

THE BIKEALAMEDA CYCLIST

The Park Street Triangle

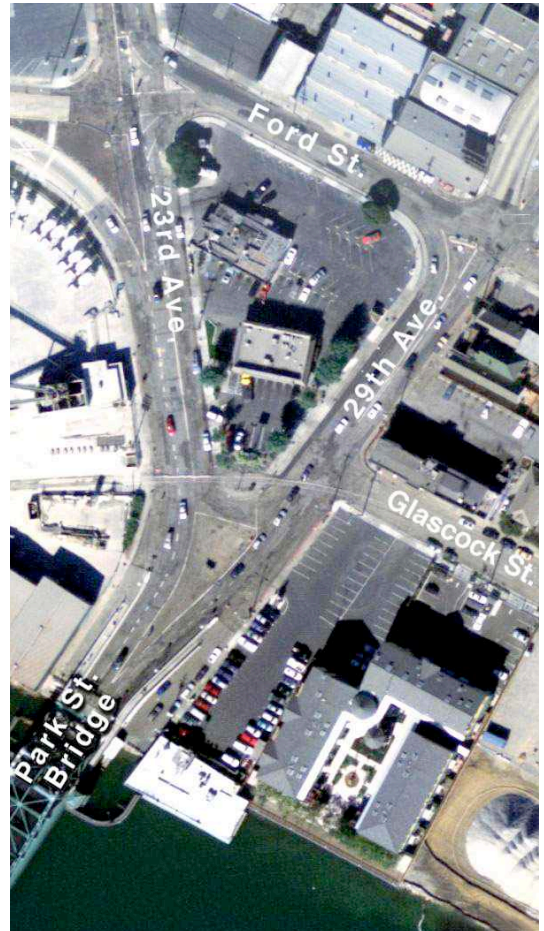
TIME FOR PARTICIPATION

The City of Oakland is currently studying the approach to the Park Street Bridge on the Oakland side. A draft report and circulation study that was completed in September 2005, studies the alignment and intersection of 29th Avenue/Park Street and 23rd Avenue. This series of intersections is a key bicycle link between Alameda and Oakland's Bay Trail and Embarcadero Road bike lanes.

The City of Oakland has received a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to analyze and improve this area. Three alternatives are already being considered. Alternatives 1 and 2 close the 23rd Avenue leg and recommend different uses for the triangle area. Alternative 3 keeps all roads open and allows two-way flow along each leg.

Bicyclists have an opportunity to help make this area safer and more convenient. BikeAlameda is requesting that Alameda citizens get a presentation of the project and opportunity to voice their opinions. The community meetings are scheduled for December 1 (Oakland) and February 8 at undetermined locations. A presentation at an Alameda Transportation Commission meeting would be the most convenient and appropriate place. Both cities would save the expense of publicizing separate meetings. ☸

What you can do: Attend the meetings; Contact Oakland Public Works - Philip Ho at (510) 238-6256, PHo@oaklandnet.com; and Alameda Public Works - Virendra Patel at (510) 749-5852, vpatel@ci.alameda.ca.us. See www.bikealameda.org for the study and documents.



Also Inside This Issue:

Police on Bikes • Winter Visibility

President's Message

As the days grow shorter, and the streets are more likely to be slick from rain, we recommend you take the time and spend the money to make sure that you and your bike are well equipped with lights and reflective clothes. The

rain makes you less visible, railroad tracks are slicker and brakes take longer to work. Anytime day or night we should all be striving to ride with care for our own safety and our neighbors'.



Lucy Gigli



Railroad tracks

SHORT TERM DANGER; LONG TERM FIX!

Railroad tracks are always a danger to cyclists who risk getting a tire caught in them when riding parallel or close to parallel to them or slipping on them when they are wet. The tracks that run along Blanding Avenue near Broadway pose this danger. AC Transit buses that park close to the tracks make crossing them at a right angle close to impossible.

Tracks to be repaved — BikeAlameda has uncovered that the developers of the Bridgeside Center are planning to rebuild the entire sidewalk along Blanding Avenue. Part of this plan includes the complete removal of the railroad tracks from the street all the way down to the west edge of their property (as far as the old Stone Boatyard) and repaving the street. Track removal is scheduled to be completed sometime during the next 12 months.




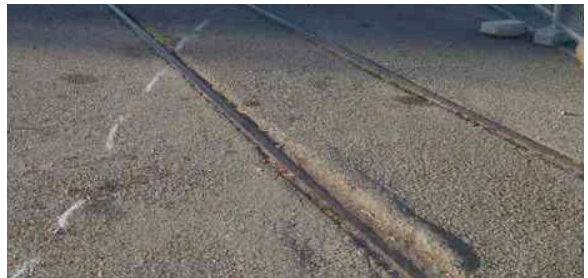
Interim fix is shaky — BikeAlameda has been talking with the

city in the last six months to make this area safer. As reported in the Oct/Nov

What you can do: Call Alameda Public Works Department, Andy Anderson. Let them know if the buses are posing a hazard. Call 749-5860.

edition, AC Transit buses that park along the edge of the railroad tracks force bicyclists to cross them at an unsafe angle. We've won an agreement that requires AC transit buses not to park within 50 feet of where the tracks enter Blanding. They should park across the street.

As soon as the tracks are gone, the danger is gone. For the time being, continue to use extreme caution on this stretch of road or, better yet, if you see buses parked near the tracks, use an alternate route. You can head West on Fernside, turn left on Tilden, right on Broadway and left on Blanding. Avoiding the tracks is especially important when they are wet! 



Be Visible: Winter riding

There are two main ways to avoid a bicycle collision: being aware of what is happening around you and being visible to those around you. The former is a factor of training and how you ride, the latter more dependent upon how you ride and what you ride with.

How You Ride — To be visible to other drivers and bicyclists it is most practical to be where they are looking. Ride in the direction of traffic, stop in front of or behind the blind spot of the car next to you, ride in the street. All of these methods will help you be seen.

What you ride with. — Your clothing and your bike's accessories can make the difference in being seen. Wear reflective, bright colored clothing. You will not only look like a great bicyclist, but you'll be seen by as "smart," too. Reflective cloth can be added to any jackets and backpacks. Wheel and pannier reflectors can help you be seen from the sides, which is just as important as the front and rear.

Lights — Bright front and rear lights with rechargeable packs have come down in price and are much more efficient than they used to be. Err on the side of caution and buy the best you can afford and then have a couple of backup cheapies, just in case.

Where those lights are is also crucial. A helmet-mounted light allows you to get the attention of motorists by looking at them. Handle-bar mounted lights are only visible from the front. Some bikes' handlebar cables can obscure the headlight, too. The ideal situation is one helmet light and one bar-mounted light for safety

CA Equipment Requirements CVC 21201

- d) Every bicycle operated upon any highway during darkness shall be equipped with the following:
1. A lamp emitting a white light which illuminates the highway and is visible from a distance of 300 feet to the front and the sides of the bicycle.
 2. A red reflector mounted on the rear of the bicycle and visible from 500 feet to the rear of the bicycle.
 3. A white or yellow reflector mounted on each pedal visible 200 feet to the front and rear of the bicycle and a white or red reflector on each side to the rear of the center of the bicycle, except bicycles which are equipped with reflectorized tires on the front and the rear need not be equipped with side reflectors. All reflectorized tires must meet DMV requirements.
- e) A lamp or lamp combination, emitting a white light, attached to the operator and visible from a distance of 300 feet in front and from the sides of the bicycle, may be used in place of a lamp attached to the bike.

More is better - Play it safe. Rear lights and reflector. A red rear blinking light is much more conspicuous than a passive reflector. The passive reflector, though, won't stop working in the middle of your ride. Make sure that your light is visible to motorists and not pointing up or down.

The more you think about how you look to others riding, the more you can equip yourself to be safe and visible. 🚲

Special Unit: BIKES

Let's take a moment to consider the usefulness of the bicycle. It takes one from point A to point B, sometimes faster and more directly than a car can, requiring physical energy to be expended, making for good health and well being. It carries things for us, lightens the body's load, and puts a smile on the face. With its numerous variations, the bicycle is a versatile machine. It can go very fast, or slow, over pavement or dirt, through the rain and the mud, over tree branches and railroad tracks. It is sleek and friendly; quaint and high-tech. It is delicate and a raunchy beast. The bicycle is definitely not a toy. In fact, it is a useful tool for the men and women who serve and protect our communities every day. Bicycles and police have been working together for over two decades to make our streets safer.

Around 1980, police departments across the country began searching for a way to maintain the maneuverability of walking beat officers with the speed and mobility of patrol cars. The answer came from that archetype of efficient motion: the bicycle. Patrol officers found that bikes allowed them to have more social interaction with the people and to respond quickly to urgent situations. According to the International Police Mountain Bike Association, "Experience has shown that citizens are more likely to approach a bike patrol officer than even a neighborhood beat officer, optimizing community-oriented or problem-oriented policing efforts. Bicycle officers are better able to use all of their senses, including smell and hearing, to detect and address crime." Alameda has had

"Experience has shown that citizens are more likely to approach a bike patrol officer than even a neighborhood beat officer"

a bike patrol unit for over 15 years. According to officer Hank Morten, "the community loves it: to see an officer in full uniform on a bike."



Officer Morten and the other officers who ride in bike patrol are specially trained to use the bike to handle anything that might come their way. At a minimum, they must pass a 20-hour-long training course that emphasizes key elements of efficient bike handling, teaching them to respond as quickly as, or even faster than, patrol car officers to calls. "If I'm within a mile of the call, I can almost always make it there quicker than a car when I'm on my bike." This could also be due to the types of bikes the officers ride. While you might think of the police as patrolling the streets, mountain bikes with hybrid tread tires are preferred for their ability to conquer any terrain. They can be taken up and down stairs, through back alleys, over curbs, through parks; anywhere a car can go and then some. Frequent cyclists outside of work, the bike patrol officers are in great physical condition and generally pretty happy since they're on the bike for up to 25 miles, or a minimum of 3 hours a day, while on a beat.

Police cyclists have a passion for their work and for their bikes. In their hands, the bicycle is not just a mode of transportation, it is a partner that can help them respond fast, catch the suspect, and help protect and influence the community for the better. Bike cops help to increase cycling awareness and bring a new level of cool to the standard cycle. Here's to a much respected partnership! 🚲

Bicyclist Biography:**Officer Ed Dowd***By Casey Larimore*

Officer Dowd is a member of the Alameda Police Department's bike patrol unit. He has covered the Park Street beat and the West End on the bicycle. Currently, Officer Dowd is the school resource officer at Encinal High School. In September, he will be returning to bike patrol covering the Park Street beat.

How do you become trained to do this? What criteria do you have to pass to be on the bicycle patrol.

It's a two day, 20 hour course that really goes over the basics of cycling, based on three criteria: Look Ahead to Succeed, Pedal Pedal Pedal, and Keep Your Weight Back. All of the different exercises are based on those three items.

I took the basic bike course in Oakland, and then, when the word got out that the Sacramento County Sheriff had a program, and I went for the one week advanced course and the one week instructor's course. It's just incredible fun. It's like a vacation, along the Sacramento river and the Sierra foothills. Their course is based on those three standards. It's actually based on POST certification. It's the statewide organization that regulates training to police.

What are the actual skills that you learn?

The bottom line goal is that you have to get, as a police officer, from point A to point B and handle the call. With the bicycle, you'll run into potentially a lot of different obstacles. Specifically, what we learn at the course is a whole list of [how to handle] obstacles. One of them is slow riding, riding around an obstacle, say the Park Street Fair, where you want to be able to

look around and pedal the bike safely at a slow speed through a crowd. You practice feathering or dragging your rear brake in order to move through a crowd. We'll also do differ-



ent cone patterns at slow speed, and they'll have competitions to see who can do it the slowest. They'll take you off-road for slow pedaling. It's just amazing how many people crash at slow speeds.

Another thing we do is if you're going to arrest a suspect [while you're] on a bicycle, and there's a chance that that person might run, you need to be able to dismount your bicycle, contact the person and mount your bicycle if the person were to say, take off running. Or, say, a simple suspect contact, where the person doesn't run, but just stands there... You have to learn how to approach the suspect, dismount your bike, and contact the person. Also, the officer is [trained to be] familiar with approaching the suspect, getting off the bike, and contacting them.

The third thing is dismounting and power slides, kind of fun. If it's a very high-risk suspect and you want to create a distraction and then take the person into custody, you might do a power slide, where one officer rides up, spins out, like you might have done as a kid, skids out

Continued Next Page

Bicyclist Biography, Continued

in front of a person and is then able to take the person into custody.

Other things we do: we ride up stairs, down stairs, down longer and longer sets of stairs to emphasize Keeping Your Weight Back. Riding up stairs emphasizes Pedal Pedal Pedal and looking ahead. Stairs are like many other objects you might find out in the streets. You might run over a curb and you want to [know how not to] look down or crash. You want to go over obstacles and not look back.

There's an amazing part of bike patrol which is a lot of fun and that is normal folks see you, they wave to you, they say hello. Say I'm riding down Park Street and I see you. All I have to do is go to the curb, we chat for a little bit. That's why I like the Park Street beat. It's social, it's a lot of fun. Kids come up, it's easy to talk to them about their helmets; you see a lot of kids with helmets that are poorly adjusted. So, on the bicycle among the vast majority of law abiding folks, they see you and they really like it. Now the bad guys don't see me. I've rolled up on people doing any number of things. They just don't see you, they don't hear you. You can sneak up on them.

Can you talk a little bit about your bike and what is on your bike?

Sure: We ride Raleigh mountain bikes that are modified for police patrol. They're Town and Country tires, 50/50. Then you have to carry a certain amount of gear around with you and so we have the rack, the bag. In the bags we carry all the stuff we would in a car, but more condensed—paperwork, clip boards—and when I go back in September, I'll be carrying a laptop back there. Some guys carry flares and we carry

a first aid kit, spare tubes... One of the water bottle cages carries the battery for the Nite-Rider that connects to the siren and the light. The bicycle is black and it says POLICE on the side, which it has to by law in order to be an official police vehicle.

How many hours a week are you riding, or per day, on a normal day, or mileage?

I never kept track of the miles, no computer... anywhere between 3-6 hours per day on the bike. I like to stay on the bike as much as possible, I usually park in front of a bank for deterrence and then any calls I get on the east end or down town I'd respond to.

I've heard that police on bikes are exempted by law from the vehicle codes that apply to civilians. Is that true?

Yes. Only under certain circumstances, and those are: responding to an emergency, rescue ops, and in pursuit of a dangerous felon. Those are cases where you could violate vehicle code — go the wrong way down a street, go up on a sidewalk in a business district. In the years that I've been on bike patrol, I very rarely do anything like that. If I'm going on a hot call I'm going to stay with traffic and obey the rules of the road. I'll scoot across the intersection if I can, but I'm not surrounded by 2000 pounds of plastic and steel like I am in a patrol car, so I don't want to get injured. The one thing I've noticed is: going to a hot call, say you put on the siren. No one knows where that siren is coming from. So you have people who just stop their car in the middle of the road, people who get out of their cars... so I might use the siren, just to chirp it and let people know that I'm there, but it's rare that you'll find someone violating the vehicle code for that. 🚲

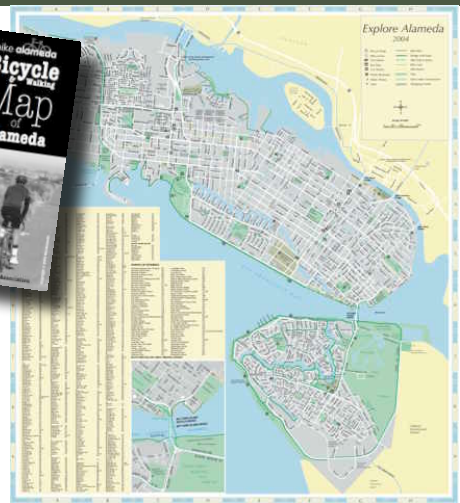
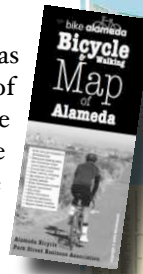
About BikeAlameda

BikeAlameda's mission is to encourage bicycle use as an integral part of daily life in and around the City of Alameda. Founded in 1999, BikeAlameda serves the community through education and services such as secure Valet Bike Parking at community events and its Bicycle and Walking Map of Alameda. BikeAlameda believes in safe streets, active, healthy citizens, and vibrant, walk-

able business districts and neighborhoods. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) California corporation. 🚲

Newsletter Production

Editor in Chief: Lucy Gigli
 Editors: Eve Pearlman, Shelley Reed
 Graphics & Layout: Dan Wood
 Production & Content: John McNulty



Breaking News



This "Hanger" style bike rack seems to be popular with bicyclists parking in Southshore Center.

meetings in early 2006. We need lots of bicyclists to show up to voice their interest in a good solid bicycle network and a plan to get that network implemented. It is critical that you voice your concerns when the time comes. We will let you know by email and through this newsletter when the meetings are. 🚲

Pick up BikeAlameda's free Bicycle & Walking Map of Alameda at: Tucker's Ice Cream, Stone Cyclery, Cycle City, Alameda Bicycle, Java Rama, Spritzer's, Alameda Free Library, and more!

Attention School Bike Clubs: BikeAlameda will give a free regular membership to every bike club member who has a sponsored membership. A sponsored membership is a paid regular membership (\$25). The bike club member is getting a free membership by finding a paid membership. We highly encourage the bike club membership to find a teacher, parent or neighbor to sponsor them. Each membership will then get the full BA packet of discounts, newsletter (6 per year), ice cream scoop and a full membership to the East Bay Bicycle Coalition. 🚲 **Alameda Bicycle Plan Update:** This update has been postponed (again). The City of Alameda's current plan is to begin having public

What you can do: Join our email discussion and/or our announcements list. Send an empty email to discuss-subscribe@bikealameda.org or announce-subscribe@bikealameda.org.

Also, join the city's announcement list at http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/tmp/bicycle_plan.html to get updates on meetings.

Join Us! Become a member and help us make our city a better place to ride.

Membership Benefits

- This bimonthly newsletter
- Membership card for great discounts at local shops:

Cycle City 10-20%
clothing/accessories

Stone's Cyclery 10-20%
clothing/accessories and more

Alameda Bicycle 10% bikes, 20%
parts/access. (thru 2005)

Zach Kaplan Cycles 5%
...and more: See our website

- Tucker's ice cream scoop
- East Bay Bicycle Coalition reciprocal membership
- Satisfaction knowing you are improving bicycling here!



Personal Information *Print Clearly*

We do not share information with anyone (except EBBC).

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Membership Fees (yearly):

- Individual \$25
- Household/Family \$35
- Business \$70
- Benefactor \$100 + _____
- Volunteer 8 hours
(contact us for details)

Attach a check & send to:

BikeAlameda

PO Box 2732

Alameda CA 94501

Membership dues are tax-deductible

Or...Join us online with your credit card at www.BikeAlameda.org



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Pass this newsletter along to a friend!