

From the President Fall Ramblings

By Lea Brooks

Imagine the chaos and criticism that would occur if organizers of the Sacramento International Marathon in December temporarily closed the roads that the runners follow from Folsom Dam to downtown Sacramento without providing signed detours for motorists. Of course, this would never happen.

Why then, was the American River Parkway bike trail around Lake Natoma closed from 8 a.m. to noon Oct. 31 with no detours? Why are motorists provided with detours when there are temporary road closures for special events while bicyclists and other trail users are greeted with signs that simply say "trail closed?"

The event that closed the bike trail within jurisdiction of the California Department of Parks and Recreation on Halloween was the popular half-marathon that draws runners of all abilities. I want to make it clear that I am not criticizing this event or the trail closure.

I consider events like the half-marathon and Eppie's Great Race held every July on the Parkway within the jurisdiction of the Sacramento County Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Space to be good for the community for several reasons. These events promote use of our beautiful Parkway, encourage physical activity, generate community spirit, raise money for good causes and expose individuals who may not be familiar with the Parkway to its special qualities.

What concerns me is that race organizers are not required to post detours so other trail users can easily and safely continue on their respective outings during these special events. Many cyclists who usually ride the

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Complete and Utter Victory

By Walt Seifert

On Oct. 19, the Sacramento City Council voted to restore Freeport Boulevard and 21st Street to two-way operation. In a huge victory for pedestrians, cycling, cyclists and SABA, the council not only decided to go with two-way streets, it chose to have bike lanes on 21st Street instead of merely having signed bike routes.

More than 30 people testified in a packed chamber. By opting for bike lanes, the



council rejected its staff recommendation to have two northbound lanes on 21st. Instead, 21st Street will have one lane northbound and one lane southbound plus the bike lanes. (Freeport will be one lane in each direction and be designated as a bike route.)

In addition, the council directed staff to design the project so cyclists can make left turns from 21st Street onto the side streets on the east as well as allowing cyclists to make left turns from the side streets onto 21st Street. Through use of "restricted turn

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STUDY: Traffic May Be Factor in Heart Attacks

from CenterLines, the e-newsletter of
the National Center for Bicycling &
Walking

According to an Oct. 20th Elites TV story, "A recent German study has found that people prone to a heart attack face triple their usual risk as a result of traffic, whether they are in cars, on bicycles or on mass transit. The researchers put most of the blame on polluted air. The study was funded partly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and appeared in the Thursday edition of The New England Journal of Medicine. The authors estimate that 8 percent of the heart attacks they studied were attributable to traffic. The triggers for a heart attack, which is a sudden event, are rarely understood, but, if the findings are confirmed, traffic will be added to the list of known list of triggers, which include outbursts of anger, strenuous exercise and use of cocaine.

"Given our current knowledge, it is impossible to determine the relative contribution of risk factors such as stress and traffic-related air pollution," said the research team, led by Annette Peters of the National Research Centre for Environment and Health in Neuherberg. Nonetheless, because air pollution is known to increase the probability of a heart attack, they said, people already at risk for heart problems "are likely to profit from recent efforts to improve the air quality in urban areas with the use of cleaner vehicles and improved city planning." ...Traffic posed a risk regardless of the mode of transportation, with one in 12 heart attacks being linked to this source. Heart attacks were 2.6 times more common for people stuck in cars, 3.1 times higher for people stalled in traffic while taking public transportation, and 3.9 times greater for those jammed up while on a bicycle..."

SABA Mission

*SABA represents bicyclists.
Our aim is more and safer trips by bike.*

SABA Vision

*Bicycling for everyday transportation is common
because it is safe, convenient and desirable.*

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

The Squeaky Wheel

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Welcome new members!

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SABActions

Meetings

SABA members attended these meetings:

- Sacramento Transportation and Air Quality Collaborative Funding Team and Environmental Group
- SACOG Bike to Work 2005 Working Group
- SACOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- SACOG Regional Planning Partnership
- American River Parkway Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee

Letters

SABA sent letters to:

- Sacramento Bee, Sacramento Business Journal, Sacramento News & Review on Measure A
- Sacramento City Council on the Sacramento Intermodal Transit Facility
- Sacramento City Council on Freeport Blvd/21st Street two-way restoration
- Developer Petrovich on bike parking at new Safeway store on 19th Street

Testimony

- Sacramento City Council on Freeport Boulevard/21st Street two-way restoration

Other

- SABA members helped with bike parking at the Salmon Festival

SABA Pizza Party — Pizza, Soda and Doin' Stuff

No pizza party in December - the holidays are busy enough. Many thanks to those who helped throughout the year.

Take the time to enjoy the season, and the family and friends who support your efforts year around.



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trail are not familiar with other routes and could end up on roads that are unsafe and indirect.

I am especially concerned that trail users could end up on the Hazel Avenue/Highway 50 interchange that is clearly not safe for bicyclists. Organizers of the half-marathon could have easily provided access to the separate bicycle/pedestrian overcrossing of Highway 50 at Aerojet Road without affecting their event.

I will write letters to the county and state parks asking them to please require clearly marked safe and convenient detours during special events.

On another matter, daylight-saving time will be a memory by the time you receive this newsletter. For those of you who ride for transportation in the winter months, please be especially cautious and visible while pedaling in the dark. In addition to a mandatory headlight and rear reflector, wear bright and reflective clothing and don't assume motorists see you.

I am truly amazed at the number of bicyclists, runners and walkers on the streets and the American River Parkway bike trail who wear black, navy blue and dark gray and have no lights or reflectors. While there is no requirement for runners and pedestrians to be visible in the dark, state law clearly requires that cyclists have a white light to illuminate the road and a rear reflector while riding in the dark. Be safe out there!

Another issue: SABA receives several complaints a year from members who are concerned about the lack of consistent education and enforcement of rules and etiquette on the Parkway bike trail. There is much frustration with runners and walkers on the "wrong" side of the trail and traveling two or three abreast. Some pedestrian groups spread across both lanes of the trail without regard to other users. Unleashed dogs are another major source of frustration and pose a threat to safety.

These complaints often note that the worst behavior is on the bike trail between Hazel Avenue and Beals Point. This stretch of the trail is within state parks jurisdiction that has no posted rules or etiquette.

In contrast, rules are posted on the trail under county jurisdiction from Discovery Park to Hazel Avenue. The rules remind users to think of the trail as a road. Bicyclists are encouraged to stay on the right side of the trail except when passing other users. Runners and walkers should use the left decomposed granite shoulder facing bicycle traffic. All dogs must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet and kept in complete physical control by their owners at all times.

The need for consistent rules and etiquette was raised at the Oct. 28 meeting of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. There was agreement that the region would greatly benefit from consistent rules and etiquette on all trails, including the American River Parkway, so users know what is expected of them regardless of which trail they are enjoying.

The committee will address this issue in more detail at its next meeting early next year. Stay tuned. ☼

Air Quality Conformity Lapse

By Walt Seifert

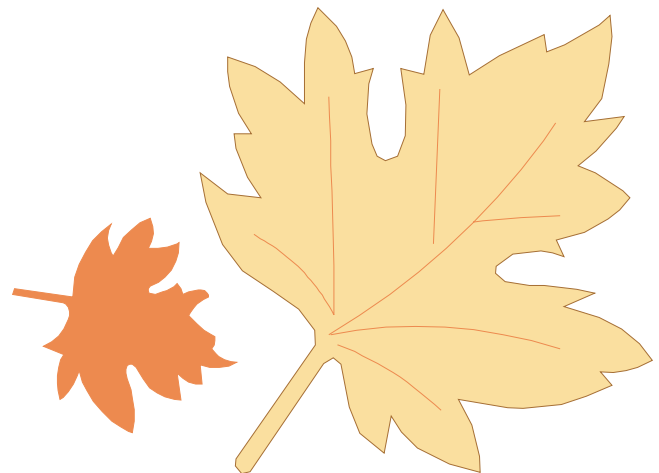
Sacramento currently does not meet Federal health based standards for ozone. The region is a "severe non-attainment" area. As a result, to meet Federal Clean Air Act requirements, the Sacramento region's transportation plan must "conform", or show that it does not harm the region's chances of reaching the ozone standard. The critical aspect of conformity is having a transportation plan in which projected pollution from motor vehicles does not exceed emissions "budgets."

On Oct. 4, the Sacramento region lapsed federal air quality conformity requirements. Now Sacramento has neither good air quality nor an approved plan to achieve healthy air. The lapse could have a significant impact on the progress of major transportation projects that provide new capacity, yet, outside the bowels of bureaucracy, the lapse has received scant attention. It certainly wasn't mentioned in the Measure A mailers.

The lapse will remain in effect until next summer at the earliest, or more likely, until November 2005. It could extend even longer if planning and paperwork requirements don't go well.

To end the lapse, a number of things have to happen. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has to issue eight-hour implementation plan rules in a timely manner. The eight-hour federal ozone standard will take affect June 15, 2005. In addition, the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District has to use those rules, new region population projections and new vehicle pollution projections (updating vehicle fleet information to reflect the increasing numbers of pick-up trucks and SUVs) to create a plan to meet the eight-hour standards.

Will the region seize this opportunity – it's really more of an obligation or mandate than an opportunity – to fill the transportation pipeline with bike/pedestrian projects? Or will it delay spending transportation dollars until those dollars can be spent on all projects? What do you think? ☼



SMART Plan Good for Cyclists

By Walt Seifert

By the time you read this, Midtown in Sacramento should be even better for cyclists. Four major streets — L, N, P and Q — will be transformed from hostile territory to places that welcome cyclists. For years, the streets have been three-lane, one-way streets with high-speed traffic and lots of traffic volume during commute time. Under the South Midtown Area Revitalization and Transportation (SMART) Plan, the east-west streets are being resurfaced and restriped from 14th to 29th Streets. The result: still one-way streets, but a reduction to two lanes with six-foot bike lanes not just on one side, but on both sides. At press time, L and N Streets have already been redone and the other streets await good weather for their turn.

The SMART Plan consists of the lane reductions plus a variety of other traffic control elements strategically placed within the south Midtown area to enhance public safety and reduce speeds. Residents and businesses approved the SMART Plan in November 2001. The Sacramento City Council approved the Environmental Impact Report in October 2003.

The lane reductions on L, N, P and Q Streets may be just a first step. Separately, the city of Sacramento has been working on a Central City Two-Way Conversion Study. Pending the outcome of the Environmental Impact Report for this study, a number of streets in the central study area, including 9th, 10th, L, N, P and Q Streets and short segments of 3rd, 9th, 10th and J streets, could be changed back to two-way operation.

In addition, 19th and 21st streets from H/I Streets to W Street could be reduced from three lanes one-way to two lanes one-way, the same treatment that L, N, P and Q Streets are now receiving. This would fit in nicely with the Freeport/21st Street project described in the Victory article starting on page 1.

Things are better for cyclists, especially for east-west routes through Midtown, but the central city still has a lot of challenges and good north-south routes throughout the city remain in short supply. ☼



25th and Capitol, before the traffic circle.
Photo by Natalie Morris



25th and Capitol, after the traffic circle installation.
Photo by Natalie Morris



Back-up Editor Needed

SABA is looking for someone who can fill in when The Squeaky Wheel volunteer editor Steve Mathias is not available, perhaps a couple times a year.

This is what Steve does: Receives articles and photos from the SABA president and executive director. Lays out the articles into a standardized format using Adobe PageMaker software. Fits the copy, photographs and clip art onto the newsletter pages. Proofreads and corrects. After proofing, packages the required files and sends them to the printer. Also converts the newsletter to Adobe Acrobat format, posts this electronic version on the SABA Web site and updates links to it. Sends out e-mails to the electronic newsletter subscribers informing them that they can now go to the Web site and read the latest newsletter.

Steve estimates that he spends from six to eight hours per issue. The Squeaky Wheel is published monthly.

If you're interested, please contact SABA volunteer coordinator Larry Robinson at volunteer@sacbike.org. ☼

Partial, but Utter Defeat

By Walt Seifert

Measure A passed with a considerable margin of victory in the Nov. 2 election. 75 percent of the voters approved the 1/2 cent sales tax for transportation in Sacramento County. A two-thirds majority was required. The sales tax will take effect in 2009 when the existing Measure A expires.

It's very likely that the measure will provide little funding for new bike and pedestrian projects. It is extremely likely the measure will increase pressures to sprawl because of the free-way capacity projects it includes – a south/east county beltway and added lanes to Interstate 80, Interstate 5 and Highway 50.

Fearing the worst, SABA and our coalition partners fought a brave and principled fight against the measure. In the end, we could not overcome the forces and money arrayed against us. Developers poured money into the fight. We were outspent 100 to one, \$1.3 million to \$14,000. The money was used in a slick, but deceptive, campaign that suggested the measure will relieve congestion problems and provide substantial transit, bike and pedestrian improvements. Overwhelmingly, local elected officials supported the measure. The Sacramento Bee and Sacramento Business Journal also endorsed the measure.

There are glimmers of hope with Measure A. Cyclists can try to get a fair share of the scant ADA, bicycle, pedestrian, streetscape and smart growth funding.

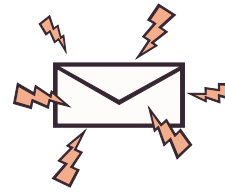
There are challenges and opportunities as well. We must make sure the funding for the American River Parkway bike trail is spent wisely and its designated transportation purposes. We need to ensure that the promises of routine accommodation of cyclists and pedestrians in Measure A projects are fulfilled.

Even many of its supporters recognized that Measure A was not enough. There simply was not enough funding for all transportation needs. There will be future efforts to raise additional local transportation funding.

Losing on Measure A was a tough defeat, especially because the duration of the measure is so long – 30 years. Sometimes you have to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and keep on going. Bike advocacy is not tilting at windmills (not always anyway), but there is no question cyclists are accustomed to facing long odds and dealing with adversity. In the long run, we can hope that more decision makers and voters recognize which way the megatrends are going and respond in a sensible manner. ☼



Letters to the Editor



We want to hear from you!

Preferably e-mail your letter to: saba@sacbike.org

or mail it to: **SABA**

P.O. Box 1295

Sacramento, CA 95812-1295

Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

STUDY: OBESITY CAUSES 1/4 OF HEALTH CARE COST GROWTH

from *CenterLines*, the e-newsletter of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking

According to an Oct. 20th Washington Post article, “More than a quarter of the phenomenal growth in health care spending over the past 15 years is attributable to obesity, Emory University researchers reported yesterday. With 60 percent of the U.S. population deemed overweight or obese, study author Kenneth Thorpe said the only way to control soaring medical costs is to begin targeting prevention efforts and treatment on the most costly weight-related illnesses, such as diabetes, high cholesterol and heart disease.

“‘We’ve got to find ways to get the rates of obesity stabilized or falling,’ he said in an interview. ‘We need to find effective interventions to deal with this on multiple levels — the schools, at home, in the workplace — because clearly this is a major driver in terms of growth in health care spending.’...”[The] numbers show that the prevailing approach for dealing with obesity, which is to blame people who have the problem and hope the situation will disappear, is a fantasy,” said Kelly Brownell, director of the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders. ‘Something dramatic needs to be done to change the environment in order to prevent this problem from occurring in the first place.’...” ☼

Why I ride

By David Houghton

Tuesday p.m.:

The weather service says 30 percent chance of rain, winds from the north at 10 to 15. We will see.

Wednesday a.m.:

The alarm arouses me from an oh-so-deep slumber. What a rude awakening. I reset the alarm so Kathy will be awakened at the proper hour. I go through the routine, combining the electric shave and commode time, downing a Powerbar with a cup of reheated coffee, a check for the newspaper (again it's not there, damn). The thermometer says 50 degrees on the nose. I put on the wind-resistant long sleeve jersey and the tights. There's that north wind, you know.

On the train ride to Broadway station, folding-bike man gets on at the Florin Road stop. He and the bike are dripping.

"How'd you get wet?" I ask. The road over to Meadowview station was damp, but hardly what I would consider wet.

"The ride to the bus," he says. "It's raining about four miles from here."

"Great," I say. "Looks like I'll be racing it to work. Hope I win." The only "rain gear" in the bag on the bike is the wind-proof jacket. Soaks up water like a sponge.

I depart the train at Broadway, wishing folding-bike guy a good day and admonishing him to "Stay safe."

The platform is wet. But it's not raining. Not yet.

I take off up Broadway to 21st. Take a left and head for the entrance to the bike trail on the other side of downtown. Wet streets. No rain. The air is nibbling at my face. A white Volvo sedan runs through the red at 21st and K in front of me. I think about the two cyclists from Auburn injured when a car pulled out in front of them. One is repairing nicely. The other is crippled from the neck down. Benefit for him in November. I ride to C Street and enter the Parkway.

I'm on the north side of the river now, that north wind now gently pushing from behind, my light slowly revealing the paving before me. The drying leaves chatter in the wind. The drive train isn't making a clink, clank or clunk. The tires hum over the pavement. It's just me and the bike and the early morning. No rain. No cars. I feel so alive, so content, so ...

"This is why I ride," I say to myself and fly down the path. ☼



Tip of the Month Successful Swap Meet Strategies

By David Takemoto-Weerts

Bike swap meets can provide good deals on bikes, parts and accessories. On Nov. 13, the 2nd annual VeloSwap, a huge event, took place at the Cow Palace in San Francisco (www.veloswap.com). To take the best advantage of such opportunities, you should come prepared.

First of all, create a shopping list and equip yourself with certain tools. For example, if you're looking for some parts for which exact sizing is important, be sure to bring a set of measuring calipers and a tape measure (don't forget that most parts are metric!). Bring a multi-tool or a few basic small tools such as screwdrivers, Allen and open end wrenches because you may find someone willing to sell you just that part you need right off of a bike - if you have the right tool to remove it. Will there be an opportunity to test ride a potential purchase? You don't know how safe that bike is - bring your helmet or at least do a thorough safety check before you ride.

Be prepared to bargain. It never hurts to offer a lower price. As the day wears on, some sellers may be more than willing to slash prices rather than have to box up all those parts and take them home again.

Worried that a bike you covet might be stolen property? Be sure it has an intact and legible serial number. Ask to see the seller's ID and even write up a basic "receipt" showing his ID number, name and address should it turn out that the bike is stolen. If the seller balks at this request, reconsider the purchase.

Swap meets can be a great place just to get ideas about component installations, novel frame set-ups and the like. A digital camera will let you record all these innovations. You may also see something that someone back home may be interested in purchasing, assuming it isn't sold that day. Bring business cards or at least something to write down your contact information on to share with sellers for future communications.

To carry all this gear, bring a reusable cloth shopping bag or two. Beats trying to juggle that greasy gruppoo all day long.

Other annual bike swaps in Northern California include: the Davis Bike Club's Foxy Fall Century swap meet on the third Saturday in October; Marin County's Trips for Kids swap meet in Mill Valley, generally in late June; and The Pedaler bike shop's fall and spring swap meets in El Sobrante. ☼

David Takemoto-Weerts is the University of California, Davis, bike coordinator and a League of American Bicyclists' cycling instructor.

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islands,” these left turn movements will not be allowed for motor vehicles. The islands took the places of the median on 21st initially proposed to prevent cut through traffic.

The council heard significant testimony from project opponents, mostly residents living east of 21st Street. They were worried about cut-through traffic on their quiet streets and traffic impacts from the future residential and commercial development of the Union Pacific railyards.

On the other side was powerful testimony from residents on 21st and Freeport who asked for their neighborhood streets back. They wanted a neighborhood with reduced speeding where it was safe for them and their children to walk, where they could safely get into and out of their driveways and they didn't have to head in the wrong direction to get somewhere. A heart-warming number of neighborhood cyclists pointed out the current dangers of cycling in the area. By the time I testified, most of my points had already been made eloquently by other cyclists.

Bike lanes on 21st will greatly improve connectivity for the adjacent neighborhoods to Sacramento City College, McClatchy High School, the light rail station at Freeport and 21st, and to Midtown. The two-way conversion project will extend from the intersection of Freeport and 21st Street on the south (where a new traffic signal will be installed) to W Street on the north. There is no question that cycling on Freeport south of the railroad tracks remains dicey, but that's an issue for another day.

The project approval was, perhaps, a fitting culmination for Council Member Jimmy Yee's tenure on the council. For more than a decade, Yee has been interested in getting the streets restored to two-way operation. The notion was initially stymied by the fact that Caltrans controlled the streets, but Caltrans eventually relinquished control to the city and made restoration of two-way traffic possible.

No timetable has yet been established for the changes to the streets. ☉

State Legislation Update

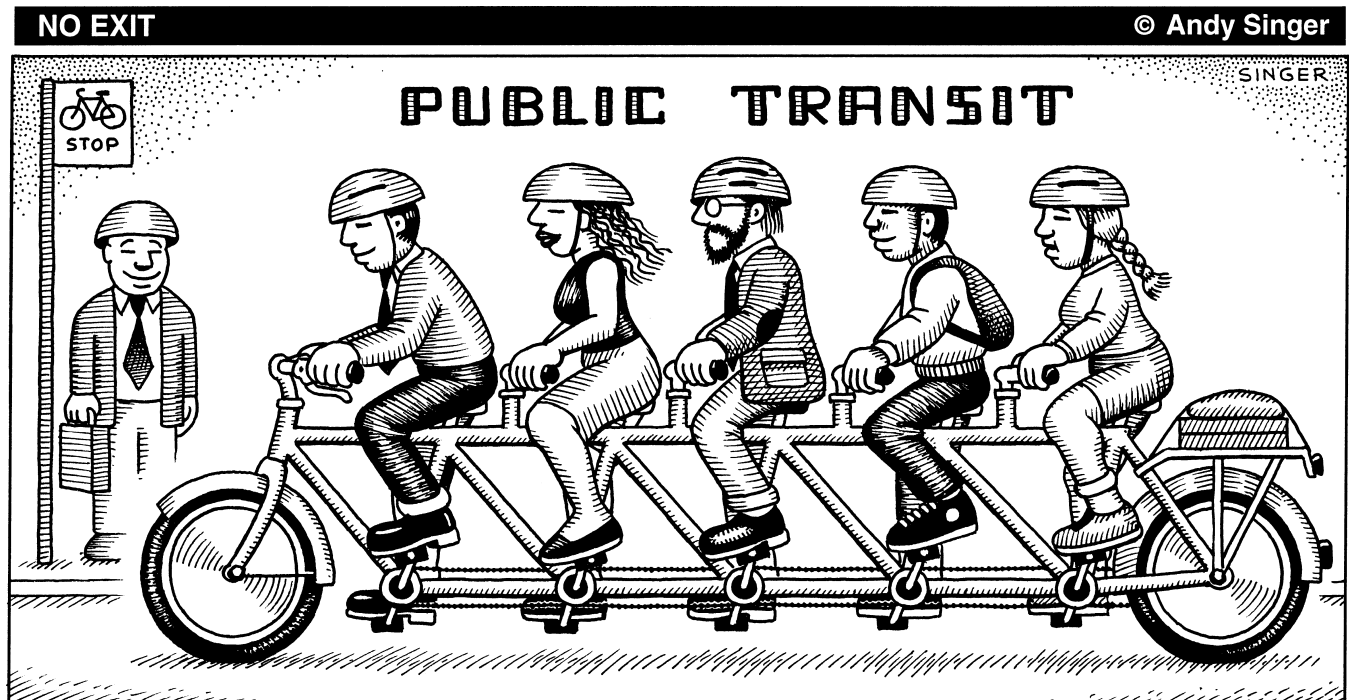
One up. One down.

In early September, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation that extended California's Safe Routes to School program for three years. Since 1999, the program has funded \$90 million in projects to make walking and cycling to school easier and safer.

Chris Morfas of the California Alliance for Transportation Choices said, "With the signing of SB 1087, this California success story will continue to serve as a national model and increase momentum for the creation of a national Safe Routes to School program now under consideration by Congress for inclusion in the federal bill that will replace TEA-21."

A week after signing SB 1087, the governor vetoed SB 1381. The bill would have turned Caltrans Deputy Directive 64, "Accommodating Non-Motorized Travel," into state statute. In addition, Caltrans would have been directed to implement the goals of the California Blueprint for Bicycling and Walking. The Blueprint calls for a 50 percent increase in cycling and walking trips by 2010, with a 50 percent decrease in cycling and pedestrian fatality rates by the same year. Lastly, Caltrans would have been instructed to identify abandoned or underused rail corridors for rail-trail conversions.

Though Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill, he said, "While I support efforts to promote increased walking and bicycling, both of which are important for improving physical fitness, I believe that this measure would impose unnecessary legislative requirements." ☉



SABA

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SABA Appeal

Once a year, SABA sends a mailing to its membership seeking contributions. We recognize that people are bombarded by financial requests, so we intentionally limit the number of times we ask. When we do ask, we hope that people will respond.

SABA cannot survive, let alone prosper, without the generous support of its members. Our board members recognize this fact.

That's why 100 percent of the board is making contributions.

While membership dues are vital, they cover only newsletter printing and mailing and some administrative costs. The incontrovertible truth is that it takes money to run an organization and to have programs. The more things we do, the more money it takes. Please help. And remember, your contributions are tax deductible. ☸

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