



Pedestrian Advisory Council

Recommendation 20180910-05C: Butler Trail E-Bike Pilot Program

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) is to advise the City of Austin on pedestrian planning, policy, design, funding, education, and enforcement efforts regarding the creation, maintenance and operation of pedestrian facilities;

WHEREAS, the Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake is the environmental heart of present-day Austin;

WHEREAS, the Butler Trail was built as a place for everyone in the community to access the scenic beauty of the lake without exclusion and without designation for specific fitness, recreation, or transportation activities;

WHEREAS, the Butler Trail is a major route and an off-street refuge for people walking, running, and biking that is safe, continuous, shaded, and protected;

WHEREAS, the city has developed, invested in, and improved the Butler Trail to conserve its natural treasures, and to serve pedestrians and bicyclists, residents and visitors alike;

WHEREAS, e-bikes and e-scooters are a significant, growing form of mobility that let more people get around Austin without producing greenhouse gas emissions;

WHEREAS, e-bikes are often used by less able community members, and hold the promise to get more people to ride bikes by reducing barriers of geography and fitness;

WHEREAS, scooters by design are best suited for paved surfaces;

WHEREAS, other cities in the U.S. are in the process of amending park regulations or have trial programs for e-bike use such as Seattle;

WHEREAS, Section 541.201 (24) of the Texas Transportation Code defines e-bikes or electric bicycles to mean a bicycle that: (A) is designed to be propelled by an electric motor, exclusively or in combination with the application of human power; (B) cannot attain a speed of more than 20 miles per hour without the application of human power; and (C) does not exceed a weight of 100 pounds;

WHEREAS, Austin City Code of Ordinances 12-1-21 (B) allows bicycles, scooters, or other similar vehicles equipped with an electric motor capable of propelling the bicycle, scooter, or vehicle at a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour to use on-street bicycle infrastructure;

WHEREAS, City Code Section 8-1-31 and current park rules do not allow for the use of electric bikes and scooters on city park trails including the Butler Trail (Park Use Rule 5): *(A) A person may not operate or use a motor vehicle or a bicycle on a trail or path that is not designated for the use of the motor vehicle or bicycle, (B) On a trail, a bicyclist shall yield to a runner or a walker, and a runner shall yield to a walker, (C) People on bicycles may not be more than two abreast if this impedes other traffic on the trail, and a person using a trail must leave ample room on the trail for other people to pass safely, (D) A bicyclist must use a bicycle that is in good condition and equipped with properly functioning brakes, and operate the bicycle in a safe manner at a prudent speed, (E) Unless otherwise posted, all portions of the hike and*

bike trails are designated as bicycle speed zones and shall be identified by signage, and a bicyclist may not travel faster than 10 miles per hour in an area designated as a bicycle speed zone);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Pedestrian Advisory Council recommends:

The creation of a 1-year pilot program beginning on October 1, 2018 by PARD and ATD staff to:

1. Study the use of e-bikes and e-scooters on the Butler Trail;
2. Observe and collect data on the speeds and behavior of all users of Butler Trail; and
3. Establish the framework for future amendments to PARD Park Use Rule 5 and City Code Section 8-1-31 that:
 - a) Respects the vision of Butler Trail as a quiet place for the community to enjoy nature in the city;
 - b) Benefits the comfort and experience of all users of the trail, and minimizes potential conflicts;
 - c) Includes education and outreach campaigns to promote safe biking practices and courteous trail use;
 - d) Reclassifies electric bikes and scooters as a category aligned with state and city legal definitions of bicycles;
 - e) Integrates the Butler Trail as a connection for legal e-bike users within the on-street all-ages- and-abilities bicycle network;
 - f) Sets appropriate guidelines for the use of scooters based on the trail surface and public right-of-way;

Date of Approval:

Record of the vote:

Attest: *(Staff or chair can sign)*