

# Proposed ordinance would require bicycle helmets

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Bike riders under age 16 will need a helmet if a new ordinance takes shape in Farmington Hills.

The Farmington Hills City Council gave City Manager Steve Brock the go-ahead to put together a bike helmet ordinance, which would allow police to warn or ticket kids for not wearing appropriate head gear.

**'This isn't just punitive; this is educational. It's not a drag-net type of thing. If it does nothing else, it gets more helmets out there.'**

Steve Brock  
—city manager

However, the warning would be tossed out if the rider later provides proof he has a helmet.

More so, the police may hand out or help pay for protective helmets.

"This isn't just punitive; this is educational," said Brock about the ordinance based on a similar one used in Adrian. "It's not a drag-net type of thing. If it does nothing else, it gets more helmets out there."

Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer has pushed for a bike helmet ordinance. The Commission on Children, Youth and Families also backs the idea.

Thirty-one percent of bicycle deaths in 1997 were riders younger than 16, according to U.S. Department of Transportation statistics. East Grand Rapids and Adrian require young riders to wear helmets.

Several years ago, the city council

shied away from a bike helmet ordinance, deeming it too strict. One council member is not sold on the milder version, either.

"It's like the tobacco thing: If kids are not going to wear them, then kids are not going to wear them," said Councilwoman Cheryl Oliverio, who also opposed a tobacco ordinance presented during last year's goals session.

She was in the minority, though. "I'd like to try it," Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said.

Under the ordinance being proposed, the first offense would be \$5 with the second \$10. Though council members suggested eliminating the fine for the first offense altogether.

## FARMINGTON HILLS

The protective helmet would have to be properly fastened and meet American National Standards Institute standards or those of the Snell Memorial Foundation.

The ordinance still has to be drafted and voted on during a regular city council meeting. Police officials would like to have something in place when the department's new mobile community policing vehicle hits the streets in the spring.

"Obviously we're very pleased. We think that it's the right approach," Dwyer said. "We are trying to decrease the number of injuries to young people bicycling."

"It's a win-win for the community, the police department and for the families and children who will prevent injuries by wearing a helmet."

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Tickets are on sale now for Farmington Area PTA Council's annual Founder's Day Dinner, set for 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25 at Vladimir's Restaurant, 28125 Grand River in Farmington Hills.

The primary purpose of the evening is to recommit to the goals set out by PTA's across the nation in supporting the education of children.

Keynote speaker for the event

## FOUNDER'S DAY

is Kathleen Straus, vice president and former president of the state school board.

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