

Virginia Capital Trail Foundation

Electric Bicycle Policy

The Virginia Capital Trail Foundation (VCTF) would like to recognize the use of electric bicycles (e-bikes). E-bikes are becoming much more prevalent on the Trail. E-bikes might look like traditional bikes, but they have a motor attached that can be used to assist the rider. They are commonly used by cyclists who are new to cycling or who may be discouraged from riding otherwise due to physical limitations, age, disability, or convenience.

The Code of Virginia defines an electric power-assisted bicycle as “a vehicle that travels on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground and is equipped with (i) pedals that allow propulsion by human power and (ii) an electric motor with an input of no more than 1,000 watts that reduces the pedal effort required of the rider. For the purposes of Chapter 8 of this title, an electric power-assisted bicycle shall be a vehicle when operated on a highway.” (§46.2-100) Virginia law prohibits anyone under the age of 14 to operate an E-bike unless supervised by someone over the age of 18.

While VCTF encourages everyone to get outside and stay active; VCTF only supports the use of Type One and Type Two E-bikes. Type One E-bikes are pedal operated with a motor assist only when the cyclist is pedaling and cannot exceed 20 mph. While Type Two E-bikes are solely motor assisted and cannot exceed 20 mph. Type Three E-bikes are motor assisted and reach speeds up to 28 mph. The Trail’s posted speed limit is 20 mph therefore the VCTF does not condone Type Three E-bikes as the high speeds are a safety concern to other Trail users.

While VCTF does allow certain types of E-bikes, we do not allow mopeds or unauthorized motorized vehicles on the Trail.