



CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION & PROMOTION



EDUCATION & PROMOTION GOAL:

To improve safety and increase bicycle ridership throughout Austin through promotion, education, and encouragement.

While a safe and well-connected bicycle network is an important component of ensuring a safe environment for bicycling, it alone cannot increase bicycling. Education and encouragement is an integral part of a sound bicycle network that creates a safer, more predictable environment for all transportation users. Just as we provide training for drivers of motor vehicles, we must provide information for bicyclists to safely operate their vehicles. Education and training increase confidence which translates to a greater number of individuals choosing to ride a bicycle. Bicyclists, both youth and adult, and motorists alike need to be educated of the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists as well as how to safely share the road.

Education is not simply instruction on how to bicycle and share the road. Information on the bicycle system is also important information. Helping bicyclists find bicycle routes, parking, and showers and changing facilities could alleviate many apprehensions about bicycling.

Encouragement to choose bicycling as a mode of transportation comes from education and other promotional programs. Promotion is another form of education that increases awareness of the benefits of bicycling. The two go hand-in-hand, however, the distinction between education and promotion is that education focuses on increasing safety and bicycle use through skill building and information on the laws of bicycling, while promotion focuses on attracting people to the benefits of bicycling through incentives as well as marketing and advertising activities.

Public investment in bicycle facilities cannot prevent many of the crashes that result from inadequate bicycling skills. Bicycle lanes cannot replace bicycle education and awareness for all roadway users. Communities must develop regular programs to educate and train adults and children on the proper use of bicycles in traffic and how to operate a motor vehicle when bicycles are present. Most bicycle experts agree that training in bicycle riding reduces crashes, encourages greater ridership, and makes bicycling safer for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. Bicyclists, like motorists frequently do not obey traffic laws, and thus put themselves and others in danger.

Educational and promotional programs should not only be for the general public, but also target specific populations and audiences. The bicycling community can include children, adults, motorists, commuter bicyclists, recreational bicyclists, university students, minorities, city / public agency staff, businesses, employers, employees, etc. Promotions and education should be targeted to these audiences

Findings and recommendations by the SSTF also supports increasing education and promotion to improve bicycle safety and use in Austin. Programs identified by the SSTF as recommendations to the City of Austin include promoting National Bike Month and associated activities; an annual *Ciclo-Via* ride whereby streets are closed to vehicular traffic; partnering with local businesses to create local events such as “Longhorn Bike Day” or “Bike to your Neighborhood Pool Day”; and sponsoring educational programs to include education of the general public and targeted groups, such as children, university students, or the minority population.



Source: City of Portland, Platinum Bicycle Master Plan - Existing Conditions Report, September 10, 2007, pp. 5-1 - 5-3.





Objective 2.0

Develop and execute education programs for the general public and targeted populations.

Benchmarks

Educate 1,000 adult bicyclists and motorists about bicycle and motorist safety each year.

Distribute 5,000 Austin Bicycle Maps each year.

Increase number of stakeholder contacts in the City of Austin's Bicycle Program listserve to 350 by 2015, and increase by 10% per year.

Increase number of media pieces (radio, television, Internet, or print) to 75 annual occurrences by 2015, and increase by 10% per year.

Provide a bicycle rider educational presentation to the PTA of every school served by a new bicycle facility, starting in 2010.

By 2011, hire one staff member to focus on education and promotional programs.

EDUCATION

As discussed, education is a crucial component of bicycling. A person who knows how to ride a bicycle does not necessarily know how to ride in traffic. It is important to educate bicyclists and the general public that bicycles should be operated according to the rules applicable to all vehicles. Any vehicle operated in violation of those rules is subject to increased risk of ticketing and associated fines, collision, injury, and death.

The City of Austin distributes a bicycle map to bicyclists through the Internet as well as selling hard copies at area bicycle shops and city offices. The map also contains basic bicycling education regarding traffic laws.

The City of Austin has been aggressive in promoting bicycling among its employees through its Physical Education (PE) Program. The PE Program was developed to increase health and physical fitness within the workplace. The PE Bike component educates employees on bicycle safety and is based on the League of American Bicyclists Road I bicycle safety course. In Spring 2008, 48 City employees were certified in Road I, and in Fall 2008, 50 additional employees will be certified.

Additionally, the City of Austin is aggressive in educating school-aged children on bicycling and walking to school through the Child Safety Program in the Department of Public Works as well as the Safe Routes to School Program in the Department of Health and Human Services. These programs are discussed in more detail in Objective 2.3.

These strategies increase public awareness and knowledge of bicycling through two primary techniques: public outreach and skill building / education classes. These strategies target both bicyclists and motorists to improve safety and the coexistence of bicyclists and motorists on the road.

Objective 2.0 Benchmarks

- Educate 1,000 adult bicyclists and motorists about bicycle and motorist safety each year.
- Distribute 5,000 brochures on bicycle safety to motorists and bicyclists per year.
- Increase number of stakeholder contacts in the City of Austin's Bicycle Program listserve to 350 by 2015, and increase by 10% per year.
- Increase number of media pieces (radio, television, Internet, or print) to 75 annual occurrences by 2015 and increase 10% each year.



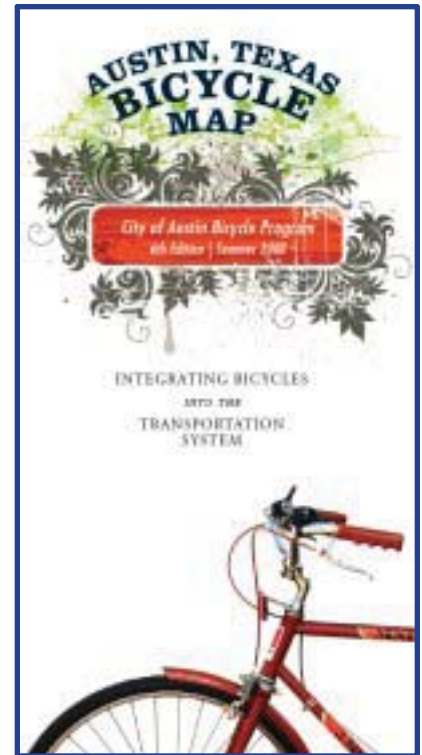
The Travis County Sheriff's Office is utilizing billboards to educate bicyclists and motorists about sharing the road.

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- Provide a bicycle rider educational presentation to the PTA of every school served by a new bicycle facility starting in 2010.
- By 2011, hire one staff member to focus on education and promotional programs.

Objective 2.0 Actions

- 2.0.1 Strengthen the "Share the Road" and develop a "Share the Trail" public awareness campaign.
- 2.0.2 Actively and regularly promote the use of helmets by all cyclists.
- 2.0.3 Implement a Helmet Usage Campaign
- 2.0.4 Regularly update and widely distribute the Austin Bicycle Map.
- 2.0.5 Develop legal, uniform minimum bicycle safety recommendations and guidelines for use in local education and enforcement programs by law enforcement agencies, cycling groups, and bicycle educators and planners.
- 2.0.6 Create, widely distribute, and regularly update informational brochures regarding the benefits of bicycling, safe bicycle behavior, and bicyclists' rights and responsibilities.
- 2.0.7 *Encourage and promote the use of the City 311 system specific to bicyclists' issues.*
- 2.0.8 Create all educational and informational material as well as any other languages deemed appropriate.
- 2.0.9 Utilize a variety of methods to distribute and market educational information more effectively and at a lower cost.
 - 2.0.9a *Utilize advertising techniques, such as billboards, signs, bus wraps, and the various media outlets, to publicize educational messages.*
 - 2.0.9b *Increase visibility of the Bicycle Program and distribute informational brochures at events.*
 - 2.0.9c *Improve existing Bicycle Program website by including a web-based bicycle safety program for adults.*
 - 2.0.9d *Work with utility companies to distribute information in mailings.*
 - 2.0.9e *Distribute informational materials through area bicycle shops and events.*
 - 2.0.9f *Distribute educational brochures through grocery stores and other area businesses.*
- 2.0.10 Partner with community organizations and bicycle advocacy groups to offer educational classes.



Increasing Education & Promotional Programs

The SSTF recommends an increase in city-sponsored educational programs, including training to city employees, council members, and the police department. They also suggest a web-based program to be made available to the public, among others, and other campaigns that promote bicycle safety.

Source: SSTF, 2007, pp. 17-18, recommendation no. III.2



Interdepartmental Coordination

There are many opportunities to coordinate with other City departments and/or agencies to provide bicycle education. The SSTF identifies the potential to expand the Health PLUS Wellness Program and PE Program to promote bicycling, or working with PARD to establish a "share the trail" campaign among trail users. These avenues should be explored to more efficiently provide city-sponsored programs to a wider audience.

Source: SSTF, 2007, pp. 18, recommendatino no. III.3.e & h

- 2.0.10a *Coordinate community requests for bicycle education with experienced bicycle educators in the community.*
- 2.0.10b *Encourage community organizations and school programs to offer on-bicycle training as part of their curriculum.*
- 2.0.11 Create and provide educational programs targeting youth cyclists.
 - 2.0.11a *Cooperate with Child Safety Program to write a "Child Safety Plan." Include options for funding education and infrastructure improvements and concretize relationships with local school districts.*
 - 2.0.11b *Support the Safe Routes to School Program.*
 - 2.0.11c *Work with Parks and Recreation Department and Health and Human Services to educate children on the health benefits of bicycling.*
 - 2.0.11d *Develop a bicycle safety component of high school driver-education programs.*
 - 2.0.11e *Provide bicycle safety and bicycle rider training to schools served by a new bicycle facility installation.*
- 2.0.12 Create and provide educational programs targeting adult cyclists.
 - 2.0.12a *Provide bicycle-related classes such as repair and maintenance, commuter how-to, effective cycling skills, rules of the road, etc, such as "Traffic Skills 101".*
 - 2.0.12b *Support efforts among other city departments, public agencies, and bicycle organizations to offer bicycle related classes.*
- 2.0.13 Create and provide educational programs targeting motorists.
- 2.0.14 *Create and distribute informational material targeting motorists regarding bicyclists' rights and how to safely share the road with cyclists.*
- 2.0.15 *Provide information related to updating the Texas drivers' manual to strengthen the bicycle section and exam questions.*
 - 2.0.15a *Include motorist-bicyclist safety information in City required defensive driving courses.*
 - 2.0.15b *Train / educate drivers of commercial vehicles about bicycle safety and sharing the road with bicyclists.*
- 2.0.16 Develop and provide training and educational programs for various parties responsible for carrying out any part of this Plan.
 - 2.0.16a *Train transportation engineers and planners at the local, regional, and state levels of the needs of bicyclists.*

Chapter 3 :: Education & Encouragement

2.0.16b Train relevant City of Austin staff about implementation of this Plan.

2.0.16c Train transit operators on bicycle safety and how to operate buses and other transit modes around bicyclists. (See Infrastructure Objective 3)

2.0.17 Develop measures to reduce bicycle theft.

2.0.17a Educate citizens on techniques that can help recover stolen bicycles.

2.0.15b Educate bicyclists on proper locking techniques.

2.0.18 Further promote safety and traffic laws through Enforcement. (See Safety & Enforcement, Objective 2)

2.0.19 By the year 2011, hire one staff member to specifically focus on educational and promotional programs.

2.0.20 Require the participation of Austin Police Department (APD) in annual Bike to Work Day events to educate bicyclists on bicycle safety and to establish a working relationship between bicyclists and APD.



How to Make Recovering a Bicycle Easier:

The Austin Police Department recommends taking a picture of your bicycle and its serial number. Save the picture in your files and have handy in the case that your bicycle is stolen. If your bicycle does not have a serial number, consider getting your license plate or driver's license number etched into the underside of the frame. This information can help retrieve the bicycle as well as be useful when reporting insurance claims.

City of Austin Employees participate in a bicycle safety course, which certifies them in League of American Bicyclist Traffic Skills 101

Objective 2.1

Develop and execute encouragement programs to promote bicycling and increase awareness of bicycling among the general public.

Benchmarks

Offer 1 annual citywide event and/or ride promoting utilitarian and recreational cycling in partnership with other public agencies, and/or non-profit groups and advocacy groups.

PROMOTION

As discussed earlier, promotion aims to increase bicycling through marketing, advertising, and incentives. It is sometimes difficult to separate education and promotion, so more often than not education and promotion programs will overlap.

Currently, the City of Austin provides minimal programming to promote bicycling. The majority of efforts are done by non-City affiliated groups, such as the Austin Cycling Association, the Yellow Bike Project, the Lance Armstrong Foundation and local cycling teams. It is strongly recommended that the City increase its efforts to promote bicycling.

Like education, promotion initiatives should also target particular audiences, based on interest. 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 take up 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 strengthen this effort by diversifying events and information and cutting costs through efficient coordination and dissemination of information.

Objective 2.1 Benchmarks

- Offer 1 annual citywide event and/or ride promoting utilitarian and recreational cycling in partnership with other public agencies, and/or non-profit groups and advocacy groups.

Objective 2.1 Actions

- 2.1.1 Partner with community groups, the private sector, and other City departments and agencies to provide citywide events and campaigns, such as:
 - 2.1.1a *National Bike Month in May.*
 - 2.1.1b *Share the Road and Share the Trail promotion.*
 - 2.1.1c *A major bicycling promotional component during the City of Austin Green City Festival.*
 - 2.1.1d *A major bicycling promotional component to relevant city festivals.*
 - 2.1.1e *Implementation of an annual large bicycle ride to promote bicycling.*
 - 2.1.1f *Establish a regular "Car-Free" ride along different arterials where roads are shut down to vehicle traffic.*



Bicycle and Pedestrian Program and the Austin Yellow Bike Project at Green City Festival 2007.

- Image source: University of California Berkley, Center for Latin American Studies, <http://www.clas.berkeley.edu:7001/Events/spring2002/04-08-02-penalosa/>



- 2.1.3g *Coordinate with others to establish a bicycle commuter repair/tune-up service on the Pfluger Bridge or the Lance Armstrong Bikeway (or other appropriate area). At a minimum the service should occur once a month between September and May (during Bike Month)*
- 2.1.4 Create an interactive route finding system online.
- 2.1.5 Partner with local celebrities to promote cycling through public service announcements and other means.
- 2.1.6 Bicycle Program staff should host a regular T.V., radio, and/or print section preferably for a mainstream channel or publication regarding bicycling promotion and education.

PROMOTE BICYCLING TO SCHOOL

Schools, including elementary, junior highs, and high schools, are major destinations in the City of Austin to which bicycling should be promoted, particularly since many students cannot drive. Targeting promotional and educational efforts to this significant population has the potential to increase bicycling as a mode of transportation.

In 2008 the City’s Child Safety Program was reorganized into the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. The Child Safety group has a mission of providing a safe pedestrian and bicycle environment for Austin’s students en route to and from school. The program offers a free safe street crossing course taught in all elementary schools within the City of Austin. The focus of this award - winning course is to raise awareness in the community, to train students in safe street crossing procedures, to educate students on how to ride a bicycle in a safe manner, and to educate students on how to enter, exit and ride a Capital Metro or school bus in a safe manner. The Child Safety Program employs two full-time employees and two seasonal employees to educate over 49,000 elementary school students each year. This represents approximately 85.9% of elementary-aged children that reside in Austin.¹ The courses are taught in Spanish as well as English. In support of the education course, the crossing guards are expected to reinforce these safety lessons as the students travel to and from school each day. This team approach resulted in the City of Austin being the first city to be recognized by Safe Kids Worldwide as the safest city for children to go to and from school in 2005.

In 2007 the City of Austin received federal funding for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project at 8 elementary and 2 middle schools. One of the goals of the SRTS Project is to increase bicycling and walking to school by increasing safety and improving the accessibility of these schools in their neighborhoods. According to the SRTS Plan, an average of 29.3% of the students at these schools walk (28.9%) or ride a bicycle (0.35%) to school. Approxiamtely 30.1% of the students at these 10 schools arrive by private car, illustrating a large portion of students who could other wise be walking or bicycling to school. Additionally, expanding this program to target more schools could significantly increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school.

Objective 2.2

Promote bicycling as a mode of transportation to and from school (elementary through high school).

Benchmarks

Increase bicycle mode share of children commuting to school to 25% by 2020.

Educate 90% of school-aged children about bicycle safety each year.

Provide bicycle lane use education and bicycle safety information at all schools served by new or improved bicycle lane (or more conservative) facility.



Children at Kiker Elementary learn bicycle skills via a Bicycle Rodeo.

¹ The population of children between the ages of 5 and 11 is 57,025 (US Census Bureau, 2000, Table P8. Sex by Age.)



Marathon Kids®

Marathon Kids® is a free, incremental, school and community based fitness program. It is a six month endurance-building running/walking, nutrition and schoolyard gardening project for K-5th graders and their families. Marathon Kids® was founded by runner Kay Morris in 1996 in Austin, Texas. Ms. Morris sought to encourage children and their families to build a love and habit of running and walking and making healthy food choices. Today, with the sponsorship of Whole Foods Market®, more than 120,000 children in Texas, California, Maryland and Illinois now take part in what has become an annual program and a tradition. Marathon Kids® works hard to keep it free for the children most vulnerable to sedentary lives, childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

The City of Austin would like to begin a similar program through the cooperation of the Child Safety, Safe Routes to School, and Bicycle Programs, as well as various non-profit organizations, and the seven school districts within the City of Austin. City and County Departments could work together to involve local non-profits and schools in setting up a similar incremental program that would have participating children track the bicycle distance ridden up to 100 miles (otherwise known as a Century). The goal distance would be 100 miles (otherwise known as a Century) and the final mile or five miles could take place in the form of a celebratory ride during the Austin Cycling Association's annual Armadillo Hill Country Ride (or similar charity ride).

"Century Kids" would have the same goals as Marathon Kids® but, would promote cycling as a healthy and fun activity.

Objective 2.2 Benchmarks

- Increase bicycle mode share of children commuting to school to 25% by 2020.
- Educate 90% of school-aged children about bicycle safety each year.
- Provide bicycle lane use education and bicycle safety information at all schools served by new or improved bicycle lane (or more conservative) facility. (See box to the right).

Objective 2.2 Actions

- 2.2.1 Continue and expand the Safe Routes to School Program and Child Safety Program to encourage children to walk or bicycle to school.
- 2.2.2 Implement the bicycle network to and increase support facilities at schools to support bicycling to school.
- 2.2.3 Create and implement ride-to-school encouragement programs, such as "Bicycle to School Day".
- 2.2.4 Create a contest among school-aged children on the theme of replacing one car trip a week with a bicycle trip or student "Century Challenge" (See box to the right).
- 2.2.5 Support and encourage high school bicycling clubs that include activities for both utilitarian and recreational/competitive bicyclists.
- 2.2.6 Support innovative and new programs and/or events which aim to increase the bicycle modal split to school.



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Objective 2.3

Promote bicycling as a means of transportation to and for work.

Benchmarks

Increase number of Bike to Work Day participants to 1,000 participants in 2009 and by 10% for every subsequent year.

Increase number of City of Austin employees who commute by bicycle to 10% by 2015, and 15% by 2020.

Increase usage rate of City Cycle bicycle fleet by 100% by 2020.

Implement Citywide Bike Share Program by 2020

PROMOTE BICYCLING TO AND FOR WORK

Employment centers are another destination for many people, particularly during the week. This objective and subsequent actions specifically address bicycle transportation to work and how bicycling can become a more prominent means of commuting.

As discussed earlier, bicycling plays an important role in addressing roadway congestion, alleviating environmental detriments, and improving the overall health and well being of the residents and employees of Austin. Additionally, mode split of workforce commuters done by the Census is a key indicator of the use of bicycles as a mode of transportation in a City, making bicycling to work an important component that should be promoted.

Bicycling to work is supported by the City of Austin's Comprehensive Plan and multiple goals and objectives of other citywide departmental long range plans.

Promoting Work Related Trips

Bike-sharing discussed in Chapter 2, is useful to promote transit use, as it allows for short trips during the day by persons who do not have a car at work. Also, it allows employees who drive to work alternatives during the day to travel to meetings, or lunch, for example, by bicycle.

In 2007 the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department started a modest bike share program at one City of Austin building in the downtown area. The Program, having 4 bikes, was a success and in July 2008 the City of Austin Climate Protection Program expanded the program. This project, in its pilot stage, is intended to address the need for the City to reduce its carbon footprint within departments. Vehicular travel is a significant contributor to the City's carbon footprint, this program will help in mitigating some of those carbon emissions and to promote the acceptance of bicycling as a mode of transportation. The City's 15 bicycles are located at major City buildings in the downtown area.

Additionally, this objective can be strengthened by proactive efforts by the city and other public agencies. Cities are employers also and should set an example to other employers in Austin by promoting bicycling among City and other public agency employees.

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City of Austin Bicycle Use

The City of Austin is an employer of the City, and the SSTF recognizes the importance of targeting educational and promotional programs toward the City of Austin itself. Recommendations from the SSTF include providing safety classes to City of Austin employees and Council members; and programs that promote bicycle commuting among City of Austin employees.

Source: SSTF, 2007, pp. 18-19, recommendatino no. III.3.b-e & III.4.d



In 2008, the City of Austin Physical Education Department certified 89 employees in the League of American Bicyclist's Traffic Skills 101 bicycle safety course.

- 2.3.7 Promote bicycle use among City agencies and employees as a model program for other Austin employers.
 - 2.3.7a *Promote a pilot "Bicycle Ambassador" program that links inexperienced cyclists with current (experienced) bicycle commuters.*
 - 2.3.7b *All City-owned buildings should be retrofitted with showers, changing rooms, lockers, and bicycle parking to facilitate bicycle use among employees.*
 - 2.3.7c *Coordinate to implement a Bike Share program, starting in the downtown area, for the general public.*
 - 2.3.7d *Create a bicycle maintenance program to be included in the City's benefits programming.*
 - 2.3.7e *Continue to offer Road I, a League of American Bicyclist bicycle education course (or an equivalent), free to City employees.*
 - 2.3.7f *Coordinate with Austin Energy, or other relevant Department, to provide a rebate on a commuter bicycle purchase for Austin Energy customers.*
 - 2.3.7g *Coordinate with Austin Energy, or other relevant Department(s), to provide rebates to commercial property owners to install shower and locker facilities in existing buildings having none.*
- 2.3.8 *Provide individualized bicycle commute maps to citizens of Austin by request.*



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