From: Rosella Stromberg <strros@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2026 11:59 AM
To: Robert McCann <drbob.mccann@mymanatee.org>
Subject: Fw: Support for Proposed Scooter, E Bike, e scooters and E-Moto Safety Rules

Dear Commissioner Dr McCann,

As a registered nurse with more than 30 years of surgical nursing experience, including trauma care, I urge you to support a minimum operating age of 16 for **all e-bikes, electric scooters, and e-motos, regardless of type or classification**, along with requirements for a valid driver's license, registration, and insurance.

My concern is preventing devastating injuries. Through my work in trauma and surgery, I understand how quickly a crash can change a life. A child and their family may face emergency surgery, prolonged rehabilitation, permanent disability, or the heartbreaking loss of a life.

I respect parents' desire for their children to enjoy independence and ride to school with friends. However, convenience and shorter school car lines cannot outweigh safety. Even a responsible child wearing a helmet can misjudge speed, overlook a vehicle, or react too late to avoid a collision.

I support one clear minimum age: **no one under 16 should operate any of these electric devices on public roads, sidewalks, or bike lanes.** Although their capabilities vary, I do not support exceptions based on device type or classification.

A valid driver's license would require demonstrated knowledge of traffic rules. Registration would support identification and accountability, while appropriate insurance would provide financial protection when a rider causes injury or property damage. These safeguards would also help protect pedestrians, including young children, older adults, and people with mobility limitations.

Please adopt the strongest protections available to the county and pursue any necessary state action to establish these requirements. Clear rules, public education, and consistent enforcement should work together.

As a trauma and surgical nurse, I believe prevention must come before tragedy. Please put the safety of children and our community first.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rosella Stromberg, RN, CNOR(e)

Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

From: jarrodwyss@gmail.com <jarrodwyss@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2026 12:21 PM
To: Jodie Fiske <jodie.fiske@mymanatee.org>
Cc: Robert McCann <drbob.mccann@mymanatee.org>; 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: RE: What Exactly Are Our Kids Supposed to Do? — Proposed E-Bike Restrictions and the Future of Manatee County Families

Director Fiske,

Thank you for getting back to me so quickly, and for the meeting offer. This is an exceptionally busy week for me, and getting on a call or into a meeting is going to be difficult. Written answers would actually work better — for my schedule, and because I am far from the only parent asking these questions, and written answers are something families can actually be pointed to.

Let me be direct about why I am writing, because it is the point everything else hangs on. As you described this proposal publicly, a student under 16 may not operate an e-bike or scooter on any public roadway — and may not operate one on any public sidewalk either. Our neighborhoods are gated; the schools are not inside them. So the combined effect is not that children must ride more carefully, or more slowly, or on one surface rather than another. It is that there is no lawful way for a 13- or 14-year-old in East Manatee County to ride an e-bike or scooter to school at all — not on the road, not on the sidewalk, not anywhere outside their own gates. I find that absurd, and I do not believe it is what a reasonable safety policy looks like.

I will admit I was surprised that a letter addressed to the elected board was answered only by staff. I understand that is often how correspondence is routed, but the questions in my letter are ultimately policy questions, and only the commissioners can answer for those. I would appreciate their response as well.

So that families understand where this actually stands, I need the following answered in writing:

1. What exactly is being proposed? In your public remarks, you stated that no one under 16 will be allowed to operate any micromobility device on "any public roadway, bike path, nature path, bike lane, sidewalk," that violators will be stopped, ticketed, and fined, and that parents of riders under 16 will receive the fine — while riding inside one's own neighborhood remains permitted. Is that an accurate statement of the county's proposal? If so, please provide the draft ordinance text, or tell me when it will be published.

2. Has the board voted? In the same remarks, you said this is "100% happening" because direction has come from the Board of County Commissioners — and also that information will come out "as we get to the point where the board votes on the ordinance." Those two statements cannot both describe a completed decision. As I understand Florida law, an ordinance requires an advertised public hearing and a board vote before it takes effect. If no vote has occurred, why is the outcome being announced to parents as final? When are the hearing and vote scheduled?

3. Why are the decision-makers themselves not commenting? If the direction has already come from the board and the outcome is, as you put it, 100% happening, then the people who actually made this decision should be willing to say so themselves, on the record.
Instead, not one commissioner has responded to my letter, and I can find no public statement from any of them explaining their position.
Will each commissioner state their own position on this proposal in writing? If the decision has been made, the public deserves to hear it from the people who made it — not only through staff.

4. Is January 1, 2027 the proposed effective date, contingent on that vote — and is it correct that nothing in this proposal is law today beyond the ordinance the board adopted in July 2025?

5. The trip to school. Please confirm the point above is correct — that under this proposal, no lawful route exists for a student to ride from their neighborhood to their school.

6. What data supports going this far? You indicated the fine amounts have not been set. The requests in my original letter stand — in particular, the Manatee County accident and injury data supporting a total prohibition for under-16s, beyond the narrower ordinance adopted in 2025.

7. What opportunities for public input remain before the vote, and how will affected families — most of whom cannot attend daytime meetings — be notified of them?

Since my letter went out, I have heard from a lot of parents in the family neighborhoods out here, and I have yet to find one who disagrees. I recognize the complaints that started this came largely from other parts of the community, and the view may genuinely be different in the 55+ neighborhoods — which is exactly why a transparent process, with the draft text and the data on the table before any vote, matters. If families conclude the outcome is decided regardless of what they say, they will stop writing letters and start organizing — through PTOs, HOAs, and neighborhood groups — and I would rather it not come to that when a straightforward written explanation might resolve most of the confusion, mine included.

I am glad to meet once I have had a chance to read the written answers, if a meeting is still useful at that point.

Thank you,
Jarrod Wyss

See Attached Response from Jodie Fiske

From: Jodie Fiske <jodie.fiske@mymanatee.org>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2026 1:50 PM
To: jarrodwyss@gmail.com
Cc: Robert McCann <DrBob.McCann@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>; Tal Siddique <tal@mymanatee.org>; BCC Agenda <bcc.agenda@mymanatee.org>
Subject: RE: What Exactly Are Our Kids Supposed to Do? — Proposed E-Bike Restrictions and the Future of Manatee County Families

Good afternoon,

Please see my responses below in blue.

Respectfully,

Jodie Fiske | Director
Manatee County Government
Department of Public Safety
2101 47th Terrace E Bradenton FL 34203

O | 941.749.3500, ext. 1639
M | 941.718.7950

Public Safety Department

-----Original Message-----
From: jarrodwyss@gmail.com <jarrodwyss@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 18, 2026 9:37 AM
To: Jodie Fiske <jodie.fiske@mymanatee.org>
Cc: Robert McCann <drbob.mccann@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>; Tal Siddique <tal@mymanatee.org>; BCC Agenda <bcc.agenda@mymanatee.org>
Subject: RE: What Exactly Are Our Kids Supposed to Do? — Proposed E-Bike Restrictions and the Future of Manatee County Families

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Director Fiske,

Thank you for the written answers, and for sending them the same day.
That is exactly what I asked for, and I appreciate it.

So the record is clear, here is what I take from your email: the board has not voted on any expansion — the July 28 vote only directed staff to draft updates to Ordinance 25-35, those updates are still in legal review, and there is no agenda date. The January 1, 2027 timeline is fluid, and the 2025 ordinance is the only law in effect today. The commissioners have no written position. And you confirmed the point that is the entire reason I am writing: under the proposal, nobody under 16 would be allowed to use a micromobility device to travel to or from school if the trip requires a public roadway — while traditional bikes and scooters are not restricted.

- **This is correct except for one minor clarification. The age restriction is the largest update to the ordinance requested, that restriction is not exclusive to use of the device to and from school, the age restriction would always be in place regardless of destination. There were other requests pertaining to the definitions and particular areas for use of the devices. Once legal review is complete, the updated ordinance will be placed on a future board meeting for review before the item is discussed at whichever meeting this agenda item is placed.**

One clarification I do need in writing. Your email frames the restriction as covering public roadways. In your public remarks, the list was longer: any public roadway, bike path, nature path, bike lane, or sidewalk. Which surfaces are actually in the updates being drafted? That difference decides whether a student has any lawful route to school at all, so I need it stated plainly.

- The complete definition of where the devices would be allowable for use will be included in the final language of the update once the legal review is complete. The plainest way I can phrase the answer to your question is that regardless of destination, nobody under the age of 16 would be allowed to operate a micromobility device on any roadway defined in the ordnance. I want to make sure I make note that in the current ordinance, there is already an age restriction that anyone under the age of 16 is already prohibited from riding a Class 3 micromobility device on public roads, bicycle paths, and shared roadways/pathways. This update is an expansion of that current restriction.

One more fact that makes this concrete. Under Florida law (Fla. Stat. §1006.21) and the school district's own walk-zone policy, students within two miles of school — a mile and a half for middle schoolers — are not provided bus transportation at all. Those are precisely the students this proposal targets. If a 14-year-old living 1.8 miles from school cannot ride an e-bike or scooter, cannot take a bus, and has two working parents, what is the county's answer for how that child gets to school — walking the same roads your department describes as dangerous? I would like that answered in writing as well.

- **As far as I understand, this statute has been in place for quite some time in the state. To be clear, the department is not stating the roadways are unsafe for pedestrian traffic, the issue at hand is the use of these**

micromobility devices and the negative impacts that have arisen since their increased and improper use. A bicycle or scooter that not a micromobility device would still be allowable for travel to and from school. It would be a decision for the parents and their student for travel to and from school that did not include a micromobility device.

I will look for the Manatee County pediatric injury data you promised by end of day Tuesday, October 27, and for the draft text once legal review is finished.

Thank you again for answering in writing.

Jarrod Wyss

From: Matthew Woods <mktwoods1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2026 1:16 PM
To: George Kruse <george.kruse@mymanatee.org>; Tal Siddique <tal@mymanatee.org>; Amanda Ballard <amanda.ballard@mymanatee.org>; Mike Rahn <mike.rahn@mymanatee.org>; Robert McCann <drbob.mccann@mymanatee.org>; Jason Bearden <jason.bearden@mymanatee.org>
Cc: Charlie Bishop <charlie.bishop@mymanatee.org>; FMD <fmd@mymanatee.org>; Kara Koenig <kara.koenig@mymanatee.org>; Bobbi Roy <bobbi.roy@mymanatee.org>
Subject: 2026 Environmental Lands Bond Referendum – Financial Oversight and Questions from District 1 Voters

Good afternoon, Commissioners,

As residents of Manatee County's District 1, which currently has no representation on the County Commission, we are reviewing the proposed $75 million Environmental Lands Bond Referendum on the November ballot.

We support protecting our environment and preserving natural lands, but believe that commitment should also extend to the development approval process. Planning Commissioner Rob Brown, a former Manatee County Environmental Program Manager with 34 years of county experience, recently raised concerns about limited local wetland mitigation options and the potential loss of environmental benefits when mitigation occurs outside our watershed. His remarks reinforce an important question: Shouldn't we place greater emphasis on preserving and enhancing existing wetlands during development rather than relying on off-site mitigation, only to later ask taxpayers to fund additional land preservation?

The October 9 Inspector General's audit of the existing Environmental Lands Program estimated that approximately $6.26 million in operating expenditures could potentially have been available for additional land purchases. It also identified accounting and transparency deficiencies, with some corrective actions not scheduled for completion until March 2027.

Manatee County has long promoted its ACE philosophy—Accountability, Civility, and Ethics—as the foundation for public service and responsible stewardship of county resources. We believe those principles are especially important given the recent public concerns involving county leadership, purchasing procedures, and financial oversight. Without assigning blame or taking sides in those disagreements, the findings of the Inspector General's audit make it reasonable for residents to ask how those principles are being applied in practice, particularly when voters are being asked to authorize substantial additional borrowing and property taxes.

Before casting our ballots, we would appreciate answers to five questions:

1. **Audit Findings:** What is the current status of the estimated $6.26 million in potentially ineligible operating expenditures and the approximately $1.6 million

funding shortfall? Have these amounts been reconciled, and what corrective actions remain outstanding?

2. **Land Purchases:** Of the original $50 million bond authorization, how much has actually been spent acquiring land, and how much remains available? Of the proposed additional $75 million, how much is projected to go directly toward purchasing land versus other expenses?
3. **Overlapping Bonds and Taxes:** With the original bonds extending through 2045, how would the new bonds and additional 0.16-mill property tax overlap with the existing obligations? What would be the combined annual taxpayer cost, including debt service, and when would each tax expire?
4. **Financial Safeguards:** What specific changes have been made, or will be made, to prevent the accounting and expenditure problems identified in the audit from recurring? Will the new funds be separately accounted for and independently audited?
5. **Public Accountability:** Given the documented Environmental Lands Program audit findings and broader concerns regarding county financial oversight, what independent review processes and financial controls are in place to ensure that the additional taxpayer funds will be managed appropriately, regardless of changes in county leadership?

Our intention is not to make this a political issue or question the importance of environmental conservation. We simply believe voters deserve clear financial information and confidence in how these funds will be managed.

We were preparing to return our mail-in ballots, with this referendum and the proposed constitutional amendments being among the last items we were reviewing. We take our responsibility as voters seriously and make an effort to research the issues rather than simply checking a box. However, with the recent release of the Inspector General's audit and the additional concerns surrounding county oversight, we now find ourselves needing answers to questions that weren't apparent when we began reviewing the ballot.

Given that early voting ends November 1, we would appreciate a written response to these questions by that date, allowing us and other interested voters adequate time to review the information before casting our ballots.

Regards,
Matt and Lorraine Woods
Manatee County, District 1

Manatee County Public Comment Packet

Future Agenda Items for Manatee County Board of County Commissioners meeting October 20, 2026

Written Comment Summary

Total Comments: 1

In Favor:		**0**
Opposed:		**0**
Neutral:		**1**

Comments in Favor

None

Comments in Opposition

None

Neutral Comments

Name	County of Residence	Comment
Patrica Simmons	Manatee	Bend oregon, autism registry, cortez, thx you jason

Manatee County Public Comment Packet

Public Comments Agenda Item Generic Public Comment for meeting of October 20, 2026

Written Comment Summary

Name	County of Residence	Comment
Jonna Koellhoffer	Manatee	Commissioners, Can someone please explain how Tom Wooten, who was terminated from his position in Code Enforcement on September 16th, then a memo saying he agreed to a demotion on September 22nd, and is now employed by Manatee County as a Level III Animal Services Specialist? This raises some very serious questions about the countyâ€™s hiring practices, the qualifications required for this position, and who is ultimately responsible for this hiring decision. What experience does Mr. Wooten have that qualifies him for this position? What animal shelter has he worked in? Where did he gain the hands-on experience necessary to care for shelter animals, understand animal behavior, and safely handle animals with behavioral challenges? In case the commissioners are unfamiliar with the requirements for this position, I have included a link to the countyâ€™s own job description, which outlines the minimum qualifications for an Animal Care Specialist. Among those requirements are: â€¢ High school diploma or equivalent. â€¢ A strong desire to work with animals. â€¢ Two years of experience as an Animal Care Specialist in an animal shelter environment. â€¢ A basic understanding of animal behavior and the ability to handle behaviorally challenged animals with guidance from the Behavior Manager. â€¢ https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/manateecounty/classspecs/newprint/1689235 These are not insignificant requirements. Animal care specialists perform essential, hands-on work that directly affects the health, safety, and welfare of the animals in the countyâ€™s care. This is not simply a position that can be filled without relevant experience or an understanding of the responsibilities involved. Who made the decision to hire Mr. Wooten, and how was he determined to meet the minimum qualifications for this position? Was his prior employment history reviewed? Was his animal shelter experience verified? If so, what experience and qualifications did he present that justified this appointment? Kate Ruckerâ€™s September 22nd email to all commissioners raises additional concerns. The email says nothing about the actual care of the animals, which is a fundamental responsibility of an Animal Care Specialist. Given the already challenging conditions at MCAW, the county should be ensuring that

		every person placed in these positions has the necessary qualifications and understands the critical role they are expected to perform. There is also the question of how someone who was reportedly fired from one county position could subsequently be hired into another position at a different level. Was this considered a demotion? If so, how was that transition handled, and what was the justification for placing him in this particular role? Finally, how does a person whose relevant qualifications and experience have yet to be explained end up in a Level III position that is reportedly among the higher-paid positions at MCAW? Manatee County Animal Welfare is responsible for the care and safety of vulnerable animals who depend entirely on county employees. These positions require appropriate training, relevant experience, and a genuine understanding of animal care and behavior. The countyâ€™s own job requirements establish that expectation. The commissioners and the public deserve clear answers. Taxpayers deserve transparency in county hiring decisions, and the animals deserve employees who are qualified to care for them. I am asking the commission to explain the hiring decision, identify the qualifications that supported this appointment, and clarify who approved it. These are reasonable questions about accountability, responsible use of taxpayer dollars, and the standard of care being provided to the animals at MCAW. Thank you Jonna Koellhoffer â€“ Manatee Resident