

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT



2017 annual cycling report

CHAT WITH THE CHIEF OVERVIEW

Austin Police Department Chief of Police, Art Acevedo, has 26 years of law enforcement experience and a long history of community outreach, and the cycling community has benefited from this commitment to coalition building.

Soon after Chief Acevedo arrived in Austin, he agreed to take part in a public forum in which he addressed issues, real and perceived, between cyclists and the police department. All topics were open for discussion, including ticket stings, untrained patrol officers, and response at crash sites. The first forum, in 2008, was a watershed in relations with the APD, and the following annual events have proved to be the public catalyst for implementing a variety of initiatives.

This year's forum format will be less formal and more conversational to reflect the community partnership as it stands today. This report will supplement that change and provide transparency and updates on several projects including statistics of on crashes and violations, bike registration programs, bike light give-aways, and ticket remediation classes.

The APD continues to support the efforts of the cycling community and reinforce its vision of being respected and trusted by all segments of Austin's diverse community.

Right: In 2008, Austin Police Chief Art Acevedo first addressed many cycling stakeholders at an evening meeting with then Highway Enforcement Staff Commander Donald Baker and Lieutenant Brian Gruetzner.



STATISTICS AND DEFERRALS

Total Bike Collisions	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Fatality	1	1	1	2	1	1
Injury	230	264	286	283	338	280
None	35	49	31	21	34	34
Total bike collisions	266	314	318	306	373	315

Total Collision Reports	16420	15261	14317	13482	13,162	14,528
% of Total Collision Reports	1.6%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.8%	2.2%

Bike Specific Violations	2009	2010	2011
No Light	134	158	90
No Rear Reflector	13	33	15
Ran Flashing Red Light	2	5	2
Ran Red Light	268	323	143
Ran Stop Sign	129	158	150
Riding on Sidewalk	5	36	7
Wrong Way on One Way	29	116	35
Total Bike Violations	639	891	442

2009-2010	2010-2011
18%	-43%
154%	-55%
150%	-60%
21%	-56%
22%	-5%
620%	-81%
300%	-70%
39%	-50%

Downtown Community Court	2009	2010	2011
Riding on Business Sidewalk	97	103	20

2009-2010	2010-2011
6%	-81%

Dispositions: Ran Red Light	2009	2010	2011
Open	37	100	40
Deferral	21	41	24
Dismissed	50	50	30
Guilty	159	129	78
Not Guilty	1	2	0
Transferred Out	0	1	0
Total Bicycle Ran Red Light	268	323	172

DEFERRED DISPOSITION FOR BICYCLE VIOLATIONS

You may be eligible to have your ticket dismissed upon successful completion of a deferred disposition. Successful completion of the terms of the deferred disposition will keep the violation from becoming part of the individual's driving record. You may sign up for a deferred disposition at any Austin Municipal Court location. For more information, please visit the Municipal Courts website at www.austintexas.gov/department/driver-safety-course-dsc-deferred-disposition.

DEFENSIVE CYCLING COURSE

The Austin Cycling Association offers one of the nation's first defensive cycling courses. If referred by the court to take a defensive cycling course, the Austin Municipal Court will accept the course certificate as part of a deferral for dismissal of certain bicycle citations. The cost of the class is \$25, but additional charges imposed by the Municipal Court may apply.

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KNOWING THE LAW



BICYCLE SPECIFIC LAWS

A bicycle is a slow moving vehicle and as such should be ridden in the rightmost lane that leads to the rider's destination. (A cyclist should not ride in the right-turn-only lane if they are going straight). Cyclists shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway, UNLESS they are passing another vehicle that is moving in the same direction, preparing to turn left, or the conditions of the road makes it unsafe. Cyclists should maintain a safe distance from the curb to remain visible to drivers and avoid road hazards such as sewer grates and debris. A bicycle must share the lane with cars if the lane is wide enough to do so safely (minimum 14 foot width). A bicycle may "take the lane" if the lane is too narrow to share with motor vehicles (less than 14 feet). Additionally, a cyclist may ride as near as practicable to the left curb on a one-way road. On some roadways, shared lane markings or "sharrows" have been installed indicating where cyclists should ride within the lane

A cyclist shall ride only on or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle. This means not on the handle bars, not standing on the stunt pegs, etc. A person may not use a bicycle to carry more persons than the bicycle is designed or equipped to carry. Giving friends rides is strictly prohibited.

Roadways in Austin have varying conditions that make interpreting and applying the law difficult to describe safe and legal lane positioning in a simple sentence or two. Austin Cycling Association offers courses monthly on traffic safety that discuss the laws and help cyclists develop the skills needed to make better decisions on the road."

AUSTIN CITY ORDINANCE

- 12-2-11 – A bicyclist shall comply with the requirements of this title imposed on a driver of a vehicle.
- 12-2-12 – Unless a bike lane is specifically designated otherwise, a bicyclist may not travel in the opposite direction of adjacent traffic. (Must be traveling in the same direction as traffic)
- 12-2-16 – A bicyclist may not ride between vehicles traveling or standing in the same direction within marked lanes. (Must wait in line like a vehicle would)

STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO BICYCLES

Bicycles are allowed to ride on any street in the City of Austin, to include; Interstate 35, Mopac (Loop 1), US Highway 183, and the Toll Way, (except 183A) since neither the commission (TXDot) nor the city has adopted rules preventing such, nor erected official traffic-control devices to prevent this. (There are signs on Mopac, but the city ordinance has been lifted, therefore, they are not enforceable and should've been removed).

KNOWING THE LAW

WHAT IS A VEHICLE?

Sec 541.201 of the Transportation Code states that "Vehicles" means a device that can be used to transport or draw persons or property on a highway. A bicycle is a vehicle and is subject to all the rules of vehicle law with very few exceptions. When police officers observe a cyclist violating the transportation code and/or a city ordinance, they have to enforce that violation just as if it were being committed in a motor vehicle. Since bicycles are considered vehicles by the Transportation Code, vehicles are to treat bicycles as such. And of course, bicycles are to follow the same laws as vehicles (Sec 551.101).

STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO BICYCLES

A bicycle rider is NOT required to possess a driver's license. They are required to identify themselves through proper identification just like in any other detention/arrest. A person MAY stop, stand, or park a bicycle on a sidewalk if the bicycle does not impede the normal and reasonable movement of pedestrian or other traffic on the sidewalk.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Like any other vehicle, a bicycle must stop for stop signs and red lights. "Stop" means cease all forward motion; it does not require putting a foot down. Bicycles may ride two abreast except where such behavior impedes the normal and reasonable flow of traffic. Riding three abreast is always illegal unless part of a roadway is set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.

RIDING ON THE SIDEWALK

A person MAY ride a bicycle on a sidewalk. A person MAY NOT ride a bicycle on the following sidewalks:

100-1100 blocks of Congress Ave

1900 to 2500 blocks of Guadalupe St

100 to 1100 blocks of Brazos St.

200 to 1100 blocks of Colorado St.

200 block W 2nd St to 300 block E. 2nd St.

900 block W 5th St. to 800 block E. 5th St.

1000 block W 6th St. to 700 block E. 6th St

100 block W 8th St. to 200 block E 8th St.

100 block W 9th St. to 200 block E 9th St.

200 block W 11th St. to 200 block of E 11th St.

200 block W 15th St to 200 block of E 15th St.

VULNERABLE ROAD USER ORDINANCE

On October 22, 2009, the Austin City Council passed a Vulnerable Road User Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance was to establish a legal concept of a Vulnerable User and its potential for improvement in the safety for non-motorized roadway users such as bicyclists and pedestrians. This ordinance states that an operator of a motor vehicle passing a vulnerable road user operating on a highway or street shall vacate the lane in the which the vulnerable road user is located if the highway has 2 or more marked lanes running in the same direction or pass the vulnerable road user at a safe distance. A safe passing distance is defined as 3 feet if the operator's vehicle is a passenger car or light truck. If the operator's vehicle is a truck, other than a light truck, or a commercial motor vehicle, a safe passing distance is defined as 6 feet. To review the Vulnerable Road User Ordinance in its entirety, please see Section 12-1-35 of the City Code. In 2010, 4 individuals were citing for violating the Vulnerable Road User Ordinance. In 2011, the same number (4) of individuals was cited for violating the ordinance.

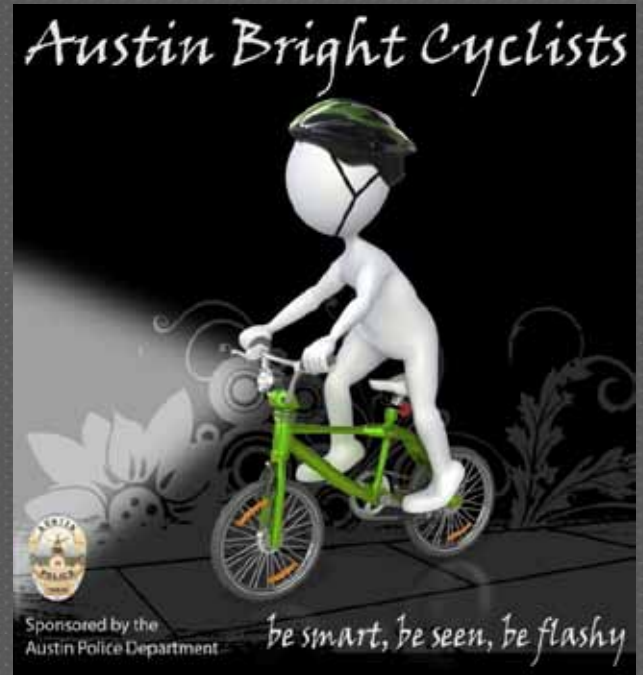


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SAFETY AND THEFT PREVENTION

AUSTIN BRIGHT CYCLISTS CAMPAIGN

The Austin Police Department's "Austin Bright Cyclists" campaign was launched in 2011 during National Bike Month to provide public communications, promote safe riding habits, and improve community relations through the use of bicycle lights. All evening and night shift patrol officers monitored roadways in their respective areas for those cyclists riding a bicycle during the evening and night hours. If an officer observed a cyclist riding without a headlight and/or a reflector affixed to his/her bicycle when required by law, the officer initiated a traffic stop. During the course of the traffic stop, the officer would inform the cyclist about the current requirements mandated by the Texas Transportation Code. A warning would be issued to the cyclist and a free light set (which includes mounting brackets, head light, and rear light that meets the required 500 foot visibility law) was given as a courtesy to the cyclist to keep them safe. The Austin Police Department's goal was to increase public awareness through enforcement education on bicycle safety and ultimately decrease the number of motor vehicle related bicycle fatalities.



WHAT DO I DO IF MY BIKE IS STOLEN

You should contact the Austin Police Department when you learn that your bicycle or bicycle parts have been stolen. Provide officers with as many identifiable markers as possible when describing your bike (i.e. serial number, make, model number, any special markings or scratches, engravings, etc.) Request that your bike's information be entered into the property section of your offense report. This will ensure that your bicycle information is entered into the Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC) as well as the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The Austin Police Department partners with participating pawn shops to run cross-checks on articles that have been pawned. By providing an officer with as much detailed information as possible, the likelihood of recovering your bicycle increases. You can assist by checking the want ads or Craigslist each day to look for bikes matching your bike's description. Post information about your bike at shops near the theft, or on local bicycle-related web sites and e-mail lists. Finally, don't give up. Keep calling us! We are here to "protect and serve." For information on whether a bicycle you have purchased has been stolen, call (512) 974-5750 or send an email to APD3@ci.austin.tx.us.



ONLINE BICYCLE REGISTRATION

Bicycle registration programs assist in reducing bicycle thefts in several ways. Bicycle registration makes it easier to identify stolen bikes, and their rightful owners. It may also serve to deter bike thieves by making registered bikes harder to dispose of. The Austin Police Department recently completed an online bicycle registration program for the public. However, to keep your bicycle registered you must submit a new report every three years. If you sell or dispose of your bicycle(s) in any way please update your report by submitting a supplement to your original report. You will receive a copy of your original report once it has been processed. Please keep a copy of this report and the case number for your records. To register your bicycle, visit www.austintexas.gov/departments/police/services and click on the Bike Registration link.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SPRING RIDE WITH THE DIRECTOR

The Public Works Director's Ride kicked off the City of Austin's Bike Month 2011 calendar. Several City of Austin employees (including the APD employees pictured to the right) participated in a 10 mile ride which highlighted Austin's most recent bicycle improvements. The ride started at the One Texas Center and incorporates trails, roadway bicycle lanes, contraflow bicycle lanes, separated bicycle lanes, views, the Rainey Street District and historic East Austin. CityCycle bicycles were available for those who did not have a bicycle in good working condition. The APD also provided bike officers to assist in traffic and safety enforcement.



BIKE-IN BOOK SWAP EVENT

The Bike-In Book Swap event was held on May 7, 2011 in collaboration with the Yellow Bike Project and sponsored by the City's Library Department. This event was a "get together" to create a fun, family-friendly bicycle celebration. The event was held at the Twin Oaks Library, 1800 South Fifth Street. Austin police officer were in attendance to promote a bicycle registry program, bike theft prevention and safe riding habits.

BIKE TO WORK DAY – BREAKFAST STATION

On May 20, 2011, the Austin Police Department, along with the Public Works Department, Austin Cycling Association, and other community stakeholders celebrated Bike to Work Day, a regional event celebrating and encouraging bicycling for transportation. Bike to Work Day celebrates both the residents who bike to work and the City's businesses who have embraced bicycling as a viable mode of transportation for their employees and customers. Chief Acevedo participated in the Bike to Work Day festivities by setting up a breakfast station at the Austin Police Department's substation located in East Austin. The breakfast station sponsored by APD handed out breakfast tacos, fruit cups, cold brew coffee, orange juice, protein bars, water, and resource materials. Chief Acevedo saw this as an opportunity to engage the bicycling community, promote safe riding habits, and improve community relations.



BIKING ISSUES IN THE MEDIA

Throughout 2011, the Austin Police Department shared scheduled media appointments with the Public Works Department and the Austin Cycling Association to notify the public about upcoming bicycling events, initiatives and improve the overall image of the Austin Police Department.

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AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT



mission

To keep you, your family, and our community safe

vision

To be respected and trusted by all segments of Austin's diverse community.

values (i care)

Integrity, Courage, Accountable, Respect, Ethical

austin police department

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