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**The League of Bicycling Voters (LOBV) asks that no action be taken on a proposal to amend the current bicycle helmet ordinance or enact new regulations regarding bicycle helmet use.**

**The LOBV does support the goals of a resolution passed on Aug. 14, 2006 by the Urban Transportation Commission to initiate an 18-month study of bicycle safety issues.**

**The LOBV specifically supports the following objectives and asks that they be formally accepted by the City Council with direction to staff to implement.**

#### **I. Formation of a Bicycle Safety Task Force**

The task force will be charged with developing, implementing and completing the 18-month study in cooperation with city staff. The LOBV is willing to discuss specifics on task force membership, but in general the task force should be made up of:

- Two members of the LOBV
- Two members of the Austin Cycling Association
- One member of the Texas Bicycle Coalition
- Two members of the medical community
- One member of a community health services/public education organization
- Support staff from COA, Travis County, CAMPO, Capital Area COG, TxDOT and the Austin Police Department.
- A City Council Member appointed to be a liaison between the full council and Task Force.

#### **I. Goals and Specifics of Issues to be Studied**

The study will produce recommendations for improving bicycle safety with specific steps outlined for achieving a goal of reducing serious bicycle-related injuries AND increasing the number of bicyclists in the Austin area. A primary objective should also be recommendations that will garner community support, instead of divisive policy that pits automobile users against bicyclists.

The task force will report on its progress to City Council every six months.

Specific issues to be addressed include:

- a. Creation of funded, public education campaigns directed at both bicyclists and motorists to encourage awareness and sharing the road--and for bicyclists, safety training and proper helmet use.
- b. Analysis of options for increasing bicycle safety with new/better infrastructure, public education, incentives for bicycling and regulations related to traffic safety.
- c. Tracking and analysis of bicycle-related injuries and the primary causes and the costs associated with them; AND tracking and analysis of auto and motorcycle-related injuries and the primary causes and the costs associated with them.
- d. Tracking and analysis of penalties/legal action assessed to motorists and/or bicyclists for collisions involving automobiles and bicycles.
- e. Tracking and analysis of helmet use by bicyclists and motorcycle riders.
- f. Comprehensive evaluation of the existing bicycle helmet ordinance for those 17 and under.
- g. Tracking and analysis of bicycle trips in the Greater Austin Area.
- h. Polling and other research into helmet use that analyzes the reasons why bicyclists choose to wear a helmet, and whether they are educated to wear the helmets properly.
- i. Analysis of the benefits and costs related to bicycle use
- j. Analysis of the benefits and costs related to automobile and motorcycle use.
- k. Best practices of other municipalities in increasing bicycle safety.
- l. A prioritized list of ways to get more people using bicycles for transportation.
- m. Tracking of year 2000 bond money intended for bicycle/pedestrian uses.
- n. Ways to make Austin a city recognized for its commitment to promoting bicycle use.

### **I. Immediate Actions Proposed**

In addition to improvements from the longer-term study, the Task Force will help implement and monitor immediate steps to improve bicycle safety and encourage bicycling. The LOBV endorses the following immediate actions recommended by the Austin Cycling Association:

- a. Complete the application for the League of American Bicyclists "Bicycle Friendly Community" at the Silver level.
- b. Hire 2 fulltime Planners to complete Bike Plan Part II.
- c. Develop a bike safety and helmet use PSA campaign focusing on the "Share the Road."
- d. Create a bicyclist and motorist traffic citation diversion program for safety training.
- e. Coordinate with community organizations to provide free or low-costs helmets.
- f. Fund the HHS Youth and Injury Prevention program.
- g. Integrate existing efforts into the Steps to a Healthier Austin Program (ithrive).
- h. Work with AISD to train staff or coordinate training for SuperCyclist and Safe Routes to School in cooperation with Texas Bicycle Coalition.