Why Not Both?
Union City Wants to Eliminate Bike Access

Busy Hesperian Blvd turns into Union City Blvd in Union City. This straight and level route has long been a preferred corridor for bicycle travel. Past EBBC Chair Leo Dubose rode the route seven days a week between his home in Oakland and a shop he once owned in the City of Newark. Dubose notes, “the wide shoulders made it a great commute route.” He also helped establish the route as a regular ride for the Oakland Yellowjackets Bicycle Club.

A few years ago, Union City Blvd was “improved” by adding curbs that eliminated the shoulder and housing tracts lined the roadway. Speeding traffic in the narrow curb lane now presents a daunting challenge for bicyclists. Roadway engineers intended for bicyclists to ride on a meandering sidewalk. According to DuBose, “bicyclists are never going to ride on that sidewalk, it compromises their safety at intersections.”

The EBBC hoped correct this problem along Union City Blvd AND develop a new Bay Trail using monies earmarked as public access mitigation funds from the $200 million San Mateo-Hayward Bridge widening project. Bicyclists lost a bitter battle to gain access to the SM-H Bridge. Nevertheless, one million dollars in State TEA (Transportation Enhancement) funds and an additional $528,000 in MTC TEA funds were specified in the bridge project permit (BCDC Permit No. 20-98) to create new bicycle connections between the Dumbarton and SM-H Bridges.

continued p. 2.

Union City Blvd must be part of the connecting route—at least in the interim. The project permit specifies: “the permittee shall provide adequate funding for the purpose of constructing a 2 to 3 mile-long paved pedestrian/bicycle path...” Even a straight-line distance measurement connecting the two bridges equals eight miles.

Union City officials and Mayor Mark Green wish to restrict the connecting access solely to the Bay Trail while they pursue widening the route to six lanes.

The Bay Trail is a desirable recreational route, but commuting cyclists need to have safe and direct on-street access as well. We definitely want both! Although we were thwarted from direct bridge access, we secured the funds to design and build a safe connection to the bicycle-accessible Dumbarton Bridge. On-street bike access serves burgeoning neighborhoods as well as the new Kaiser Hospital and the employment center near the Sun Microsystems facility to the south. Furthermore, this proposal is in accordance with local plans; Union City Blvd is shown as a bikeway on the Union City Recreational Plan, adopted in June 1999.

The folks at the ABAG Bay Trial project are likely to support moving forward with studies of both the pure trail segments AND the existing on-street connections between the two bridges. You can let Union City officials know that you want both!

-Robert Raburn

BAC Calendar

Compiled by: John Ruzek


BART (Bicycle Accessibility Task Force) April 2, 6 pm MTC, 101 8th Street, Oakland. Bimonthly, first Mondays. Staff: Laura Timothy, 510-464-6425; Chair Dave Favello, 925-937-9427, davevelo@aol.com - County representatives: Alameda - Raines Cohen 510-337-9427, raines@raines.com; Contra Costa – Dave Favello, Craig Hagelin 925-937-7610, chagelin@ccnet.com.

Berkeley Transportation Commission’s Bicycle Subcommittee April 2, May 14, 4-6 pm, (call to confirm date and time) 2118 Milvia St., 2nd floor. Staff: Rochelle Wheeler 510-705-8131, rwheeler@ci.berkeley.ca.us; Chair: Stephen Wheeler, r wheeler@uclink.berkeley.edu; EBBC rep Hank Resnik, hankr@earthlink.net, 510-524-4488.

Brentwood Parks & Recreation Department 740 3rd St. Staff: Craig Bronzan, Director Parks & Rec (925) 516-5365, CBronzan@ci.brentwood.ca.us; Delta Pedalers rep Dave Stoefller 925-634-1793, Dav es@ecis.com.

California Bicycle Advisory Committee (CBAC) April 5, 10:00 - 3:00 pm Meetings held bimonthly in Sacramento at Department of Food and Agriculture Building, Conference Rm A-317, 1220 N Street. CBAC addresses bicycle issues regarding facilities, standards and legislation of statewide significance. Staff: Jim Douglas, Caltrans, 916-653-2451, Jim_Douglas@dot.ca.gov; Chair: Alan Wachtel, CABO, 650-494-1750, Wachtel@aol.com; REBAC rep: Alex Zucker mann, 510-452-1221, REBACazu@earthlink.net.

Caltrans District 4 April 10, 1:30 pm, 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland. Meets quarterly to review state highway projects which impact bicycle facilities. Staff: Christine Williams, 510-286-5562, email: cwilli01@dot.ca.gov; Chair: Doug Kinsey, MTC, 510-464-7794, dkinsey@mtc.dott.ca.us; EBBC rep Doug Faunt, 510-655-8604, Faunt@netcom.com.

Concord (Trails Advisory Group) Call for See “BAC” p. 8

Originally designed as a military transport (and agricultural tractor), Daimler-Chrysler will be manufacturing the 20 foot-long Unimog for the American luxury SUV market. Competing against the Hum-Vee and Ford Excursion, it gets just 10-14 mpg (Diesel) and will sell for a base price of $84,000. It is nearly the height of a basketball net and includes a 3-step ladder for reaching the front seat. Because of its width, the Unimog must carry truck marker lights across the top of the front and back. It weighs a remarkable 12,500 pounds — equivalent to two Chevrolet Suburban SUV’s or four Toyota Camry sedans. The NY Times quotes marketing manager Bruce Barnes: “Moms will want to take it to the grocery store. It’s a head-turning vehicle.”
WALNUT CREEK/PLEASANT HILL – The bicycle prohibition on the elevated portion of North Main/Contra Costa Blvd has finally been removed in conjunction with the installation of a new fence. The EBBC formally urged Caltrans to remove the prohibition and expedite the fence installation in August 1999, soon after the new structure was opened. We note, however, that Caltrans has modified the R-44 signs (Pedestrians Bicycles Motor-Driven Cycles Prohibited) using what appears to be duct tape to cover the word “Bicycles.” We will press for more professional, and permanent, signs on this crucial north-south route.

COCOCO - The Final Draft of the CoCoCo Trail Design Guidelines and Trail Review Study is available for review. Numerous members of the EBBC have worked to identify design guidelines that can be applied to existing and future multi-use trail to make them suitable for safe bicycle commuting. Please contact John Cunningham, Community Development Dept (925/335-1243) and/or log onto the Trail Review website: www.co.contra-cost.ca.us/depart/cd/transporation/trailrvw.htm.

JULY RACES - Three exciting bicycle races promise to provide a nexus for bicycle culture in the East Bay during July. The Bastille Day Criterium in Lafayette will be held on Saturday, July 14, followed on Sunday, July 15 by Oakland’s Grand Prix, which will also celebrate the new bike lanes on Grand Avenue. The Alameda Point Criterium is slated for Sunday, July 22. If your organization would like to be involved, contact the race promote — Velo Promo (209-533-4996). The EBBC envisions these events as becoming more than just races but rather events that entertain and educate.

OAKLAND FRUITVALE BART - The City of Oakland has been informally requested to apply for additional state (BTA) funds for the Fruitvale Bikestation. A few refreshers about the project include: 1) this project is already 2 years behind schedule; 2) the ”responsible” agencies include BART, the Unity Council, and Oakland; 3) the existing antiquated racks are filled by 7:30 every weekday morning; 4) and the stalled construction has forced bicyclists and pedestrians headed to E 14th St to cross a muddy track next to E 12th St for the past year. The Oakland BPAC agreed that some interim corrections to the parking and access problems should be given the highest priority. These low-cost needs should be included in any additional funding request for the bikestation.

OAKLAND – The Oakland BPAC in February agreed to prioritize bicycle safety improvements at the 12th St dam crossing at the foot of Lake Merritt. This “dam crossing” has often been referred to as the “world’s shortest freeway” and is a hazardous barrier to bicyclists communting to the downtown.

OAKLAND – The City Council has agreed to move forward with the Telegraph Ave bike lane project. We applaud the Council Members’ support. The project is primarily about improving bicycle safety. According to the recent study of bicycle collisions from 1996-1998 done for the Draft Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan, Oakland has an inordinate number of collisions.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN – The MTC’s inaugural public forum for the 25-year, $130 billion RTP attracted plenty of attention on March 1. If the participant’s blue dot votes for projects were translated into real priorities, we would have accomplished a revolution. The regional bicycle plan is one small component of the RTP. We have plenty of work during the next eight months, please help by getting on the MTC mailing list by calling (510) 464-7841 and/or checking for upcoming meetings and plans at www.mtc.gov.

SAN LEANDRO-OAKLAND-BERKELEY – AC Transit will present their proposals for a light rail or rapid bus service along the E14th/International Blvd – Telegraph Ave corridors at 6pm on March 14 at the Asian Pacific Center, 388 9th St, room 4.

MTC REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN - The MTC has (finally) begun the process of drafting a regional bicycle plan, starting with an open house on March 1. Alta Transportation Consulting from San Rafael will be working on the plan. The Plan “will be an extensive study of the current bicycling conditions in the nine-county region and propose [sic] actions that will create a safer and more enjoyable cycling environment for the future. The Plan will address regional policies, multi-modal connections, model ordinances, develop a safety index to determine high accident areas, produce a bike map, and create a project evaluation system,” writes Therese McMillain, MTC Deputy Director, Policy. For more information, or to comment on the plan, contact Trent Lethco, MTC (510) 464-7737 (tlethco@mtc.ca.gov).

The EBBC Online
To keep up with the latest news and happenings, subscribe to the EBBC online mailing list. Mailing lists are a great way to quickly notify lots of EBBC members of important meetings, hearings, etc.

To subscribe to the list, send email to: majoromo@listlink.berkeley.edu with the following in the body of the message:

subscribe ebbc-talk

Submissions to ebbc-talk are archived at http://www.ebbc.org/hypermail/ebbc-talk.
Safe Routes to School — Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You

By: Sarah Syed, BFBC Safe Routes to School Program Director

You might be wondering just what does the state Safe Routes to School program mean for cyclists? How can you get involved as a resident or parent to bring a project to your community?

Bicycle advocates in Berkeley are funding the first major improvements to the Bicycle Boulevard Network using $500,000 in Safe Routes to School funds, which the City of Berkeley applied for and was awarded last fall. The funding will provide safe crossings across Telegraph for cyclists and pedestrians near an elementary and middle school, which happen to be located on two bicycle boulevards.

The Safe Routes to School Program is an opportunity for us to mainstream bicycle advocacy, by making it a mom-and-apple-pie issue. It is much harder for those in power to deny safe streets for schoolchildren than it is to reject cyclists’ calls for improvements. Children’s safety is a recognized social priority, and more than ever before a critical mass of support is emerging to undo our cities of peril for these most vulnerable members of our society. When a route is made safe for schoolchildren, everyone from kids to senior citizens reap the rewards.

The Bicycle-Friendly Berkeley Coalition recently received funding from the Department of Health Services to launch a Safe Routes to School program in Berkeley public schools. The program works to both complement and build support for additional state grants for capital improvement projects along routes to schools. BFBC’s program complements the state Safe Routes to School grants by providing a much-needed interface with local schools to directly encourage more walking and cycling in our community. The program includes education, events, and incentives which aim to spark a serious dialogue between children, teachers, and parents regarding how they get to school.

BFBC is now helping parents organize walking and biking pools, along with carpools for those who must drive. We work with schools who have already received Safe Routes to School funding, but more importantly with those who haven’t — so we can ensure they will be part of a strong grant proposal by the City of Berkeley for the next round of funding.

Do you live/work near or have children who attend a school where you cringe at the conditions faced by cyclists and pedestrians? Maybe you live near Florquesta school and witness first-hand the denial of mobility presented by a freeway overcrossing with inadequate pedestrian/bike access. The time to get involved is now. We need to build support for these crucial projects, and to work within our cities with our Public Works Department to ensure we don’t get passed by. The next Safe Routes to School funding deadline is fast approaching, with applications due to Caltrans by May 22nd. For more information visit www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms.

The Safe Routes program will expire this year unless the Legislature passes SB 10 (Soto), which will eliminate the sunset provision. The program has proven extremely popular at the local level. Last year’s call for projects resulted in over $130 million in requests from California cities and counties, competing for just $20 million in available funds. In spite of that, some segments of the transportation community are out to kill the bill and end the program. Supporters of the program should:

1. Send letters of support to Senator Nell Soto and to the Senate Transportation Committee.
2. Contact your local elected officials and urge your city or county to endorse the bill
3. Get your local Public Works Department to apply for the next round of Safe Routes to School funding so we can illustrate the widespread demand for the program.

For more information about Berkeley’s Safe Routes to School Program, Sarah Syed can be reached at (510) 601-SAFE (7233). For info about the state campaign for SB 10, contact the California Bicycle Coalition at (916) 446-7558.

Ironhorse Trail and Treat Overcrossing in Jeopardy

by: “Bike” Dave Favello

With the completion of the Community meetings on the Ironhorse Overcrossing the process inches forward. The next step is to present the findings to the PH BART Station Area Steering Committee. Following their review and input, the report will be presented to the Contra Costa County Planning Commission and then on to the Board of Supervisors for a decision.

Having come so far in the process, with only a few more steps to go, people involved in the process fear the bridge is in jeopardy! Full funding for the project is in place but could be lost if not committed by late this year. The concerns of the Walden District Improvement Association and the John Muir/Mt Diablo Health System Offices could delay the process enough to miss the funding sun-set.

What can you do?

Contact the involved parties. Let them know how important the completion of this bridge and the Ironhorse Regional Trail are to you and the need to quickly move forward. The PH BART Station Area Steering Committee is scheduled to meet April 11.

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“System design” is an ideal interdisciplinary course since it can be applied to so many fields—the toe bone’s connected to the foot bone, the foot bone’s connected to the ankle bone, the ankle bone’s connected to the leg bone…. Your bicycle is a complex system of interdependent, interacting, interrelated components—often with dual backups. If a spoke breaks you can still limp home; the same applies to a broken brake cable. Other components are individually essential, like the proverbial weak link in your chain.

OK, OK I’ll get to the point. We have made some tremendous gains in individual communities, but we as yet fail to have a network of routes and bike-friendly transit connections that function as a system of interdependent, interacting, interrelated components. For example, while we applaud the new Bicycle Boulevard signs on Hillegass Ave in Berkeley, we bemoan the lack of directional signage at the border with Oakland where Hillegass Ave jogs at Woolsey Street. System design calls for a route sign directing Berkeley bicyclists to the nearest Oakland route on Colby St, only a block from Hillegass Avenue.

I don’t mean to pick on Berkeley and Oakland. Indeed, their professional bicycle staffs and citizen advisory committees will likely have the above problem corrected before long. Similar problems abound throughout the East Bay. One example is featured in the accompanying photograph of a sign on Hesperian Blvd at the southern border of Hayward that directs bicyclists to follow a circuitous detour to Industrial Parkway. The bike lanes end a few yards behind the photographer.

At least a few others have similar thoughts as mine. A couple of geographers from Arizona State recently published an excellent assessment of bicycle commuting in Phoenix1. During my own annual rides to spring training baseball sites scattered among the numerous cities that metastasize across the floor of the Valley of the Sun, I often encounter horrendous barriers that reflect a lack of coordination between cities. My experience in the saddle was aptly reflected in the study conclusion that “policy-makers should focus their efforts on providing linkage of bicycle facilities across jurisdictions.”

The good news in the Bay Area is that we are making progress toward identifying a regional bicycle transportation network—a system. Last year we participated in a review of multiuse trails in Contra Costa County for commuter suitability. The Draft Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan is ready for your review and comment (www.accma.ca.gov). Some communities (Union City and Hayward) will need to be lobbied by you to endorse this document. Plus, over the next seven months we will be working with advocates from all nine Bay Area counties to draft a Regional Bicycle Master Plan (www.altaplanning.com) as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) 25 year Regional Transportation Plan.

-Robert Raburn

MINUTES of the General Meeting of Tuesday, February 20, 2001 held at the HUBCAT, 1336 Channing Way, Berkeley

CHAIR was Robert Raburn.

TRANS-BAY TERMINAL BUILDING: Leo DuBose announced that plans for the remodeling of this building may use up funds needed for a bike path on the Bay Bridge.

MINUTES of the previous meeting of Jan 16, 2001, and the Annual Retreat, were approved.

ALAMEDA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (ACTA) gave EBBC an award for our work (mainly Robert Raburn’s) in getting transportation Measure B approved by the voters with an 81.5% majority.

EAST BAY STATE PARK is in the works, with Rob Powell of the Trails Council of the East Bay keeping us informed.

PLEASANT HILL BART station area will be the subject of several design workshops in the next few days. Our concern is the integrity of the Iron Horse Trail and the proposed bike-ped trail bridge over Treat Blvd.

FRUITVALE BART bike station has no funding and thus no progress. Money for interim improvements are being requested from Clean Air Funds by Oakland bike coordinator Katherine Hughes.

JULY BIKE RACES planning will start with a meeting at the Oakland Museum Mon, March 5th at 4:30 PM.

BAY TRAIL section now open in Hayward area from Lewelling Blvd to Grant St. EBBC will plan a Bay Trail ride in the Spring.

ALAMEDA COUNTY BIKE PLAN will soon be out for public view, but it does not contain a BAC, (something which every city and county needs.) Unfortunately, the City of Hayward does not want Hesperian Blvd to be a bike route. Hesperian is the continuation of Bancroft Ave in San Leandro, which has become a very good bike route.

BAY AREA REGIONAL BIKE PLAN will be done by MTC with the help of ALTA Transportation Planning. “Open House” at MTC scheduled for Thur, March 1st, 6-8 PM.

STIP (State Transportation Improvement Project) A motion was passed to send a letter to the CMA asking to make bike projects a priority.

BATLUC (Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition) will have a meeting, 10AM to 3PM, Sat, March 3, 2001, at the Unitarian Church at 685 14th St, Oakland, which we are urged to attend. A motion was passed to advocate for closure of gaps in bike routes, and also to provide bike access to public transit.

"EBBC POLICY PAPERS" will be the name of documents we will prepare on bike-related issues, such as "Share the Road" signs, for use by planners who need guidelines when they develop bike-related projects.

BAY BRIDGE BIKE SHUTTLES are usually full. Suggestions were made on how to solve the problem, such as asking CalTrans to provide more shuttles.

FLORESTA BLVD: Fairmont Drive comes downhill from the hospital of the same name, and it becomes Halcyon Drive as it turns westward; and eventually it becomes Floresta Blvd as it heads southwest and crosses I-880, near several schools. Because cars drive too rapidly over the I-880 bridge, we are sending a letter to the City of San Leandro asking them to make the street safe by narrowing the car lanes to only one in each direction, and adding bike lanes and sidewalks. We suggest applying for “Safe Routes to Schools” funds since there are schools in the area.

REBAC, which is now the REGIONAL Bay Area Bicycle Advocacy Coalition, is re-organizing, and will hold a meeting for this purpose this coming Tues evening, Feb 27th, at SPUR, 312 Sutter in SF.

PEDAL EXPRESS was formed by Dave Cohen, who is now involved in BAYSTEP, the Bay Area Sustainable Transportation Education Project. Dave was our Feature presentation, with an interesting slide show of various forms of human powered vehicles, mainly used in Europe, but being adapted by Dave for use here in the USA.

Respectfully submitted by Yehuda Sherman, sec’y.
East Bay Bicycle Coalition

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Bike-Friendly Berkeley Coalition

East Bay Bicycle Coalition membership form
Send your tax-deductible donation to EBBC, PO Box 1736, Oakland, CA 94604
For EBBC information & messages, call (510) 433-RIDE (433-7433)

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[] Full ($100)

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http://www.ebbc.org

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Rides for Bay Area Commuters 800-755-7665
East Bay Regional Park District (Park Advisory Committee) Mar 26, 7:30 pm, Board Room, 2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland 94605 Staff: Ro Aguilar, Legislative Analyst, 510-635-0138 x2006, Chair: Henry Losee, 510-276-2271, EBBiker@aol.com.

Lafayette Circulation Commission March 19, April 2, 7:00 pm (1st & 3rd Mondays, but call to confirm dates), Community Center Manzanita Room, 500 St. Mary’s Road Staff: Leah Greenblat, 925-299-3229, Bicycle Liaison: Commissioner Lynn Hiden 295-283-5487. (Bring up new issues in Public Comment at start of meetings); EBBC rep YehudaSherman@webtv.net, 925-284-5363.

Livermore. Mar 27, 7:00 p.m.(4th Tuesdays) City Council Chambers, 3575 Pacific Avenue, Staff: Anna Vickroy, 925-373-5796, Chair: Steve Howard, 925-455-8090.

Oakland April 19, 3rd Thursday at 3:30 pm at 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 4314. Staff: Kathryn Hughes 510-238-6493; Chair: Ron Bishop 510-652-4667, rbishop747@aol.com.

Pittsburg April 5, 7:00 pm, Civic Center 3rd Fl, 65 Civic Avenue, Staff: Paul Reinders, PReinders@ci.Pittsburg.ca.us, 925-252-4822, Chair: Peter Carpino, (Bring up new issues in Public Comment at start of meetings)

Pleasanton Spring meeting TBD. Staff: Mike Tassano, 925-931-5670.

UC Berkeley To be scheduled. Staff: Diane Sutch, 510-643-9276, DSutch@uclink4.Berkeley.edu; EBBC rep: (open)

Walnut Creek BAC April 18, 7:30 pm, City Hall, 2nd Floor. Meets bimonthly, 3rd Wednesdays. Staff: Mike Vecchio, Community Development, 925-256-3529; Chair: Lanny Bryant, BryantL@calbt.com, 510-627-7981.