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September 11, 2008

Austin City Council
Via E-mail

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members:

The League of Bicycling Voters is a Texas non-profit corporation advocating policies and programs to increase the number of bicyclists on Austin's streets and trails. Our board wholeheartedly supports the COA Bicycle/Pedestrian Program's ongoing efforts to implement no-parking zones for existing bike lanes when streets with bike lanes are scheduled for maintenance and restriping.

The program's draft guidelines (now being piloted for the next few months before implementation in the bike plan) are well-researched and a good-faith attempt to address the need for no-parking zones in bike lanes--while also balancing the need for automobile parking in residential areas, or for churches, businesses or others with special needs for on-street parking.

However, we must stress that the ultimate goal of this process should be eliminating parking in bike lanes without exceptions, since parked cars in bike lanes are a serious hazard to the safety of bicyclists. As you well know, bicycles are the cheapest, most effective solution for meeting the city's goals of providing a livable city that actively addresses air pollution, congestion, climate change, reduction of our dependence on foreign oil, and the goals of the Mayor's Fitness Council.

Therefore, we find it disturbing that a proposal for no-parking zones in existing bike lanes on Exposition Boulevard (from Windsor to Westover) includes exceptions:

- **Parking is allowed in bike lanes from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on some segments.**
- **Parking is allowed in bike lanes at all times except 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on some segments.**
- **Parking is allowed in bike lanes on Sundays, in some segments, to accommodate church parking.**

While the need for church parking seems to have a basis of merit, the bicycle community was not involved in the dialogue with the church to balance the needs of bicyclists and church members. The other exceptions regarding time restrictions, however, are completely without merit, since the overwhelming majority of residences affected by no-parking provisions on Exposition have ample off-street parking available. There simply is no

significant need for residential parking on Exposition Boulevard that outweighs the benefits for providing effective and safe travel for bicyclists in a key arterial roadway in the city's adopted transportation plan.

Indeed, Exposition provides an extraordinary opportunity to connect West Austin neighborhoods with the safest, quickest bicycle route to future development on Lake Austin Boulevard, to the Lance Armstrong Bikeway as a route to downtown, and as a means to access the heart of the Tarrytown/Deep Eddy Community (e.g. retail, Casis Elementary, O'Henry Middle School, the library and other key neighborhood destinations.)

This opportunity for connectivity and encouraging bicycling is so appealing that LOBV asks the City of Austin to do the following:

- 1) Eliminate exceptions/limitations to the no-parking zones in bike lanes in the city's proposal.**
- 2) Implement no-parking zones for the entire length of Exposition, which is striped with bike lanes in its entirety. COA staff notes that some 37% of the boulevard is already designated as no parking, due to segments with sight restriction from hills, stretches with proximity to intersections and portions adjacent to O'Henry Middle School. Those segments do not have exceptions to no-parking zones, so it makes no sense to add a significant portion of the boulevard (Windsor to Westover) as no-parking zones with limitations in place.**

Finally, we note that a couple of residents on Exposition have written you objecting to the no-parking zones, since they believe their boulevard is too dangerous for bicycle travel to begin with. They maintain that bicyclists should instead travel on the sidewalk. Professional bicycle safety instructors and advanced riders will tell you that a sidewalk is often the most dangerous place to ride, because of potential collisions exiting curb ramps or crossing driveways. The residents also note that children should not use the bike lanes going to school. We maintain that the city should be committed to providing safe and direct access to schools, businesses, libraries and parks for adults, and even children who are comfortable with and experienced enough to ride in bike lanes on busy streets.

To go the route of these residents' suggestions would further marginalize and endanger bicyclists. And we would go nowhere in our efforts to achieve the aforementioned goals of a livable city.

Sincerely,



Rob D'Amico
President
League of Bicycling Voters

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