

TOWN OF THOMASTON, CONNECTICUT
AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE OPERATION OF ELECTRIC BICYCLES,
PEDAL-ASSISTED BICYCLES, ELECTRIC SCOOTERS, SELF-BALANCING ONE-
WHEELED DEVICES, AND GAS-POWERED ATVS AND GAS-POWERED BICYCLES
ON TOWN SIDEWALKS AND ON TOWN PROPERTY

I. Authority

This Ordinance is enacted pursuant to:

- (a) Gen. Stat. § 7-148(c)(6)(A)(i), which authorizes the Town to establish, maintain, control, and operate various public facilities;
- (b) Gen. Stat. § 7-148(c)(6)(A)(iv), which authorizes the Town to regulate and protect public property from damage;
- (c) Gen. Stat. § 7-148(c)(6)(C)(i)–(ii), which authorizes the Town to control, operate, and keep safe and free from obstruction public sidewalks, streets, and places;
- (d) Gen. Stat. § 7-148(c)(7)(B)(i), which authorizes the Town to regulate the operation of vehicles on streets and highways within its boundaries;
- (e) Gen. Stat. § 7-148(c)(7)(H)(xi)–(xiii), which authorizes the Town to provide for the health and safety of its inhabitants; to regulate the use of streets, sidewalks, highways, and public places; and to make and enforce regulations to protecting and promoting the peace, safety, good government, and welfare of the public;
- (f) Gen. Stat. § 7-148(c)(10)(A), which authorizes the Town to adopt ordinances in furtherance of its general powers and to prescribe penalties for violations, enforceable by citation; and
- (g) Gen. Stat. §§ 14-286, 14-286a(a) and 14-289k, which authorizes the Town, through its ordinances, to regulate, restrict, or prohibit the operation of any bicycle, electric bicycle, or electric foot scooter upon or along a sidewalk; and
- (h) Gen. Stat. § 14-289, which authorizes municipalities to make ordinances not inconsistent with Gen. Stat. §§ 14-286 or 14-288 or any regulation of the Office of the State Traffic Administration issued pursuant to section 14-298, respecting governing and controlling the use of bicycles, electric bicycles and electric scooters within such municipality, with appropriate penalties for violation thereof; and
- (i) Gen. Stat. § 14-390, which authorizes municipalities to regulate the operation of gas-powered all-terrain vehicles through its ordinances where those ordinances are consistent with §§ 14-379 through 14-389 of the General Statutes; and
- (j) Gen. Stat. § 14-289j(h), which allows municipalities to restrict the use of mini-motorcycles on any highway or public sidewalk; and

(j) Gen. Stat. § 14-286(a), which permits the regulation or prohibition on the parking of electric scooters on sidewalks in a manner that unreasonably inhibits the movement of pedestrians or other traffic.

II. Recitations

The Town of Thomaston makes the following findings:

WHEREAS, the Town of Thomaston (the “Town”) is authorized under Section 7-148 of the General Statutes to enact ordinances for the safety of its inhabitants, including the regulation of the use of streets, sidewalks, and public places, and the regulation of activity on property owned or controlled by the Town; and

WHEREAS, the operation of electric bicycles, pedal-assisted bicycles, electric scooters, self-balancing one-wheeled devices, and gas-powered ATVs and gas-powered bicycles on sidewalks increases the risk of collisions and injury to pedestrians due to higher speeds, weight, noise, and acceleration compared to traditional, human-powered bicycles; and

WHEREAS, the operation of electric bicycles, pedal-assisted bicycles, electric scooters, self-balancing one-wheeled devices, and gas-powered ATVs and gas-powered bicycles on any Town Property presents risks to public safety, including children on school and park grounds; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen finds that it is in the interest of public safety and the general welfare to prohibit the operation of electric bicycles, pedal-assisted bicycles, electric scooters, self-balancing one-wheeled devices, and gas-powered ATVs and gas-powered bicycles on Town sidewalks and on Town Property, while continuing to permit the operation of traditional, non-motorized (human-powered only) bicycles on Town sidewalks as permitted by the General Statutes.

III. Amendment to Code of Ordinances

NOW THEREFORE, the Code of the Town of Thomaston, Chapter 260 “Vehicles and Traffic”, is hereby amended to add a new article: Article V “Electric Bike, Electric Scooter, Self-Balancing One-Wheel Devices, and Gas-Powered All-Terrain Vehicle, Gas-Powered Bicycle, and Similar Devices Ordinance”, as follows:

“ARTICLE V

Electric Bike, Electric Scooter, Self-Balancing One-Wheel Devices, and Gas-Powered All-Terrain Vehicle, Gas-Powered Bicycle, and Similar Devices Ordinance

§ 260-30. Authorization and Purpose.

- A. This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 7-148(c)(6)(A)(i), 7-148(c)(6)(A)(iv), 7-148(c)(6)(C)(i)–(ii), 7-148(c)(7)(B)(i), 7-148(c)(7)(H)(xi)–(xiii), 7-148(c)(10)(A), which provide police powers to the Town of Thomaston, including the Town’s authority to establish rules for the safe and orderly use of sidewalks, parks, and other Town Property. This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 14-286, 14-286a, and 14-289k, which authorize municipalities to regulate, restrict, or prohibit the use of electric bicycles and electric scooters on public sidewalks and across public roadways. This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 14-286(a), which permits the regulation or prohibition on the parking of electric scooters on sidewalks in a manner that unreasonably inhibits the movement of pedestrians or other traffic. This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 14-390, which authorizes municipal regulation on the operation and use of gas-powered All-Terrain Vehicles in a manner consistent with state law.
- B. The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect the safety of pedestrians, Town employees, emergency responders, students, park users, and the general public by prohibiting the operation of Electric Bicycles (“E-Bikes”), Electric Scooters, Self-Balancing One-Wheeled Devices (“One Wheels”), and Gas-Powered All-Terrain Vehicles (“ATVs”), and Gas-Powered Bicycles on Town sidewalks and on Town Property, while preserving the right of the public to operate traditional, non-motorized, non-pedal-assisted (fully human-powered) bicycles to the extent permitted by Connecticut General Statutes § 14-286. The devices regulated by this Ordinance shall be collectively known as “Regulated Devices”, as defined in § 260-31(J) of this Code.

§ 260-31. Definitions.

For purposes of this Ordinance of the Code, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below. Any term used but not defined in this § 260-31 shall have the meaning given to it in Chapters 246 and 248 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as applicable.

- A. Bicycle. “Bicycle” means every vehicle propelled by the person riding the same by foot or hand power using foot or hand pedals or cranks, consistent with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-286(e)(2), and that does not meet the definition of “Electric Bicycle” or “E-Bike” below.
- B. Electric Bicycle or E-Bike. “Electric Bicycle” or “E-Bike” means an electric bicycle as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-1(31), meaning a bicycle equipped with an electric motor and includes any “pedal-assisted bicycle”, meaning any bicycle equipped with an electric or other motorized assist mechanism that supplements human pedaling power (a “pedelec”) or that may propel the bicycle by throttle without pedaling, regardless of class, wattage, or manufacturer designation. The prohibitions in this Ordinance apply to E-Bikes of every class and to any device marketed or commonly understood as an electric or pedal-assisted bicycle, and apply regardless of whether the device has pedals or foot pegs.
- C. Electric Scooter. “Electric Scooter” means an electric foot scooter or electric-assisted scooter, including any device commonly known as an “e-scooter” or “electric foot scooter”, consisting of a platform on two or more wheels with handlebars that is designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator and is propelled by an electric motor, with or without the ability to be propelled by human power.
- D. One Wheel. A “Self-Balancing One Wheel Device” or “One Wheel” means a self-balancing electric unicycle, hoverboard, or similar single- or dual-wheeled, motorized, self-balancing personal transportation device, including but not limited to devices commonly marketed under trade names such as “Onewheel,” that is designed to be stood upon by the operator and is propelled by an electric motor.
- E. Gas-Powered ATV. “Gas-Powered All-Terrain Vehicle” or “Gas-Powered ATV” means any all-terrain vehicle propelled by a gasoline or other combustion engine, regardless of the number of wheels or tracks.
- F. Gas-Powered Bicycle. “Gas-Powered Bicycle” means any bicycle or bicycle-style vehicle equipped with a gasoline or other combustion engine used to propel the vehicle, with or without operable pedals or foot pegs, and that does not meet the definition of “E-Bike” in subsection (b) above because its motor is powered by combustion rather than electricity. Such definition shall also include any
- G. Mini-Motorcycle. Means a vehicle, as defined in § 14-1 of the General Statutes, that (1) has not more than three wheels in contact with the ground, (2) has a manufactured seat height of less than twenty-six inches measured at the lowest point on top of the seat cushion without the rider, and (3) is propelled by an engine having a piston displacement of less than 50 c.c.
- H. Sidewalk. “Sidewalk” has the meaning given in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-286(e)(1): any sidewalk laid out as such by the Town, and any walk reserved by custom for pedestrian use or specially prepared for pedestrian use, but does not include crosswalks or unimproved footpaths outside thickly settled areas.
- I. Town Property. “Town Property” means any real property, building, or facility owned, leased, operated, or otherwise controlled by the Town of Thomaston, including but not limited to: (1) Fire Department property; (2) ambulance and emergency medical services

property; (3) public school property under the jurisdiction of the Thomaston Board of Education; (4) Town parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities, including but not limited to those operated by the Thomaston Recreation Commission; (5) Town Hall and its grounds; (6) the Thomaston Public Library and its grounds; (7) property of the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA); and (8) property of the Public Works Department. This definition is illustrative and not exhaustive, and applies to all real property owned or controlled by the Town regardless of whether specifically enumerated above.

- J. Operate. “Operate” means to ride, drive, propel, or otherwise be in physical control of a Regulated Device, whether under motor power, engine power, pedal power, or both.
- K. Regulated Device. “Regulated Device” means, collectively, an E-Bike (regardless of whether it has pedals or foot pegs), Electric Scooter, One Wheel, Gas-Powered ATV, Gas-Powered Bicycle, or Mini-Motorcycle as each such term is defined in this Section 4. Any reference in this Ordinance to a “Regulated Device” includes each and every category so defined.

§ 260-32 Prohibition of Regulated Devices on Sidewalks; Unlawful Operation in Streets.

- A. No person shall operate a Regulated Device upon or along any sidewalk within the Town of Thomaston.
- B. This prohibition applies regardless of whether the motor or engine of the Regulated Device is engaged at the time of operation.
- C. No person shall operate a Mini-Motorcycle or ride as a passenger on a Mini-Motorcycle on any public road or public sidewalk.
- D. No person shall operate a Regulated Device in an unsafe or unlawful manner on any public road within the Town of Thomaston. Operators of Regulated Devices on public roads shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic. Operators of Regulated Devices on public roads shall comply with all traffic signs and signals, and regulations on operation established by Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-286, 14-286b, and 14-289k(c) through (h).
- E. No person shall park any Regulated Device on any sidewalk in a manner that impedes the reasonable movement of pedestrians and other traffic along the sidewalk.

§ 260-33 Prohibition — Town Property

- A. No person shall operate a Regulated Device on or upon any Town Property, as defined in § 260-31(I) of this Code, including but not limited to Fire Department property, ambulance property, school property, parks, Town Hall property, the Library property, WPCA property, and Public Works property.
- B. This prohibition applies to all portions of Town Property, including parking areas, walkways, athletic fields and courts, playgrounds, and building interiors, except where a paved public road or Town street that also happens to run through or adjacent to Town

Property remains subject to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-289k governing operation on public roadways generally.

§ 260-34. Permitted Use of Traditional, Human-Powered Bicycles.

Nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed to prohibit the operation of a traditional, non-motorized, non-pedal-assisted Bicycle (as defined in §260-31(A) of this Code) upon Town sidewalks, provided that the operator complies with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-286(a), including but not limited to the requirements to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and to give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian. Nothing herein shall be construed to expand or restrict the operation of traditional, non-motorized, non-pedal-assisted Bicycles on Town Property beyond what is otherwise permitted by law or by separate Town Ordinance.

§ 260-35. Exemptions from Prohibitions for Certain Devices.

The prohibitions codified in §§ 260-32 and 260-33 of this Code shall not apply to:

- A. Wheelchairs, mobility scooters, or other power-driven mobility devices used by persons with disabilities for mobility purposes. This exemption from prohibition does not apply to, any “Electric Scooter” as defined in § 260-31(C) of this Code, which remain subject to the prohibitions in this Ordinance;
- B. Regulated Devices operated by sworn police officers, firefighters, or emergency medical services personnel in the performance of official duties;
- C. Regulated Devices owned by the Town and operated by Town employees, officials, or the Town’s agents in the performance of official Town business (for example, park or facilities maintenance staff), subject to any additional rules the Board of Selectmen or a Town department may adopt governing such use; and
- D. Any operation expressly authorized in writing by the First Selectman or the First Selectman’s designee for a specific event or purpose (for example, an accessibility accommodation or a permitted community event).

§ 260-36. Signage.

The Town shall, to the extent practicable, post signage at appropriate locations on Town sidewalks and at entrances to Town Property giving notice of the prohibitions established by this Ordinance. The absence, removal, or illegibility of any such sign, or damage to any such sign, shall not be a defense to a violation of this Ordinance.

§ 260-37. Enforcement; Penalty; Hearings.

- A. Infraction. A violation of this Ordinance shall be punishable by a fine of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) per offense.

- B. Infraction by Minor. If the violation is committed by a minor, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of such minor shall be issued a written warning for a first offense as a corrective measure. Such warning shall state the time, place, and nature of the offense, and provide notice of the penalty for subsequent offenses. For each subsequent offense by such minor, the Town shall refer the matter to the state juvenile authorities.
- C. Citation Procedure. Violations of this Ordinance may be enforced by citation issued by the Thomaston Police Department or by the Connecticut State Police, in accordance with the citation hearing procedure established under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-152c.
- D. Removal from Property. In addition to any fine, an operator found in violation of this Ordinance may be directed to immediately remove the Regulated Device from the Town Property in question by any Town official, police officer, or authorized Town employee with supervisory responsibility over that property.
- E. Seizure and Impoundment of Regulated Device. In addition to any other penalty or remedy provided by this Ordinance, when a Thomaston Police Officer or a Connecticut State Police Officer has probable cause to believe that a Regulated Device is being operated in violation of this Ordinance, the Officer may seize and take possession of the Regulated Device. Any Regulated Device seized pursuant to this subsection shall be secured and held by the Thomaston Police Department in accordance with applicable law and established departmental procedures. The owner or person entitled to possession of the Regulated Device may recover the device upon payment of any applicable fine, costs, or reasonable storage charges, and upon demonstrating compliance with any other applicable requirements of this Ordinance and state law. Nothing in this subsection shall authorize the permanent forfeiture or destruction of a Regulated Device except as otherwise authorized by state law or a court of competent jurisdiction.
- F. Damages and Restitution for Harm to Town Property. The Town of Thomaston is authorized to pursue any remedy available to it at law or in equity for recovering damages or restitution from any offender (or if the offender is a minor, from such offender's parent(s) or legal guardian(s)) for any harm caused to Town Property. Nothing in this Ordinance shall limit the Town's ability to pursue any legal action at law or in equity to recover the value of damages or restitution to Town Property caused by unlawful operation of any Regulated Device.
- G. Other Remedies. Nothing in this Ordinance shall limit the Town's ability to pursue any other lawful remedy for a violation occurring on Town Property, including enforcement of the Town's posting of land against trespass under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 47-27 or prosecution for criminal trespass under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 53a-107 and 53a-108, where the elements of those statutes are independently satisfied.
- H. Appeal of Citation and Hearing. Any citation resulting from a violation of this Ordinance may be appealed by the person subject to the citation pursuant to the procedures set forth in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-152c, as amended.

§ 260-38. Relation to Existing Ordinances; No Duplication.

- A. To the extent any provision of the existing Code of Ordinances of the Town of Thomaston, including any existing sidewalk, bicycle, traffic, or park-use provision in Part 1 (Administrative Ordinances) or Part 2 (General Ordinances), is inconsistent or conflicts with this Ordinance as it relates to the operation of Regulated Devices on Town sidewalks or Town Property, this Ordinance shall control, and such prior inconsistent provision is repealed solely to the extent of the conflict.
- B. This Ordinance is not intended to duplicate, and shall not be read to duplicate, any existing Town regulation of general bicycle use, general traffic control, or general park rules that does not directly conflict with the specific prohibitions on Regulated Devices set forth herein. All other provisions of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Thomaston remain in full force and effect.

§ 260-39. Severability.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is held to be invalid, unenforceable, unlawful, or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remainder hereof. The legislative body of the Town of Thomaston hereby declares that it would have adopted this Ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, and phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid or unconstitutional.”

IV. Reserved Sections of Code

Sections 260-23 through 260-29 of the Code of the Town of Thomaston are reserved for future use.

V. Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication of a summary of its provisions pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes, §7-157(b).

Approved By Police Commission: September 23, 2026.

Approved By Board of Selectmen: September 23, 2026.

Adopted by town meeting on _____, 2026.

Published in the Waterbury Republican, on September 25, 2026.

Effective date: _____, _____, 2026.

Recorded in the Thomaston Town Records: Vol. _____, Pg. _____.