



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

April 21, 2009

From: Suja Lowenthal, Second District
Patrick O'Donnell, Fourth District

Subject: Support for Bicycle and Multimodal Events

REQUESTED ACTION:

Respectfully request the Mayor and City Council declare May as "Bicycle Month" in Long Beach to promote alternative mobility options and healthier lifestyles for our residents.

Request the City Manager work with local and regional organizations to support the following bicycle events occurring in Long Beach:

- Changing Gears – May 2nd
- Bike To Work Day - May 14th
- Car Free Fridays – May 22nd, then every First Friday through summer
- Tour de Cure – May 31st
- Los Angeles River Ride – June 7th
- Long Beach Children & Families Ride – June 7th

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Long Beach is the perfect candidate for the designation "most bike friendly city in the United States". Our topography, climate and street grid system all support a growing bicycle culture made up of riders from all different skill levels and interests. We are proud to have been the first city in the U.S. to host a Bikestation and one of a select group of cities with a Bicycle Master Plan. Our commitment to increasing bicycle use citywide is evident in our efforts to expand bike lanes, our employee Bike Share program, our grant-funded Bicycle Coordinator position and support for events such as the Long Beach Grand Prix Bicycle Festival and Race.

Similar in nature to our request last year, we are asking the Council to support staff's efforts in planning, supporting and developing bicycle and multimodal events aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Bike Month is part of a national celebration that includes Bike Commute Week, Bike to Work Day and several other events giving residents and commuters a chance discover the ease and liberation of getting to work on two wheels. Bicycling to work is not just for athletes or for people who live close to the office. Now that most buses are equipped with racks, and trains allow bikes on board during off-peak hours, more people than ever are discovering the benefits

of bicycle commuting. Those benefits include reduced air pollution, less traffic, a healthy lifestyle, social interaction and sustainable transportation options.

Car Free Fridays is being promoted by the LA County Bicycle Coalition as a means of encouraging long term changes in lifestyle and mobility throughout the entire city. On May 22nd, we hope the Mayor and every Council Member will choose one of several car-free alternatives including bike, light rail, bus, AquaLink, pedicab, skating or walking to reach our kick-off celebration for this summer-long activity.

The *Los Angeles River Ride* is sponsored by several entities including the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the LA County Bicycle Coalition. The "ride" begins and ends in Griffith Park, making Long Beach the turn around point for the anticipated 2,000 riders originating from several cities along the river including our own. Although this is the 8th River Ride involving Long Beach, last year was the first time riders were treated to beautiful harbor and Queen Mary views as they reached the halfway point at Shoreline Aquatic Park and its landmark lighthouse. This year, Long Beach will again distinguish itself by hosting its first Family Fun Ride in addition to our responsibilities as a pit stop for the long distance cyclists.

Tour de Cure is sponsored by the American Diabetes Association, which begins and ends at the Queen Mary. This "Ship to Shore" trek takes you over both the Vincent Thomas Bridge and the Gerald Desmond Bridge, the first time the two bridges will be open to cyclists.

Changing Gears is sponsored by The Center of Long Beach to raise funds to fight HIV/AIDS through prevention programs and health education workshops. It includes a 75 or 40 mile loop down the southern California coast.

We ask that our colleagues join us in supporting the alternative mobility events herein, as well as furthering Long Beach as a "Bike-Friendly" City.