

# DRAFT 2040 WALTON COUNTY MOBILITY PLAN

## MICROMOBILITY OVERVIEW

### WHAT IS THE COMMON DEFINITION OF A MICROMOBILITY DEVICE?

*Micromobility device* is the common term used to describe personal electric mobility devices, the most common of which are electric bicycles (e-bike) and electric “motorized” scooters (e-scooter). When micromobility devices are provided by a private company, they often are designed with self-locking mechanisms that do not have to be attached to a bike or scooter rack and are known as “dockless” micromobility devices.

### HOW ARE MICROMOBILITY DEVICES DEFINED BY FLORIDA STATUTE?

The Florida Legislature adopted House Bill 453 that established statutory requirements on micromobility device share programs. Section 316.003, Florida Statutes, defines a micromobility device as “[a]ny motorized transportation device made available for private use by reservation through an online application, website, or software for point-to-point trips and which is not capable of traveling at a speed greater than 20 miles per hour on level ground. This term includes motorized scooters and bicycles as defined in this chapter.” The more commonly known definition is a private entity (micromobility operator) that rents e-bikes and e-scooters for use by the public, also known as bicycle share or scooter share programs.

### WHERE CAN MICROMOBILITY DEVICES BE USED?

The Florida Legislature, through Florida Statutes 316.20655 and 316.2128, grants users (riders) of micromobility devices (e-bikes and e-scooters) the same rights as people riding bicycles. This means that anywhere a bicycle is allowed, micromobility devices are allowed. Per Statute, an individual can ride a micromobility device on any sidewalk, path, trail, street, or road where an individual is allowed to ride a bicycle. Thus, micromobility devices are allowed to be used on the multi-use paths along 30A and Scenic 98. The Mobility Plan proposes the construction of multimodal lanes and ways to provide a dedicated space, safely separated from people walking and bicycling on paths and driving on roads, for use of micromobility devices.

### WHY DOES THE COUNTY NEED A MICROMOBILITY ORDINANCE?

The Florida Legislature allows private companies to provide micromobility share programs anywhere in Florida with no regulations; other than where devices have the same operation requirements and rights as bicycles and the removal of devices from public right-of-way during emergency events, such as a hurricane. The Legislature does provide local governments the ability to develop regulations for private companies that want to operate and rent shared micromobility devices.

Absent an adopted ordinance by Walton County, any micromobility operator could offer micromobility devices for rent and the only regulations in effect would be existing County regulations regarding riding and parking bicycles. The results of no regulations, which have been largely reported, are dockless micromobility devices left in the middle of sidewalks and paths or left on the ground blocking accessible curb ramps and access to businesses and residences.

# DRAFT 2040 WALTON COUNTY MOBILITY PLAN

## MICROMOBILITY OVERVIEW

### WHAT CAN THE COUNTY REGULATE?

The County can regulate the following related to micromobility devices: (1) the number of micromobility operators permitted to rent devices; (2) the operation (riding) of devices; (3) where devices are allowed; (4) the number of devices that may be rented; (5) the allowable speed of rental devices; (6) the hours of operation of rental devices; (7) the amount charged to rent devices; (8) the parking of rental devices; (9) insurance and indemnification requirements; and (10) additional regulations related to data sharing, point of contact, public outreach, fees, resolution of complaints, confiscated vehicles, redistribution of devices, etc.

### HOW CAN THE COUNTY REGULATE USE OF MICROMOBILITY DEVICES?

The County can update Chapter 16 (Roads and Bridges) and Chapter 20 (Traffic and Motor Vehicles) of the Code of Ordinances to establish regulations for the operation of micromobility devices in the County. The County currently has limited policies related to multi-use paths under Chapter 20 that includes definitions that need to be updated to reflect current Florida Statutes.

If the County bans bicycles on certain sidewalks, paths and trails, it can ban micromobility devices. If it allows bicycles on sidewalks, paths and trails, then micromobility devices are allowed. An individual can purchase a micromobility device today for personal use and is allowed to operate it anywhere a bicycle is allowed. The County is currently lacking safe places to ride bicycles outside of sidewalks and paths and to prohibit bicycles along the paths on 30A and Scenic 98 would likely be met with opposition. The proposed Mobility Plan recommends multimodal lanes on 30A and Scenic 98 for use by micromobility devices and potentially golf carts. However, construction of those facilities, if approved, would be a few years away. In the interim, it is recommended the County consider adoption of the following micromobility speed limits:

### PROPOSED DRAFT

## MICROMOBILITY SPEED LIMITS WALTON COUNTY



APPLICABLE SIGNAGE	APPLICABLE LOCATIONS	SPEED LIMITS	APPLICABLE LOCATIONS ON SIDEWALKS, PATHS, & TRAILS
	30A along Seaside Central Square Square/Plaza/Promenade(s)	<b>SPEED LIMIT 5</b>	Seaside, Alys Beach, Rosemary Beach, Public Beach Access on Scenic 98
	<b>Shared-Use:</b> Sidewalks/Paths/Trails Square/Plaza/Promenade(s)	<b>SPEED LIMIT 10</b>	Gulf Place, Watercolor, Watersound, Seacrest, Along 30A Public Beach Access, Scenic US 98 between Miramar Beach Drive and Okaloosa County
		<b>SPEED LIMIT 15</b>	Dune Allen, Santa Rosa, Blue Mountain, Grayton, Seagrove, Seacrest, Approach to 30A Public Beach Access, Scenic US 98 between Miramar Beach Drive and US 98, 30A Access Roads start 1/2 mile north of 30A
		<b>SPEED LIMIT 20</b>	Between 30A Beach Communities/Neighborhoods, 30A West approach to US 98, 30A Access Roads from US 98 to 1/2 mile north of 30A

© 2020 NUE Urban Concepts, LLC. All Rights Reserved. www.nueurbanconcepts.com

# DRAFT 2040 WALTON COUNTY MOBILITY PLAN

## MICROMOBILITY OVERVIEW

### HOW CAN THE COUNTY REGULATE MICROMOBILITY OPERATORS?

The County can adopt a micromobility ordinance that regulates the rental of micromobility devices. Through the ordinance, the County could establish the following options to select micromobility operators:

- (1) Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be a micromobility operator in Walton County. While the County could determine how many micromobility operators it selects, the RFP process only makes sense if the County wished to select one or two operators. The RFP would expand on requirements stipulated in the micromobility ordinance and establish a process to evaluate and rank firms that submitted a proposal to operate a micromobility system in the County; or
- (2) Establish a separate permit or license process with ordinance requirements, qualification criteria, maximum number of devices, and compliance with ordinance regulations, fees, etc. Under this process, unlike the RFP process, there would be no limit on the number of private companies that could offer micromobility devices. The County could implement requirements that dockless devices that cannot be secured to designated racks would not be permitted to be parked within public rights-of-way and would need to be secured in corrals or stations on private property with the consent of property owners; or
- (3) A hybrid approach where the County issues an RFP for a single micromobility operator with the ability to offer dockless micromobility devices (most likely a national firm) and a separate permit or license process for local Walton County based companies to offer docked micromobility devices. The County could implement requirements that dockless devices that cannot be secured to designated racks would not be permitted to be parked within public rights-of-way and would need to be secured in corrals or stations on private property with the consent of property owners.

### RECOMMENDED MICROMOBILITY OPTION

The second option accommodates both local and national micromobility operators and allows the County to establish a license and permit process that does not require an RFP and allows the County to develop ordinance and permit requirements for micromobility operators. The third option allows the County to permit a single entity to provide a dockless system through the RFP process. It is most likely a dockless system can really only be provided by a national firm with geofencing technology to remotely control how a dockless system would operate. Geofencing technology allows a micromobility operator to regulate the speed of devices, restrict where devices are used, remotely disable devices where they are prohibited, restrict parking a micromobility device in prohibited areas, and require that the devices be parked only in designated locations. The permit or license process would provide an opportunity for local companies to offer micromobility devices for rent. Many local companies already offer e-bikes for rent and this would allow them to continue to do so, so long as they are in compliance with adopted regulations and permit or license requirements. The County can establish specific enforcement and compliance regulations for both options.