of these goals, the District engaged a consultant to review the District's bicycle safety policies, conduct a speed study of bicycles on the Bridge, and analyze current conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians at the Bridge. The primary product of this review is the October 2020, *Bicycle Safety Study for the Golden Gate Bridge* (“Study”), which the Building & Operating Committee reviewed at its meeting of February 25, 2021.

5. The Study recommends that the District establish a speed limit of 15 miles per hour for bicycles on the Bridge sidewalks. This speed limit is consistent with the 15 mph bicycle speed limit on other shared use pathways adjacent to the Bridge, and around the Bay Area as well as nationally, and is also consistent with the 85th percentile bicycle speeds observed in the Study. The Study recommends that the speed limit be reduced to 5 mph around the Bridge's towers. At all times the bicyclists should travel at speeds that are safe for the conditions of the sidewalk. The Study further recommends that the bicycle speed limit be posted at appropriate locations on the Bridge, and stenciled on the Bridge sidewalks.

6. The Study recommends that the District continue to place signage and pavement markings at appropriate intervals to delineate space on the sidewalks for pedestrians and for bicyclists, taking into account that the ten-foot sidewalk width is not sufficiently wide to allow a complete separation of pedestrians and bicyclists, and that the area around the Bridge towers is a special zone of mixed, extremely slow speed bicyclist travel with limited sight distance.

7. The Study recommends that the District continue to maintain and upgrade its radar speed signs to inform bicyclists and record their speed of travel to monitor traffic patterns and safety conditions on the Bridge sidewalks.

8. The Study recommends that the District permit the use of Classes 1, 2, 3 electric bicycles on the Bridge's sidewalks.

9. Currently, the District prohibits roller or inline skates, skateboards, and scooters on the Bridge sidewalks. The Study recommends that these prohibitions continue in effect.

10. On September 23, 2021, as part of a comprehensive public outreach program to engage and receive public feedback on the Study, the District's Board of Directors ("Board") authorized the setting of a public hearing (Hearing) to receive public comment regarding the recommended actions included in the Study. The Hearing was set for Monday, October 18, 2021 at 10:00 am via audioconference. Outreach regarding the Study's findings and recommendations began following the Board's authorization to set a Hearing and continued through early October. Outreach activities included the following: 1) a virtual open house (Open House) held from September 24, 2021 through October 10, 2021, 2) a live virtual town hall (Town Hall) was held on October 6, 2021 to present the findings and recommendations of the Study and to solicit public comment on the recommendations, 3) a press release announcing the Hearing was posted on the District's web site on October 12, 2021 and sent to local media on October 13, 2021, 4) posting signs on the Bridge advertising the Open House, Town Hall, and Hearing, and 5) an email announcing the Hearing was sent to customers and community-based organizations, and posted on Twitter on October 13, 2021. Public comments regarding the Study's findings and recommendations were received at the Open House, Town Hall, Hearing, by email to the District, and by written comments to the District Secretary.

11. Legal notices of the Hearing were published to the District's website on September 28, 2021; in *La Voz*, in English and Spanish, on September 27, 2021; in the *Marin Independent Journal* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* on September 28, 2021 and October 11, 2021; and, in the *Press Democrat* on October 2, 2021 and October 11, 2021. A public hearing was held on October 18, 2021 to formally receive public comment on the Study's recommendations. As of October 18, 2021, there were 377 written comments received by the District. Of these, 37 commenters explicitly agreed with the Study's recommendations and 9 commenters explicitly disagreed with the Study's recommendations. Other commenters supported some recommendations, but not others. Additionally, 258 participants in the Open House provided feedback on a Likert-type scale which

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ranked their agreement with the following statement: “The [Study] recommendations will make the Golden Gate Bridge safer for cyclists and pedestrians.” Of the 258 responses, 10% (26) rated 5 (Strongly Agree), 18% (46) rated 4, 29% (74) rated 3, 22% (57) rated 2, and 21% (55) rated 1 (Strongly Disagree).

12. Staff reviewed and categorized all comments, and prepared written responses to questions received during the Town Hall, all of which are included as an attachment to the staff report for the November 18, 2021, Building and Operating Committee meeting.

13. The bike paths on the west and east Bridge sidewalks are part of recognized trails in the State of California, including the California Coastal Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The Bridge sidewalks provide access to or, and are used for recreational purposes, including hiking, bicycle riding and providing access to scenic look out points and recreational activities. The Bridge sidewalks function as bicycle paths and recreational trails for the purposes of Government Code section 831.4(b) and, as such, the District is entitled to absolutetrail immunity for accidents occurring on them.

14. ~~Due to the Bridge’s physical constraints and unique security needs, the District’s in-house and retained engineers determined that the current design is the only reasonable alternative for the Bridge’s sidewalks.~~ The District Engineer, the Building and Operations Committee, and the Board reasonably adopted and/or approved the design and configuration of the Bridge sidewalks before their construction or improvement and use. Substantial evidence supports such reasonable adoption and/or approval, therefore, the Board’s determination to approve the design and the District is entitled to design immunity under section 830.6 of the California Government Code.

15. Staff recommends that the Board revise the District's Master Ordinance to allow Classes 1, 2, and 3 electric bicycles, as defined in the California Vehicle Code, on the Bridge's sidewalks and approaches. Staff recommends that the Board adopt a maximum speed of fifteen miles per hour for all bicycles and a five mile per hour maximum speed for all bicycles when on blind turns near the Bridge's towers, subject to the requirement that, under all circumstances, bicycles shall be operated at a speed no greater than what is reasonable for safe operation, and in a manner that does not endanger the safety of others. Staff further recommends that the Board revise the District's

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Master Ordinance to clarify that, unless specifically permitted under the Master Ordinance, other pedestrian-type rolling conveyances are not permitted on the Bridge sidewalks.

16. Staff has begun implementing a number of proposals that were offered during the public outreach process. Additionally, many participants in the process expressed interest in a District bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee to ensure continued and ongoing engagement with bicycle and pedestrian users of the Bridge and the District's Bus and Ferry systems. Staff recommends that the Board approve the establishment of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee as further described herein.

17. On November 18, 2021 a meeting of the Building and Operating Committee was held to consider staff's recommendation to permit the use of Classes 1, 2, and 3 electric bicycles on the Bridge's sidewalks, to establish the forgoing bicycle speed limits, to clarify the list of wheeled devices which are prohibited on the Bridge's sidewalks, and to approve the establishment of a District Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Following presentation of the staff report, the Building and Operating Committee recommended the proposed revisions to the District's Master Ordinance and the establishment of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee by a vote of [REDACTED].

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section II, "Golden Gate Bridge and Approaches," Subsection G.5, "Bicycles," of the Master Ordinance is replaced in its entirety with the following:

5. BICYCLES. Bicycle traffic shall be permitted every day of the week, twenty-four (24) hours a day, on the following basis:

- a. On the east sidewalk: (1) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, from the commencement of Daylight Hours to 3:30 p.m.; and, (2) every day of the week during non-Daylight Hours on the condition that bicyclists comply with procedures implemented by the District that shall include notification to and authorization from the District's Sergeant's Office prior to entering and exiting the east sidewalk through the remote controlled access gate. Notwithstanding

the foregoing, the General Manager, or his or her designee, may permit bicycle traffic on the east sidewalk, at any time, in response to severe weather conditions or other emergencies.

- b. On the west sidewalk: (1) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, from 3:30 p.m. through the end of Daylight Hours; and, (2) Saturdays, Sundays and holidays during Daylight Hours.
- c. For purposes of this Section II.G.5, the term "Daylight Hours" shall mean at a minimum from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during periods with the shortest days and at a maximum from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. during periods with the longest days, which hours will be determined within this range by the General Manager taking into account seasonal variations.
- d. Crossing from one sidewalk to another or walking or riding a bicycle on the roadway of the Bridge or approaches is prohibited, except that bicycle riding is permitted on the roadway of Alexander Avenue.
- e. At all entrances to Bridge sidewalks conspicuous signs shall be posted cautioning bicyclists that wind may be hazardous and advising bicyclists that they should walk their bicycles across the Bridge.
- f. For purposes of this Section II.G.5, the term "Bicycles" includes class 1, 2, and 3 electric bicycles as defined in Section 312.5 of the California Vehicle Code.
- g. The speed of a bicycle on the Bridge's sidewalks and approaches shall not exceed fifteen (15) miles per hour. In addition, the speed of a bicycle shall not exceed five (5) miles per hour while navigating the blind turns adjacent to the Bridge's towers. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no event may a bicycle be operated at a speed that is greater than what is reasonable for safe operation in the existing conditions, nor in a manner that would endanger the safety of others. Notwithstanding Section V, "Violations," a violation of the bicycle speed limits herein provided is a violation of California Vehicle Code Section 22405 and individuals violating such bicycle speed limits will be subject to all applicable sanctions and penalties.

Section 2. Section II, “Golden Gate Bridge and Approaches,” Subsection G.12, “Motor-Driven Cycles on Sidewalks,” of the Master Ordinance is replaced in its entirety with the following:

12. MOTOR-DRIVEN CYCLES AND OTHER DEVICES ON SIDEWALKS.

- a. Except as provided in Subparagraphs (b) and (c) below, no motor-driven cycles or motorized bicycles shall be operated on Bridge sidewalks. Additionally, no person shall use or ride on the Bridge sidewalks other wheeled conveyances, which are defined as forms of pedestrian transportation including, but not limited to, motorized boards, electrical personal assisted mobility devices, and motorized scooters as defined in California Vehicle Code sections 313, 313.5, and 407.5(a)(b), respectively, and any other pedestrian-type wheeled conveyances not expressly permitted by this Master Ordinance.
- b. The prohibition in Subparagraph (a) above does not apply to maintenance and emergency equipment of District forces and the California Highway Patrol, nor to equipment used by construction contractors under contract to the District using equipment approved by the District, nor to special equipment used by persons with disabilities such as electrically powered wheelchairs.
- c. Motorized bicycles or motor-driven cycles may use Bridge sidewalks in accordance with other provisions of this Master Ordinance pertaining to bicycles, provided the engines or motors are not in operation and the motor-driven cycle or motorized bicycle is propelled by human power only.

As used herein, motor-driven cycles and motorized bicycles shall have the meaning set forth in Sections 405 and 406, respectively, of the California Vehicle Code.

Section 3. The Board of Directors hereby approves the establishment of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee consisting of interested representatives of the bicyclist and pedestrian communities and District Staff for the purpose of making recommendations concerning bicycle and pedestrian safety on the Golden Gate Bridge and related matters concerning District

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facilities and services. The proceedings of said Committee shall be reported to the Board of Directors.

Section 4. The effective date of this Ordinance shall be the first day of January 2022.

Section 5. If any provision of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any other provisions or applications of the Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are severable.

ADOPTED this 19th day of November, 2021, by the following vote of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District Board of Directors:

**AYES:**

**NOES:**

**ABSENT:**

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**Barbara L. Pahre**  
**President, Board of Directors**

**ATTEST:**

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**Amorette M. Ko-Wong**  
**Secretary of the District**