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# 2014 AUSTIN BICYCLE PLAN

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City of Austin



Austin Transportation Department  
Active Transportation Program

November 2014

Adopted by the Austin City Council November 6th, 2014



Austin City Council Member Chris Riley  
at Viva Streets, Austin, May 2012

# CHAPTER THREE | PROGRAMS

While an all ages and abilities bicycle network is the foundation for increasing bicycle use and creating safer streets, programming is necessary to make highest use of the infrastructure. Programs that deliver education, encouragement and enforcement are all integral parts to create a safer environment for all transportation users and obtain the most use of the investment in infrastructure.

Bicycle programs should broadly reach the general population and also recognize that there are many different audiences that should be specifically tailored to. Programs will have to effectively reach children, adults, motorists, commuter bicyclists, recreational bicyclists, university students, people of different cultures, business stakeholders, employers and employees. The following sections describe the broad groups of programs that support bicycle use.

## BICYCLING AND SAFETY EDUCATION

**Objective 3.1: Develop and execute programs to improve bicycle safety and roadway behavior.**

Educations programs are a great tool to create safer conditions for all roadway users. While people who bicycle can benefit from learning how to more safely ride, people who drive, walk, and take transit should understand how to interact with people on bicycles to improve the safety and coexistence on the roads, sidewalks, and trails. Education programs are delivered through two primary means: public outreach and education classes.

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The City of Austin distributes a bicycle route map to the public that contains basic tips on how to safely ride in traffic and the rules of the road. It is also a great tool to educate people on the safest bicycle routes and give them the confidence to start taking trips by bicycle.

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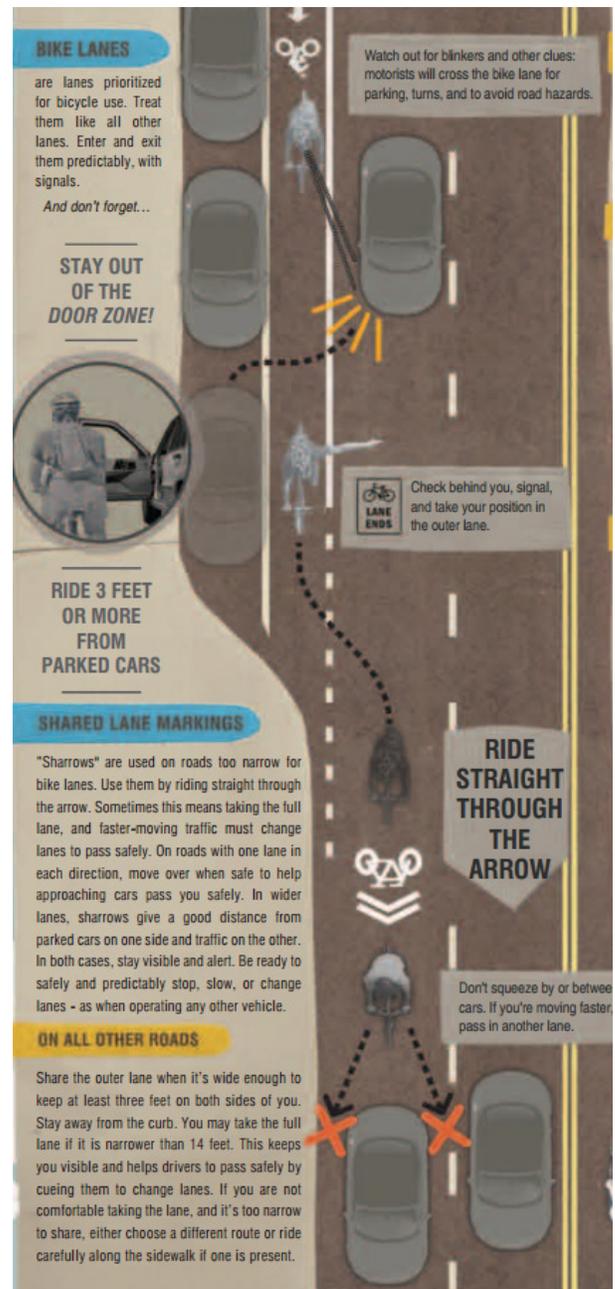
Just as we provide training for drivers of motor vehicles, we must inform bicyclists of their rights on the road and how to ride in a safe manner. While many

bicyclists know how to ride a bicycle, they do not necessarily know how to ride in traffic. Bicycle skills courses can give bicyclists the confidence and tools to ride safely.

Providing bicycle education for young children is key because they have little to no experience making decisions in traffic, they depend on bikes for transportation, and because in teaching children, we have the potential to affect the behavior of parents. The City of Austin educates school-aged children on bicycling and walking to school through the Public Works Department's Child Safety Program and the Health and Human Services Department's Safe Routes to School Program. These programs are discussed in more detail in Objective 3.3.

It is also important to educate motor vehicle drivers of the needs and rights of bicyclists as they differ considerably from other road users. Integrating bicycle perspectives and content in general road safety training is traditionally underrepresented, but is important to encourage more positive interactions between bicyclists and motor vehicle drivers on the road.

For the general public, there is a market of bicycle safety courses taught by both businesses and non-profits. Unfortunately the cost of these classes keep exposure to the general population limited. To advance education goals, the Plan recommends providing low cost or free educational classes to the public through City programming or partnerships with organizations. Bicycle education classes can also be offered through employers such as the City of Austin's Health PLUS Wellness Program and PE Program that offers bicycle safety courses.



**EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL ON THE CITY OF AUSTIN BICYCLE ROUTE MAP.**

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### **Objective 3.1 Benchmarks**

- Distribute 5,000 Austin Bicycle Map Brochures to motorists and bicyclists per year.
- Educate 1,000 adult bicyclists and motorists about bicycle and motorist safety each year.

### **Objective 3.1 Actions**

- 3.1.1 Partner with community organizations and bicycle advocacy groups to offer educational classes.
  - 3.1.1a Coordinate community requests for bicycle education with experienced bicycle educators in the community.*
  - 3.1.1b Encourage community organizations and school programs to offer on-bicycle training as part of their curriculum.*
  - 3.1.1c Offer bicycle education and safety courses free to City employees.*
- 3.1.2 Create and provide educational programs targeting youth cyclists.
  - 3.1.2a Cooperate with Child Safety Program to write a "Child Safety Plan." Include options for funding education and infrastructure improvements and strengthen relationships with local school districts.*
  - 3.1.2b Support the Safe Routes to School Program.*
  - 3.1.2c Work with Parks and Recreation Department and Health and Human Services to educate children on the health benefits of bicycling.*
  - 3.1.2d Develop a bicycle safety component of high school driver-education programs.*
  - 3.1.2e Provide bicycle safety and bicycle rider training to schools served by a new bicycle facility installation.*
- 3.1.3 Create and provide educational programs targeting adult cyclists.
  - 3.1.3a Provide or partner to provide bicycle-related classes such as repair and maintenance, effective bicycling skills, rules of the road, etc, such as "Traffic Skills 101" at a low cost to the public.*
  - 3.1.3b Support efforts among other city departments, public agencies, and bicycle organizations to offer bicycle related classes.*

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- 3.1.4 Create and provide educational programs targeting motorists.
    - 3.1.4a *Create and distribute informational material targeting motorists regarding bicyclists' rights and how to safely share the road with cyclists.*
    - 3.1.4b *Provide information related to updating the Texas drivers' manual to strengthen the bicycle section and exam questions.*
    - 3.1.4c *Include motorist-bicyclist safety information in City required defensive driving courses.*
    - 3.1.4d *Train/educate drivers of commercial vehicles about bicycle safety and sharing the road with bicyclists.*
  - 3.1.5 Create partnerships to conduct educational campaigns
    - 3.1.5a *Utilize a variety of methods to distribute and market educational information more effectively and at a lower cost. This includes various advertising means, partnerships, and presence at events.*
    - 3.1.5b *Strengthen the "Share the Road" and develop a "Share the Trail" public awareness campaign.*
    - 3.1.5c *Encourage the use of helmets through educational programming and campaigns.*
  - 3.1.6 Expand Distribution of Austin's Bicycle Map and provide wayfinding guidance along the bicycle network.
    - 3.1.6a *Regularly update and widely distribute the Austin Bicycle Map.*
    - 3.1.6b *Improve and expand upon a comprehensive citywide signing system to clearly indicate bicycle routes and multi-use paths.*
    - 3.1.6c *Display bicycle route system maps and information at key locations / destinations like downtown, activity centers, and transit stations.*
    - 3.1.6d *Partner to create an interactive route finding system online.*
    - 3.1.6e *Publish GIS bicycle map and facility information to promote 3rd party solutions.*
    - 3.1.6f *Provide wayfinding guidance along bicycle network.*
  - 3.1.7 Develop measures to reduce bicycle theft.
    - 3.1.7a *Educate citizens on techniques that can help recover stolen bicycles.*
    - 3.1.7b *Educate bicyclists on proper locking techniques.*

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3.1.8 Coordinate educational efforts with Austin Police Department

*3.1.8a Further promote safety and traffic laws through Enforcement. (See Safety and Enforcement, Objective 3.5)*

*3.1.8b Develop legal, uniform minimum bicycle safety recommendations and guidelines for use in local education and enforcement programs by law enforcement agencies, bicycling groups, and bicycle educators and planners.*

*3.1.8c Require the participation of Austin Police Department in annual Bike to Work Day events to educate bicyclists on bicycle safety and to establish a working relationship between bicyclists and law enforcement.*

3.1.9 Encourage and promote the use of the City 311 system specific to bicyclists' issues.

3.1.10 Hire staff to specifically focus on educational and promotional programs.

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## ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMOTION

**Objective 3.2a: Develop and execute encouragement programs to promote bicycling and increase awareness of bicycling among the general public.**

**Objective 3.2b: Partner to create citywide multi-modal encouragement and educational programs targeting reduction in drive alone trips.**

Encouraging and promoting bicycle riding are necessary for getting people over personal psychological barriers and excited about bicycling. Local data suggests that up to 17 % of Austinites are currently interested in riding a bicycle, given the conditions on our roadways, yet bicycling accounts for only 2 % of trips to work. Encouragement programs can get people the information and nudge they need to break deeply seeded habits that keep them from trying a trip by bicycle for the first time.

Austin is in the middle of a rapid expansion of the mobility market and would benefit from a multi-modal encouragement program such as a Smart Trips Program. A partnership between the City of Austin, Capital Metro, Movability Austin, Car2go, Zipcar, B-cycle, Carma ride sharing and other mobility providers has the potential to significantly increase use of rail, bus, bike sharing, bicycling, walking, car sharing, car pooling and other mobility options. The success of this type of program in increasing bicycling lies in its ability to help people find bicycle routes and discuss parking, showers and changing facilities to alleviate apprehensions about bicycling. The confidence building personal touch that this program gives results in successful behavior change.

Promotion aims to increase bicycling through marketing, advertising and incentives. Currently, the City of Austin provides minimal programming to promote bicycling. The majority of efforts are done by non-City groups on a limited basis. It is strongly recommended that the City increase resources and partnerships to promote bicycling and other modes of transportation.

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Smart Trips has been a program in Portland, Oregon since 2004 focused on reducing drive alone trips. The program works by focusing on a neighborhood and assessing which individuals and households are interested in learning about how to get around using alternative transportation such as bus, bicycle, walking and other mobility options. A program staff member then schedules a one-on-one appointment with residents and answers questions about mobility options. The program organizes events such as bicycle rides in the neighborhood so residents can become more familiar and comfortable getting around the neighborhood using alternative transportation.

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Ciclovia events (called Viva Streets in Austin), where miles of road are made car free for the day are incredible means of promoting the transformation of public space, walking, bicycling, and active healthy living. Austin has now hosted two limited ciclovia events in 2012 and 2013 and is planning its third for the fall of 2014. The plan recommends that these events are expanded in frequency, geographic diversity and total length of street closure in order to extend the reach and effectiveness of these events in Austin.

Other events are also a great way to promote bicycling. The City of Austin partners with groups to promote National Bike Month and associated activities. Other events such as Social Rides, “Longhorn Bike Day” or “Bike to your Neighborhood Pool Day” are other examples of effective promotional events.

Promotion increases awareness of the benefits of bicycling to the public at large. They can also target particular audiences. For example, a person who commutes to work from 20 miles away may not be encouraged to commute by bicycle, but may be encouraged to start bicycling for recreational purposes to improve health, or to make short trips on the weekend or evening by bicycle. Partnering with other public agencies, non-profit groups, and/or private sector groups will result in more diverse, lower cost, and effective promotional efforts.

Promoting bicycling to work is a common practice as commuting is a daily trip, driving contributes to congestion and bicycling is an opportunity to integrate physical activity into a busy workday. Events such as bike to work day and programs such as commuter cash incentives are effective ways to increase bicycling to work.

The City of Austin promotes bicycling among its employees. As the work of City of Austin employees touch all areas of City life it is important that bicycling be embraced among this

### **BEST PRACTICES: BOGOTÁ, COLUMBIA**

Every Sunday in Bogota, Columbia, the city closes down over 70 miles of roadway to cars to make way for bicyclists.

This event, known as Ciclovia, which is Spanish for bike path, is being picked up by cities around the World.

El Paso had a Ciclovia every Sunday during the month of May 2007. The event is now called Scenic Sundays, and occurs every Sunday from April through August, two miles of street is closed (City of El Paso, 2007).

Portland holds 5 “Sunday Parkway” events a year, with 5-10 miles of streets closed to traffic (Portland Bureau of Transportation, 2014).

Chicago is planning its first two “Sunday Parkways” for two Sundays in October (Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, 2008).

New York City closed 6.9 miles of streets to automobiles on three Saturdays in August 2008 (Neuman & Santos, 2008).

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group. Also, as one of largest employers, the City of Austin has an opportunity to set an example to promote bicycling among its workforce to other employers and public agencies. Examples include hosting bicycle classes through its Physical Education (PE) Program and stand alone safety classes, providing secure bicycle parking rooms and hosting annual department director led rides to celebrate new bicycle infrastructure.

### **Objective 3.2 Benchmarks**

- Reach 20,000 households a year through a Smart Trips type program.
- Reduce drive alone trips by 10% in areas after deployment of Smart Trips program.
- Create partnerships with other public agencies, and/or non-profit groups and advocacy groups to reach tens of thousands of people per year with promotional programs.
- Host 5 Viva Streets (Ciclovía) events a year serving geographically diverse parts of the City by 2015.
- Increase the number of recipients of the Bicycle Program social media and email communications by 15% per year.
- Notify the public of and engage citizens in all phases of new infrastructure projects and programs through the City's website and other communication means.
- Increase number of media pieces to 75 annual occurrences by 2015, then continue to increase by 10% per year.
- Increase number of Bike to Work Day participants by 10% each year.
- Increase number of City of Austin employees who commute to central city locations by bicycle to 7% by 2015 and 10% by 2020.

### **Objective 3.2 Actions**

#### 3.2.1 Implement a Smart Trips Program

*3.2.1a Reach 20,000 households a year through a pilot Smart Trips type program.*

*3.2.1b Conduct ongoing evaluation of the program, and if successful, expand with a goal of strategically scaling the program to optimal levels considering demand and opportunity areas.*

#### 3.2.2 Partner with community groups, the private sector, and other City departments and agencies to provide citywide events and campaigns, such as National Bike Month.

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- 3.2.3 Expand the Viva Streets (Ciclovía) program 5 events a year serving geographically diverse parts of the City by 2015.
  - 3.2.4 Utilize a variety of methods to distribute and market promotional information.
  - 3.2.5 Partner with local celebrities and organizations to promote bicycling through public service announcements and other means.
  - 3.2.6 Bicycle Program staff should host a regular TV, radio, and/or print section, preferably for a mainstream channel or publication regarding bicycling promotion and education.
  - 3.2.7 Work with local retail bicycle dealers to create a “Take your bike to the shop today” program offering special incentives to get bikes out of the garage and ready to ride safely.
  - 3.2.8 Promote a pilot “Bicycle Ambassador” program that utilizes a volunteer force to conduct promotional outreach at events and other forums.
  - 3.2.9 Promote bicycling to work.
    - 3.2.9a *Develop and deploy incentive programs to encourage individuals to commute to work by bicycle.*
    - 3.2.9b *Work with employers to promote bicycling as a means of commuting to work.*
    - 3.2.9c *Promote Bike to Work Day and Bike Month in May.*
    - 3.2.9d *Support Bicycle Commuter Services and Escorted Commute Rides offered by local bicycle shops and bicycle advocacy groups.*
  - 3.2.10 Promote bicycle use for employees who work for the City to serve as a model program for other Austin employers including public agencies.
    - 3.2.10a *All City-owned buildings should be retrofitted with showers, changing rooms, lockers, and secure bicycle parking to facilitate bicycle use among employees.*
    - 3.2.10b *Switch to a parking payout program to give cash incentive to employees to commute by means other than the private car.*

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## PROMOTION OF BICYCLING TO SCHOOL

### **Objective 3.3: Promote bicycling to school (elementary through high school).**

Safety education and encouragement programs for school aged kids is particularly important as many students are in need of outlets for daily physical activity and giving them the skills to bicycle will help them form lifelong habits creating the next generation of people on bicycles. Additionally, school related traffic is a significant source of congestion on our roadways and creates unsafe conditions around schools. To break the cycle of concern for walking and bicycling safety around schools, a deliberate program of infrastructure, education and encouragement effort needs to be put in place.

There is much opportunity to further promote bicycling to all school age children. Students, families and school staff all need more resources to increase bicycling use at schools. High schools are particularly underserved at this time and need attention. These educational and promotional efforts will support the City's investment in an all ages and abilities network. The combined infrastructure and program efforts will result in significantly increased ridership to school and healthier and more engaged students who will become the next generation of Austin's workforce and citizen body.



**STUDENTS AT BRYKER WOODS ELEMENTARY PARTICIPATING IN THE BOLTAGE PROGRAM (PHOTO COURTESY OF CORD DOVER).**

Several successful programs are already in place and should be supported and expanded. The City of Austin's Safe Routes to School Program, formerly the Child Safety Program, creates a safe environment for students as they travel to and from school. The program includes over 200 crossing guards at 91 elementary schools in seven school districts within the City. Training staff educates over 50,000 students in safe street crossing procedures for walking and bicycling. In class, the bike training for students teaches the rules of the road for our young bike riders. The students then practice what they have learned in the classroom at hands-on training events, called "bike rodeos," after school or on weekends. The program works closely with the schools' community and neighborhood groups to encourage use of active transportation options to travel to and from school instead of using motor vehicles.

Another successful program is the Boltage Program, which offers an incentive to students to ride to school on a daily basis. The program was sponsored by the Bicycle Sport Shop and has been in place since 2011 at several local area schools. The program utilizes a sensor near the school bike rack that detects a transmitter located in the child’s helmet recording how many days kids ride to school. Prizes are given out at the end of the year for participants who ride a certain number of days throughout the year which at Doss Elementary was 70 of the 180 days of the year. At Doss and Bryker Woods Elementary Schools the Boltage Program resulted in a significant growth in Bicycling.

School	Daily Students Bicycling to School		Yearly Trips
	Before	After	
Doss Elementary School	10-15	100	18,000
Bryker Woods Elementary School	5-10	52	9,394

*Source: City of Austin*

**INCREASED BICYCLE RIDERSHIP TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AS A RESULT OF THE BOLTAGE PROGRAMS (AS OF NOVEMBER, 2014).**

**Objective 3.3 Benchmarks**

- Increase bicycle mode share of children commuting to school to 25% by 2020.
- Provide bicycle education and encouragement programs to 90% of children before high-school.
- Conduct safe biking and safe walking encouragement & messaging to school-aged children.
- Provide encouragement and education outreach to all students, parents, and staff at schools served by new or improved bicycle facilities.

**Objective 3.3 Actions**

- 3.3.1 Continue and expand safety and encouragement programs for school aged children to increase walking and bicycling to school.
- 3.3.2 Install supporting bicycle infrastructure that extends the All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network to schools.
- 3.3.3 Partner to create ride-to-school encouragement programs, such as “Bicycle to School Day.
- 3.3.4 Support and encourage high school bicycling clubs that include activities for both utilitarian and recreational/competitive bicyclists.
- 3.3.5 Support innovative and new programs and/or events which aim to increase bicycling to school.

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## EQUITY AND ACCESS

### **Objective 3.4 Promote and support access to all through public engagement, program delivery, and capital investment**

In working to increase access to and promote bicycle transportation it is important to take an approach that works towards equitable access to all. As supported by Austin’s Complete Streets policy, all streets should generally have safe facilities for all modes for users of all ages and abilities. Certainly this will take many years to achieve, though through the process of implementation it is important to carefully evaluate the equitability of transportation options, and orient infrastructure and programs accordingly.

The development of the all ages and abilities bicycle network, while prioritizing where short trips could be captured, also carefully considered where additional access was needed in under-served areas where populations have little or no current access to safe bicycling. Geographically this is challenging as areas in the outer limits of the city have low densities, incomplete road networks, and few inexpensive retrofit options to provide bicycle access. The Plan prioritizes providing access to these areas and programming support to encourage bicycling once infrastructure is put in place.

One significant challenge is that the older, more connected, and central parts of the city are more conducive to bicycling, largely due to the high concentration of short trips. Affordability of living in the central part of the city, have become a major concern, and current trends erode the equity of access to bicycling for lower income families who increasingly cannot afford to live in the central part of the city. If Austin is to provide equitable access to bicycling and

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### **SPOTLIGHT: M STATION**

M Station is a project by Foundation Communities, a leading provider of affordable housing in Austin. The M Station project is 150 unit affordable housing project 2.5 miles from downtown and is the first affordable housing project to be located in Austin’s new Transit Oriented Developments (TODs). M Station currently has good access to bicycling and walking and will be served by funded future expansions of the all ages and abilities bicycle network.

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### **SPOTLIGHT: COLONY PARK MASTER PLAN**

The Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative (CPSCI) is a 3-year Community Planning Process that will culminate in a Master Plan for 208-acres of publicly-owned land in Northeast Austin, in addition to 93 acres of parkland, on Loyola Lane between Johnny Morris Road and Decker Lane. The proposed project will support and furthers the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s six “livability principles”:

- provide more transportation choices;
- promote equitable, affordable housing;
- enhance economic competitiveness;
- support existing communities;
- coordinate policies and leverage investment; and
- value communities and neighborhoods.

Not only does the Colony Park plan include all ages and abilities within the site, but also includes access to the city wide network.

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walking, it is therefore utterly important, that structural solutions that address access to affordable housing be put in place, particularly in the central city. Other tools to provide affordable access to bicycling will be the move to distributed centers (of concentrated employment, shopping, and housing) throughout the region. While this strategy reduces dependence on the center part of the city where market forces put the most pressure, the challenge is that many centers have poor and incomplete street systems that will need much investment to support bicycling and walking.

### **Objective 3.4 Benchmarks**

- Provide equal bicycling access for all; through public engagement, program delivery, and capital investment.
- Create programs with organizations, neighborhood groups, and community leaders to encourage short trips and bicycling commuting throughout the City.
- Create and support neighborhood events to promote education and safety about bicycling throughout the City.

### **Objective 3.4 Actions**

3.4.1 Ensure that bicycle transportation is accessible to all citizens of Austin.

*3.4.1a Provide access to safe bicycle routes throughout all of Austin.*

*3.4.1b Ensure that affordable housing is available throughout Austin, especially in the Central City and near high capacity transit stations where the potential for short trips and the potential for bicycling are most present.*

3.4.2 Create bicycle educational and safety informational material in Spanish, as well as in any other language deemed appropriate.

3.4.3 Partner with other departments and local organizations to develop education and encouragement programs for populations historically underrepresented in bicycling, including youth, older adults, women, economically disadvantaged, and people of color.

3.4.4 Continue to partner with Austin Bike Share to promote the bike share system and focus on safety for new riders, encouragement programs and wayfinding.

3.4.5 Collaborate with community leaders, neighborhood groups and other partners who want to promote and improve bicycling and bicycle safely through neighborhoods and city events.

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## BICYCLE LAWS AND ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement is a tool to both reinforce and educate the public about the rules of the road and promote safer behavior. Enforcement of traffic laws for all users is a key element in developing cooperative behavior among bicyclists and motorists. Bicycles are legal vehicles in the State of Texas, and persons riding a bicycle are required to follow all the rules and regulations applicable to all vehicles, with only minor differences.

### STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT

**Objective 3.5 - Strengthen efforts to enforce proper motorist and bicyclist behavior and reduce bicyclist-motorist collisions.**

There is a perception that bicyclists do not obey traffic laws. While some bicyclists run red lights and stop signs, travel the wrong way down the street, or switch unpredictably from the sidewalk to the street, this represents only a small portion of people riding bicycles. This behavior does put these bicyclists at risk and increases conflicts with pedestrians and motorists. This unlawful behavior also leaves a negative impression on motorists and contributes to the antagonism between bicyclists (even those who do obey the law) and motorists.

The lack of adequate bicycle facilities may also contribute to unlawful actions by bicyclists and must be taken into account by law enforcement agencies. Often times traffic signals fail to detect and change for bicyclists, resulting in bicyclists running the red light. In many situations, bicyclists operating on inadequate facilities face harassment and intimidation from inconsiderate and uneducated motorists who do not understand the needs of bicyclists or how to properly share the road.

Similarly, some motorists drive in a manner that is dangerous to bicyclists and other roadway users. Bicyclists report that car drivers sometimes go out of their way to intimidate them by driving too close, throwing objects, blowing their horns, and generally harassing them. Motorists also roll through stop signs, speed, run red lights, fail to signal turns or lane changes, and exhibit other unlawful behaviors that are dangerous to bicyclists and other roadway users. The numerous stories of hit and runs where the person on a bicycle is left for dead by a negligent motorist also contribute to the antagonism between bicyclists and motorists. Certainly, the bad behavior of all road users should be strictly enforced to create a safe and predictable environment.

Bicyclist and motorists both have common behaviors that are illegal and dangerous to both road users. The table below illustrates common dangerous behaviors for each.

**TABLE 4.1 COMMON DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR BY ROAD USERS**

Failure to have a red light during dark hours.	Speeding. Driving in a bicycle lane.
Running red lights.	Rolling through stop signs at high speeds.
Rolling through stop signs at high speeds.	Parking in a bicycle lane.
Passing on the right.	Failure to yield right-of-way.
Riding the wrong way on a roadway.	Speeding. Driving in a bicycle lane.

The highest priorities to provide safer conditions for people on bicycles is enforcing laws related to driver speed, distraction, and impairment. Speed is often thought of as a law to be mildly disregarded, but if Austin is going to become a safe place to walk and bicycle then the enforcement of excessive speed of motor vehicles will have to be taken seriously. Higher speeds are a leading contributor to dangerous outcomes and give less room for human error. Distraction and impairment are often what make speed dangerous and deadly. Austin already has ordinances banning texting while driving, which should be enforced with a no tolerance policy. Lastly, drug and alcohol impairment needs to be taken more seriously both through enforcement and the consequences of being caught driving. Enforcement and publicity of stings of the safe passing law and impaired driving are great opportunities to educate drivers to the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.



**APD PATROL CAR WITH EDUCATIONAL MESSAGE USED IN THE SAFE PASSING LAW CAMPAIGN.**

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In 2001, the City of Austin Transportation Division analyzed pedestrian and bicycle accidents that occurred on public roadways. The analysis of these accidents did not reveal any “patterns or common cause factors... and don’t indicate a specific type of problem that would lead to a logical prevention strategy” (City of Austin, 2001, p. 1). It concluded that the common factor in all the accidents was a “failure to exercise caution and observe right-of-way rules [among] motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists” (City of Austin, 2001, p. 1). The findings in this study support the comprehensive approach of this Plan to address bicycle safety. The promotion of bicycling on adequate facilities with all users following applicable laws will result in the safest environment for all roadway users.

Additionally, Chapter 525 of the Texas Transportation Code requires that the Department of Public Safety include bicycle awareness information in any edition of the Texas drivers’ handbook (Texas Transportation Code, Statute 525.001). Chapter 9 of the Texas Drivers’ Handbook addresses vehicular sharing of the road with bicycles; Chapter 13 addresses bicycle vehicle laws and safety; and Chapter 15 addresses safe passing of bicycles by commercial vehicles. Continuing to revise the Texas Drivers’ Handbook with the most current and best practices of bicycle safety will ensure consistent education of motorists and bicyclists, enforcement of these laws, and improvement for safety of bicyclists on the road.

Strategies to implement this Objective include increasing enforcement of traffic laws and increasing education of traffic laws in driving instruction and defensive driving courses. With the Austin Police Department, the Bicycle Program will establish enforcement priorities to target the most dangerous behaviors.

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A great example of enforcement improving public safety is the Austin Police Department’s (APD) enforcement of the Safe Passing Law. The campaign consisted of media outreach and press coverage, undercover sting, and publicity of sting. The program resulted in 39 citations, 78 warnings to motorists braking the safe passing law and tens of thousands of people reached through media coverage.

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### **Objective 3.5 Benchmarks**

- Increase compliance each year in the general public with speeding, distraction and impairment laws through integrated enforcement and publicity campaigns.
- Increase compliance each year in the general public with the safe passing law through integrated enforcement and publicity campaigns.

### **Objective 3.5 Actions**

- 3.5.1 Increase enforcement of traffic laws for bicyclist and motorist behavior through citations and/or warnings.
- 3.5.2 Increase enforcement in areas with high crash rates, high levels of complaints, and where new infrastructure has been installed.
- 3.5.3 Forgive bicycle equipment violators if they can show evidence of properly equipping their bicycle within a reasonable amount of time from citation.
- 3.5.4 Coordinate with the Bicycle Program to continue the Bright Lights program that gives warnings along with lights for violation of the law.
- 3.5.5 Support and monitor efforts to update the State drivers' manual to strengthen bicycle section and exam questions.
- 3.5.6 Amend City of Austin Defensive Driving Course curriculum to include motorist-bicyclist safety information and support any State or other agency efforts to do the same.
- 3.5.7 Expand a bicycle education course for bicyclists cited for traffic violations, to take in lieu of a fine, or offer defensive driver courses revised to include bicycle use in traffic instead of a new course.
- 3.5.8 Partner to create a mandatory cyclists awareness educational course for motorists that receive citations involving cyclists.
- 3.5.9 Increase enforcement of traffic laws of motorist violations in bicycle facilities.
- 3.5.10 Find means of providing responsive citywide enforcement of parking in bicycle lanes.
- 3.5.11 Further promote safety and traffic laws through education. (See Education & Promotion, Objective 1).
- 3.5.12 The City of Austin Bicycle Program shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in task forces and/or collaborations between the Austin Police Department and the community which aim to address traffic safety.

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## BEST PRACTICE BICYCLE REGULATIONS AND CONSISTENCY IN ENFORCEMENT

**Objective 3.6a: Ensure best practice bicycle related laws are in place.**

**Objective 3.6b: Ensure consistent interpretation and enforcement of bicycle related laws by Austin Police Department.**

It is important to have both best practice bicycle laws and consistent enforcement to create a culture of safe and respectful interactions between road users. This alignment will also create a partnership and mutual respect between bicyclists and law enforcement agencies.

Regular evaluation of current laws will ensure that they are in-line with best practice and are effective in improving safety, road conduct, and increasing ridership. Bicycle friendly laws that have been implemented in other cities include stiff penalties for negligently opening a car door into the path of a cyclist.

Enforcement should be consistently and fairly applied to all roadway users. This goal can be achieved through reviewing law enforcement policies and data reporting while maintaining an ongoing dialogue and partnership with the bicycle community. Local laws should be interpreted consistently so that neither law enforcers nor users of the road (motorists and bicyclists) will be confused on what is legal behavior. Educational materials should be consistent with state and local traffic laws, which should also reflect the best practice regulations around the country. Ultimately, Austin's law enforcement and the bicycle community want the same thing, safe conditions on Austin's roadways for all users that allowing travelers to choose the best travel mode for their trip.

Currently, the Austin Police Department (APD) includes bicycle law enforcement training in the Cadet Academy. Continuing to train law enforcement officers on bicycling issues will help ensure consistent enforcement of the laws protecting bicyclists. The City of Austin Bicycle Program will work with APD to unify traffic laws and enforcement policies and ensure consistent interpretation of bicycle traffic law enforcement.

### **Objective 3.6 Benchmarks**

- Evaluate bicycle laws every 2 years and work with APD and City prosecutors to bring them up to national best practice.
- Train 100% of APD law enforcement officers in bicyclist and motorist behavior laws and bicycle issues in conjunction with the City Bicycle Program.

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## Objective 3.6 Actions

- 3.6.1 Clarify and increase enforcement of state laws and the City of Austin’s traffic codes where necessary to improve safety for bicyclists, and amend the City Traffic Code as needed to support bicycling as a mode of transportation.
  - 3.6.1a Clarify legal status of bicycles as vehicles, with all rights to use the roadway.*
  - 3.6.1b Clarify riding position on the roadway, riding abreast, riding on sidewalks, etc.*
  - 3.6.1c Evaluate bicycle laws every 2 years and work with APD and City prosecutors to bring them up to national best practice*
  - 3.6.1d Amend local ordinances as necessary to reflect national best practices regarding safe behavior for bicyclists and motorists.*
- 3.6.2 Coordinate with APD to monitor and support bicycle safety efforts.
- 3.6.3 The City of Austin Bicycle Program should coordinate with APD to compile an annual report outlining data for bicycle-related citations, 311 calls on aggressive driving, crashes, injuries, and other enforcement/safety issues to help identify specific trouble spots or behaviors by motorists and/or bicyclists that need to be corrected.
- 3.6.4 Review APD Uniform Traffic & Tolerance Policy to make recommendations of changes as necessary regarding bicycle specific issues.
- 3.6.5 Provide bicycle educational training for all law enforcement personnel in the Austin metropolitan area.
  - 3.6.5a Enhance bicycling issue education within Police Training Academy curriculum.*
  - 3.6.5b Provide that all law enforcement officers receive an annual review on bicycle behavior laws and safety issues and the current Traffic and Tolerance Policies related to bicycling.*
  - 3.6.5c Require all law enforcement officers to pass at least a Road I, League of American Bicyclists certified (or equivalent) training course.*
- 3.6.6 Develop legal, uniform minimum bicycle safety recommendations and guidelines for use in local education and enforcement programs by law enforcement agencies, bicycling groups, and bicycle educators and planners.
- 3.6.7 Request that any selective enforcement targeted to bicyclists is executed at the same time as selective enforcement of motor vehicles and is coordinated with the City Bicycle Program.