

The Bike Problem

The number one complaint at the center of every town hall and police precinct meeting between citizens and elected officials lately is the problem of the out-of-control bicycles and e-bikes, and now scooters and electric skateboards.

The last few administrations have been vigorously promoting bicycles, and then e-bikes; and now pedestrians feel constantly threatened by out-of-control cyclists who terrorize them by constantly breaking the laws designed to protect us all.

Cyclists and e-bikers often:

- 1) Ride the wrong way in the streets
- 2) Ride on sidewalks
- 3) Ignore the rules of the road: some even text while riding
- 4) Break the speed limit and have caused way too many accidents: Year-to-date, 2022, bicycles have caused 432 accidents in NYC. There were 305 reported crashes between bicycles and pedestrians, with 270 pedestrians injured and at least one fatality. *

The city has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on bike infrastructure, but not one penny for education or enforcement programs.

New York State law states that:

- 1) All bikes and wheeled objects are vehicles.
- 2) They must obey the same laws as cars.
- 3) It is illegal for adults to ride anything on the sidewalk.
- 4) All vehicles must travel in the direction of traffic, and bikes and e-bikes must travel in that one direction only...bikes lanes are one way.
- 5) All bikes must follow stoplights and obey all traffic signals.
- 6) Pedestrians *always* have the right of way.

There is absolutely no reason why all cyclists can't obey these laws.

E-bikes are not bicycles, but motorcycles that can break the speed limits, so they should all be registered and licensed. Since even undocumented people are eligible to get a New York driver's license, this should add a layer of protection to all delivery people.

Citibike, as administered by Lyft, the car share people, has added e-bikes to their rolling stock. This means a person who has never even ridden a bike before, now has access to, virtually, a motorcycle. Citibike users have become a leading menace to pedestrians everywhere. They have no idea what our bike laws are, and Citibike has made no meaningful effort to inform them. There is a small notice about bike laws in the basket up front, but since the first thing riders do is put something in that basket, they rarely see the notice. Why can't Lyft and Citibike print out the bike laws and post them at every rental station where they now have advertisements? Why can't they ask every user to sign a document attesting that they have read and understand these reasonable regulations?

It's time for a change!

*Reported incidents courtesy of the NYC Police Department.

We are asking you and all our elected officials to act accordingly to make the city a safer place for *EVERYBODY*.

The city speed limit is 25MPH, but these bikes can easily reach speeds of 35MPH, and can reach over 40MPH going downhill. Some of these bikes weigh over 45-50 pounds, making them lethal. Solution? Register all these bikes, and make sure everyone who rides one has a legitimate license, and is thus educated about the laws:

- No riding on sidewalks,
- No texting while riding,
- No riding against the traffic
- No sidesaddles.

There is NO reason this can't be done, and this, in our opinion, will solve the great majority of complaints about bikes in the city.

For starters, the Department of Transportation can be proactive and install signage alongside parking regulation signs that say: "It is illegal for bikes and e-bikes to ride on sidewalks!"

Another simple measure that would help is to start displaying the rules of the road for all cyclists and e-bikers on every kiosk the city awarded to Google in a non-compete contract. They should be showing this message in different languages for the foreseeable future. Why can't the city do that?

We must help the DOT enforce *existing* bike laws.

They should be given the proper tools to get the job done.

The DOT briefly offered bike corrals, but they had to be backed up and maintained by local landlords, an unnecessary hardship to small owners.

The city should provide bike corrals and get all these bikes off the sidewalks...after all that was one of their selling points; that 8 bikes could take the parking space of one car.

How can we make this happen?

First, we should not spend one more penny on new bike lanes and infrastructure until we have a well thought out program to enforce the bike laws.

Madame Governor, Mr. Mayor, it is time that we do something about this ever-growing problem. We are entitled to peace of mind when walking the sidewalks and crossing the streets. And we are ready to help.

How can we help?