Public Comment

Manatee County Government

Submitted On:
Oct 12, 2026, 06:45PM EDT

Full Name	**First Name:** Kimberly **Last Name:** Harden
Email	kcmedic85@gmail.com
Which meeting is this public comment for? (Please select date of meeting)	October 15, 2026
Topic/Agenda Item	Yes
Comment	Manatee County residents deserve to know whether once-weekly garbage collection is actually saving taxpayers money or simply passing the costs and problems onto homeowners. I've dealt with two separate maggot infestations, including one in a brand-new, fully closed county-issued trash bin. Now I have larvae in my driveway, flies in my home, and additional expenses just to manage my garbage. How many other residents are dealing with odors, pests, overflowing bins, and extra costs without ever filing a complaint? Signed contracts shouldn't be the end of the conversation. I'm asking the commissioners to conduct a countywide review, invite residents to share their experiences, and show us the actual numbers. If this program is working so well, the county should have no problem proving it.

From: Jarrod Wyss <jarrodwyss@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2026 6:06 PM
To: Robert McCann <drbob.mccann@mymanatee.org>
Cc: Tal Siddique <tal@mymanatee.org>; Amanda Ballard <amanda.ballard@mymanatee.org>; Mike Rahn <mike.rahn@mymanatee.org>; Jason Bearden <jason.bearden@mymanatee.org>; George Kruse <george.kruse@mymanatee.org>; BCC Agenda <bcc.agenda@mymanatee.org>
Subject: What Exactly Are Our Kids Supposed to Do? — Proposed E-Bike Restrictions and the Future of Manatee County Families

Dear Manatee County Commissioners and Director Fiske,
I'm writing as a parent and Lakewood Ranch resident because I'm becoming increasingly frustrated with the direction we're heading when it comes to our children.

I recently watched a video from a discussion at Lake Manatee K–8 concerning proposed restrictions on electric bicycles, scooters, and other micromobility devices. After watching it, I was left with more questions than answers.

From what I understand, children under 16 could face additional restrictions on riding certain electric scooters and bicycles on public roads and sidewalks, potentially beginning in January 2027. There was also discussion about driver's licenses, fines, and differences between riding within neighborhoods and on public roads.

I'm not even sure the average parent could walk away from that discussion understanding exactly what their child can and cannot legally ride.

But the bigger issue is this:

What exactly are we expecting our kids to do?

We continue building thousands of homes, advertising Lakewood Ranch as a wonderful place to raise a family, and welcoming younger families into our communities. Yet it seems like every year we make it a little more difficult for children to actually enjoy growing up here.

Let's start with transportation and our school bus system.

When our family first started using the Manatee County school bus system several years ago, it was honestly one of the most unreliable transportation services I had ever experienced.

There were days when the bus was literally hours late. As a parent, trying to plan your day around a school bus that may or may not show up is beyond frustrating.

And while I will absolutely acknowledge that things have improved somewhat over the years, the problem is far from resolved.

To this day, I still receive notifications that buses are running late or, in some cases, not showing up at all.

This isn't something I heard from another parent or read about online. It's something my family has personally experienced for years.
I understand that transportation departments face staffing challenges, scheduling problems, and the demands of a rapidly growing county. But those challenges don't change the impact on families who depend on the service.

So when county officials begin discussing additional restrictions on electric bicycles and scooters, I have to ask:

If we can't consistently provide reliable school transportation, why are we considering restricting some of the alternative transportation options families have come to rely on?

For many children, a bicycle or scooter isn't just something to ride around for fun. It's how they get to school, visit friends, or participate in activities without requiring a parent to drive them everywhere.

And throughout East Manatee County, we have roads where vehicles travel 45 or 50 mph, often with nothing more than a painted white line separating a bicycle lane from traffic.

If a responsible 13- or 14-year-old can't ride a scooter on a public sidewalk, where exactly are we expecting that child to ride?

Are we seriously suggesting that riding alongside high-speed traffic is safer than riding responsibly on a sidewalk while yielding to pedestrians?

Before we take away another transportation option, perhaps we should make sure the alternatives we're providing actually work.
Then there's the lack of things for our kids to do.

We keep approving thousands of new homes, but where are the recreational facilities for all the children moving into them?

Where are the skate parks? The BMX facilities? The places where preteens and teenagers can spend time without their parents having to drive them everywhere or pay substantial fees?

We have pickleball courts, swimming facilities, and an impressive soccer complex, but meaningful recreational options for teenagers still seem to be an afterthought.

The pump track is a start, but it's small, inconveniently located for many Lakewood Ranch families, and nowhere near adequate for the number of kids who would use a larger facility.

Premier Sports Campus is another example. It's a beautiful facility, but in my experience, the rental costs can make it difficult for local teams to use. I've also seen portions of it sitting unused, which makes me question whether we're making the best use of the recreational facilities we already have.

And then there's fishing.

This is one that really bothers me.

We live in Florida, surrounded by ponds and water. Kids want to grab a fishing rod, meet their friends, and spend a few hours outside.

Instead, they're regularly being told to leave neighborhood ponds, and complaints sometimes turn into calls to law enforcement.

I understand private property rights, liability concerns, and the need for reasonable rules. I'm not suggesting children should be allowed to trespass or fish wherever they want.

But where are the accessible, designated places for kids to fish within or near these growing communities?
We should be encouraging these activities and creating appropriate spaces for them, not leaving children with fewer and fewer options.

And now we're considering restricting how they get to their friends' houses in the first place.

Think about that for a minute.

They can't fish at many of the neighborhood ponds.

They have limited places to skateboard or ride BMX bikes.

Getting around independently is already difficult.

And now they may not even be allowed to ride certain electric scooters or bicycles on public sidewalks?

Ten years ago, everyone complained that kids sat inside all day playing video games and staring at screens.

Now we have kids outside riding bikes, fishing, and spending time with friends, and somehow that's a problem too.

Do we actually want kids outside enjoying themselves, or do we just want them inside where nobody has to see or hear them?

I'm not asking for a community without rules.

Kids need boundaries. Reckless riding should have consequences. Pedestrians deserve to feel safe. Property owners have rights.

But there has to be a reasonable balance between safety, responsibility, and allowing children to be children.

I've personally spoken with members of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office about calls involving children riding e-bikes. In those conversations, I've heard frustration about deputies spending time responding to these complaints instead of more serious public safety matters.

We should not be creating additional reasons for law enforcement to confront children over ordinary outdoor activities unless there's a genuine safety concern.

I'm also concerned about who is making these decisions and whether the public has any meaningful say.

In the Lake Manatee K–8 video, the speaker indicated that direction concerning these restrictions came from the Board of County Commissioners.

What I find particularly alarming is that officials are already discussing a January 2027 implementation date for restrictions that could directly affect thousands of children and families, yet many of the parents who would be affected have no idea these discussions are even taking place.

If these decisions haven't been finalized, why are they being presented in a way that makes the outcome sound predetermined?

And if they have already been made, when were the families affected given a meaningful opportunity to voice their concerns?

We elect commissioners to represent their constituents. I understand that not every ordinance requires a public referendum, but I would expect something affecting this many families to involve more than discussions among county officials before the public learns what's happening.

What can residents actually do to change these proposed restrictions before they take effect?

Can parents formally object? Will there be additional public hearings? Can the proposed restrictions be amended or rejected? And if an ordinance has already been adopted, what is the process for asking commissioners to reconsider or repeal it?

Many working parents cannot attend lengthy commission meetings during normal business hours. Their absence should not be mistaken for agreement.

I would encourage the county to involve schools, PTO organizations, parents, and students directly before making additional changes.

The public should have a meaningful opportunity to influence the decision, not simply be told when it will take effect.

I am respectfully asking for the following:

1. A clear explanation of the current laws and any proposed changes affecting children under 16, including electric scooters, e-bikes, sidewalks, neighborhood roads, and public roadways.
2. The accident and injury data supporting any proposed restrictions, along with an explanation of how the changes would improve safety.
3. School transportation performance data, including late and missed routes, the frequency of service disruptions, and what improvements are planned as East Manatee County continues growing.
4. An assessment of the transportation challenges families already face, including school bus limitations and the safety of unprotected bicycle lanes along high-speed roads.
5. A comprehensive plan for youth recreation in East Manatee County, including skate parks, BMX facilities, accessible fishing areas, and affordable activities for teenagers.
6. A review of how juvenile bicycle and scooter complaints are handled by law enforcement, with an emphasis on education, proportional enforcement, and parental involvement.
7. Public meetings and opportunities for working parents and students to provide input before additional restrictions are adopted.
8. A clear explanation of the process and deadlines for residents to challenge, amend, delay, or reverse these restrictions, including whether January 1, 2027 is an approved effective date or only a proposed target.

I believe these are reasonable requests.
Manatee County is growing at an incredible pace. We continue approving developments, building homes, and attracting families from all over the country.

But **building more houses doesn't automatically make us a better place to raise children.**
That requires safe transportation, recreational opportunities, accessible outdoor spaces, and a community that actually welcomes kids.

I would much rather see a group of teenagers riding their bikes to a fishing spot than sitting inside all day playing video games.

And I would hope our county leaders feel the same way.

Before we create another rule telling children what they can't do, perhaps we should spend some time figuring out what we're actually giving them the opportunity to do.
I would appreciate a substantive written response addressing these concerns, particularly the status of the proposed restrictions, the evidence supporting them, the opportunities for public involvement, and the county's plans to better accommodate its growing population of children and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jarrod Wyss
Concerned Parent and Manatee County Resident

From: Christian Bergen <fcbergen12@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2026 10:47 PM
To: BCC Agenda <bcc.agenda@mymanatee.org>
Subject: E-bike Commission Meeting Query

Hi, I recently heard about a possible new law prohibiting people under 16 to ride electric vehicles in manatee county. I'm curious to wether there will be a meeting thats open to the public discussing this possible law.

Thank you

From: Theresa Prather <tplap123@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2026 11:32 AM
To: Public Comments <public.comments@mymanatee.org>
Subject: In reference to the manatee county growth and surrounding areas

County should be able to say which agency is responsible for each new demand, whether capacity exists, what improvement is needed, who pays and when it will be delivered.

TP