

Bicycle Advisory Council Recommendation: Electric-Assist Pedicabs and Group Cycles

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Bicycle Advisory Council (BAC) is to advise the City of Austin and other jurisdictions on all matters relating to the use of the bicycle, bicycle infrastructure, and individuals of all ages and abilities who utilize bicycles;

WHEREAS, Pedicabs are an important part of the vision of a climate-friendly, safe multimodal system for Austin, and increasing the use of shared mobility solutions like pedicabs is a specific tactic for reaching 50 percent non-single occupancy car trips by 2039, as set forth by the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan;

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2019, Austin City Council declared a climate emergency and called for an immediate emergency mobilization to address the climate crisis;

WHEREAS, since April 2018, the over 5 million trips of an average distance of 1 mile each on electric scooters and other micro-mobility options show strong demand for non-car-mode transportation using electric-assist motors;

WHEREAS, pedicab stakeholders have confirmed that e-pedicabs are popular and in demand by pedicab customers and drivers, so that demand and use of non-electric pedicabs has substantially decreased while overall industry permit numbers have also decreased by 16% since the start of the e-pedicab pilot;

WHEREAS, a small electric-assist motor can dramatically extend the range of bikes such as pedicabs and provide a low impact, quick transportation option for more people to get around without a car;

WHEREAS, pedicabs with electric-assist motors make pedicab jobs more accessible and equitable to people of diverse ages and abilities;

WHEREAS, small low-speed transportation modes like pedicabs make streets welcoming, safe, and comfortable places for all people;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the BAC recommends the following amendments to City Code Chapter 13-2:

- Permit pedicab businesses to utilize electric pedal-assist motors
- Permit group cycle businesses to utilize electric pedal-assist motors
- Establish rules governing the safe handling and use of batteries and charging equipment
- Evaluate pedicab operational boundaries for possible expansion

Date of Approval: August 20, 2019

Record of the vote: 7 – 0 – 2 with Alcorn, LeBlanc, Lentz, Merlino, and Ortega absent, Fraser, Heathcott, Moris, Rogers, Wald voting as full members for the purposes of the meeting, and Schaub and Wald abstaining.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn Flowers', is written over a faint, circular official stamp.

Kathryn Flowers, BAC Chair