

CITY OF AUSTIN
BICYCLE ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC)
MEETING SUMMARY

Bull Pen, Room 1029
301 W. 2nd
March 18, 2014
6:00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS:

Mike Kase – BAC Chair
Christopher Stanton – BAC Vice Chair
Tommy Eden – BAC
Sophia Benner – BAC
David Orr – BAC

Tom Thayer – BAC
Nick Warrenchuk – BAC
Eileen Nehme – BAC
Pete Wall – Alt BAC

Tom Wald - Alt BAC
Tom Hilde – Alt BAC
Bill Blome – Alt BAC
Alison Kaplan – Alt BAC

GUESTS:

Joel Meyer
Tara Long – APD

Roch Hollenbeck
Robert Davis – COA Municipal Court

Commander Fred Fletcher – APD

STAFF PRESENT:

Aleksiiina Chapman
Nathan Wilkes

Neil Kopper

Shannon Wisner

1. Introductions – Mr. Kase begins the meeting with introductions. Mr. Wald will serve as a full standing member.
2. Review and Approval of January Minutes – Mr. Stanton moves to approve the minutes and Ms. Benner seconds. The minutes are approved.
3. Items from BAC –

Briefing: APD Annual Report – Commander Fred Fletcher

Officer Fletcher distributes safety stats collected by Austin Police Department. The total citations in 2013 increased due to a general increase in enforcement initiatives across the City. This year's enforcement efforts included outreach and education in addition to enforcement. Mr. Kopper asks why the total is not the sum of the separate categories. Officer Fletcher replies that there are some categories that are not shown. APD was focused this year on enforcement of cyclists running red lights, which was requested by other cyclists because it puts cyclists at risk and also creates a negative stigma towards the cycling community. Mr. Eden asks what code "riding on a business sidewalk" refers to. Mr. Davis explains that sometimes there are multiple codes that enforce the same law. Mr. Eden asks if the two sidewalk riding categories can be combined. Ms. Long explains that sometimes there are huge databases that would have to be changed if two ordinances are combined. Ms. Kaplan asks why locations and key times for no lights on bikes are not displayed and Mr. Fletcher replies that it just didn't get added. Ms. Kaplan asks if Mr. Fletcher knows off the top of his head if there were key times or locations. Mr. Fletcher explains that the data may be misleading because enforcement operations are

done in specific locations, and the data would reflect only locations where operations occurred, even if there is a city-wide issue. Mr. Stanton asks if it would be possible to look at combining sidewalk riding citations. Mr. Kase wants to know if there was any specific location that citations were particularly high. Mr. Fletcher replies that South Lamar from Oltorf to Barton Springs is a location that was targeted. Mr. Wald clarifies that there is the existing code for restricted sidewalk riding on specific sidewalks but that city engineers can also decide that sidewalk riding should be restricted in a given area. Ms. Nehme asks how and if crash statistics are used to determine enforcement operation locations. Mr. Fletcher replies that there are too many data points to parse out trends. Higher crash locations also tend to have lower injury rates because they tend to happen in lower speed, congested traffic. Ms. Nehme asks if the bicycle program looks at crash statistics. Mr. Kopper replies that we are moving in the direction and that there was a lag in getting access to the data. Mr. Wilkes adds that we are using the crash data for before-after analysis on projects. Mr. Fletcher says their general methodology was to combine data with anecdotal evidence of unsafe locations to determine where their enforcement operations would occur. Mr. Wilkes shows a graph of increasing ridership in Austin and increasing crash numbers, but emphasizes the decreasing crash rate because the number of cyclists is increasing faster than the number of crashes. Mr. Fletcher thinks that one of the best ways to increase cyclist safety is to increase the number of cyclists. Mr. Orr asks if any citations were written to enforce the vulnerable user law, outside of enforcement operations. Mr. Fletcher replies that it does not happen outside of an operation. Mr. Stanton asks if there is a route for cyclists to send in evidence. Mr. Davis replies that you have to file a citizen complaint and that the responsible party needs to be identified. Mr. Fletcher adds that officers may be able to identify officers on scene.

Briefing and Possible Action: Vulnerable User Law – Robert Davis

Mr. Davis introduces himself. The majority of the cases that he deals with on a daily basis are traffic cases. He explains that the safe passing ordinance is different than general traffic tickets because it does not add points on your driving record and that the fine is more flexible than general traffic offenses. There is a bicycle safety course that you can take in lieu of paying a fine and that he has heard very positive anecdotal feedback about the course. The course can be taken online at TheCCE.org.

Mr. Davis gives an overview of the safe passing ordinance: The safe passing ordinance states that you either need to move out of the lane when you are passing a cyclist or provide at least three feet of passing space, or six feet of passing space if you are an oversized vehicle. You also cannot use your vehicle to intimidate vulnerable road users. Vulnerable road users include more than just bicyclists; they include pedestrians, horseback riders, moped riders, etc. This law depends an officer being able to articulate how far the vehicle is from the bike and if there is any question on the distance it will most likely not hold up in court. Mr. Stanton adds that the Ghisallo foundation has a device that can measure the distance between the bicycle and the vehicle. Ms. Benner asks what the legal implications of this law are if it were taken to court. Mr. Davis replies that it is a monetary fine between \$72 and \$500. Mr. Fletcher adds that the person who receives that citation can opt to take the safe cyclist course and that is the

preferred punishment instead of paying the fine. Mr. Stanton asks for clarification on sections B1 and B2, where the vehicle has to either move into the other lane or give a safe passing space. If there is a 10' vehicle lane beside a 5' bike lane, vehicles can pass within the safe passing distance without citation. Mr. Fletcher says that they will enforce vehicles that pass within the safe passing limit, regardless of the wording. Mr. Wald asks Officer Fletcher if all the citations in the C part of the stats sheet were related to the safe passing law. Officer Fletcher confirms that this was the case. Mr. Eden notes that there is a section of the ordinance relating to intimidation that could be used for unsafe passing even if a bicycle is in a bicycle lane. Mr. Orr adds that he prefers having a bike lane with buses passing within an unsafe distance than a shared lane because many of the lanes would not have been built on existing bus routes if buses were required to move out of the right lane when passing bikes. Mr. Wilkes confirms that this is correct. Mr. Stanton is more concerned about big trucks passing than buses and Mr. Kase adds that trucks pulling trailers are especially concerning.

Mr. Fletcher says that APD is organizing a beginner ride which includes new cyclist education in partnership with Sharon Cannon on April 5th, 2014. Bike Texas is lending bikes to the ride so that anybody will be able to participate. RSVP to Sharon Cannon, Sharon.cannon@austintexas.gov

Briefing and Possible Action: Technical Subcommittee Meeting Discussion – Neil Kopper

- 360 Ramp Improvement Strategies
- Bicycle Priorities for TXDOT

Mr. Kopper introduces Loop 360 ramp discussion. The 2222 and 2244 ramp crossings of Loop 360 are particularly bad. Mr. Kopper explains that there is a history of fatal crashes at these ramps. There are a lot of existing tricks for crossing the ramps, but that the goal is to find a safe crossing method that can be achieved by a first time rider, but will still accommodate cyclists who want to cross the ramps as quickly as possible. Mr. Kopper shows an example from Bend, Oregon at the intersection of Bend Pkwy and Empire Blvd. Ms. Benner asks about having a painted strip across the ramp, similar to the treatment on Dean Keeton. Mr. Kopper explains that painting a route implies an expectation for vehicles to yield which may not be realistic on a high speed street. Mr. Stanton adds that beginner cyclists may use the delineated route in place of caution. Mr. Kopper explains that improvements would be done as a pilot project initially before implementing full scale improvements on all ramps. Mr. Orr worries that there could be conflicts between different types of cyclists. Mr. Kopper explains that shoulders are the first step and that additional changes will follow. Mr. Kase wants to emphasize that the bicycle cut-through be narrow enough so that cars cannot use it. Mr. Eden points out that the technical subcommittee also discussed additional crossings. Mr. Kopper has pulled other crossings in the TxDOT barrier list.

Mr. Wald moves that the BAC supports the recommendations on Loop 360 from the technical subcommittee. Mr. Kase seconds the motion. The motion passes.

TxDOT has asked the City of Austin Bicycle Program to give them a list of barriers to cycling. Citizen who came previously to talk about rumble strips on 360 asks if rumble strips are being incorporated into the barrier list. Mr. Kopper does not think that it is a barrier to cycling since shoulders already exist. Mr. Wald asks if there were any concerns about the list at the technical subcommittee.

Mr. Wald moves to endorse the list of barriers from the technical subcommittee with the addition of profile pavement markings on Loop 360 to the list. Mr. Kase seconds the motion. The motion passes.

4. Items from Staff –

Briefing and Possible Action: Rio Grande Cycle Track – Nathan Wilkes

There are continuing concerns about parking and driving in the cycle track on Rio Grande. Delineators are not enough of a solution to keep people out the cycle track. A physical barrier curb will be added to replace the delineator sticks. The project will most likely go out to bid in the next 6 months.

Briefing and Possible Action: Guadalupe Cycle Track – Nathan Wilkes

There have been concerns about interactions at intersections along Guadalupe, which was spurred on by a cyclist hitting a car which pulled in the cycle track when attempting to park. Mr. Stanton asks if there is the city can drop in concrete wheel stops in place of the delineator posts. Mr. Wilkes says that it's possible but that COA staff time is limited so it may not be a priority right now. Mr. Orr feels that there is a need for better signage for right turning vehicles, especially at 21st Street, and Mr. Thayer agrees and has experienced close calls from right turning cars personally. Mr. Eden suggests that we may want to merge cars closer to the vehicle lanes as best practice. Mr. Wilkes suggests that it is too early to decide what the best design option will be, and points to many design solutions from Europe with high levels of separation at intersections.

UPDATE ON PEDERNALES:

The hold-up on the installation of the Pedernales cycle track has been related to figuring out a suitable barrier. Barrier curbs, like the ones that exist on parts of Pedernales, require high levels of review from the watershed department. Additionally, the split of the urban trails program from the bicycle program has caused constrained funding and barrier curbs are an expensive form of physical protection. Most likely, the remainder of the cycle track will be protected by turtle bumps similar to the ones on 4th Street near the red line station that separate the rail tracks.

Briefing and Possible Action: Cycle Track Barrier Curb Selection Matrix and briefing on facility types: review of comprehensive list of barrier types and tradeoffs – Nathan Wilkes

Mr. Wilkes shows different options for physical protection and the attributes which are related to each option. The list will be sent out to the BAC.

5. Proposed Items for Future Meetings –

- Technical Subcommittee meeting discussion
- Briefing on the Bicycle Plan Update
- Complete Streets Update

6. Announcements/Adjourn –

There will be a public meeting for the Bicycle Plan Update at OTC on April 2nd from 5:30 pm to 7:30 before bringing the Bicycle Plan to Boards and Commissions.

UTC needs a briefing from the BAC at the April meeting since the regular representative from the UTC is not at the meeting tonight. Mr. Kase and Mr. Stanton will give the briefing.

Mr. Stanton moves to adjourn. Mr. Orr seconds. Motion passes.