



# Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road • Longmont, CO 80503  
303-678-6200 • POSinfo@bouldercounty.org  
www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, June 22, 2023

Location: Boulder County Courthouse  
1325 Pearl Street, Third Floor, Boulder

<b>TO:</b>	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
<b>FROM/PRESENTER:</b>	Tina Nielsen, Special Projects Coordinator
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	Amend E-bike Policy
<b>ACTION REQUESTED:</b>	Recommend to BOCC

### Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to request that POSAC recommend that BOCC amend the Boulder County e-bike policy to allow class 1 and class 2 e-bikes on all Boulder County trails where bikes are allowed on the plains, including the Coalton Trail, Mayhoffer Singletree Trail, and in addition, allow e-bikes on the Boulder Canyon Trail.

### Background

On November 13, 2019, Boulder County Commissioners adopted a policy to allow class 1 and class 2 e-bikes on Boulder County trails on the plains where regular bikes are allowed, including regional trails and trails on open space parks, with the exception of three county trails requested to be off limits to e-bikes by the City of Boulder.<sup>1</sup> This approval followed a two-year public process including a pilot study with intercept surveys on trails, a phone survey, a bike/e-bike speed study, recreation conflict literature review, and other research. The county's e-bike [webpage](#) includes all the documents leading to adoption of the policy.

On June 1, 2023, Boulder City Council approved an ordinance allowing e-bikes on Open Space and Mountain Parks Trails in the plains, including the three trails referenced above: Coalton Trail, Mayhoffer-Singletree Trail, and the Boulder Canyon Trail. This ordinance goes into effect on July 1. This action is in line with Boulder County's expressed desire and negates the need for the exceptions in Boulder County's original e-bike policy.

### Discussion

Rangers are patrolling more frequently using e-bikes over the three and a half years since the e-bike policy was adopted. Rangers and other staff keep records of tickets and incidents:

- Zero accidents involving e-bikes have been reported, however accidents are usually not reported to the county unless there is serious injury.
- The county issued one ticket for illegal e-biking at Heil Valley Ranch in 2020.

<sup>1</sup> The City of Boulder requested e-bikes not be allowed on the Boulder Canyon Trail (due to prohibition of motorized uses on a conservation easement parcel owned by City of Boulder), and Coalton and Mayhoffer-Singletree Trails (because these two county trails lead to city-owned trails where e-bikes are not allowed, and there is no option to leave the trail). Note, the county encouraged the City of Boulder to examine e-bikes on its multi-modal and OSMP trail system for appropriateness, regulatory consistency, and ease of access to the regional trail system.

According to the latest Five-Year Visitor Study at Open Space Parks (2021), 3% of visitors at county open space parks reported e-biking as their primary activity on properties/trails where it is allowed. Four percent of visitors reported e-biking as primary activity on regional and neighborhood trails in 2022 (where only the Boulder Canyon Trail does not allow e-bikes).

The highest percentage of visitors reporting e-biking as their primary activity is:

- 12% on Rock Creek Trail
- 5% on Coal Creek Trail
- 5% at Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm

Only 3% of visitors report experiencing conflict at our parks, neighborhood trails, and regional trails on the day they were surveyed (97% of visitors did not experience conflict). Although just two responses out of 102 mentioned e-bikes as the reason for the conflict they experienced, bike speed and communication/not yielding are more commonly mentioned as a conflict for visitors.

Amending the county's e-bike policy means that bike trails throughout unincorporated county areas and all communities in the eastern portion of the county, including City of Boulder, will have consistent e-bike regulations going forward. This is a great benefit to users, who no longer need to worry about jurisdictional differences. This also promotes accessibility and biking as a mode of transportation. In practical terms, the county will update information on its web page and update signage on the LoBo, Coalton, Mayhoffer-Singletree, and Boulder Canyon Trails.

#### **POSAC Action Requested**

Recommendation to the Boulder County Commissioners for approval of the county's e-bike policy amendment as described above and as further described by staff at the POSAC meeting.

Suggested motion language: I move approval of the county's e-bike policy amendment as staff has described.