

ORDINANCE NO. 017466

AN ORDINANCE ADDING A NEW SECTION TO TITLE 12 (VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC), CHAPTER 12.80 (MISCELLANEOUS TRAFFIC REGULATIONS) OF THE CITY CODE RELATING TO RESTRICTIONS ON OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE NEAR VULNERABLE ROAD USERS; THE PENALTY BEING AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 12.84.010 OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE.

WHEREAS, bicyclists and pedestrians are allowed to use the roadway by law in Texas, but these users do not have the same physical protection as motorists and are at greater risk of injury or death; and

WHEREAS, approximately 50 cyclists and 400 pedestrians are killed every year in Texas; and

WHEREAS, a safe passing ordinance provides the foundation for an education campaign of tolerance and acceptance for "active" forms of alternative transportation, which furthers the City's goals of promoting El Paso as a bicycle friendly community, as well as for the enhancement of walkable streets and neighborhoods.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

Section 1. That Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic), Chapter 12.80 (Miscellaneous Traffic Regulations) is amended to add the following section:

§ 12.80.220 VULNERABLE ROAD USERS.

A. In this section, a Vulnerable Road User means:

1. a pedestrian, including a runner, physically disabled person, highway construction and maintenance worker, tow truck operator, utility worker, other worker with legitimate business in or near the road or right-of-way, or stranded motorist or passenger;

2. a person on horseback; or

3. a person operating equipment other than a motor vehicle, including, but not limited to, a bicycle, handcycle, horse-driven conveyance, or unprotected farm equipment.

B. An operator of a motor vehicle passing a vulnerable road user operating on a highway or street shall:

1. vacate the lane in which the vulnerable road user is located if the highway or street has two or more marked lanes running in the same direction; or

2. pass the vulnerable road user at a safe distance.

C. For the purpose of Subsection (b)(2), when road conditions allow, safe distance is at least:

1. three feet if the operator's vehicle is a passenger car or light truck; or

2. six feet if the operator's vehicle is a truck, other than a light truck, or a commercial motor vehicle as defined by Texas Transportation Code Section 522.003.

D. An operator of a motor vehicle that is making a left turn at an intersection, including an intersection with an alley or private road or driveway, shall yield the right-of-way to a vulnerable road user who is approaching from the opposite direction and is in the intersection, or is in such proximity to the intersection as to be an immediate hazard.

E. An operator of a motor vehicle may not overtake a vulnerable road user traveling in the same direction and subsequently make a right-hand turn in front of the vulnerable road user unless the operator is safely clear of the vulnerable road user, taking into account the speed at which the vulnerable road user is traveling and the braking requirements of the motor vehicle making the right-hand turn.

F. An operator of a motor vehicle may not maneuver the vehicle in a manner that:

1. is intended to cause intimidation or harassment to a vulnerable road user; or

2. threatens a vulnerable road user.

G. An operator of a motor vehicle shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with any vulnerable road user on a roadway or in an intersection of roadways.

H. It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section that at the time of the offense the vulnerable road user was acting in violation of the law.

Section 2. Effective date: The effective date of this ordinance shall be March 1, 2011.

Section 3. Except as expressly herein amended, Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic), Chapter 12.80 (Miscellaneous Traffic Regulations) of the El Paso City Code shall remain in full force and effect.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 7th day of December, 2010.



THE CITY OF EL PASO

John F. Cook
John F. Cook
Mayor

Richarda Duffy Momsen
Richarda Duffy Momsen
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Mark Shoosmith
Mark Shoosmith
Assistant City Attorney