

## **4.0 Safety, Education, Outreach, and Security**

### **4.1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Programs**

The Folsom Bikeways Master Plan provides both physical recommendations (such as bike lanes) and program recommendations. Some of the program recommendations, such as changes in zoning requirements for bicycle parking, have already been covered. This section covers future efforts to educate bicyclists and motorists, and efforts to increase the use of bicycles as a transportation alternative.

### **4.2 Education**

The Folsom Unified School District, Police Department, and the Department of Public Works have a long history of trying to improve safety conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Despite these efforts, the younger riders are recording the majority of the accidents. For example, the most common type of reported bicycle accident in California involves a younger person (between 8 and 16 years of age) riding on the wrong side of the road in the evening hours. Studies of accident locations around California consistently show the greatest concentration of accidents is directly adjacent to elementary, middle, and high schools. Many less-experienced adult bicyclists are unsure how to negotiate intersections and make turns on city streets.

In November 2006, the 50 Corridor Transportation Management Association, with many dedicated volunteers formed the Smart Routes to School Program to promote children in the elementary schools in El Dorado County and Folsom-Cordova Unified School District to return to biking, walking, carpooling and bus riding as a choice for safe, even smart school commuting. The goals of the 50 corridor Smart Routes movement is to reduce personal auto school trips, improve safety of students traveling to and from school (especially those traveling by non-motorized means), and build exercise and independence into the daily routine of students. A manual has been produced and distributed to all schools to implement a Smart Routes to School program at their school.

Motorist education on the rights of bicyclists and pedestrians is virtually non-existent. Many motorists mistakenly believe, for example, that bicyclists do not have a right to ride in travel lanes and that they should be riding on sidewalks. Many motorists do not understand the concept of 'sharing the road' with bicyclists, or why a bicyclist may need to ride in a travel lane if there is no shoulder or it is full of gravel or potholes.

Existing education programs in schools are generally taught once a year to 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders. Curriculum is generally derived from established programs developed by groups such as the California State Automobile Association, and taught by members of the Folsom

Police Department. Budget cuts, demands on students' time, and liability concerns limit the extent of bicycle education to schoolchildren. Formal adult bicycle education is non-existent.

*Recommended Program: Expand Current Education Programs*

Existing educational programs in Folsom schools should be expanded and supported by a secure, regular funding source. Efforts of the City's Traffic Safety Committee to coordinate needs of school commuters should be continued.

*Recommended Program: Develop New Educational Program Materials and Curriculum.*

Education materials should be expanded to promote the benefits of bicycling, the need for education and safety improvements, the most recent educational tools available in the country (including the use of low-cost safety videos), and directives to parents on the proper school drop-off procedure for their children. Educational pamphlets for children should be made more readable. Incentive programs to reward good behavior should be developed. Educational programs, and especially on-bike training, should be expanded to more grades and for more hours per year. Education curriculum should, at a minimum, cover the following lessons:

- ❖ On-bike training or bicycle 'rodeos'
- ❖ How to adjust and maintain a bicycle
- ❖ Night riding (clothes, lights)
- ❖ Rules of the road
- ❖ Riding on sidewalks
- ❖ How to negotiate intersections
- ❖ Riding defensively
- ❖ Use of hand signals

A standard safety handbook format should be developed incorporating the best elements of those currently in use, and made available to each school on disk so they may be customized as needed. Each school should develop a circulation map of the campus and immediate environments to include in the handbooks, clearly showing the preferred circulation, parking patterns, and explaining in text the reason behind the recommendations. This circulation map should also be a permanent feature in all school newsletters. Bicycle helmet subsidy-programs are available in California, and should be used to provide safety approved low-cost helmets for all school children that ride bicycles.

*Recommended Program: Produce a Bicycle Commuter Handbook.*

Develop a bicycle commuter handbook through the Parks and Recreation Department, or other City departments that identifies the local system and commute routes available to bicycle commuters. This may include maps, commuter education programs, motorist education programs, and employer incentives. Work with local employers to distribute the handbooks and safety literature.

*Recommended Program: Develop an Adult Education Program.*

Establish an adult bicycle education program through a coordinated effort between the Parks and Recreation Department and League of American Bicyclists, or other City departments that teaches adults how to ride defensively, how to ride on a variety of city streets, and encourages adults to feel more confident to ride to work or for recreation (example is Road 1 and 2 training). Work with local bicycling groups who could provide the training expertise, and possibly lead organized bicycle-training sessions, tours and rides.

*Recommended Program: Educate Motorists*

Educate motorists about the rights and characteristics of bicyclists through a variety of means including: (a) making bicycle safety a part of traffic school curriculum in Folsom, (b) producing a brochure on bicycle safety and laws for public distribution, (c) enforcing existing traffic laws for both motorists and bicycles, (d) sending an official letter to the Department of Motor Vehicles recommending the inclusion of bicycle laws in the drivers license exam, and (e) install signs that read 'Share the Road' with a bicycle symbol at least every 1,000 feet along all routes of the proposed primary system where bike lanes are not feasible, travel lanes are under 14 feet wide, and ADTs exceed 20,000.

*Recommended Program: Identify School Commute Routes*

This plan has identified many routes that will benefit school children who choose to walk or bicycle to school. However, each school needs to conduct its own evaluation of school commute patterns and work with the City in identifying crossing and corridor improvements. Identifying and improving routes for children to walk or bicycle to school is one of the most cost effective means of reducing AM traffic congestion and addressing existing safety problems. Most effective school commute programs are joint efforts of the school district and city, with parent organizations adding an important element.

*Recommended Program: Develop School Commute Route Improvement Plan*

Develop a tool that can be used to evaluate safety conditions on school commute corridors to determine if conditions are within acceptable bounds. This can be done using state or City accident data, surveys of parents on their school commute habits, surveys of students

who walk or ride to school, and other sources. Develop specific thresholds by which meaningful comparisons can be made.

Develop a toolbox of measures that can be implemented by the school district and City to address safety problems. This may include maps of preferred school commute routes, warning signs, enhanced education, additional crossing guards, signal treatments (longer cycles, pedestrian activated buttons, etc.), enhanced visibility at key locations (lighting, landscaping abatement), crosswalks, bike lanes, and other measures

### **4.3 Community and Employer Outreach**

Without community support, a bicycle and pedestrian plan lacks the key resources that are needed to ensure implementation over time. While the City Public Works Department may be responsible for designing and constructing physical improvements, strategies for community involvement will be important to ensure broad-based support which translates into political support and can help secure financial resources. Involvement by the private sector in raising awareness of the benefits of bicycling and walking range from small incremental activities by non-profit groups, to efforts by the largest employers in the City. Specific programs are described below.

#### *4.3.1 Bicycle Donation Program*

A fleet of lender bicycles available to employees to use as a commute alternative has proved successful in Portland and other U.S. cities. The bicycle may be purchased new or obtained from police auctions, repaired, painted and engraved with ID numbers, and made available free of charge to employees. Depending on demand, bicycles may be made available through reservations or on a rotating basis. The bicycles themselves should be lower-end heavy-duty bicycles that have minimal resale value. Employer's responsibilities would be limited to an annual maintenance inspection and repairs as necessary. The objective of the program is to encourage employees to try bicycling to work as an alternative, without making a major investment. Employers may wish to allow bicycle commuters to leave 15 minutes early from work, or some other type of incentive to encourage use of the bicycles. It is recommended that the City of Folsom (all Departments) be the first to try this program, and to encourage private employers to follow suit by offering TDM credits or subsidized purchases of bicycles.

#### *4.3.2 Bicycle Clunker and Parts Program, Bicycle Repair Program*

This program ties directly into the previous program by obtaining broken, stolen, or other bicycles and restoring them to working condition. The program's dual mission is also to train young people (ages 12-18) how to repair bicycles as part of a summer jobs training effort. Bicycles are an excellent medium to teach young people the fundamentals of mechanics, safety, and operation. Young people can use these skills to maintain their own

bicycles, or to build on related interests. The program is often staffed by volunteers from local cycling organizations and bicycle shops, who can help build an interest in bicycling as an alternative to driving. The seed money to begin this program often comes from a local private funding source. The proposal submitted to this source should clearly outline the project objectives, operating details, costs, effectiveness evaluation, and other details. The bicycles themselves could be derived from unclaimed stolen bicycles from the police department, or from donated bicycles. The program will need to qualify as a Section 501C(3) non-profit organization to offer tax deductions.

#### *4.3.3 Bicycle Facilities Map*

Work with the Parks and Recreation Department, the School District, Chamber of Commerce, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and local businesses to produce a local bicycle/walking map that shows existing and recommended touring and commuting bicycle routes, access to regional mountain bike trails, historic walking tours, and school commute routes.

#### *4.3.4 Community Adoption*

Programs to have local businesses and organizations ‘adopt’ a pathway such as the Humbug-Willow Creek System have proven effective around the country, similar to the adoption of segments of the Interstate Highway system. Small signs located along the pathway would identify supporters, acknowledging their contribution. Support would be in the form of an annual commitment to pay for the routine maintenance of the pathway (cleaning, repairs, landscape maintenance, etc.). The Parks and Recreation Department or other groups may administer this program.

#### *4.3.5 Bike Fairs and Races*

The City is well positioned to capitalize on the growing interest in on-road and off-road bicycle races and criteriums. Events would need to be sponsored by local businesses, and involve some promotion, insurance, and development of adequate circuits for all levels of riders. It is not unusual for these events to draw up to 1,000 riders, which could bring some additional expenditure into the town.

The City can assist in developing these events by acting as a co-sponsor, and expediting and possibly underwriting some expenses, for example, police time. The City should also encourage these events to have races and tours that appeal to the less experienced cyclist. For example, in exchange for underwriting part of the costs of a race the City could require the event promoters to hold a bicycle repair and maintenance workshop for kids, short fun

rides for kids, and/or a tour of the route led by experienced cyclists who could show less experienced riders how to safely negotiate city streets.

#### *4.3.6 Employer Incentives*

Beyond programs described earlier such as the Bicycle Donation Program, employer incentives to encourage employees to try bicycling or walking to work include sponsoring bike fairs and races, providing bicycle lockers and shower facilities, and offering incentives to employees who commute by bicycle or walk by allowing for more flexible arrival and departure times, and possibly paying for transit or taxis during inclement weather. The City may offer incentives to employers to institute these improvements through air quality credits, lowered parking requirements, reduced traffic mitigation fees, or other means.

#### *4.3.7 Bike valet parking*

The City of Folsom and a local bike advocacy group (Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates) have set up a program to provide free bike valet parking at special events in the City. Automobile parking in the historic district is very limited and the ability to provide bike parking provides a realistic alternative to helping relieve parking during the many special events in the historic district.

### **4.4 Other Safety Improvements**

In addition to the education actions listed above and the proposed bikeways system improvements, the following miscellaneous actions address a variety of needs and deficiencies.

#### *Sidewalks and Street Crossings*

Street crossings are generally provided with crosswalks, warning signs, lighting, signals, and/or pavement treatments. Standards for the design, operation, and installation of pedestrian crossings have been developed by a variety of organizations such as Caltrans and AASHTO. The type and location of crossing improvements is often based on an evaluation of pedestrian and bicycle volumes, spacing between crossings, traffic volumes, accident patterns, and other information.

The City should adopt minimum thresholds for crossing facilities that are applied citywide. This includes minimum green time at signalized intersections based on street width, and grade, minimum distances between crosswalks on collectors and arterials, minimum sight clearance (including on-street parking restrictions), criteria for grade separated bike/pedestrian crossings, and minimum lighting standards.

*Recommended Program: Sidewalk Management Plan*

The City should examine its current ordinance regulating bicycle use of sidewalks, and adopt a new ordinance clearly defining if and under what circumstances bicycle riding on sidewalks is acceptable. Many cities develop ordinances that allow bicycle use on sidewalks with some limitations such as maximum speeds in busy commercial areas.