

MOTION

Bicycle theft is a problem in the City of Los Angeles, but the City does not have effective systems for its residents to register their bicycles, or to report a stolen bicycle; or for Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers in the field to determine whether a bicycle is stolen. It is important to provide LAPD with the tools necessary to investigate these crimes and to restore stolen bicycles to their rightful owners.

All new bicycles sold in California must be marked with a unique serial number. In California, cities may adopt bicycle registration ordinances, which must comply with California Vehicle Code sections 39000 *et seq.* Such programs are difficult to administer, especially for large cities. In 2009, the City repealed its bicycle registration program because it had become ineffective. Very few bicycles were registered; few LAPD divisions processed license applications; and information, including bicycle serial numbers, was not accessible to officers investigating bicycle “chop shops” or other collections of suspected stolen bicycles.

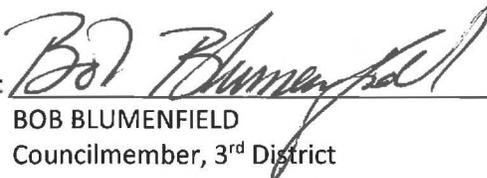
There are several on-line bicycle registries, including Bike Index, the National Bike Registry, and Project 529, which allow people to register their bicycles, including serial numbers. These entities, some of which are non-profits, generally provide no-cost or low-cost registration, and in some cases their databases may be accessed by law enforcement. Some California jurisdictions, including San Francisco and Santa Monica, partner with non-profit bike registries to provide non-mandatory bicycle registration. Such partnerships include promoting registration in schools, park and recreation facilities, and at community events and through community organizations.

When LAPD comes across bicycles that may have been stolen, its investigations are often hampered because many people do not report stolen bicycles and/or cannot provide serial numbers. Even if the City has no registration program, it is important for people to keep a record of their bicycle serial number, and photographs of their bicycle. An education and outreach program about the need to record serial numbers, and report stolen bikes, could assist LAPD. Also, as LAPD increases its efforts to deploy more officers in the field, the City should explore options for on-line reporting of bicycle theft, and options for LAPD officers in the field to access databases of registered or stolen bicycles.

In years past, some community members expressed concerns that the City’s bicycle registration requirement was used to harass bicyclists. Any revived program must take into account these concerns.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Los Angeles Police Department and the Department of Transportation (LADOT) to develop recommendations for:

- a. an effective mandatory or voluntary bicycle registration program, including outreach to retailers, schools, bicycle organizations, etc., to make registration readily available and to encourage people to record bicycle serial numbers; and
- b. increasing the reporting of bicycle thefts, including outreach to inform people that such reporting is necessary and effective, and potentially allowing on-line filing of bicycle theft reports, including costs of such programs and potential funding sources.

PRESENTED BY: 
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SECONDED BY: 

 AUG - 2 2017

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