

2026 City Council Candidate Questions

E-bikes and E-scooters

Growing numbers of people, including teens and children, ride personal electric mobility devices such as e-bikes and e-scooters on the city's streets, sidewalks, and trails in ways and at speeds considered dangerous.

If you concerned about this issue, as a councilmember, what measures would you propose to make Palo Alto's streets, sidewalks and trails safe while not discouraging encouraging alternative transportation modalities?

BRYNA CHANG

This is an urgent safety issue, particularly near schools. Six collisions at PAUSD campuses in a single month demands a serious response.

I would propose:

- **Speed and equipment standards** — work with PAUSD and the city to establish clear, enforced standards for e-bike speeds near schools and on shared paths, including geofenced speed limiting where technically feasible.
- **Education** — expand Safe Routes to School programming to explicitly include e-bike safety training, including for students who missed foundational bike safety education during COVID.
- **Infrastructure** — separate fast e-bike traffic from pedestrians on heavily used paths by widening, striping, or physically separating lanes where possible.
- **Enforcement** — coordinate with PAPD on targeted enforcement near school campuses during arrival and dismissal times.
- **Parent and community engagement** — work with PTAs and school site councils to establish community norms and parental accountability.
- **State advocacy for licensing** — actively lobby our State Assemblymember and State Senator to require state-level licensing for Class II and Class III e-bikes. These vehicles can reach speeds comparable to motor vehicles, and ensuring operators are properly licensed is a necessary step for broader public safety.

The goal is not to restrict e-bikes — they are a valuable, climate-friendly transportation option — but to ensure they are used safely, particularly around children.

YUDY DENG

This issue is very personal to me because I have children who need to walk and bike on our streets. Like so many parents, I want to know they can get to school, a park, or a friend's house and come home safely.

More than 58% of PAUSD students walk or bike to school, so safe streets aren't a side issue. They are basic public-safety infrastructure. We should continue working toward zero pedestrian and bicycle fatalities by improving crossings, adding protected bike lanes where they make sense, slowing traffic around schools and parks, and making sure our streets and trails are well-lit and maintained.

E-bikes also mean we have to adapt. I want the City, PAUSD, Stanford, families, and riders working together on better education, practical safety training, and responsible enforcement.

Palo Alto has a great biking culture and we should encourage it. But whether you're walking, biking, or driving, everyone should be able to use our streets safely.

HENRY ETZKOWITZ

Did not answer.

GARY GECHLIK

E-Bikes and E-Scooters are dangerous, set speed limits and ticket.

Ticket those riding bikes and scooters on the pedestrian sidewalks, that simple.

RAYMOND LEE GOINS

Did not answer.

BRIAN HAMACHEK

Yes. I would combine clear rules, safety education, focused enforcement, and street improvements.

Families need a simple guide explaining the differences between e-bikes and electric motorcycles, along with rules for helmets, passengers, streets, and school campuses. I would coordinate with PAUSD and expand hands-on training with schools, police, and local bicycle shops.

Enforcement should target dangerous behavior: running red lights, unsafe passing, excessive speed around pedestrians, and unlawful devices or modifications. Drivers who endanger children should receive the same attention.

I would prioritize safer school crossings and gaps in bicycle routes. Shared paths should make pedestrian priority clear and separate users where space and demand justify it, while preserving disability access.

Success should be measured by fewer injuries, fewer conflicts, and better compliance, not simply more citations.

ED LAUING

This needs a very detailed review of the many different modalities. Overall, speed is the core problem regardless of the classification of E -bikes and even regular bikes. We need new ordinances to lower speeds and raise fines.

VICKI VEENKER

I am very concerned about this issue. I have spoken with our Youth Advisory Board and they, too, identified this as a top concern.

I support PAUSD's decision to phase in a ban of e-bikes on school grounds. We should accompany this with e-bike safety education, either in partnership with the schools or as part of our Parks and Recreation program.

I believe that there should be a minimum age for e-bikes, especially class 3 e-bikes, and we should explore licensing them. For e-motos, we should consider similar rules as for regular motorcycles.