

# BIKE AUSTIN

August 8, 2019

Mayor and Council:

Bike Austin applauds your continued efforts and those of the Austin Transportation Department to support pedicabs as a for-hire transportation option. Pedicabs are an important part of the vision of a climate-friendly, safe multimodal system for Austin. Increasing the use of shared mobility solutions like pedicabs is an express goal of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

Over the past two years, ATD staff have been working with industry stakeholders to create safe and practical regulations for equipping pedicabs with electric-assist motors through a pilot program using a limited number of pedicabs. We encourage you to provide policy direction to advance this effort.

In particular, Bike Austin supports the concept of allowing **all** pedicabs the option of using an electric-assist motor by:

- Opening the current pilot program to all pedicabs permitted by ATD, and
- Amending the Austin City Code to allow pedicabs to use electric-assist motors.

After two years of study, it's long past time to lift the regulatory barriers that currently prevent the pedicab industry from making full use of the clear benefits of electric assist.

As evidenced by the rapid growth of e-bikes in recent years, a small motor can dramatically extend the range and potential of bikes. With electric-assist, pedicabs can provide a low impact, quick transportation option for people to get around without a car.

Like all e-bikes, pedicabs with electric-assist motors make riding, or pedicabbing and pedicab jobs, more accessible and equitable to people of diverse ages and abilities. Having a motor also can prevent overuse injuries, pain, and exhaustion that frequently force pedicab workers to lose valuable time on the job and to eventually quit, sometimes suffering long-term physical problems.

This change would be a great way to build on our existing assets. It will be implemented by a local industry already regulated by the city, and does not require extra city resources or fiscal commitments for enforcement, administration, or infrastructure.

For years, pedicabs have quietly played an important role in growing the bicycling movement in Austin, literally doing the work of the Bike Austin mission. Pedicabs normalize biking on our busiest city streets and at the busiest times, in defiance of the attitude that cars are the only viable mobility option. With a top assisted speed of 20 mph or less, the presence of pedicabs

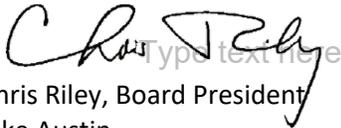
adds to the safety of the overall system by having low potential crash energy. A pedicab is human scale transportation that makes a street an active and inviting place, enhancing walkability and raising the quality of life for everyone.

Pedicabs also serve as a visible reminder that transportation alternatives are available, and that an internal combustion engine and a large heavy vehicle are not requirements for moving people.

The success of the current electric pedicab pilot program is a testament to your and ATD's approach and the nimbleness with which Austin has adapted our rules to new technologies. We urge you to make electric pedicabs a permanent transportation service.

Bike Austin looks forward to the next steps in this process, and to seeing these improvements realized. We hope you'll join us in support of this important opportunity.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Riley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The name "Chris" is written in a larger, more prominent script than "Riley".

Chris Riley, Board President  
Bike Austin