

## Proposal: "Bicycle Stop Ordinance" for the City of Gainesville

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**What:** In order to encourage bicycling and promote Gainesville's mission of sustainability, we propose that the city adopt a "Bicycle Stop Ordinance" that would make it legal for bicyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs. Under the new ordinance, a cyclist approaching an intersection controlled by a stop sign would be permitted to slow down, look both ways and roll through the stop sign provided that there are no other vehicles or pedestrians at the intersection. The "Bicycle Stop Ordinance" is modeled after Idaho's "Stop Law," which has been in effect for 27 years with no increase in cycling accidents.

**Why:** Currently, Florida law requires that all road users make complete stops at Stop signs. However, because a bicycle's efficiency relies on balance and momentum, dead stops drain cyclists of much-needed energy. Thus, instead of stopping completely and placing both feet on the ground (as current law requires), the majority of cyclists approach Stop signs by yielding, looking both ways and coming to a "rolling stop." By preserving a small amount of forward motion, the cyclist maintains enough momentum to avoid unnecessary strain, while riding through intersections in a safe, sensible and efficient manner.



### Benefits of the "Bicycle Stop Ordinance":

- ✓ Promotes bicycle commuting by removing fear and uncertainty associated with Stop signs
- ✓ Legitimizes sensible behavior. If a law is on the books and it doesn't make sense, it sends the message that lawbreaking is acceptable behavior.
- ✓ Creates a distinction between reckless right-of-way theft (illegal) and responsible cycling behavior (legal)
- ✓ Encourages riders to use safer inner roads instead of major roads powered by traffic lights
- ✓ Makes cyclists less unpredictable to motorists – cyclists who are stopped often "wobble" from side-to-side as they work to gain balance and momentum

**How:** Bicyclists must abide by Florida traffic and bike laws, however local governments of counties, cities, and towns may adopt additional ordinances regulating bicycle riding.

**Costs:** The "Bicycle Stop Ordinance" could be implemented at little to no cost to the city.