



**SOUTH VALLEY
BICYCLE
COALITION**

www.southvalleybike.org

***Projects to
Improve
Facilities for
Bicyclists in
Bakersfield***

A presentation to the Urban Development Committee
Bakersfield, California
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Project 1

Increasing signal timing at key intersections to accommodate average bicyclists

Currently many major intersection signals are timed at very short intervals and are difficult for bicyclists — especially children and novice bicyclists — to get across in time. The Coalition has identified a number of intersections where an increase in signal timing is needed, and more are slated to be identified in the near future. (a list of intersections is posted on our Web site.)

We are already working with city traffic engineers to study the problem. Bruce Deeter has been most helpful and has even ridden a few of the intersections with Coalition member Bailey Abbott.

Bruce's tentative conclusions agree with our own informal assessment: the affected intersections need an increase in the green cycle of about four seconds.

We seek the Committee's help in completing this project. We believe it is a real safety issue, particularly with the beginning of school approaching.

Project 2

Placing high-visibility signs alerting motorists to the presence of pedestrians and bicyclists at key locations

These signs have a made of an extremely bright, non-naturally-occurring reflective material and have been approved for use by Caltrans. They have proven effective in many other California communities, where they are already being used.

While Caltrans has installed one such sign on 24th Street here in Bakersfield, we are working with the city Roads department to have the city install more throughout its jurisdiction. Of particular concern to us are locations around schools and on routes commonly used by bicyclists.

We seek the committee's help in getting these signs in place and improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Project 3

Working on better, safer Kern River bike path access at the intersection of Truxtun and Mohawk

This is an issue that has been brought to us, often independently of one another, by numerous bicyclists and other bike path users. Currently, the bike path connector runs to the crosswalk at the northeast corner of Truxtun and Mohawk. Bicyclists seeking to enter the path must dismount and walk their bikes across the crosswalk. Bicyclists exiting the path must walk or end up riding wrong-way down Mohawk.

Research shows that bicyclists fare best when they are treated the same as other vehicular traffic. Thus, it would be best to construct bike path access for bicyclists that acts as the fourth street of this intersection and allow bicyclists to cross to Truxtun to the correct side of Mohawk when exiting the path, and to ride straight across Truxtun from Mohawk to enter the path on the vehicular green signal. (currently Mohawk at Truxtun is signaled only for right and left turns).

It is our hope that this intersection can be changed so that bicyclists can be accommodated in the same manner as other traffic. We welcome any help the committee can provide in this endeavor.

Project 4

Ensuring bicycle access on Hageman Road to and from the north downtown area when Hageman is extended across Freeway 99.

Accommodating bicyclists on Hageman is vital because there are no good alternate routes across the 99 freeway close by. To the south, Rosedale Highway at the 99 is extremely difficult for the average cyclist to negotiate. Olive Drive is quite a ways north and involves crossing an interchange with Freeway 99 and an extremely poor rail crossing at an oblique angle, increasing bicyclists' risk. The bike path and Truxtun Extension to the south are much easier for cyclists, but also quite far out of the way. Cyclists should not have to add several miles to their ride simply to get across the freeway safely.

Because Hageman is slated to be constructed as a flyover of Freeway 99, it will have no complex intersections (where most accidents occur) and can be an ideal bicycle route.

The fact that it is slated to merge into Golden State Highway, a limited access road, for a short time before intersecting with downtown streets, should not be a deterrent. There are many locations where bicyclists are allowed to ride the shoulders of freeways, and the risk is negligible because intersections on these roads are rare.

In addition, Caltrans is now committed to ensuring access for non-motorized traffic in all its projects (Please see attached memo on pages 4-5). The Hageman Road flyover would be an ideal project for Caltrans the City to make accessible to bicyclists.

We urge the committee to design bicycle facilities into Hageman Road across Freeway 99 and into the northern downtown area. We would be pleased if pedestrian facilities could also be incorporated, as pedestrians face many of the same difficulties crossing Freeway 99 as bicyclists.

Additional Coaliton goals and activities for the committee's information

- 1) We are actively involved in educating bicyclists. Ron Jones runs the Share The Road program under the Kern county Superintendent of Schools, and John Lotze has taught bicycle safety and skills through the Bakersfield Parks and Recreation Department and Bakersfield College Community Education program for several years.
- 2) We hope to have a bike and helmet safety check event sometime during the first half of the coming school year. We will check children's and adults' bicycles and helmets, provide safety information and promote bicycling classes and other education activities.
- 3) We want to encourage more enforcement of the helmet law and of traffic laws relating to bicyclists. We know our law enforcement officers have many duties, but we would like to see more attention given to some basic enforcement efforts.
- 4) We want to encourage more frequent and more thorough street sweeping, particularly along routes frequently used by bicyclists.
- 5) We want to encourage the re-paving of bicycle lane surfaces to be done to the same standard as the rest of the roadway. Too often, utilities and others dig in the bicycle lanes, then do a hasty resurfacing job that leaves the surface almost unrideable.

Appendix: Memo from Caltrans Chief Deputy Director regarding accommodation of non-motorized travelers in all projects.

California Department of Transportation

-Deputy Directive Number: DD-64

Effective Date: 3-26-01

Supersedes: New Title: Accommodating Non-Motorized Travel

POLICY The Department fully considers the needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrian bicyclists and persons with disabilities) in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations and project development activities and products. This includes incorporation of the best available standards in all of the Departments practices. The Department adopts the best practice concepts in the US DOT Policy Statement on Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure.

DEFINITION

BACKGROUND The planning and project development process seeks to provide the people of California with a degree of mobility that is in balance with other values. They must ensure that economic, social and environmental effects are fully considered along with technical issues, so that the best interest of the public is served. This includes all users of California's facilities and roadways.

Attention must be given to many issues including, but not limited to, the following:

- Safe and efficient transportation for all users of the transportation system
- Provision of alternatives for non-motorized travel
- Support of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Attainment of community goals and objectives
- Transportation needs of low-mobility, disadvantaged groups
- Support of the State's economic development
- Elimination or minimization of adverse effects on the environment, natural resources, public services, aesthetic features and the community
- Realistic financial estimates
- Cost effectiveness

Individual projects are selected for construction on the basis of overall multimodal system benefits as well as community goals, plans and values. Decisions place emphasis on making different transportation modes work together safely and effectively. Implicit in these objectives is the need to accommodate non-motorized travelers as an important consideration in improving the transportation system.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Deputy Director, Planning and Modal Programs:

Ensures that the needs of non-motorized travelers are incorporated into the program element of Transportation Planning and the modal elements of the statewide strategy for mobility. Ensures that liaison exists with non-motorized advocates to incorporate non-motorized needs into all program areas including project and system planning. Ensures that the needs of the non-motorized travelers are incorporated in Personal Movement Strategies.

Deputy Director, Project Delivery:

Ensures that projects incorporate best practices for non-motorized travel in the design and construction of Capital projects.

Deputy Director, Maintenance and Operations:

Ensures that the transportation system is maintained and operated in a safe and efficient manner with the recognition that non-motorized travel is a vital element of the transportation system.

Ensures that the needs of non-motorized travelers are met in maintenance work zones.

District Directors: Ensure that best practices for non-motorized travel are included in all district projects and project planning. Ensure that best practices for non-motorized travel are implemented in maintenance and travel operations practices.

Chief, Division of Design

Ensures that project delivery procedures and design guidance include the needs of non-motorized travelers as a regular part of doing business.

Ensures that all Project Delivery staff is trained and consider the needs of the non-motorized traveler while developing and designing transportation projects.

Chief, Division of Planning:

Ensures incorporation of non-motorized travel elements in transportation plans, programs and studies prepared by Transportation Planning.

Ensures planning staff understand and are trained in the principles and design guidelines, non-motorized funding sources and the planning elements of non-motorized transportation.

Coordinates Caltrans projects with non-motorized interest groups.

Ensures incorporation of non-motorized travel elements in Corridor Studies prepared by Transportation Planning.

Chief, Division of Environmental Analysis:

Ensures that non-motorized travel groups potentially affected by Caltrans projects are identified and have the opportunity to be involved in the project development process.

Advocates effectively for all reasonable project-specific best practices that support or promote non-motorized travel.

Chief, Division of Maintenance:

Ensures State-owned facilities are maintained consistent with the needs of motorized and non-motorized travelers.

Provides guidance and training to those maintaining roadways to be aware of and sensitive to the needs of non-motorized travel.

Chief, Division of Traffic Operations:

Ensures that the transportation system is operated in accordance with the needs of all travelers including non-motorized travel.

Provides training and guidance on the operation of the transportation facility consistent with providing mobility for all users.

Recommends safety measures in consideration of non-motorized travel on California's transportation system.

Chief, Division of Local Assistance:

Ensures that Local Assistance staff, local agencies and interest groups are familiar with funding programs that are available for nonmotorized travelers.

Ensures that program coordinators responsible for non-motorized travel modes are familiar with non-motorized issues and advocate on behalf of non-motorized travelers.

APPLICABILITY All Caltrans employees who are involved in the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operations of the transportation system.

TONY V. HARRIS
Chief Deputy Director