

City from A1

Cottage Grove's current ordinance, which does not allow bicycles on any sidewalks in town while personal vehicles like skateboards and roller skates are prohibited only on sidewalks in the downtown district.

A prohibition against sledding or skiing on streets was removed as well.

The section exempts peace officers, police community service officers, maintenance workers and police or public works volunteers performing official duties. Additionally, it does not apply to self-propelled or motorized vehicles which are medically necessary for the mobility of the person.

The city's current ordinance also requires bicycle licenses in Cottage Grove, though the new ordinance changes licensing requirements to a voluntary registration system, which would enable lost property to be returned if found.

The new draft ordinance as proposed to councilors on Aug. 10 stipulated that children ages 10 and under who are accompanied by an adult can ride on sidewalks outside the downtown commercial district.

Councilors went back and forth on this age limit

before ultimately deciding to allow the use of sidewalks for all ages.

Of main concern were issues regarding the use of sidewalks downtown and the overall question of safety on the city's streets.

"Living downtown, I can tell you people do ride on the sidewalks," said Councilor Candace Solesbee, "and the skateboarders definitely come through downtown and rail the steps on historical buildings and that's always been a concern."

The challenge of enforcement was also raised. "It is difficult to enforce, but it can be with direction," said Police Chief Scott Shepherd to the council, noting that education is a useful method.

"One of the things I think the ordinance does for us, too, is it makes it consistent for all of those wheeled vehicles," said City Manager Richard Meyers. "Because the current ordinance is different for skateboards and scooters than it was for bicycles and it was a challenge to figure that out. ... This cleans it up so they're all treated the same."

In proposing the use of sidewalks outside the downtown district, Councilor Greg Ervin spoke of his experience riding around town with his family and the usefulness of using the sidewalk option for safety.

"My position is: less rules, generally," he said.

Councilor Jake Boone also did not think it was necessary to restrict sidewalk usage throughout the city.

"I don't know if we need this outside the downtown core," he said, pointing to the "sparse usage" of sidewalks in many of the town's neighborhoods. "So, someone on a bicycle moving along on a sidewalk isn't a big problem generally."

However, Councilor Mike Fleck had concerns regarding the competition for space between cyclists and pedestrians he had seen on the sidewalks of Eugene.

"I absolutely do not want to see adults on bicycles on sidewalks in our town," he said. "I'm certainly open to a lot of concessions on that, but that, to me, is just a risky venture. I would prefer not to go down that road."

Councilor Solesbee, meanwhile, stated that downtown traffic was her main concern.

"Living down here, working down here, we've seen a lot of close calls," she said.

Mayor Jeff Gowing also noted that he has seen the need for cyclists to use sidewalks in certain Cottage Grove neighborhoods when there is automobile traffic.

While Councilor Boone queried whether it was

safer to keep people on the streets or allow them to use the sidewalk, Councilor Ervin responded that he felt it was safer to allow riders the option.

"There are just enough areas in town that it makes more sense, if there's an available sidewalk, to use it," Ervin said. "Let's let people make that judgment for themselves."

Councilor Fleck, meanwhile, remained torn because "I really see risk either way we do this," he said. "I will yield to what the group says, but I do want us to follow this and if it does become an issue, I want us to absolutely take another look at it."

Following a motion by Councilor Ervin to amend that the ordinance prohibit the personal transportation devices only within the downtown area, the council voted unanimously to pass the new city code.

The downtown district is defined by the ordinance as the area between and including the south side of Washington Avenue to the north side of Whiteaker Avenue and between and including the east side of Ninth Street (Highway 99) to the east bank of the Coast Fork Willamette River.

In closing remarks on the issue, Ervin commented that an education campaign in regard to the new rules would be helpful.

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MATT BJORN

STATE FARM

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SAFE BOATING

Boating should be fun, but keep in mind that operating a boat is a serious responsibility. In 2014, the Coast Guard counted 4,064 accidents that involved 610 deaths, 2,678 injuries and approximately \$39 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents. Be a responsible boater and follow these simple tips to help keep yourself, your passengers and fellow boaters safe on the water:

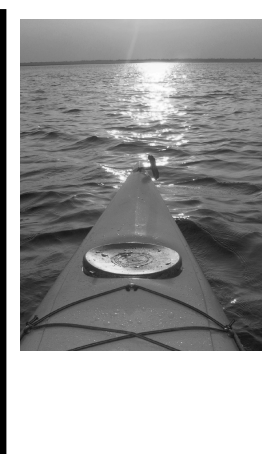
ALWAYS WEAR A LIFE JACKET.
84% of all victims in fatal boating accidents were not wearing life jackets.

STAY SOBER ON THE WATER.
21% of all boating fatalities resulted from some involvement with alcohol.

TAKE A BOATING SAFETY COURSE.
77% of all boating fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had not finished a safety course.

The National Safe Boating Council also suggests having a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) and installing carbon monoxide detectors on your boat to enhance safety.

(Statistics are from U.S. Coast Guard's "Boating Statistics 2014" which is based on reported incidents only.)



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