



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair and Environmental Board Members
FROM: Annick Beaudet, City of Austin, Public Works Department (PWD)-
Neighborhood Connectivity Division
Greg Griffin, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)
DATE: May 2, 2012
SUBJECT: Austin Bicycle Master Plan & Air Quality Briefing

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Environmental Board on progress made with the Austin Bicycle Master Plan, since its major amendment in June 2009 (at which time it was presented to the Environmental Board prior to it being presented to the City Council).

Specifically, this briefing will address, per the Boards request, the relationship of the plan to air quality. While the City Public Works Department primarily focuses on the implementation of the infrastructure portions of the plan, we do work closely with CAMPO with regard to assessment of related congestion and air quality data.

Since summer of 2009, the PWD has implemented approximately 15 linear miles of new and/or improved bicycle lanes per year. At this rate we would have the bicycle lane portion of the plan implemented by 2030.

It is important to note that bicycle lanes are not the only contribution to the creation of a bicycle friendly City. In order to achieve higher levels of peak hour bicycling, safety education for bicyclists and provision of adequate bicycle parking, for example, are also important components. The PWD staff also implements these items in partnership with other City departments, and governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Currently the goal is to have 2% of peak hour commuters arrive to their destination by bicycle by 2015; we are currently at 1.1% (source: US Census Data). Several studies have shown bicycle infrastructure to induce new cyclists to choose that mode over others for transportation trips, and these changes benefit air quality by reducing emissions. A quick analysis of the benefits of developing 15 miles of bike lanes without parking (City of Austin's approximate annual average) indicates a 35% increase in bicycling over existing conditions. This improvement may be associated with a reduction of approximately one ton of carbon dioxide every day in savings of automobile trips, in addition to other known and unknown chemical by-products. Bicycle facility development yields the most positive impact in higher density areas with mixed land uses and greater street connectivity. Innovative facility development can benefit individual users and the community at large through improved health, mobility, recreation, air quality, and cost savings.











