

City seeking public help on bicycle program application - 09/06/2016

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City officials are asking for public help to make Key West one of 10 U.S. cities chosen for a new \$750,000 bicycle program.

Nonprofit People for Bikes is looking for communities of all sizes to participate in The Big Jump, which aims to double or triple local bike riders by 2020.

Participating in The Big Jump would complement the \$275,000 in grant funding and recent partnership with South Florida Commuter Services already in place, according to Key West Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator Chris Hamilton.

“We’re trying to make biking safer and having the expertise of an organization like People for Bikes would make that a lot easier,” Hamilton said. “We’re starting to build momentum so adding this on top would be really cool.”

Hamilton is asking city leaders to write letters in support of the city’s application and list their organization or business as a supporter. Supporters have the option of providing additional funding for the program and the opportunity to serve on the Key West Leadership Team if chosen as a participating city, Hamilton said.

Chosen cities will “connect standalone projects into safe and convenient networks and see the big jump in physical activity, economic investment and neighborhood connectivity that follows,” according to People for Bikes Director of Local Innovation Kyle Wagenschutz.

People for Bikes will provide a support package and services valued at \$250,000 annually for three years to the 10 chosen communities. The package includes training, research and access to experts through study tours, peer exchange programs and an online forum, according to peopleforbikes.org.

Peer exchange programs would allow Key West community leaders first hand access to cities with the safest bike practices in the country, Hamilton said.

The organization has received 92 letters from cities intending to apply and will accept applications through Oct. 28. Finalists for the program will be chosen in January 2017.

sunger@keysnews.com