

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Streets and Services to hold hearings to assess the results of the Streets Department's dedicated bike lane pilot program on Spruce and Pine Streets in Center City.

WHEREAS, Bicycling provides citizens with a quick and efficient mode of transportation that does not worsen existing traffic congestion by adding cars to the road or creating additional demand for scarce parking spaces; and

WHEREAS, Bicycling has increased in popularity in recent years as both a mode of transportation and as a recreational activity. The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia estimates that more than 75,000 bicycle trips are made in Philadelphia each day, with the number of daily bicycle trips more than doubling between 2005 and 2008 in certain locations; and

WHEREAS, Bicycling is a sustainable mode of transportation that produces no toxic emissions and virtually no negative impact on the environment; and

WHEREAS, Bicycling is a good source of exercise that enhances the health and physical fitness of riders; and

WHEREAS, Other major cities have successfully installed many miles of dedicated bicycle lanes, with active plans for more to be installed. New York City, for example, has more than 400 miles of existing bicycle lanes with plans for 1,800 miles by 2014. As a result of its extensive bicycle infrastructure, the inhabitants of Amsterdam use bicycles more often than cars as a means of transportation; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has installed bicycle lanes on streets throughout the city in recent years, yet many streets in Center City and other neighborhoods continue to be dangerous and inhospitable to bicyclists; and

WHEREAS, Bicycling in Philadelphia is often unsafe under current traffic conditions, with many streets lacking dedicated lanes to separate bicycles from vehicular traffic, forcing bikers to share lanes with cars, buses, and trucks; and

WHEREAS, The creation of additional bicycle lanes would complement recent actions taken by City Council to encourage bicycling, such as requiring bicycle parking as part of certain new construction; and

WHEREAS, The Streets Department is temporarily adding dedicated bicycle lanes on Spruce and Pine Streets in Center City; and

WHEREAS, The Department believes "that if bicycle lanes are to be effectively accommodated on the streets of Center City, and if bicyclists are to be discouraged from riding on sidewalks crowded with pedestrians, Philadelphia needs to extend its bicycle network into more of Center City." Further, the marking of bike lanes will help improve traffic flow by separating vehicular and slower moving bicycle traffic into separate lanes; and

WHEREAS, The Department selected Spruce and Pine Streets because they have less traffic and fewer pedestrians compared to other Center City streets and because of their existing connections to the Columbus Avenue Bike Lanes and Schuylkill River Trail; and

WHEREAS, Portions of Spruce and Pine Streets are scheduled to be resurfaced in Spring 2009; if the Department determines that the bike lanes are worsening traffic rather than improving it, they will be eliminated; now, therefore,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Streets and Services is authorized to hold hearings to assess the results of the Streets Department's dedicated bike lane pilot program on Spruce and Pine Streets in Center City.