



**Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, January 6, 2025, at 9:00 AM
Council Chambers - Eagle Town Hall
200 Broadway Eagle, CO 81631**

This agenda, meetings, and information about the Committee can be viewed at www.Townofeagle.org.

OSRAC MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION

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9:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

9:05 a.m. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items; 3-Minute Limit Please)

9:10 a.m. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9:13 a.m. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER MINUTES

9:15 a.m. DISCUSSION/ BUSINESS ITEMS

9:15 a.m. (15 min) Committee Officer Election - Chair

9:30 a.m. (60 min) E-bike use on natural surface trail discussion

10:30 a.m. FUTURE BUSINESS ITEMS

10:45 a.m. ADJOURN



**Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee
Unapproved Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 9:00 AM
Council Chambers - Eagle Town Hall
200 Broadway Eagle, CO 81631**

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OSRAC MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION

This will be an in-person meeting with access via Microsoft Teams. First-time users of Microsoft Teams will need to download the free app before joining the meeting.

9:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

- Members present: Jessica Foulis, Roger Mitchel, Phillip Kirkman, Dan Lambert, Chris Cohen, Ryan Gilmer (online).
- Members absent: Ernest Seager
- Council representative Ellen Bodenhimer.
- Staff Present: Alex Smiley, Open Space and Trails Manager

9:05 a.m. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items; 3-Minute Limit Please)

9:10 a.m. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- Motion to adopt the agenda by Dan Lambert, second by Phillip Kirkman - Passed unanimously

9:13 a.m. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER MINUTES

- Motion to adopt the October minutes by Roger Mitchel, seconded by Dan Lambert - Passed unanimously

9:15 a.m. DISCUSSION/ BUSINESS ITEMS

9:15 a.m. (15 min) Manager Updates

- Seasonal Closure
- Kiosk signage update
- Volunteer projects
- Trail counter data

9:30 a.m. (15 min) Dog Park Fence

- Discussion points
 - Fence specifications – balancing dog containment with wildlife considerations
 - Amenities – support of simple approach with minimal amenities at this stage
 - Trail improvements – monitor existing trail
 - Terminology – Preferring “off-leash area” over “dog park”

9:45 a.m. (30 min) OSRAC Roles and Bylaws

- Mission and vision statements reviewed and affirmed
- Officer roles summarized, Chair election to occur at January meeting
- Council liaison transition discussed due to Ellen's departure

10:15 a.m. FUTURE BUSINESS ITEMS

- **Elect a Chair**
- **E-bike Discussion**

10:30 a.m. ADJOURN

- Motion to adjourn by Dan Lambert, second by Phillip Kirkman - Passed unanimously.



To: Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee

From: Alex Smiley, Open Space and Trails Manager

Date: January 5, 2026

Agenda Item: Pedal Assist E-bike Use on Town of Eagle Natural-Surface Trails

Request:

Staff requests that OSRAC discuss the results of the e-bike assessment process and provide a recommendation to Town Council regarding the potential change in policy around the allowance of electric assisted bicycles on the Town of Eagle's Open Space natural surface trails.

Background:

In early 2024, the Bureau of Land Management – Colorado River Valley Field Office (BLM CRVFO) received a request to consider authorizing Class 1 e-bikes on traditional mountain bike trails. The BLM CRVFO is now evaluating this request through a NEPA analysis, stakeholder outreach, and coordination with neighboring land managers.

In spring 2025, the BLM CRVFO initiated a Visitor Satisfaction Inventory for the Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) surrounding the Town of Eagle. Because the Town and BLM trail systems are interconnected, BLM staff approached the Town early in the process to discuss potential alignment before making any decisions that could affect shared trails.

In response, the Town launched a streamlined internal review to provide feedback to the BLM CRVFO and to determine whether current Town policy should be amended to align with any potential BLM changes. Components of this process have included a community survey (available in English and Spanish), stakeholder outreach with partner agencies, and a public open house held in November. Staff have also reviewed current research, regional policies, and land-manager guidance regarding Class 1 e-mountain bikes.

The intent of this memo is to summarize the information collected to date and to request OSRAC's discussion and recommendation to Town Council on this topic. Because the Town's trail system is closely integrated with adjacent BLM routes, staff anticipate that any potential policy change would be most effective if it aligns with forthcoming BLM decisions. **If the OSRAC determines that amending code to allow e-bikes on natural-surface trails is desirable, staff would likely wait to bring a formal recommendation to Town Council until the BLM has completed its visitor-use evaluation and at least has a preferred alternative.** This alignment would help ensure consistent messaging, enforcement, and

user experience across the shared trail network. The BLM hopes to complete this process by Spring 2026.

Analysis:

To support OSRAC's discussion and potential recommendation, staff conducted a comprehensive review of available research, policies, and management frameworks related to e-bike use on natural-surface trails. This included scientific literature on ecological and wildlife impacts, safety studies, federal and state regulatory guidance, and policy approaches from peer jurisdictions across Colorado. Staff also evaluated existing organizational positions from recreation, conservation, and trail-management groups. The following analysis summarizes the key findings from that review and outlines how they relate to potential management decisions within the Town of Eagle. A full summary of the research is included as **Attachment A**.

1. Ecological and Physical Trail Impacts

Staff reviewed multiple environmental studies evaluating Class 1 e-mountain bike (eMTB) effects on natural-surface trails. Overall, current literature shows no statistically significant difference between Class 1 eMTBs and traditional mountain bikes in terms of soil displacement, erosion, or tread disturbance on existing, sustainable trail alignments.

- IMBA/PeopleForBikes Soil Displacement Study (2015): Class 1 eMTBs and conventional MTBs produced comparable levels of soil displacement, with motorcycles causing substantially more. Slightly higher displacement for eMTBs was observed under steep or loose trail conditions, but differences were small and inconsistent.
- Boulder County OSMP Literature Review (2019): Found that Class 1 eMTB tread impacts were "functionally similar" to analog bikes, and far below those of motorized trail bikes.
- Boone et al., *Global Ecology & Conservation* (2023): Confirmed similar findings and emphasized that off-trail riding and unauthorized trail creation pose greater ecological risks than Class 1 eMTB tread forces.
- General consensus is that best management practices and current trail standards are sufficient to support class 1 e-bikes.

2. Wildlife Disturbance and Habitat Considerations

Studies on wildlife response show similar alert or flight reactions to both eMTBs and traditional MTBs. No research has demonstrated unique physiological or population-level impacts attributable specifically to Class 1 e-bikes.

- Boone et al. (2023) note that wildlife responses to bikes, electric or not, are comparable to hiking and much lower than responses to motorized OHVs.
- Longer eMTB range could, however, increase the spatial footprint of recreation if not managed, potentially spreading disturbance into previously low-use areas.
- Research gaps include long-term monitoring and sensitivity analysis for specific species (e.g. elk in winter range), suggesting caution where seasonal wildlife closures already exist.

3. Safety and User Interactions

Safety and user interactions were the most frequently cited concern in the Town's e-bike survey, consistent with findings across other jurisdictions. Research indicates that while Class 1 e-bikes do not introduce fundamentally new safety risks compared to traditional mountain bikes, they can change the dynamics of trail interactions in ways that may require proactive management.

- Speed and Passing Behavior
 - Multiple studies (Volpe Center 2022; Boulder OSMP 2019) show that Class 1 eMTBs generally travel at similar downhill speeds as traditional mountain bikes, since gravity, and user skill, drives descent speed.
 - Uphill speeds, however, are more consistent and faster on average for Class 1 riders. This can increase the number of passing events, particularly on narrow singletrack.
 - On multi-use trails, increased passing frequency, not absolute speed, is cited as the primary factor influencing perceived safety.
- Trail Design and Geometry Factors
 - Studies emphasize that safety outcomes are strongly tied to trail width, sight lines, grade, and user density, not the presence of an electric motor.
 - Trails with limited sight distance or high use levels may be more sensitive to speed differentials and user conflict.
- Conflict, Crowding, and Anticipated use
 - Consistent with findings from Jefferson County, Boulder County, and international studies (Taylor et al. 2023), the majority of conflict around e-bikes is perceptual rather than observed. Many non-cyclists reported discomfort based on assumptions about speed of e-bikes. However, when asked whether they observed unsafe e-bike behavior, far fewer users reported direct incidents.
 - Jeffco pilot study found that 65% of users could not reliably distinguish an eMTB from a traditional MTB in the field.
 - Several studies (Boulder County OSMP 2019; Taylor et al. 2023; ERO Resources 2023) conclude that most early adopters of Class 1 eMTBs are already active mountain-bike riders, not new entrants to the sport. These riders tend to substitute their traditional bike for an eMTB rather than add new trips.
 - As a result, jurisdictions that have permitted Class 1 e-bikes generally did not experience a sudden influx of new trail users attributable to the policy change.
 - Increases in trail visitation in Colorado and nationally appear tied to broader outdoor recreation trends, not specifically to e-bike access.
 - Literature suggests that managing crowding and user interactions require broader strategies rather than policies targeting any single trail use type.
- Enforcement and Compliance Considerations
 - Trail etiquette (yielding, speed control, safe passing) is a recurring challenge for all user groups.
 - User behavior is driven more by education, awareness, and social norms than by what equipment they are on. Multiple studies (Boulder OSMP Literature Review 2019; Taylor et al. 2023; JeffCo OS e-Bike Pilot 2017–2018) emphasize that courteous or discourteous behavior is not correlated with the type of bike being used.

- Education and outreach, rather than equipment-based restrictions, are repeatedly identified as the most effective tools for improving trail courtesy and reducing user conflict.
- Interagency coordination as well as clear and consistent messaging around allowable classes, speed control, and yielding norms are crucial to all recreation management including e-bikes.
- Summary
 - Overall, research indicates that Class 1 e-bikes do not pose substantially different safety risks than traditional mountain bikes, though they can change the frequency of uphill passing and influence user perceptions of speed and etiquette. Many concerns identified in the Town’s survey relate to behavior, crowding, and user expectations are issues common to all user types and best addressed through education, clear signage, and coordinated management rather than equipment-specific restrictions.

4. Regional and Interagency Policy Landscape

Local Policy

E-bike policy across Colorado varies considerably among local land managers, resulting in a patchwork of approaches depending on trail conditions, community expectations, and agency capacity. Some jurisdictions allow full access for Class 1 e-bikes on natural-surface trails (e.g., Jefferson County Open Space), others permit limited or zone-specific access (e.g., City of Boulder, City of Durango), while several maintain full prohibitions of e-bikes on non-motorized singletrack (e.g., Summit County). This diversity underscores the need for regional consistency, particularly where trail systems cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Under current Town of Eagle code, electric bicycles are already permitted on paved recreation paths and on-street bicycle facilities within the Town of Eagle, consistent with Colorado state law. The Town’s municipal code adopts the state-defined e-bike class system and allows Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 e-bikes on shared-use paths unless otherwise restricted. In contrast, e-bikes are currently prohibited on natural-surface trails within Town-owned Open Space, where trails are designated as non-motorized. **The current OSRAC discussion does not propose changes to existing allowances on paved paths, but instead focuses exclusively on whether the Town should consider amending policy to allow Class 1 e-bikes on natural-surface trails.** This approach mirrors that of many Colorado jurisdictions, which permit e-bikes on paved facilities while applying separate, site-specific considerations to non-motorized trail systems.

State of Colorado Policy

At the state level, Colorado statute (C.R.S. 42-1-102 and 42-4-1412) defines the three e-bike classes and allows Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on bicycle and pedestrian paths unless a local authority adopts a restriction. While these statutes were written to apply specifically to paved rec paths, these definitions form the legal basis for most local management decisions on all trail types.

In 2025, the Colorado Legislature passed HB25-1197, which requires

- Standardized class labeling in all e-bikes sold in the state,
- Point-of-sale disclosures of speed, wattage, class, and passenger capacity
- Special labeling for multi-mode e-bikes.

These phased requirements go into effect in 2026 and 2027 and aim to improve enforcement clarity, close loopholes that allow high-powered devices to be marketed as e-bikes, and help land managers implement class-based policies with greater consistency.

Federal Policy

At the federal level, both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) consider e-bikes to be motorized uses by default, unless designated otherwise through site-specific planning:

- BLM’s 2020 E-Bike Rule (43 CFR 8340.0-5) allows Class 1–3 e-bikes to be authorized on non-motorized roads and trails only after a NEPA-supported decision. The rule does not automatically open any trails.
- Under the USFS Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212), e-bikes require a similar designation process, including environmental analysis and public involvement.

While staff reviewed a wide range of studies and policies, the research presented here is not exhaustive. The science and management guidance surrounding e-bikes is still evolving, and many questions remain under active study. As technology, rider behavior, and trail-use patterns continue to change, new information will likely emerge. OSRAC members are encouraged to consult additional sources they trust and to consider this analysis as part of a broader, ongoing conversation about how best to manage this growing form of recreation.

Community Input:

To help inform this assessment and ensure that any potential policy changes reflect community values, staff collected a broad range of input from residents, trail users, partner agencies, and local organizations. This included both quantitative and qualitative data gathered through multiple years of surveys and direct stakeholder outreach.

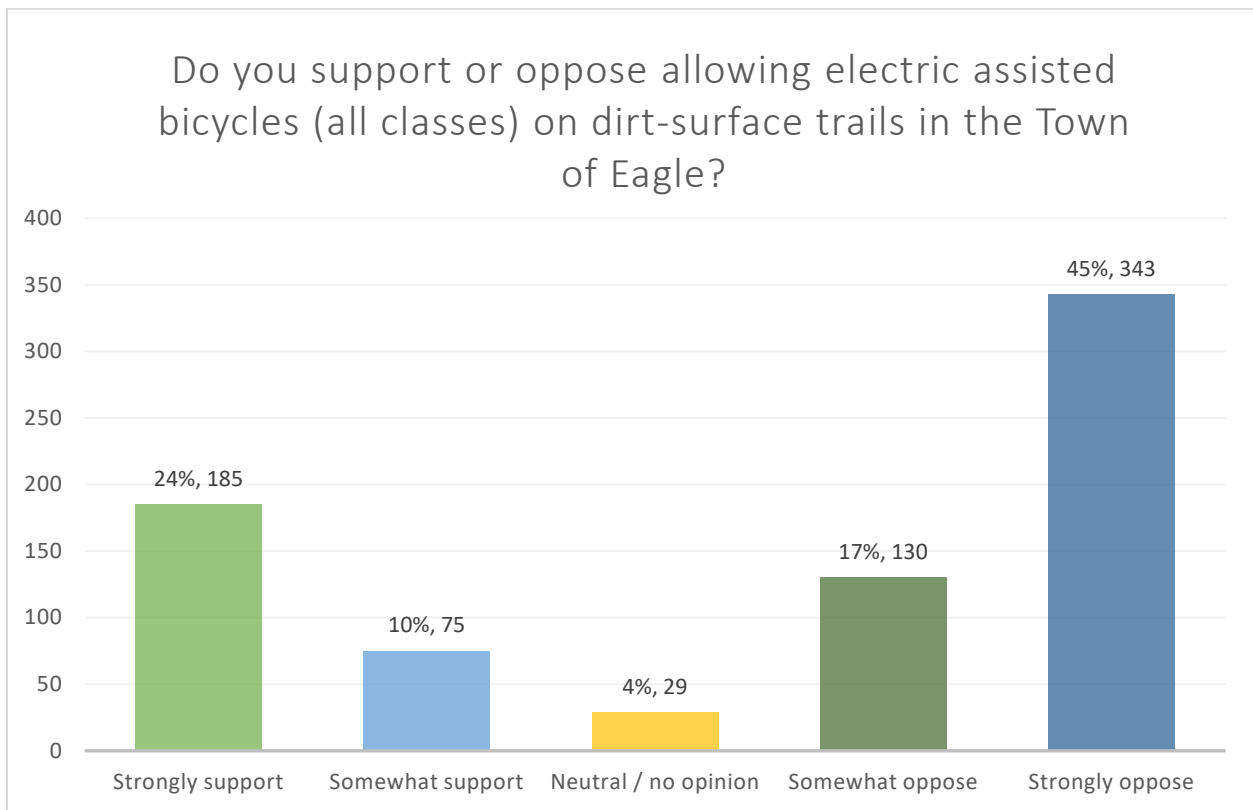
Materials reviewed as part of this process include:

- 2025 Community Survey
- Open House Feedback
- 2023 Community Survey – Data Collected during the Open Space and Trails Master Plan process.
- Stakeholder correspondence and letters

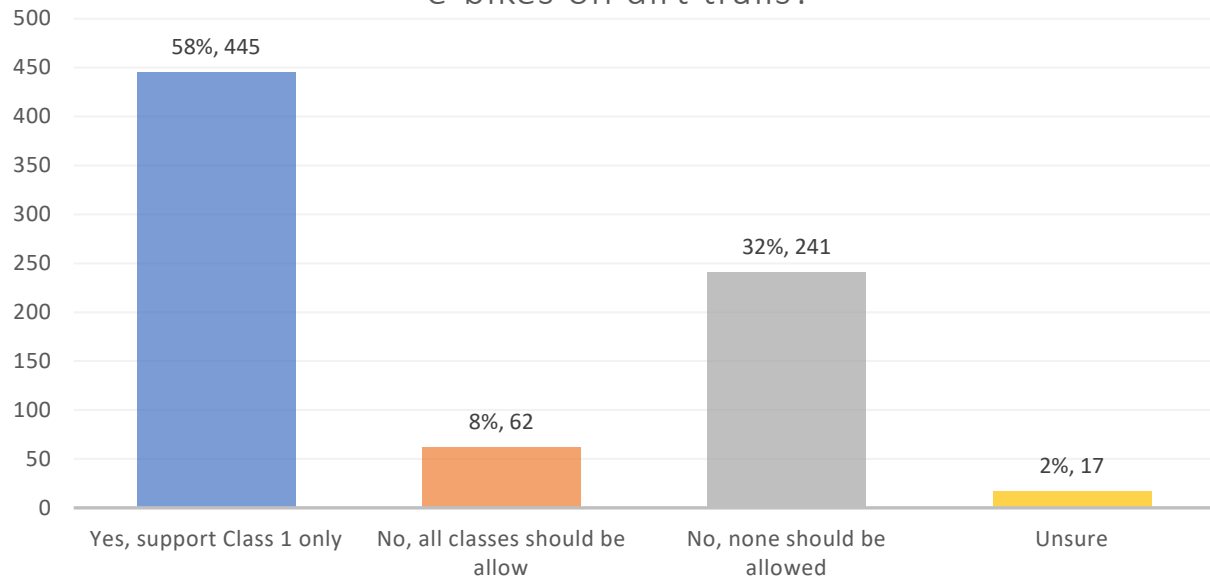
➤ 2025 Survey

The town collected extensive community feedback through an online survey that ran September through December 2025. In total 765 participants engaged with the survey indicating a high level of public interest in the topic. Respondents demonstrated a strong familiarity with e-bike classifications, and many provided detailed comments about safety, wildlife, user experience, and accessibility.

Survey results indicated a community divided on whether e-bikes should be allowed on natural-surface trails in general but showed more support for allowing only class 1 if access is permitted. Survey responses showed a clear preference for allowing Class 1 only if any access is permitted. A majority of respondents opposed allowing all classes of e-bikes on natural-surface trails (see graph below); however, 58.2% supported allowing Class 1 e-bikes only. Smaller percentages supported allowing all classes (8.1%) or allowing none (31.5%). Safety was the most frequently cited concern, particularly around speed differentials and uphill passing on narrow singletrack. Other common concerns included wildlife impacts, trail wear, and changes to the user experience. Supportive comments emphasized accessibility for older adults and riders with physical limitations, regional consistency with neighboring jurisdictions, and reducing vehicle trips to trailheads.



Some land management agencies only allow Class 1 e-bikes (pedal assist only, no throttle, motor stops at 20 mph) on dirt surface trails. Do you support the Town of Eagle following suit and allowing only Class 1 e-bikes on dirt trails?



It's important to note that this survey was conducted as an open-link, non-scientific survey, meaning any individual with access to the link could participate. The survey was shared widely by multiple stakeholders and community groups, which helped generate a large response sample but also means the results cannot be interpreted as a statistically representative poll of all Town residents. Instead, the survey provides directional insight into the themes, concerns, and values expressed by engaged community members. OSRAC should consider this feedback as one component of a broader body of information, rather than as an election or formal vote.

The survey results are available as **Attachment B**.

- Open House – November 4th, 2025, Brush Creek Pavilion

The Town hosted an in-person community open house to gather additional input on the potential allowance of e-bikes on natural-surface trails. Participants provided written comments reflecting both support and concern, generally aligning with themes seen in the community survey.

Supportive themes included:

- Improved access and inclusivity for older adults and individuals with physical limitations.
- Ability for mixed-ability groups to recreate together.
- Potential economic benefits, including increased visitation and support for local bike shops.
- Belief that class 1 e-bikes do not substantially change trail speed or physical impacts relative to a strong traditional mtb rider

- Desire for regional consistency, noting nearby communities that allow class 1 e-bikes.
- Opportunities to spread out users, extend trail reach into BLM land, and improve overall recreation experiences.
- Some support for allowing all classes, citing comparisons to other mtb destinations.

Opposition themes included:

- Safety concerns, particularly uphill speed, cornering, and interactions with hikers.
- Fear of trail degradation, increased use, and potential erosion.
- Concerns about wildlife disturbance, fragmentation, and expanded zones of influence.
- Limited enforcement capacity and skepticism about the towns ability to regulate classes.
- Worries about user experience, noise, and crowding.
- Fear of “slippery slope” leading to OHVs or Moab-style recreation pressures.
- Risks associated with less experienced riders accessing remote terrain through motor assistance.

Overall, the open house comments mirrored the survey’s split perspectives, reinforcing safety, wildlife, enforcement, and user-experience as primary considerations, with strong support noted around accessibility, consistency, and evolving recreation demand. Open House comments are recorded as **Attachment C**.

- Stakeholder Feedback

Staff engaged with key partner organizations and land managers to understand perspectives related to safety, conservation values, enforcement feasibility, and regional consistency. While stakeholders expressed a range of views, most supported or were open to Class 1 e-bike access if paired with clear etiquette expectations, coordinated management with the BLM, and appropriate consideration of conservation easements and wildlife needs. Safety, education, and clarity around allowable classes were the most consistently noted priorities across groups. Full stakeholder letters and notes are included in **Attachment D** for reference.

- 2023 Survey

As part of the 2023 Open Space & Trails Master Plan process, the Town conducted a broad community survey that received 802 responses, with 76% from Eagle residents. This earlier survey asked a single, general question about increasing e-mountain bike access on non-motorized dirt trails. A majority, 57.5%, did not support expanded access, while 42.5% indicated support, with nearly identical results among Eagle residents. Because the question did not distinguish between different e-bike classes, the wording may have contributed to confusion or broad opposition, a pattern reflected in the 2025 survey where respondents showed general disagreement with allowing all classes of e-bikes, but substantially more support for a limited Class 1 only allowance. Open-ended comments in 2023 echoed familiar themes, safety, wildlife disturbance, trail wear, and increased use, alongside support related to access and inclusivity. These 2023 findings serve as an informative baseline and highlight how class-specific questions provide more meaningful insight into community sentiment. Results of the 2023 Survey are available as **Attachment E**.

- Community Input Summary

In summary, community and stakeholder feedback on e-bike access is broad, diverse, and deeply engaged, but several areas of common ground clearly emerged. Across surveys, open-house comments, and stakeholder conversations, respondents consistently emphasized the importance of safety, trail etiquette, wildlife protection, and clear, consistent rules, regardless of whether they supported or opposed additional e-bike access. Many recognized the need for regional coordination with BLM and partner agencies, and a shared interest in maintaining high-quality recreation experiences for all users. While views differ on whether and where Class 1 e-bikes should be permitted, the collective input reflects a community that values its open spaces and seeks a balanced approach that supports access, protects natural resources, and avoids user conflict.

Budget/ Staff Impact:

At this stage, staff anticipated minimal direct budget impacts associated with adapting e-bike policy on natural surface trails. The primary costs would be related to signage, public education, and interagency coordination.

Potential budget and staff consideration includes:

- Signage updates: installation or modification of regulatory signs at trailheads and intersections to clarify allowable classes. Estimated costs would vary based on placement and design but are expected to be modest and could be absorbed into routine signage replacement budgets.
- Public education and outreach: Time required for staff to develop and distribute educational materials, both in-house and through regional partners, focused on trail etiquette, speed management, and yielding expectations.
- Interagency coordination: Ongoing staff time spent working with the BLM, Eagle County, EVLT, and local organizations to ensure consistent messaging and enforcement across shared trails.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Staff time to observe trail-use patterns, user interactions, and overall compliance if any policy change is implemented.

No substantial capital costs are anticipated, and no additional staff positions would be required if the Town were to move forward with a Class 1 e-bike policy. If no changes are adopted and the current prohibition remains in place, operations would continue under business-as-usual conditions with no additional budget or staff impacts. If changes are implemented, most associated efforts could be absorbed within the existing workload of the Open Space & Trails program, with the potential for volunteer groups and partner organizations to assist with education and monitoring efforts.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This assessment aligns directly with the **Policy Considerations** identified in the **Town of Eagle Open Space & Trails Master Plan (2022)**, particularly **P1 – E-Bikes**, which states: *“Continue to evaluate e-bike policies on non-motorized trails in the system. The ultimate policy should be consistent system-wide to minimize confusion.”*

(Master Plan reference: **P1**, Policy Considerations section)

In addition, this assessment is in line with many other general goals outlines in the 2022 Open Space and Trails Master Plan including but not limited to:

- **Goal: Provide appropriate recreational opportunities**
The Plan calls for offering a variety of trail experiences that meet the needs of different user groups while ensuring responsible recreation. Evaluating Class 1 e-bike access is consistent with this goal, particularly as it relates to accessibility, inclusivity, and emerging recreation technology.
- **Goal: Strategically evaluate support for new recreational opportunities**
The Plan directs the Town to weigh recreational opportunities against wildlife habitat, resource sensitivity, system connectivity, and user experience. The e-bike assessment directly reflects this directive through its ecological analysis, community/stakeholder input, and interagency coordination.
- **Goal: Provide equitable access to open space and trails**
The Plan highlights inclusivity and accessibility for all residents and visitors. Community feedback shows that Class 1 e-bikes can expand access for older adults, people with physical limitations, and families—aligning with this equity objective.

Overall, this project is consistent with the Master Plan’s direction to foster a balanced, well-communicated, and environmentally responsible trail system that adapts to changing technology and community needs while safeguarding wildlife habitat and natural resources.

Recommend Action or Proposed Motion:

As an advisory body, OSRAC’s role in this process is to provide guidance and a recommendation to help inform the Town Council’s decision making. OSRAC does not set policy or amend Town code; Council is the ultimate decision-maker on whether, and under what conditions, e-bikes may be allowed on natural-surface trails within Town of Eagle Open Space. Because the Town’s trail system is tightly integrated with adjacent BLM routes, and because the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office is currently conducting its own evaluation of Class 1 e-bike access, it is important for any Town policy to align with BLM’s forthcoming decision to avoid confusing or conflicting rules across shared trails. For this reason, even with an OSRAC recommendation in hand, staff may wait to bring the matter to Council until BLM has finalized its decision.

In discussing a motion, OSRAC may consider several possible recommendation pathways. Regardless of the option selected, staff will continue working with partner agencies to ensure consistent communication and coordinated management.

1. Maintain Current Policy (No Change) – Continue to hold and enforce the current ban on all electric bicycles on natural surface trails in Town owned Open Space
 - a. “I move that OSRAC recommends maintaining the current prohibition on e-bikes on natural-surface trails within Town of Eagle Open Space and request BLM to also maintain a prohibition on e-bikes on their lands surrounding the Town of Eagle”
2. Recommend Allowing Class 1 E-bikes – Recommend allowing Class 1 e-bikes on natural-surface trails within Town open space, recognizing that implementation and timing would be coordinated with BLM to ensure consistency across shared trail systems.
 - a. “I move that OSRAC recommend allowing Class 1 e-bikes on natural-surface trails within Town of Eagle Open Space, with implementation coordinated with the BLM to ensure consistent management across shared trail systems.”

3. Request more time / Information – If OSRAC determines that additional analysis, monitoring, or BLM clarity is needed to make a sound recommendation, the committee may choose to defer a decision.
 - a. “I move that OSRAC defer a recommendation at this time pending completion of the BLM’s decision on adjacent trail systems and receipt of additional information identified by the committee, and that OSRAC revisit this item as a priority once those materials are available.”

Attachments (Linked to OneDrive folder):

[Attachment A: E-Bike Research Document](#)

[Attachment B: 2025 Survey Results](#)

[Attachment C: Open House Response](#)

[Attachment D: Stakeholder feedback notes and letters](#)

[Attachment E: 2023 Survey Results](#)