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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bike Walk Nebraska Developing e-Moto Policy with MAPA and Papio NRD Funding

Bike Walk Nebraska, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA), and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (Papio NRD) are teaming up to help address the safety challenges posed by the rapid rise in electric micro-mobility devices – particularly high-powered electric motorcycles, or "e-motos."

MAPA recently awarded funding to Bike Walk Nebraska to develop state and local policy recommendations for electric micro-mobility devices, with Papio NRD providing the necessary matching funds for the federal funding.

These devices provide new opportunities for recreation and transportation, but also have created new safety challenges and increased crashes. In contrast to legal e-bikes, e-motos can reach upwards of 50-60 mph, and electric scooters reach high-powered speeds of 20 mph.

"We understand the urgency of the issue. When lives are impacted, it's natural to look for an immediate solution, but the market has outpaced the policy from the start," said Julie Harris, Executive Director of Bike Walk Nebraska. "Our goal is to provide policy recommendations balancing safety, enforcement, and access because what we want to avoid is an outright ban of electric devices."

Through this project, Bike Walk Nebraska will examine current use and regulations, analyze policies from other states, engage with regional stakeholders, and develop policy and regulatory recommendations for the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro region, while also addressing state-level needs.

"Safety and mobility don't stop at city borders. MAPA is excited to support this e-moto policy framework to align local rules across our region and provide state legislature leaders with locally-driven recommendations to support these emerging transportation options," said Mike Helgerson, Executive Director of MAPA. "This policy work aligns with MAPA's Safe Streets for All project to reduce traffic deaths and serious injury crashes to zero for all road users."

Vulnerable road user safety, which includes bicyclists, pedestrians and users of mobility devices, is the core of Bike Walk Nebraska's mission.

"While we work on this, it's important to remember all road users have a shared responsibility to watch out for each other, and policy and enforcement are only two aspects of safety. We can't forget infrastructure and education also play a role," said Harris.

The e-Moto Policy Planning project will kick off with focus groups of law enforcement and public officials, and a public survey is planned for early next month. You can learn more and find additional resources engage.mapacog.org/emotos.

For those seeking to get involved, please contact Bike Walk Nebraska at julie@bikewalknebraska.org or the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency at lbutton@mapacog.org.