

# Sidewalk riding earns tickets

## Police step up enforcement in city

**TICKETS** from page 1  
can't be waived.

In 55 minutes Wednesday, Lincoln police Officer Conan Schafer wrote four tickets to unsuspecting bikers cruising along the sidewalks near 14th and O streets. And that was just the first hour.

"We'll start getting busier now," he said as a lunch hour crowd began to hit the sidewalks.

Between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesday, 18 citations were handed out in the three hours - all to protect pedestrians and the bicyclists, Officer Tom Duden said.

"We started to get a lot of complaints from downtown businesses," Duden said. "So this year we decided to write official citations to begin the education process right away."

"We've had a lot of people come up to us and say they're thankful we're handing out tickets."

The tickets are met with the usual responses, Duden said. Some people understand the situation and

accept the ticket and go on their way. Others are hostile and don't understand why it is such a big deal.

Mick Rodysill, a sophomore art education major at UNL, was stopped at the corner of 14th and O streets just before noon Wednesday.

He was lucky, Schafer said. He received a verbal warning because he had only been riding a few feet on the sidewalk before being stopped.

"I didn't know it was illegal," Rodysill said. "I thought there was only one or two blocks in the whole city that you couldn't ride on."

The ordinance puts bicyclists in a no-win situation, he added.

"It's a Catch-22," he said. "If you're riding on the street you fight with the drivers. If you ride on the sidewalks you fight with the pedestrians."

And while it may seem like it for many, riding on downtown sidewalks did not become a crime overnight. In fact, the first city ordinance designed to stop it was passed in April 1954.

Since then, the off-limits area has expanded with the city and now extends from Seventh to 16th streets, and from K Street to R Street. The Havelock, Bethany, College View and University Place areas of Lincoln are also restricted.

"Most of the people we stop don't know about the ordinance," Duden said. "We've tried to get the city to put more signs up, but I don't know if it's a lack of funding or a lack of interest, but we just don't get much help."

There are a few signs attached to bike racks in the restricted areas, Duden said, but most have been vandalized or taken down.

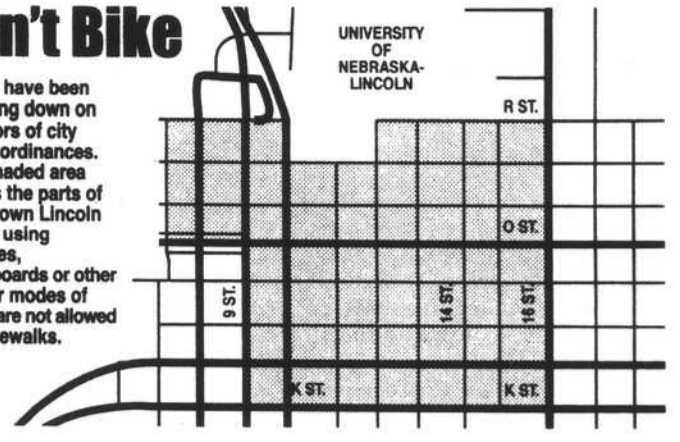
Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns said the issue of more signs had not been presented to him.

"I don't think the topic has come to my desk," he said. "If it did, I would treat this like I would if a neighborhood came to me for a new sign. I see no reason why we can't get out and do it."

Cost, Johanns said, would not be a factor.

### Don't Bike

Police have been cracking down on violators of city street ordinances. The shaded area shows the parts of downtown Lincoln where using bicycles, skateboards or other similar modes of travel are not allowed on sidewalks.



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

"In the grand scheme of things, considering we have an \$85 million budget, the cost can't be very much," he said.

Failing to get off of your bike, take off your skates or carry your skateboard on the restricted sidewalks could mean much more than a simple \$26 ticket, Duden said.

Skaters and bikers riding on the sidewalk give up their right of way, according to another city ordinance. Duden has, in the past, been

forced to give tickets to cyclists who have just been hit by a car coming out of an alley.

New signs would be a huge help in alleviating the problem, Duden said. And they hope, Duden said, handing out more tickets will too.

"There is a lot of frustration on our part that there is no compliance with the ordinance," he said. "We're hoping that the word will get out that this is a serious problem."

## Dump dispute goes on

**DUMP** from page 1  
2000.

The project is waiting on Nebraska's Department of Environmental Quality to decide on permit applications that were submitted in 1991 and resubmitted in 1995. A decision is expected in October.

Nebraska's representative, F. Gregory Hayden, said he does not see the compact at a crossroads.

"I think we have a constant evolution going on here," he said. "I'm not sure I know of its direction yet."

According to Hayden's studies, the compact is heading for disaster. Hayden's research has found that estimated costs per cubic foot of space would be more than \$18,000. When other compacts found their costs per cubic foot would be between \$400 and \$1,000, they quit. He said waste producers wouldn't pay for space if costs exceeded \$400.

Two states, Nebraska and Arkansas, have legislators studying whether or not the states should get out of the compact.

Nebraska State Sen. M.L. "Cap" Dierks of Ewing proposed legislation in the last session that would have pulled Nebraska out of the compact. The measure stalled, but Dierks said he would try again this session.

In Arkansas, a legislative committee voted Aug. 18 to study whether that state should pull out of the compact. The committee is expected to consider the measure this fall.

Commissioners and Hayden have clashed in the past over his studies - which also have said there aren't enough wastes produced to need a dump and that the compact already has \$48 million in interest to pay. One commissioner, H.A. Caves of Oklahoma, called Hayden's studies "opinions."

Hayden dismisses his critics by saying his conclusions have never been proven wrong.

"I'm an economist," he said recently. "That's what I have to offer."

Commissioners say they still believe the project will work. Gilson, who said she is pessimistic about getting approval for the permits they need to build, said the compact wins if the site is built.

"That's not going to wipe away the 10 years it's taken to get to this point," she said. "If I thought there was any real merit to what the other side is throwing at us, all of us would have volunteered to go home."

"There's better ways to spend your time."

Nelson said recently that the compact should cut its losses and stop trying to build a site. He said that when the compact started, assumptions were made based on data that have since changed. He said power plants and hospitals aren't producing wastes like they used to and the commission has failed to change its assumptions.

"It's never too late," he said earlier this month. "I think they are tardy, but it's better than truant."

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