



Memorandum

To: Town Council
From: Thomas Dansie, Director of Community Development
Date: May 6, 2022
Re: Appointment of Gil Kiefer as the Springdale Bike Liaison

Executive Summary

Staff recommends the Council appoint Gil Kiefer as the Town of Springdale Bike Liaison. This position will provide education and information to cyclists and bike rental companies in the Town and will coordinate with the Bike Ambassador program in Zion National Park.

Background

The Town of Springdale has adopted policies that encourage active transportation, including bicycling, as an alternative to vehicular travel (see General Plan Objective 9.1.1), as well as policies promoting more infrastructure supporting bicycling (see General Plan Objectives 9.1.4 and 9.1.5). As directed by these policies the Town has made significant investments in bicycle related infrastructure over the past several years. This has led to perceptible increases in the amount of bicycle use in the Town.

E-bikes have become increasingly popular throughout the United States over the past several years. This trend has been particularly noticeable in Springdale. Because of increased demand for e-bikes in Springdale the number of bike rental companies in the Town has exploded over the past three years. This has led to unprecedented numbers of cyclists using the Town's bicycle infrastructure.

On one hand the increase in the amount of bicycling is a positive trend and in line with the Town's adopted policies and practices that encourage bicycle use. On the other hand the increase in bicycling, particularly e-bike use, has created some impacts that the Town needs to manage.

The type of cyclists riding in Springdale has changed coincident with the rise in e-bike rentals. Many of the cyclists riding rental e-bikes in Town are less experienced riders who may have never ridden an e-bike. They may not have experience riding in traffic and may lack the skill and expertise to safely maneuver on a high-traffic street like SR9. Ensuring these riders receive the proper education and training about how to ride safely, how to ride an e-bike, and the unique policies that apply to cyclists in Zion National Park is essential to help increase safety for all road users.

The Town has partnered with Zion National Park to start a Bike Ambassador program. This program will station trained bike volunteers in Springdale and Zion to assist cyclists with bike-related information and education. The Town has also started communication with e-bike rental companies regarding the need to provide appropriate training and education to their customers. This will be an ongoing effort with continual communication to the rental companies. Staff believes these programs will help promote safer cycling behavior and mitigate many of the negative impacts of increased bike use.

Staff does not have the resources to manage these programs on a long term basis. Staff recommends the Council appoint a volunteer Bike Liaison to manage these programs for the Town.

Bike Liaison Responsibilities

Staff recommends the Council direct the Bike Liaison to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Coordinate with Zion National Park to represent the Town of Springdale's interests relative to the Bike Ambassadors program. In conjunction with the Park's Volunteer Coordinator help recruit and train volunteer Bike Ambassadors. Provide insight to the National Park on how the Bike Ambassador program can help educate and inform cyclists about the major cycling related issues impacting the Town.
2. Communicate Town bike policy to bicycle rental companies. Act as the Town's liaison with bike rental companies. Maintain an open and positive line of communication with bike rental companies. Help bike rental companies understand the importance of providing education and training regarding e-bike use and Town/Park specific bike policies to their customers.
3. Based on observations of cyclist behavior in the Town, as well as interactions with bike rental companies, provide information and insight to the Director of Community Development regarding bike related issues in the Town that could be used to inform the Town's bike policies.

Council Action

Staff recommends the Council appoint Gil Kiefer to the role of Bike Liaison and direct him to fulfill the responsibilities listed above.