



The Squeaky Wheel

www.sacbike.org

Newsletter of the Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates

August 2002

From The Chair North Natomas — Yet Another Barrier to Cycling and Walking?

By Lea Brooks

In a recent article in the Sacramento Bee, city of Sacramento officials were proudly describing a proposed major freeway interchange on Interstate 5 near Arco Arena as a connection between new neighborhoods now separated by the freeway in North Natomas.

The truth is that this project — and all freeway interchanges designed to move large volumes of fast-moving motor vehicles — will be a major barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians. To residents of North Natomas who want to walk and cycle — either by choice or necessity — the proposed interchange sends a disturbing message from the city of Sacramento that their need for safe and convenient transportation facilities does not matter.

A contractor for this project will be hired soon, with construction scheduled to begin later this summer. The \$19 million project, which will take two years to build, will be paid for by developers and home buyers.

Something is very wrong here. Why did Sacramento deliberately select a freeway interchange design that is unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians? This is the same city that has asked Dan Burden, a national expert on walkable communities, for advice on how to make the capital of California a more pleasant place to live.

Burden's five keys to a successful bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly community are security, convenience, efficiency, comfort and a sense of welcome.

I'm not aware of any cyclists and pedestrians who feel welcome or safe in a free-

Interchanges, page 3

SABA and WalkSacramento Receive Grant

By Walt Seifert

SABA and WalkSacramento have received a \$10,000 grant from the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District that is part of the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails' Clean Air Public Awareness Program. The grant effort will run through June 2003.

The purpose of the grant is to develop a presentation to educate community leaders, including elected officials and planning commissions, on the health benefits of cycling and walking. The presentation will describe community design changes that help increase levels of cycling and walking.

SABA and WalkSacramento will also conduct a feasibility study of having a "Car-Free Day" in Sacramento County. SABA volunteers are needed for this effort. Research will be needed on what has been done and what has worked in other cities around the world. Based on car-free day options identified by the research, there will need to be contacts with local governments, transit pro-

Grant, page 3

MTP Approved

By Walt Seifert

On July 18, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) board unanimously approved the \$21 billion Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which will guide transportation spending in the region for the next 23 years.

Several SACOG board members expressed the notion that this may not be the best possible plan, but given political realities and the democratic process, it is the best achievable plan.

Board member Steve Cohn thanked the board for building the plan on an assumed increase in the Measure A sales tax for transportation — which will result in far more funding for transit.

Sacramento County Supervisor Roger Dickinson complained the MTP did not go far enough in linking land use and transportation - something that is supposed to be rectified in the next MTP update. His comments came the day after the Board of Supervisors voted in favor of old-style, sprawling development in the massive 22,000-residence Sunrise-Douglas project that will be accessible only by motor vehicle.

MTP, page 4

SABA
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This space reserved for a mailing label with your name on it. Join us! A membership application is available at www.sacbike.org and most bike shops.

SABA Mission

To make cycling in the Sacramento area safe, convenient and pleasant. To have more people cycling for transportation so we have healthy air, healthy citizens and healthy communities.

SABA meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, usually at noon, but once every three months at 6:00 p.m. For more information call us at (916) 444-6600, or e-mail us at bikesaba@pacbell.net.

SABA's Folsom Chapter, the Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates (FABA), meets at 7:00 p.m. the third Thursday of the month. For more information call Chapter Chair Tony Powers at (916) 353-1745 or e-mail them at faba@tomatoweb.com.

The Squeaky Wheel

The newsletter is produced and distributed once each month. If you have an idea, a compliment, a tale of woe or an article for the newsletter, contact Lea Brooks, 2013 Roaring Camp Drive, Gold River 95670, via e-mail at lea2skip@aol.com, or call evenings at (916) 635-9332 by the third Thursday of each month.

SABA General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, August 27, noon, American Lung Association, 909 12th Street, Sacramento

- 11:45 I. Pre-meeting mingle, chat and eat.
- 12:00 II. Introductions (Lea Brooks).
- 12:05 III. Executive Director's Report (Walt Seifert).
- 12:20 IV. Central City Streets Project Status Report (Walt, Chris Morfas and/or Doug Thompson).
- 12:35 V. Other business and announcements.
- 1:05 VI. Adjourn.

SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

The monthly SABA Volunteer Work and Pizza Party will be Thursday, Sept. 12, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the SABA Supreme HQ, 909 12th St. We'll be writing letters, stuffing envelopes, and talking all kinds of intriguing bike stuff!



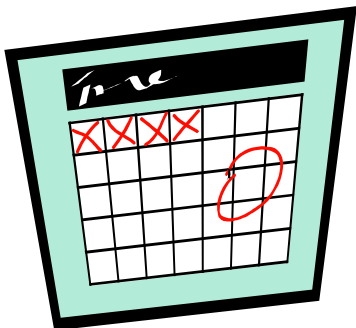
SABA/Community Calendar

August

27 SABA General Membership meeting, noon

September

- 7-9 Emigrant Trails Bike Trek, sponsored by the American Lung Association
- 8 "Celebrate the Bridge" parade, Watt Avenue
- 12 SABA volunteer pizza party, 5:30-7:30 p.m., SABA HQ
- 21 Great American River Cleanup
- 24 SABA General Membership meeting, noon



SABActions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Sacramento Transportation and Air Quality Collaborative plenary and indicator working group sessions
- Freeport Boulevard/21st Street two-way reversion open house.

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Sacramento Board of Supervisors on the Sunrise-Douglas project
- Sacramento County Parks on the proposal to allow off-leash dogs in the American River Parkway
- City of Elk Grove in support of its grant for an Alternative Modes Master Plan
- Caltrans District 3 on the Tower Bridge closure and detour
- Assembly Member Darryl Steinberg in support of SB1555 for pedestrian and bicyclist safety
- Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on budget cuts to the American River Parkway.

Testimonies

SABA testified before:

- The Board of Supervisors on the Hazel Avenue Corridor Study
- The Sacramento County Parks and Recreation Commission regarding a proposal to allow off-leash dogs on the American River Parkway. ☺

Interchanges, from page 1

way interchange with multi-lane on- and off-ramps and vehicles accelerating to freeway speed. The city might as well post a neon sign that flashes: "motor vehicles welcome; bicyclists and pedestrians enter at great risk to your life." SABA has made its position on freeway interchanges quite clear, most recently in comments to the city of Elk Grove regarding the Sheldon Road/ State Route 99 Interchange Improvement Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

In part, SABA said, "As proposed, the interchange replacement would result in Sheldon Road at State Route 99 being widened with shoulders wide enough for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. However, few bicyclists and pedestrians will cross Highway 99 through an interchange designed to move large volumes of fast-moving vehicles. It simply is too intimidating and dangerous. We strongly believe that just about anyone, including family groups, kids over the age of 10 and the elderly, should be able to bike anywhere. They should not only be safe doing so, but feel safe and comfortable as well.

"The draft EIR does not recognize that the proposed project would effectively block bicyclists and pedestrians from safely crossing State Route 99 and the consequences of building a project that only accommodates motor vehicles. Does the new city of Elk Grove truly want to inhibit individuals who choose to travel by bicycle or foot from crossing the freeway? The EIR should seriously address alternatives to the proposed interchange that would accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, including a separate bicycle-pedestrian overcrossing."

The Sacramento City-County Bicycle Advisory Committee (SacBAC), which is comprised of many SABA members, developed a proposed policy on new or expanded freeway interchanges and overcrossings that has been submitted to city officials and the Board of Supervisors for review and adoption.

The proposed policy's key point in this situation is that "all new freeway overcrossings and undercrossings or interchange projects are required to meet the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists as part of the project or else additional and/or separate pedestrian and bicycle facilities meeting their needs are to be developed and constructed simultaneously with the project for motor vehicles. The pedestrian and bicycle facilities must not be separate projects and/or be postponed to future dates. All new or expanded overcrossings and interchanges must include direct, functional and safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities."

Well, city of Sacramento, you're already behind. SABA challenges the city to direct its staff to fix the Arena interchange or immediately start designing and securing funds for a separate freeway crossing in North Natomas that accommodates bicyclists and pedestrians. Anything less is unacceptable. ☸

Grant, from page 1

viders and other groups to assess their interest in participating. Please let me know by phone (916) 444-6600 or e-mail bikesaba@pacbell.net if you would like to help. ☸

SARA Seeks SABA Representative

The Save the American River Association (SARA) board is looking for a SABA representative. Lea Brooks filled the traditional SABA "seat" on the board for many years. SARA, a nonprofit, advocacy group, has been instrumental in creating and preserving the American River Parkway.

The SARA board meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. If you are interested, contact Lea for more information at Lea2skip@aol.com. ☸

SABA Now 500 Members Strong!

SABA reached a significant membership milestone in July as it topped the 500 member mark. For most of its early years, SABA's membership ranged between 100 and 150 members. In the last four years, membership has steadily increased from just over 100 to the current level.

Many thanks go to the SABA volunteers who have devoted many hours to stuffing envelopes, eating pizza and writing notes, thousands of times over, to prospective members. Our membership numbers are noticed by decision-makers. Of course, in addition to its direct members, SABA represents the several thousand cyclists in the Sacramento Wheelmen, the Sacramento Bike Hikers, the Davis Bike Club and other recreational clubs, as well as the interests of hundreds of thousands of unaffiliated cyclists in the area.

Having more members creates the possibility of having a greater number of involved members. If you want to be more involved, check the list of volunteer service opportunities on the SABA Web site www.sacbike.org - or create a role for yourself and talk to us. ☸

Welcome new members!

Welcome new members and welcome back returning members!

American River Bicycles (Town & Country)

Lucy Barber
 Noelle & Stein Buer
 Jim Collins
 Chris Dawson
 David Graber
 Pat Lydon & Karen Burkhardt
 Gerald Klaas
 Kathy Long
 Glenda Marsh
 Tom Meagher
 Mary Menconi
 Valeri Mihanovich
 Carol Misquez
 Linda Morrow
 John Smith
 Gary S. Summers
 Elaine M. Wagg
 Lukas Weber



MTP, from page 1

County Supervisor Muriel Johnson, who is also chair of the SACOG board, expressed irritation that "road" had become a dirty word. She said roads were essential for public safety, delivery of goods and bicyclists. By making no distinction between freeways, beltways, six- or eight-lane arterials and neighborhood streets, she implied all roads were the same in their benefits and negative impacts.

Board member Christopher Cabaldon of West Sacramento singled out SABA and the American Lung Association for their astute (but generally dismissed) comments on the draft environmental impact report for the MTP. SABA will be reviewing the responses to its comments and assessing whether further action is warranted.

While falling far short of what it should have been, the MTP has levels of funding for bicycle, pedestrian and community design projects never before reached. It will be a monumental undertaking for local governments, SABA, and others in the community to make sure this money is used wisely. ☉

Bumps on the Bike Trail

Fast action by SABA and a quick response by the Sacramento County Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Space averted some potentially dangerous problems for Eppie's Great Race. SABA Chair Lea Brooks reported raised reflective "tabs" on the American River Parkway bike trail under the Watt Avenue Bridge five days before the race on July 20.

Apparently a well-intentioned contractor was trying to delineate the center line of a newly paved stretch of the trail before it was striped. The contractor didn't realize that the tabs could present a safety problem, especially to hundreds of tightly-grouped racers with various abilities who might instinctively swerve to avoid them. The Caltrans Highway Design Manual says raised delineators are a no-no for separating bike lanes from traffic lanes. They are clearly a bad idea for trails as well.

The tabs were removed the day before the race. ☉



Tower Bridge Detour Update

As previously reported, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will be closing the Tower Bridge to all traffic for several months starting sometime in September so the structure can be repainted. Cyclists and pedestrians will be detoured to the I Street Bridge, a woefully inadequate structure for cyclists.

SABA has met with Caltrans officials and provided them a number of recommendations to improve the I Street Bridge and its approaches. The recommendations include better directional signage, speed limit signs, signage and ramps to make the sidewalk usable by cyclists, peak-hour enforcement and sweeping to remove debris.

The complete list of suggested changes are included in a letter posted on the SABA Web site, www.sacbike.org. Click Advocacy, then Letters. ☉

TALL Order

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments and Valley Vision will host a fourth annual transportation forum titled "TALL Order: Balancing the Region's Needs." TALL is an acronym for Transportation, Air Quality, Land Use and Leadership. TALL Order will be an all-day affair on Oct. 18, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Grand Ballroom at the Sacramento Convention Center.

Participants, including regional lawmakers, business leaders, educators and informed citizens, will examine the four immediate issues facing the Sacramento area and provide instantaneous feedback via interactive devices.

Ann Compton, ABC news correspondent, will be the luncheon speaker. Cost is \$75 for the forum and lunch.

SABA is a sponsor of the forum and encourages its members to attend. For more information, please visit the 2002 Regional Forum website at www.sacog.org/forum2002. ☉



Supervisors Support Hazel Avenue Widening

By a 3-2 vote, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on July 25 expressed a preference for converting Hazel Avenue from four to six lanes between Madison Avenue and Gold Country Boulevard. Additional information will be presented to the board on September 17.

This option includes bike lanes and a separate bike/pedestrian bridge over the American River just east of the existing Hazel Avenue Bridge.

The action clears the way for county staff to move forward with preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act. The EIR will include the four- and six-lane options, a no-project alternative and other possibilities.

SABA supported a four-lane option for Hazel with other improvements because six-lane roads are intimidating and unpleasant for bicyclists and pedestrians. The City-County Bicycle Advisory Committee initially supported the four-lane alternative without the separate bridge, but apparently changed its mind in July and supported the staff recommendation.

Despite the fact that no detailed work has yet been done so that the required environmentally superior option could be selected, the board decided to follow the staff recommendation to express a preference for six lanes so that staff could begin securing the \$20 million in additional funds needed.

The six-lane project, which requires substantial property acquisition, will cost an estimated \$40 million. The four-lane version is half as expensive. ☼

Watt Avenue Bridge Parade on Sept. 8

SABA members are encouraged to bicycle in the Watt Avenue "Celebrate the Bridge" parade on Sunday, Sept. 8 to mark completion of the two-year Watt Avenue expansion project. The remodeled bridge and supporting facilities provide much improved bicycle and pedestrian access.

The parade will begin at 8:30 a.m. on the southbound Watt Avenue on-ramp at American River Drive. Staging for the parade will be at the Teichert parking lot at 3500 American River Drive (SABA members should arrive at the parking lot by 7:45 a.m.).

The parade will travel southbound on Watt Avenue and end at La Rivera Drive between the north and southbound on-ramps. Immediately following the parade, a bridge dedication ceremony will take place at the La Riviera entrance to the American River Parkway. Free refreshments and T-shirts will be available.

SABA members Skip Amerine and David Lively attended two years of monthly meetings of the Watt Avenue Community Advisory Committee to ensure that this project improved conditions for bicyclists at the La Riviera and American River Drive interchanges and the bridge over the American River and its connections to the Parkway bike trails. ☼

Two-way on Freeport and 21st?

By Walt Seifert

The city of Sacramento held an open house on July 22 at the Sierra 2 Community Center so the public could view options on changing Freeport Boulevard and 21st Street to two-way operations. The city, in a project that is separate from (but potentially related to) the Central City Two-Way Conversion Study, is looking at three traffic lane configurations for Freeport and 21st from W Street to their intersection near the Union Pacific (UP) tracks/future light rail crossing and Taylor's Market.

On display at the open house was an animated traffic simulation that showed what happened to traffic queues on northbound Freeport when light rail or a freight train went by. Some people objecting to conversion to two-way were worried about what happens when a long train goes by during peak hours, though this is a relatively rare event and will not be made worse by the project. Neighborhood merchants and residents, especially those living directly on Freeport or 21st, appear to support the reversion because of the safety benefits and improved access.



SABA believes a reversion to two-way traffic on these streets (converted to one-way in 1974) could benefit cyclists by slowing motor vehicle traffic and providing more space. ☼

7th Street Project Under Way

By Walt Seifert

The city of Sacramento recently started construction of the 7th Street extension, which will take 7th under the Union Pacific (UP) railroad tracks. The project is being challenged legally by residents of Alkali Flats, the neighborhood that lies immediately to the east.

Neighborhood residents are concerned about the traffic impacts, exposure to toxic materials and adequacy of the city's outreach and environmental analysis.

The project has pluses and minuses for cyclists. The extension as planned is slated to have bike lanes. Thus, it would greatly improve access from downtown north to the Richards Boulevard area, an area that is inevitably going to experience tremendous growth even before the railyards are developed. However, Sacramento Regional Transit wants the space on the road now reserved for bike lanes to be used for light rail tracks. It is not clear how RT's interests are going to be accommodated.

In addition, the extension, because it will be below grade for many blocks, will actually block east/west access. Streets will dead end. The dead ends mean cyclists and pedestrians will have to travel longer routes over busier streets to get to the railyards when the yards are developed. ☼

Letters to the Editor

Don't forget that we want to hear from *you!* Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

Preferably e-mail it to:

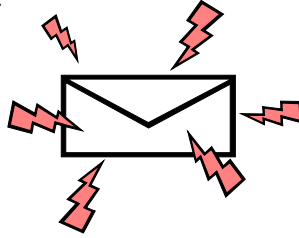
bikesaba@pacbell.net

or put it in an envelope to:

SABA

P.O. Box 1295

Sacramento, CA 95812-1295



Bike Trek Sept. 7-9

SABA's friend and benefactor organization, the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails will be holding its annual Bike Trek September 7-9 in the rolling foothills east of Sacramento starting in Rancho Murietta.

Join 500 other cyclists as they cycle 40 miles a day to support clean air, healthy lungs and the elimination of lung disease while enjoying a weekend of biking and camping.

Gourmet catered food by Ettore's, snacks, entertainment and a wealth of on-road support are provided and your gear is hauled for you. Swimming, massages, beer cantina, live music, dancing and prizes are just some of the other activities!

The cost of this excellent bike vacation is \$35 to register and a minimum of \$350 in pre-collected tax-deductible donations. Join an energetic group of Trekkers for a fun-filled three days! For more information about the 16th Annual Emigrant Trails Bike Trek, please check out www.saclung.org or call Judy Bruguier at (916) 444-5864 or judyb@saclung.org. ☼



Another Successful Parkway Cleanup

By Chad Muilenburg

Thanks to everyone who turned out on July 20 for our most recent cleanup of Mile 8, SABA's adopted mile in the American River Parkway! Although our mile is generally a very nice place to spend a Saturday morning, there was plenty of work to be done. For example, one of our volunteers found a full front bike wheel in the weeds, leaving us all wondering how its original owner got home.

Our next cleanup will be at 10 a.m. at the Mile 8 signpost on the north side of the river on Sept. 21, the date of the Great American River Cleanup. This annual event involves hundreds of volunteers who remove tons of garbage from the premier recreation area in the region. The cleanup provides an opportunity for community involvement, ownership of the Parkway, and an educational forum for youths and adults, and is a valuable service to the Sacramento County Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

But wait, you may say! SABA members have traditionally volunteered to clean up the 20th Street Bikeway, an area in desperate need of at least annual TLC! That is true, and is why this year SABA will be volunteering in *both* places. If the 20th Street Bikeway is nearer to where you live, or if you just want to provide a much-needed public service, please show up at the bike trail near 20th and C Streets at 9:30 a.m. on Sept. 21, or call Walt Seifert for more information.

Typically volunteers for the Great American River Cleanup have been offered a free lunch and T-shirt, but we have not been able to confirm those arrangements for this year.

Whether you want to work at Mile 8 or 20th Street, remember to bring sunscreen and work gloves. SABA will supply disposable rubber gloves, any necessary tools and bottled water. Because a certain amount of tromping around in the weeds is involved, you may also want to consider sturdy shoes, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and a hat. Feel free to ride your bike, of course — we'll provide secure bike parking. We look forward to seeing you there! ☼

SABA Business and Organization members

Business members with an * offer SABA members a discount.

- Air Resources Board
- American Lung Association
- American River Bicycles* (Folsom Blvd.)
- American River Bicycles (Marconi Ave.)
- American River Bicycles* (Riverside Blvd.)
- The Bicycle Business
- Bicycles Plus*
- Bob's Cycle Center
- Body Concepts
- City Bicycle Works
- Davis Bike Club
- Downtown Sacramento Partnership
- Franchise Tax Board
- Gary Brustin, LLP
- Gregorini & Associates
- Hannan Specialties
- The Hoyt Co.
- Inside Publications
- Judith Lamare, PHD
- LambertWebWorks.com*
- Natomas Bike Shop*
- North Natomas TMA
- Power Inn BTA
- Regional Transit
- REI
- The Rest Stop*
- Rex Cycles
- Sacramento Air Quality Management District
- Sacramento Bike Hikers
- Sacramento TMA
- Sacramento Wheelmen
- Savoyard Bed & Breakfast*
- Sierra Engineering
- SMUD
- South Natomas TMA
- UC Davis Transportation & Parking Services