



MEDWAY POLICE DEPARTMENT

315 Village Street

Medway, MA 02053

Phone (508) 533-3212 | Fax (508) 533-3216

www.townofmedway.org/police-department



STATEMENT FROM CHIEF OF POLICE WILLIAM KINGSBURY REGARDING MICROMOBILITY DEVICES

In response to concerns raised by members of my staff several weeks ago, I tasked our Operations Commander and School Resource Officer (SRO) Supervisor with researching the safety of micromobility devices and providing information on the laws, regulations, and known safety concerns associated with these devices. This is not the first time we have examined this issue.

Over the past several years, including as recently as this week, Medway Police officers have stopped riders to provide safety education and, in some cases, have impounded devices until we could meet with parents to discuss our concerns. We have also offered e-bike safety training programs, although attendance has been limited.

Our research has consistently shown that the laws governing micromobility devices are neither comprehensive nor, in some cases, consistent. When it comes to e-bikes in particular, enforcement can be difficult, and there are legitimate concerns regarding how certain laws can be applied safely and effectively. In some situations, strict enforcement may actually create additional safety risks for riders, motorists, and officers.

Members of the Medway Select Board have asked me to focus on this issue and present both the challenges and potential solutions for the Board's consideration in its role as the Town's policy-making body. Our goal is not to simply post information that may be confusing or incomplete. Instead, we want to develop a thoughtful, practical approach that addresses the problem in a meaningful way.

Over the coming weeks, residents can expect more focused information regarding micromobility device safety, as well as the development of a comprehensive plan through the collaborative efforts of the Police Department, the Select Board, other Town officials, and, hopefully, the broader community. Parents whose children own and operate these devices, as well as adults who use them, will play an important role in that process.

While it is easy to identify visible safety concerns, we must recognize that guidance from various sources often conflicts with existing state law and other recommendations. We must also acknowledge that many people operate these devices responsibly and safely, and that not every crash involving a micromobility device is the rider's fault.

Fortunately, Medway has experienced relatively few crashes involving micromobility devices. However, statewide reporting systems remain limited, making it difficult to fully understand the causes and contributing factors behind many of these incidents. In

Medway, we have investigated one crash involving a child operating a micromobility device in a crosswalk. We have also investigated crashes involving traditional pedal bicycles in which the fault lay with the motor vehicle operator rather than the cyclist.

Recognizing the growing popularity of these devices and the challenges associated with regulating them, Massachusetts established a commission to study the issue. The commission has identified numerous concerns and issued recommendations, and Governor Healey has filed legislation intended to address some of these challenges.

There is no simple solution. By working together as a community, we can promote the safe and responsible use of micromobility devices while balancing education, enforcement, personal responsibility, and public safety.

I urge people with safety concerns about micromobility devices and bicycles to call the station to report them as soon as possible, as we do with any safety issue. Without this information, it is difficult for us to target the problem.

Prepared by:
Chief of Police William Kingsbury
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