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People Power! UPDATE is published by People Power. Our goal is to educate people and politicians about the advantages of a transportation system less dependent on the automobile. A special thanks to all our volunteers.

PEOPLE POWER! UPDATE

SANTA CRUZ CYCLING NEWS

ISSUE 49

WINTER/SPRING 2006

Going to Sacramento to Stop Highway Widening

On Wednesday, March 15th, please join with People Power, the Sierra Club and other members of the Campaign for Sensible Transportation as we band together to stop the sneak lane approach to widening Highway 1.

On March 15th, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) will hear a request from the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) to fund \$20 million worth of projects in Santa Cruz under the 2006 STIP funding program. These projects include over \$2 million for the rail trail, an additional half million dollars (on top of \$8 million already allocated) for the EIR on widening Highway 1, and \$8.475 million—almost half the total amount requested—for the sneak lanes. Officially called the "Auxiliary Lane Project," these lanes would widen Highway 1 between Morrissey and Soquel. (This project is not to be confused with the "merge lanes" from the Fishhook to Morrissey, which were already under design prior to the defeat of Measure J, and are purported to be primarily a safety project.)



People Power goes to Sacramento.

The CTC has a limited amount of money to allocate and most of the counties asking for it have the full support of their residents. Our job is to convince the CTC to save \$8.475 million by not giving it to a county that is fiercely divided over the

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The County Transportation Task Force Needs You

Between April and June, Fred Keeley (former chair of the California Assembly) will convene a countywide discussion of transportation. After the defeat of Measure J, (the Highway Widening tax Initiative) the Regional Transportation Commission convened a county-wide task force, acknowledging that there is currently no consensus about what the county should do with regard to transportation policy. The goal of the task force is to hear from as many county residents as possible and then come up with some kind of consensus about what direction we should be going. Should we continue with subsidizing automobiles or look towards other ways of getting around? We need you to be part of the discussion.

The meetings will be more interesting and interactive than the usual public hearing. Each participant will get a workbook with specific questions. Participants will randomly be assigned to tables for discussion with other county residents regarding transportation. Facilitators will be present to assist. This is the perfect opportunity to share your point of view with other people interested in transportation while learning from their point of view. In addition to attending at least one public meeting, we are looking for people to lead rides to the meetings, to do valet

bike parking outside of the workshops, and/or to participate in guerrilla theatre skits in front of the venues.

Last month, President Bush admitted that we are a society addicted to oil. The only way this is going to change is for each of us who can imagine a different way of getting around to reach out to others in a community conversation. Whether you want a train system or a bike path in your neighborhood, this is your chance to propose it. This is not a place where you can be represented by Micah or anyone else. Your presence is necessary for your perspective to be heard and advocated.

Tentative workshop schedule:

Aptos	early May
San Lorenzo Valley	late April
South County	mid May
Live Oak	late May
Santa Cruz	early June

Workshops will be held in the evening. Please contact the People Power office or check our website to confirm the date, time, and place or to volunteer to help out: **phone: 425-0665. web: www.peoplepowersc.org. ■**

Spring 2006 Bike Week

What started as a UCSC student Community Studies project has turned into a community tradition. From **May 13th–21st** Santa Cruz will celebrate its 19th Annual Bike Week with 5,000 expected participants. Bike Week not only brings the bike community together, it also reaches out to novice bike commuters to offer a better way to travel while getting daily exercise.

Our mantra of “fun, informative and inclusive events” continues with such events as the Bicycle Trip Bike Fest on May 20, featuring bike safety course by BikeSmart!, BMX air show, music, booths and even free lunch! Our cornerstone event, Bike to Work/School Day, is Thursday, May 18. This year we are trying to recruit more schools, as biking to school is as important as ever in fighting childhood obesity, making our streets safer, and reducing CO₂ emissions. Last year Bike to Work/School Day participants cycled a total of 30,097 miles which reduced CO₂ emissions by 29,194 pounds.

Other events we’re planning are a Kid’s Mountain Bike Ride through Wilder Ranch, a history tour of the Monterey Bay, Rail & Trail Day (*see below*), the Commuter Race and more!

Bike Week continues its success with the support of volunteers, donations from local businesses and public agencies. Some of our biggest sponsors include the City of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, and the Bicycle Trip.

Contacts for more information: **phone: (831) 423-9569 x128 email: staff@bike2work.com web: www.bike2work.com. ■**

2nd Annual Rail & Trail Day

Friends of the Rail Trail (FORT), Bike to Work, and People Power are teaming up for the **2nd Annual Rail & Trail Day**, which will be held on **Sunday, May 21st**.

This fun transportation event highlights the best of train and bike riding, with scenic trips up and down the San Lorenzo Valley. Roaring Camp of Felton is once again making this event possible by significantly discounting fares for the ride. Last year some 500 participants enjoyed the camaraderie of loading bikes, riding the train, and then biking down Highway 9 with a CHP escort.

We hope you can join us as volunteer or participant for the Rail & Trail Day which begins at Santa Cruz Depot Park. The event is the final event of the 19th annual Santa Cruz Bike Week event, May 13th–21st. For more information visit **www.bike2work.com. ■**



People Power Hosts

Alleycat Race—April 30th

After the success of PedX’s Loose Scruz bike event last October, People Power has decided to put on its own alleycat race. This will be the perfect opportunity for cyclists to participate in a friendly bike race and learn more about People Power.

So what is an alleycat race? An alleycat is an urban bike race, with various “checkpoints” throughout the city. In this case, participants must go to every checkpoint to collect information about advocacy in Santa Cruz and perform tasks. The first racer back with information from every checkpoint wins. There will also be fun bike related activities before and after the race.

The event will be held on Sunday, April 30th, from 11AM to 4PM. Bicyclists will meet at the Hub (703 Pacific Ave.) to register and get their information and race number. We request a minimum \$10 donation (\$5 for members). Additional contributions are welcome and donations over \$20 include a People Power t-shirt. The ride will be followed by a party at the Hub.

All registration fees will go toward helping People Power and the Hub with its outreach to cyclists in Santa Cruz County. If you cannot afford the registration fee, you can make a donation to People Power, volunteer at the race, or help out in the office.

Everybody is welcome to this event. People and bikes of all shapes and sizes can participate, no matter what your skill level. In fact, “race” describes only one aspect of the alleycat. “Puzzle” would also fit, as would “ride” or “rolling party.”

For more information, visit **www.peoplepowersc.org** or call People Power at **425-0665**. See you there! ■

FROM OUR MAILBOX

“...My wife and I have had to cut down our donations this year, but we just can’t cut you guys out. You’re the epitome of “think globally, act locally.” I really respect that.”

—Skye Leone, People Power member

Adopt-a-Bicycle-Path

The Santa Cruz Bicycle Industry Coalition (SCBIC) will host a two-hour volunteer clean up day of the Wilder Ranch Bicycle/Pedestrian path on Saturday, March 11th from 9AM to 11AM.

This will be the kick-off event for the SCBIC’s official adoption of the path. Meet at Shaffer Road at the beginning of the Wilder Path at 9AM. The SCBIC will supply most of the work equipment as well as prizes, drinks and snacks. Help the cycling community to take positive action in the upkeep of the path! For more information, contact Piet at **piet@ecoact.org** or **423-9569 x 127. ■**

Sacramento *continued from page 1*

merits of this particular project.

The meeting is scheduled for March 15th at 2PM. We’ll meet at the Metro Center at 7:30AM to take the bus and train to Sacramento. We’ll return by 8:40PM. In addition to going to the CTC meeting, we will visit Assemblyman John Laird and a representative for Governor Schwarzenegger.

The cost of bus and train fare is \$51. If you would like to go but can’t afford it, some sponsorships are available. AND, if you are able to sponsor someone please contact us.

Why we oppose funding this project:

Our county already voted against Measure J—the ballot initiative whose primary purpose was to widen Highway 1. Almost 2/3 (58%) of county residents voted against Measure J. Supporters of highway widening, such as Supervisor Jan Beautz, are now saying that “people voted against Measure J because of the rail trail and other projects.” HOWEVER, the reason that the RTC put other projects in the initiative at all is that a survey that they commissioned in November, 2003 found that the initiative would receive 9% LESS support if it only funded highway widening. Contrary to Beautz’s assertion, this suggests that more people voted FOR Measure J due to the inclusion of other projects like the rail trail.

Shortly after Measure J’s defeat, Supervisor Beautz quipped, “there is more than one way to widen a highway.” These so-called “auxiliary lanes” are designed to sneak around the results of Measure J. Other auxiliary lanes are now being planned for the section of the Highway 1 south of Soquel.

In addition to sneaking around the outcome of Measure J, the current proposal sneaks around the Keeley Commission, an 80-member, county-wide task force headed by ex-Assembly Majority leader Fred Keeley and comprising a wide range of stakeholders from the community. This task force was created after the defeat of Measure J—with the support of the RTC—to determine the county’s spending priorities with regard to transportation projects. This task force is scheduled to begin meeting in late March of this year. The sneak lane funding, planning, and EIR completely undermine this community effort to democratically find solutions to transportation issues.

The sneak lane project is being touted as necessary, citing the fact that the segment of the freeway in question is the busiest in the county. No studies have been done on other ways to reduce trips on this part of the freeway. Many of these trips are less than 3 miles. The areas adjacent to this stretch of freeway are cut off from modes of transportation other

than driving. The sneak lane project does not include adding pedestrian bridges that are part of the Transportation Commission’s plan for the area.

In addition to these practical reasons for opposing the sneak lanes, it also appears that the project is not necessarily legal, due to the fact that there is an ongoing Environmental Impact Report over the larger Highway 1 Widening Project. If it is possible to sue to stop—or delay—the project, environmentalists in Santa Cruz are very likely to do so. A report on the legality of the project by the County Council that was requested by Supervisor Mark Stone has not yet been received by the Commission.

Our reasons for going to Sacramento:

Basically, we have a Transportation Commission that is determined to shove highway widening down our throats. It is going to take the power of the people to stop them. A field trip to Sacramento is sure to be an interesting adventure. In addition to lobbying, it is also a chance to build community and meet friends. There are personal and political histories to be shared and alliances to be made. Peter Scott may sing folk songs on the train.

If you simply cannot take a Wednesday off, please consider helping in one of the following ways:

1. Circulate a petition to stop the sneak lanes. We have over 1,000 signatures of county residents but could use many more. Please call the office to get a petition sheet or download one at **peoplepowersc.org**

2. Send an email or letter to the California Transportation Commission at:

1120 N Street
Room 2221 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814
PHONE: (916) 654-4245 **FAX:** (916) 653-2134
EMAIL: glenda_hixson@dot.ca.gov

****EMAIL NOTE**** If sending email, it is ESSENTIAL that you state that you want your message forwarded to ALL of the commissioners.

Correspondence is most valuable if received by March 7th. Please send People Power a copy of anything you send.

3. Sponsor somebody who can’t afford to go. If you have the money but not the time, you can make a donation to help sponsor someone to go in your place. Contact the People Power office at **425-0665. ■**

People Power Staff Changes

This month has seen several changes in People Power's day-to-day operations. In addition to moving into our new office, we also are saying goodbye to Karsten Mueller, who for several years has volunteered as our treasurer. Good luck, Karsten on future endeavors, and thanks for all your work with People Power.

At the same time, we are happy to welcome Joe Smythe as our new treasurer. Joe will be in the office five hours a week, helping to keep things running smoothly and more efficiently. ■

Help Get Improvements to Bike/Pedestrian Path

Neighbors of Ocean View Avenue (NOVA) has started a petition to the city council to repair and improve the short path from Ocean View Park down to East Cliff Drive. This path is used by many bicyclists as well as pedestrians who currently have to navigate around deep ruts. The condition of the route is potentially hazardous. We would like your help to make sure this path is repaired this year.

This path is a pleasant and efficient way for people in the area to reach Seabright Beach, the Beach-Boardwalk area, the trails along the levee, and the future skate park. It is also an easy way for people in the lower Ocean area, or traveling along the levee, to reach Ocean View Park and the shops along Soquel Ave. Improving the condition of the path would encourage more use and easier bicycle and pedestrian access.

WHY NOW? Budget time is approaching and the city council needs to hear that repair of this path is a priority. NOVA has already met with Steve Hammack of the Parks Department and secured his agreement to include funds for this repair in his budget for the next fiscal year. Repairing the path to make it suitable for pedestrians, bicyclists and wheelchair users would cost less than \$20,000. But, to make sure it happens, the city council needs to hear that this is a priority for the community.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? Write a letter to the city council expressing your support (see sample letter on right) or send email to: citycouncil@ci.santa-cruz.ca.us.

Better yet, help collect signatures to present to the city council. You can download a copy of the petition from the People Power web site (peoplepowersc.org) or get copies by calling Eric directly (423-8072).

Signed petitions can be dropped off at the new People Power office (703 Pacific Avenue, at the corner of Spruce and Pacific) or to Eric Child (419 Ocean View Ave., Santa Cruz 95062). We will coordinate presentation to the city council.

Please help us ensure that the City Council knows that repair of this important transportation link is a priority. ■

Newsletter E-Option

Several People Power members have expressed interest in receiving an electronic version of the *Update* rather than hard copy, saving both paper and postage.

We still have a few technical glitches to work out to get this to work, but if you'd like your name added to the list of those who prefer an e-version of the *Update*, send email to: members@peopleposersc.org. ■

SAMPLE LETTER

**Address To: Santa Cruz City Council
809 Center Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

Date

Dear Mayor Mathews and Santa Cruz City Council,

We urge the city council to fully fund and assign a high priority in 2006 to rebuilding the path from Ocean View Park to East Cliff Drive. This path has become a safety hazard and poses a liability to the city as well as an obstacle to the many people who use this path every day.

Walkers, joggers, bike riders, children from Familia Center, and especially mothers with strollers use this path. It is a great way for people in the lower Ocean neighborhood to access our beautiful park. This path is a pleasant and efficient way for people in our greater neighborhood to reach Seabright Beach, the Beach/Boardwalk area, the trails along the levee, and the skate park when it is completed.

The Parks Department has obtained a preliminary estimate for rebuilding this dangerous trail into an ADA compliant path that would serve everyone well — bike riders and pedestrians. For less than \$20,000 this work can be done. Please make sure it is a priority in the upcoming budget for the Parks department.

SIGNATURE

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

AROUND TOWN... People Power continues to track (and keep on track) various bike projects. To get involved, contact the office at 425-0665.

Bike/pedestrian crossing from the trestle over the river to Hiawatha St.: Should be installed by Public Works this year. The project came in well over bid and additional funding is expected. **Soquel bike lanes between Seabright and Capitola:** Still scheduled to be installed this year.

Amendments to the Morrissey Bridge over Hwy 1: The bridge should be modified, with a wider sidewalk and a stop sign, sometime in the next 3 years, creating a safe route for pedestrians (and bikes) crossing Hwy 1 to the north.

San Lorenzo River Levee Work: Plans are being drawn to extend the river levee under the freeway to the new Tannery Arts Center. City Council has asked that completion of the path coincide with the Center's opening sometime in the next 5 years.

Bike/pedestrian bridge over the river: Funds are secured for bridge running parallel to Hwy 1 over the river. Construction should happen within 3 years.

East Cliff Esplanade: Plans continue to be championed by Bill Simpkins (of Simpkins Swim Center). We should know more about the status of this project by next *Update*.

Acquisition of rail corridor to Watsonville: The latest timeline for acquiring the corridor is October, 2006. Delays have occurred while UP fixes trestles. Meanwhile, the SCRTC is going to begin the master plan as early as this summer. Construction funds keep coming in, thanks to the efforts of Congressman Sam Farr.

This is just a sampling of important projects that are waiting to happen. Your involvement just could be what pushes these projects out of the planning stages and onto the street. ■

PROJECT IN PROGRESS: Bicycle Traffic School

People Power has teamed up with the Santa Cruz County Traffic Safety Coalition and Traffic Commissioner Kim Basquet in an effort to start a program that will allow bicyclists to attend Bike Traffic School instead of paying fines for bike tickets.

Under the proposal, cyclists receiving tickets—usually involving fines of over \$100—would have the option of paying \$35 and attending a half-day traffic safety school taught by cyclists in the advocacy community. The class would include classroom and on-the-street instruction in safe and legal bicycling.

Commissioner Basquet supports the program and is seeking approval within the County court system. Her support is crucial, as she hears most of the traffic cases. Though we cannot guarantee that this exciting program will become available to cyclists, it is just one example of the many things that People Power is currently working on. ■

In Memory of Robert Grey

On December 4th, 2005, Robert Grey died after being struck by a car while trying to cross Highway 1 near Wilder Ranch. Robert was a Santa Cruz resident and long-time cyclist. To make cycling safer, his family asked friends to make donations in his memory to Friends of the Rail Trail (FORT). FORT has received almost \$2,000 to date.

People Power, FORT and the County Bike Committee continue to work to improve cycling safety. For the stretch of Highway 1 north of town, we are working to get Caltrans to install signs warning drivers to look for bikes and to put a different gate where the bike path meets Coast Road in Wilder Park. This would make it easier for cyclists to continue north without using the highway. Both projects have tentative approval thanks to the combined efforts of People Power members Micah Posner, Piet Canin, Corey Irimes and Randy Widera.

We send our condolences to Robert's family.

Support Broadway-Brommer Path

On March 28th, a meeting of the Parks Commission and City Council will review the new draft plan for Arana Gulch. The plan includes a much scaled-down version of a Broadway-Brommer connection, which has long been an important project for cyclists.

This revised plan features one bridge to the west, a narrow, paved path across the central meadow, and a sloped connection to the upper harbor, for access to Brommer. Dubbed "the one bridge alternative," the plan is a compromise that preserves much of the utility of the original path while protecting this important section of greenbelt.

Based on a previous city council decision, the Parks Dept. has prioritized recreational uses over transportation uses for Arana Gulch. However, they still support a bridge from Frederick St. (near Broadway), to the plateau/meadow. For recreational users, this allows park access for those who don't happen to own property next to the gulch. For transportation advocates, it allows a safe route from Santa Cruz to Live Oak (albeit slower than past alignments) Don't just trust our opinion. Read the plan yourself at the main library or go to:

www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/pr/parksrec/pdfs/06aranaupdate.pdf.

The neighbors of Arana Gulch are committed to stopping this path. If you want to see the path built, you're going to have to let them know. Write a letter in support of the project, pointing out the POSITIVE impact on the environment of a path that reduces car trips. Send it to: **Susan Harris, Santa Cruz Parks and Rec Department, 809 Center St. SC, CA 95060**, or send email to sharris@ci.santa-cruz.ca.us Most importantly show up at the March 28th Meeting at the above address, 7 PM. ■