Bicycle Access Threatened by Sprawl in Eastern Contra Costa County

This map, from the MTC’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) shows planned highway and arterial expansions, some of which will affect bicycle access.

NEXT MEETING begins at 7:30pm on January 15 (third Tuesday) at Oakland’s Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Ave, at Manila. Agenda topics for discussion include upcoming ballot issues (Prop 42, EBRPD and the PCL Initiative), plus our positions on State legislation. Plans for Bike to Work 2002 efforts that promote local advocacy efforts will also be discussed. We will also address items for the Jan 27 Annual Retreat in East Palo Alto.

Starting at 8:30pm we will welcome Kurt Abrams who will present images from his tour in Russia. Bicycles allowed inside and an elevator is available.
Bicycle Access Threatened in Eastern Contra Costa County

The East Contra Costa Bikeway Plan was approved by the CCTA on December 19. This plan has been adopted by all the cities in the East County and by Contra Costa County for the unincorporated areas. The next step is for Caltrans to accept it. John Greitzer of Contra Costa’s Community Development plans to aggressively seek funding to build the on-street facilities listed in this plan.

The City of Antioch is forging ahead with plans adopted 15 years ago to re-stripe two miles of Lone Tree Way from four-lanes with shoulders (defacto bicycle lanes) to six lanes without shoulders or any on-street accommodation for cyclists. This change is in response to the construction and imminent opening of the first segment of the Highway 4 Bypass. An additional mile of Lone Tree Way is currently undergoing widening. Its width was planned to be a continuation of the existing roadway in Antioch so it will have no accommodation for cyclists, either. Lone Tree Way is the major arterial between southeast Antioch and Brentwood. The Delta Pedalers is campaigning for cyclist rights.

In other news, the Delta de Anza multi-use trail will be closed for “an extended period” while the Contra Costa Water District constructs its new 48” pipeline. The City of Pittsburg’s engineering department has declined to paint bicycle lanes on a two-mile stretch of West Leland Road that is listed on the City’s 2001 General Plan as an “existing” bicycle facility and that is the only reasonable detour. A hearing has been set for 7:00P.M. on February 7 in front of the City’s Traffic and Circulation Advisory Committee.

-Bruce “Ole” Olson

The MTC’s new RTP document (as outlined in http://www.mtc.ca.gov/projects/rtp/downloads/draft/5-delta.pdf) states that a “Management Objective” for the Highway 4 corridor is to “develop pedestrian and bicycle access to transit and rail facilities.” Elimination of bike facilities would seem to contradict that goal, and yet the RTP document plainly spells out plans to expand Lone Tree Way without any mention of the shoulder elimination.

The long-term Route 4 corridor planning includes the following:

- Construct a 4-lane “facility” from Route 4 to Lone Tree Way and a 2-lane “facility” from Lone Tree Way to Walnut Boulevard, upgrade Marsh Creek Road and construct a partial freeway-to-freeway interchange 1 mile east of Hillcrest Avenue on Route 4 and partial interchange at Lone Tree Way.
- Widen Lone Tree Way to 6 lanes
- Widen Ygnacio Valley/Kirker Pass from 4 to 6 lanes
- Widen Wilbur Avenue from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
- Widen Vasco Road to 4 lanes
- Tracy-Vasco Road Expressway
- BART to Antioch (2-station extension)

Regional Bicycle Plan Adopted by MTC

Representatives from the EBBC have reminded elected officials in numerous public meetings over the years that “nothing gets built without a plan.” Finally, on December 21, 2001, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission adopted the Regional Bicycle Plan (RBP).

Advocates from throughout the Bay Area labored for over a year to compile a document that would address closing gaps in regional bikeways, integrate bicycle commuters with transit systems, and set forth policies to insure that bicyclists’ safety and access would be incorporated in all transportation projects. For the first time, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) would include a bicycle element as specified in the RBP.

Alex Zuckermann, REBAC Executive Director, was particularly thrilled by our landmark gains. “Here is what we are getting, things we have never gotten before:

1. A Regional Bicycle Plan has been officially adopted and is now part of the RTP. It took us 14 years [since REBAC formed] to get MTC to create one, and it didn’t happen until Steve Heminger took over from Larry Dahms as the head of the MTC.
2. DD 64 (see: rideOn, June 2001) will be adhered to by MTC staff and be applied to all road projects. This alone is an important victory.
3. An MTC bicycle working group will be established by MTC to monitor the implementation of the RBP and to make sure staff will actively procure more funding for Safe Routes to Transit, such as Prop. 42/ACA 4 and the Air Resources Board mandates to MTC to meet air quality mandates.
4. Safe Routes to Transit is no longer a vague concept but now a real program accepted by MTC and I expect funding for it will be found. MTC staff has promised to be vigilant about this and to pursue funding.”

Safe Routes to Transit (SRT) formed the centerpiece for our advocacy during the past month of intense funding negotiations between the region’s bicycle coalition leaders and the MTC. During marathon public meetings on December 14 and again on December 21, our message was buried by the news splash about the approval of BART to San Jose. We failed to secure additional funding for the program.

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SHORT REPORTS

SAN RAMON Despite appeals from the EBBC to extend bikelanes along burgeoning Camino Tassajara, the Southwest Area Transportation Committee headed by Supervisor Gail Uilkema voted to support an alternate proposal by Orinda and Lafayette to fund changes to SR 24. The auxiliary lanes proposed for SR 24 threaten to sever existing shoulder access between Orinda and Fish Ranch Road.

PLEASANTON Parks and Recreation Commission voted 5-0 on October 11 to forward a recommendation to the City Council for the approval of 6 trail projects including, opening the South side Arroyo Mocho and Iron Horse immediately less paving. The Iron Horse is top priority for paving as funding becomes available. Recommendations will go before the council sometime January-February, 2002. Some $232,000 in funding is secured will go before the council sometime January-February, 2002. Some $232,000 in funding is secured.

PITTSBURG The Delta de Anza multi-use trail will be closed for “an extended period” while the Contra Costa Water District constructs its new 48” pipeline. The City of Pittsburg’s engineering department has declined to paint bicycle lanes on a two-mile stretch of West Leland Road, the only reasonable detour, that is listed on the City’s 2001 General Plan as an “existing” bicycle facility. A hearing has been set for 7:00 P.M. on February 7 in front of the City’s Traffic and Circulation Advisory Committee.

EAST CONTRA COSTA Bikeway Plan was approved by the CCTA on December 19. This plan has been adopted by all the cities in the East County and by CoCoCo for the unincorporated areas. John Greitzer of Contra Costa’s Community Development plans to aggressively seek funding to build the on-street facilities listed in this plan.

BETHAL ISLAND Municipal Advisory Council (BIMAC) Bikeway Committee member, Dann Meyers intends to pursue Caltrans funding to link BI with Oakley. Please contact Dan at (925) 684-2367.

BART The Bicycle Advisory Task Force meeting on Dec 6 featured a presentation on the Unity Council plans for the Fruitvale BikeStation proposal to securely store 240 bicycles.

BERKELEY/EMERYVILLE Caltrans is planning another overcrossing at the Ashby interchange in conjunction with rebuilding the interchange. Bicycle access remains uncertain. Emeryville Vice Mayor Ken Bukowski has proposed a joint meeting of the Emeryville Traffic Committee and the Berkeley Traffic Commission to review and comment on the proposal.

BERKELEY City Councilmember Margaret Breland has appointed the president of the Bicycle-Friendly Berkeley Coalition, Dave Campbell, as her representative on the Public Works Commission. His term begins immediately.

OAKLAND The Lake Merritt Master Plan will be available for public review at the Oakland Museum and Oakland Main Library from Jan 5-12. Please submit supporting comments on improved bicycle access.

OAKLAND Storm drains capable of injuring bicyclists are to be replaced. You can help identify dangerous grates by notifying the EBBC Hazard Elimination Coordinator, Ian Mac-Donald at (510) 832-6300 or through the online hazard elimination form at www.ebbc.org. In fact, you can go ahead and report hazardous grates anywhere in the East Bay to Ian!

HAYWARD BAY TRAIL Join Save the Bay for a fun, leisurely ride along the dirt paths of the Hayward shoreline on Feb 2 from 9:00-1:00. We will be biking, discussing local water policy issues, and looking at the huge numbers of wintering shorebirds. Binoculars and snacks provided. $5 per person. For more information, contact Jocelyn Hittle at (510) 452-9261 or Jhittle@savesf bay.org or visit our website at www.savesf bay.org

ALAMEDA COUNTY Robert Raburn, EBBC Executive Director, was nominated and elected to chair the 17-member Citizens Watchdog Committee set up to ensure voters get what they were promised for voting to renew a half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

EBBC SAFETY QUIZ EBBC received recognition and initial support from Oakland’s Community Based Organization Traffic Safety Mini Grant program. Our request for $8000 was approved by the City Council to translate the quiz into Spanish and Chinese and provide both printed quiz booklets as well the online version at www.ebbc.org. We need a volunteer to help translate the Vehicle Code to Chinese.

OLYMPIC-SIZED BIKE PARKING A group called the Bay Area Sports Organizing Committee is putting together a proposal to bring 2012 Olympics to the Bay Area. “We’re a 100 percent public-transit Olympics,” says committee spokesman Tony Winnicker. “There will be no public parking, to force the use of mass transit and bicycles, stuff like that.”
MTC LOSES LAWSUIT OVER TRANSIT PRIORITIES

U.S. District Court Judge Thelton Henderson today declared that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), with the cooperation of the Bay Area’s six major transit operators, must increase Bay Area public transit use by 15 percent above 1983 levels.

The Court found that MTC is not in compliance with TCM 2, a transportation control measure designed to increase ridership on public transit and help clean the region’s air. MTC admitted it adopted a 15 percent ridership increase target, but denied responsibility for actually reaching it, an argument the court called “disingenuous.” The Court “rejects Defendants’ argument that TCM 2 requires only adoption of the target but not the target’s achievement.”

This ruling was in response to a lawsuit brought against MTC in February of this year by Bayview Hunters Point Advocates, Communities for a Better Environment, Latino Issues Forum, the Sierra Club, the Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund, and Urban Habitat Program. The lawsuit claimed that MTC never implemented a “transportation control measure”-known as TCM 2-to increase transit use by making improvements to transit service and reliability. The transit operators were required to prepare plans to attract the additional riders. The groups sued MUNI and AC Transit. While AC Transit promptly settled, and has already completed a draft plan, MUNI refused.

“We know how to clean up the Bay Area’s air, and that is to offer clean, reliable transit alternatives so people can get out of their vehicles. Now the court has ordered MTC to make good on its commitment to improving and increasing transit use in the region,” said Earthjustice attorney Deborah Reames, representing the coalition in court Tuesday.

Richard Drury, Legal Director for Communities for a Better Environment said, “Thanks to today’s order, the Bay Area will finally get serious about making public transportation a vehicle for cleaner air.”

Motor vehicle emissions account for about one half of the region’s ozone (or smog). Transportation control measures, required by the federal Clean Air Act, are an essential part of the Bay Area’s ozone pollution control strategy. Ozone can cause permanent lung damage, wheezing, respiratory disease, and greatly exacerbate asthma attacks. The Bay Area has exceeded federal health-based standards for ozone pollution in 29 of the past 30 years.

“Expanding and improving MUNI and AC Transit service are the cheapest way of quickly getting people into transit, by offering better alternatives to driving, pollution and congestion,” said John Holtzclaw, Chair, Sierra Club Transportation Committee.

“MTC always puts new highways first and transit last. It’s even forced certain operators to raise fares and cut back service,” said Olin Webb with Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates. “When transit service is cut back, so is access to jobs, schools, and essential services for the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and folks without cars.”

“MTC encourages sprawl development, with more and more driving every year and even more congestion. We want to stop them from running the Bay Area,” said David Schonbrunn, President, Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund.

Tiffany Schauer, founder of Our Children’s Earth said, “The Clean Air Act provides for public oversight. Without citizen oversight by public interest groups the law will not be enforced and we will not have clean air.”

In order to reduce ozone pollution levels, MTC committed in 1982 to increasing the number of people using transit in the Bay Area by 15 percent. Nearly thirty years later, despite a 30 percent increase in population, the number of transit riders today remains close to 1982 levels. The Court ruled that “While MTC bears the greatest responsibility in ensuring that the region achieves the target increase, the region’s six major transit operators also share collective responsibility under TCM 2.” Judge Henderson referred the parties to a magistrate-conducted settlement conference to determine implementation of the court order.

“Having access to clean, reliable transit can make a huge difference for a community, especially for Latinos in the Bay Area who rely on these services for getting to work and school,” said Enrique Gallardo, Project Manager for Latino Issues Forum.

After thirty years of failure by MTC and other local agencies to clean the region’s air, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in September disapproved the Bay Area’s most recent plan for improving air quality, in response to a suit brought by Earthjustice on behalf of the same client coalition. As a result, the region is prohibited from adding any new highway projects to current transportation plans, and local agencies, including MTC, are scrambling to submit an approvable plan to EPA. If the agencies do not have an EPA-approved plan in place by April 22, 2002, the Bay Area will lose all of its federal highway funds. Any projects designed to increase transit ridership will receive funding.

Contacts:
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- Olin Webb, Bayview Community Advocates 415-671-2862
- Enrique Gallardo, Latino Issues Forum, 415-284-7226
- David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF, 415-380-8600
- Tiffany Schauer, OCE Foundation, 415-934-9600
- John Holtzclaw, Sierra Club, 415-977-5534
Bay Bridge Success a Victory for Entire State

Bicycling the new East Span bridge will be more comfortable, thanks to cooperation between Caltrans and bicycle advocates.

The EBBC’s efforts initially failed to add noise mitigation to the East Span construction permit approved by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. However, our pleas to reduce the objectionable tire pavement noise that is seemingly inherent in Caltrans bridges were heard by Caltrans engineer Brian Maroney. (Note that Brian is personally familiar with the extreme discomfort — over 90 decibels — that bicyclists experience on the 3-mile Yolo Causeway path adjacent to the transverse pavement grooves on I-80.)

At a meeting with bicycle advocates from REBAC and the EBBC, Maroney shared a FHWA study titled “Tire Pavement Noise and Safety Performance” (FHWA-SA-96-068, 1996). The study makes it clear that longitudinal grooves are “considered one of the best noise reducing surfaces.” The report further elaborates that motorist safety is not compromised by longitudinal grooves that are carefully specified and properly constructed.

Guess which way all existing Caltrans bridge pavement grooves are oriented? If you guessed transverse, you are correct. Part of the reason is economical construction practices, another reason is the known safety (i.e., wet weather friction) associated with transverse grooves. Inertia also becomes a factor with practices that continue unquestioned. Brian and other Caltrans engineers were swayed by the FHWA report comment that “it is unlikely that one surface texturing method will always be the best choice in any given state.” Especially when noise is an issue.

In a precedent-setting move, Caltrans has modified the East Span contract to specify that the deck grooves be parallel to the centerline of the traffic lane. This action will lead to increased bicycling comfort on the East Span, as well as on future pathways adjacent to Caltrans structures statewide.

Consideration of bicyclists represents a monumental shift for Caltrans. We note that Caltrans Director Jeff Morales signed a policy directive “Context Sensitive Solutions” on November 29, 2001. We applaud such cooperation with local stakeholders.

- Robert Raburn

MINUTES of the General Meeting of Tuesday, November 20, 2001 held at the Berkeley Center for Appropriate Transport, 1336 Channing Way, Berkeley

CHAIR was Robert Raburn, who has now become our Executive Director at a salary of $1 a year.

NEW CHAIR will be Leo Dubose, who had been our chair for several years in the past. All the other Board members and officers will remain the same, but Michael Margulies, the bicycle person for the City of Alameda, has joined the Board.

BART REP: Another City of Alameda bike activist, Lucy Gigi (IEEL yee) will replace Dan Gildea as an Alameda County rep on the BART/Bicycle Advisory Task Force. Dan had been our rep for five years but he is moving.

MEMBERSHIP has risen to 982. Minutes of previous meeting of Oct 16, 2001, were approved.

CAR-SHARE is a new program wherein several persons use the same car, and thus save money. Daryl Norcott told us how the program works. He can be contacted at www.citycarshare.org or City CarShare, 410 Jessie St, suite 503, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 995-8588.

LEWELLING BLVD in San Lorenzo is being widened and re-paved. Members are urged to attend a meeting on Dec 10 at 377 Paseo Grande to let the officials know how important it is for the road to have bike lanes.

CAMINO TASSAJARA in southeast Co Co will also be widened. We will need to show up at meetings to remind officials that provisions must be made for bicycles.

LAFAYETTE At the last meeting your secretary announced that Lafayette is in the process of creating a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

T-SHIRTS Because shirts sell much better at $5 each than at higher prices, we decided to sell our latest T-shirts at cost, $5, and all future sales of such items will also be at the cost to us.

CO CO CO BIKE PLAN is getting done, and may be ready in Jan 2002.

STATE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE on transportation will meet in Martinez City Hall on Nov 28, 1-3 PM. We should advocate for “Safe Routes to Transit” at this meeting.

ANNUAL RETREAT will be the week-end of Jan 26-27, 2002, in East Palo Alto at the Chinese inspired “Funky Shue” after a ride over the Dumbarton Bridge. The home of Raburn’s friends, Dennis and Marilyn Scherzer, 2261 Clarke Ave

REGIONAL BIKE PLAN meeting at the MTC bldg will be at 9:30 AM Fri, Dec 14, 2001.

PCL INITIATIVE The Calif. Planning and Conservation League is proposing an initiative for the Nov 2002 ballot. Long discussion of this matter, which contains money (2%) for bicycle facilities, although not as much as we would like. It also seems to reverse the Carrol court decision about liability for bike paths, and makes Safe Routes to Schools money permanent. Consensus was that all such measures have to be compromises with other folks, who have other interests, in order to get enough signatures and enough votes. We would need to collect signatures at transit stations early next year.

FUTURE NATIONA’L MEETINGS Ole Ohlson informed us of two meetings: Bike Summit in Washington DC March 6-8, 2002, and Bike Education Leaders Conference in Madison, WI, June 3-5, 2002. As in the past, we will sponsor his going to such meetings.

BIKE STATIONS Amanda Jones, a woman of many talents and varied experience, informed us about bike stations, such as the one she operates in Palo Alto, the one in Berkeley, and one in Long Beach. Not only do cyclists park their bikes in these stations and then board public transit, but some cyclists would like to keep a bike at the station in order to get from there to their school or place of work.

NEXT MEETING will be back at the Rockridge Library in Oakland at 7:30 PM on Tues, Jan 15, 2002.

Respectfully submitted by Yehuda Sherman, sec’y
MINUTES of the Board of Directors Meeting of Tuesday, November 20, 2001 held at the Berkeley Center for Appropriate Transport, 1336 Channing Way, Berkeley

CHAIR was Robert Raburn who announced that he was resigning as Chair, a position he had held since 1993, and assuming the role of Executive Director at the pay of one dollar per year.

MEMBERS All members of the Board were present except John Ruzek and John Siemsen.

MICHAEL MARGULIES, the bicycle person for the City of Alameda, was nominated to the Board by Dave Campbell.

LEO DUBOSE was nominated by Raburn to become our Chair, the position he had held for several years prior to Raburn. Both nominations were approved unanimously.

BY-LAWS: Copies were distributed, and then amended at the recommendation of Dave Campbell, our un-paid lawyer. Changes were made to keep us in accord with I.R.S. rules about being a non-profit organization. We are allowed to advocate for legislation “in an insubstantial manner.” We changed the section about the location of our meetings to bring us in accord with our practice of having meetings in various places. E-mail is now an official means of communication among members. The position of Executive Director was added to our by-laws.

GRANT APPLICATIONS: Dave Campbell got approval for submitting a grant to the City of Oakland for $30,000 in State Office of Traffic Safety funds for a “Bike Diversion” plan. A grant application was also approved for $8,000 to translate (and update) our Bicycle Safety Test into Spanish and Chinese.

INSURANCE We will buy $1,500 worth of insurance annually, something which we will need legally.

MAP Raburn reported on his so far unsuccessful attempt to get Barclay Maps to help us print an updated East-of-the-Hills map.

T-SHIRTS, with our logo in the front, and “ONE LESS CAR” on the back, will now be sold at cost, $5.00 per shirt. They sell well at that price. In the future we will plan to sell at cost any clothing that we might purchase.

ANNUAL RETREAT was scheduled to take place the week-end of Jan 26-27, 2002, in East Palo at the Chinese inspired “Funky Shue” after a ride over the Dumbarton Bridge at the home of Raburn’s friends, Dennis and Marilyn Scherzer, 2261 Clarke Ave.

Respectfully submitted by Yehuda Sherman, sec’y.

Tuvalu Prepares Evacuation in the Wake of Global Warming

The leaders of tiny Tuvalu, a Pacific island nation that has existed for thousands of years, have admitted defeat in their battle against the rising sea and have announced they will abandon their homeland. The 11,000 citizens plan to move to New Zealand after being rebuffed by Australia.

Rising sea level has caused flooding, saltwater intrusion, and erosion of the nation’s nine islands. Higher temperatures have caused more severe tropical storms.

Tuvalu almost certainly will not be the last island nation to be evacuated because of rising seas. In 1987, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives warned that his country was “an endangered nation.” Most of its 1,196 islands are barely 2 meters above sea level. Millions of others living in low-lying countries such as Bangladesh are also threatened by rising seas.

Even large nations are vulnerable. A one-meter rise in sea level would put more than a third of Shanghai under water. The US itself is vulnerable — large portions of lower Manhattan and the Capitol Mall in Washington would be flooded by the 50-year coastal storm surge.

Donald F. Boesch, with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences, estimates that for each millimeter rise in sea level, the shoreline retreats an average of 1.5 meters. Thus if sea level rises by 1 meter, coastline will retreat by 1,500 meters, or nearly a mile. With such a rise, the US would lose 14,000 square miles of land — with the middle Atlantic and Mississippi gulf states losing the most.

Note: This month’s newsletter contains minutes for both the General Membership and Board of Directors meetings that were held in November.
EAST BAY BICYCLE COALITION

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Bike-Friendly Berkeley Coalition

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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)

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone/Fax
E-mail Address
Workplace/City
Interests

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“Plan”, continued p. 2.

We succeeded, however, in unifying the voice of bicyclists throughout the Bay Area in calling for SRT. The EBBC earlier incorporated the key elements of SRT in the Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan, adopted in July 2001. The Bay Area’s elected officials and transportation staffs now know the SRT mantra as: 1) secure bicycle parking at over 200 transit stations; 2) safe bicycle access to stations from all quadrants; and 3) large capital projects to overcome major natural and freeway barriers to transit.

Regional adoption of the Caltrans DD-64 policy may be the most momentous aspect of the RBP. It portends a widespread policy shift derived from the US DOT “Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A US DOT Policy Statement on Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure.” The US DOT document is a morale booster for advocates. I like to leave copies with recalcitrant engineers. The US DOT policy is also in the Regional Bicycle Plan (following DD-64) and is available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm

We still have much work ahead to secure our fair share of transportation funds. For helping us to reach a point where we are secure at the table with other transportation interests we can extend our gratitude for the tenacious efforts of bicycle leaders, especially Alex Zuckermann, Debbie Hubsmith (Marin) and Dave Snyder (SF). Thanks also go to the MTC for providing able assistance in the person of Trent Lethco. San Mateo Supervisor and MTC Commissioner Sue Lempert repeatedly pressed for accommodation of bicyclists. Another MTC Commissioner and ally, Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey publicly summarized his support for bicyclists by stating, “the plan represents a major step forward.”

-Robert Raburn