City of Austin

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Bike Buddy Website Launched
as a May Bike Month Initiative

Austin, TX – As the 2013 Bike Month gets underway, a new website will connect anyone interested in biking to work with experienced bicycle commuters in Austin. This website provides an opportunity to encourage new people to explore bicycle commuting as a viable transportation option. The most recent data indicates that approximately two percent of Austinites commute by bicycle, and in some central city areas over twelve percent of the population is riding to work on a bicycle.

The website (http://bike-buddy.open-austin.org/) is easy to use, allowing anyone to sign up as a new or experienced bicycle commuter in just a couple of minutes. With an interactive map, users will be able to visually see where other cyclists are starting and ending their trips. The website also makes it easy to connect with other registered users in order to coordinate a ride together.

"Many Austin commuters are interested in cycling, but concerned about the safety of riding to work," Council Member Riley said. "We also have many experienced bike commuters who are ready to help others discover how safe and enjoyable riding to work can be. This website offers a bridge between those two groups, enabling anyone to feel more comfortable by riding in with an experienced commuter who can suggest good routes, address questions about equipment and clothing needed, and provide guidance about the rules of the road."

Open Austin provided the technical expertise to develop the website based on collaboration with the Office of Council Member Riley. A number of local organizations will be helping the City of Austin promote the website, including the Austin Cycling Association, Bike Austin, BikeTexas, and Movability Austin.

"Open Austin was asked to lend its development skills to the project," Open Austin member Chip Rosenthal stated. "Austin Bike Buddy is a great idea and directly fits our mission to support local civic technology, apps, and websites. This project resulted from a partnership between our volunteers, the City, and the local biking community," he added.

The website will be live for the month of May. Organizers hope that the project will provide valuable information for continued efforts to connect and encourage new and experienced bicycle commuters.

Open Austin (www.open-austin.org), founded in 2009, is a local citizen volunteer group that advocates for open government, open data, and civic technology. Open Austin is affiliated with Code for America, a national non-profit that uses technology to help governments work better, as the local civic brigade.

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