

THE BIKEALAMEDA CYCLIST

Estuary Crossing Update

by Lucy Gigli

The Background

In 2006, BikeAlameda launched an Estuary Crossing Campaign (ECC) to find solutions to a major gap in Alameda's bicycle and pedestrian network. The present Alameda-Oakland connection is the submerged Posey Tube which funnels all biking and walking traffic into a single 3-foot-wide sidewalk bordered by the tile wall of the tube on one side and by an open railing on the traffic side of the walkway. The sidewalk is so narrow that two bicyclists cannot pass without one person dismounting and carrying their bike over the outside of the railing, hanging the bike into the traffic lane. The traffic noise, exhaust smell, extreme wind, and steep grade in one direction makes this singular route virtually impossible to navigate. The Posey tube is the only connection between the western end of the City of Alameda and the downtown Oakland employment area. It connects Alameda residents to regional transportation systems via BART and Amtrak. Plus, the City of Alameda is currently considering design proposals for Alameda Point that include 1500 to 4500 new housing units.

To date, the ECC has:

- Built a coalition of 15 partners in business, nonprofit and government.
- Conducted bicycle and pedestrian counts for the Posey Tube and Park Street Bridge to gather data for future grants.
- Worked with the developer of a large portion of adjacent land (Alameda Landing), gaining the promise of a one-year pilot water shuttle. The original timeline for this project has been delayed.
- Successfully advocated for \$200,000 in local and grant funds to conduct a feasibility study.
- Persuaded the Alameda City Council to contribute funding for further study (called a "PSR") of a bike/ped bridge across the estuary.

The Feasibility Study

A feasibility study is due out in March 2009. The long-term solution is a **moveable bike and pedestrian bridge** with a transit option. The medium-term alternative is an **estuary water shuttle**. We are not yet sure what, if any, short-term alternatives might be recommended and what their costs might be.

The Bridge

To further study the possibility of a moveable bike and walking bridge, the city applied for two grants for a Project Study Report equivalent (PSR). Thanks to the over 30 BikeAlameda members who wrote the council and attended the council meeting, the council approved \$100,000 in Measure B funds to match grant applications totaling \$900,000. The monies being requested are from state and county funding sources that can only be used for bicycle and pedestrian projects. No general funds would be used.

Since interest in the feasibility of a bridge has come up, we've found cases like the Sundial Bridge up in Redding, which was built for \$25 million with a much less dense population. Another example of funding a similar project is the ped/bike suspension bridge at University Avenue over Interstate 80 in Berkeley, which cost 6.4 million dollars.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of the county and state grant applications.

You can monitor our progress in the current news section at www.bikealameda.org, with an RSS feed.

In This Issue

Earth Day • Bike Commuter Act • Free Safety Classes • Valet Bike Parking • Fruitvale Bridge • Bike to Work Day

Every Day Is Earth Day (on a bike!)

by Tom Christoffer

Each time I hop on my bike I have the opportunity to intentionally turn that day into Earth Day. Our Earth community is made up of not just us humans, but minerals/land, seas/water, plants and animals. As we approach the official International Earth Day on Wednesday, April 22, 2009 my challenge is that we become more aware of how beautiful our Island City and Earth are on every ride!

Our bike rides are all on our land. Whether it is on a dirt path, asphalt, concrete, rock or sand, our tires



contact our Earth with each revolution of our wheels. This awesome land can also be seen in our hills and mountains as we peddle on our way. We must never take for granted that our Earth provides the surface for our rides.
San

Francisco Bay, San Leandro Creek and the Pacific Ocean are just a few of the waterways we experience on a bike in our Bay area. How gorgeous to be biking along Shoreline Drive as the sun sets over our East Bay!

What a sight to see a dolphin under the Bay Farm Island Bike Bridge! (I did see one last year.)

I love to notice the various kinds of trees on our island, especially our Palm trees. Orange, Lemon, Oak and Redwoods breathe new air for us each and every day. To smell our flowers and plants all year long down our city streets and neighborhoods is a wonderful opportunity to be grateful for their gifts!

How many of us have a pet? What would we do without them? Our animals make our Earth and our bike rides so much more fun and diverse! Next time you take a bike ride just take a count of how many species of animals (dogs, cats, birds, squirrels, etc.) you see and the total number of them you pass by. The kids, young and not so young, love this game of awareness with our Earth companions!

Of course we love to notice our human sisters and brothers on our rides around our Island and beyond! Actually, everything we see as we bike to our hearts content, came from our Earth. May this Spring and Earth Day of 2009 find you spending more and more time outside on your two wheeler!

Bicycle Commuter Act Passes House, Senate

After seven long years, the bicycle commuter tax provision passed both the House and Senate as part of the financial bailout package at the end of 2008.

“We are delighted that the bicycle commuter benefits act has passed after a lengthy and persistent campaign spearheaded by Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR),” said League President Andy Clarke. “Bicycle commuters will now be extended similar benefits to people who take transit and drive to work – it’s an equitable and sensible incentive to encourage greater energy independence, improve air quality and health, and

even help tackle climate change.” Reasonable expenses include the purchase of a bicycle and bicycle improvements, repair, and storage. These are considered reasonable expenses as long as the bicycle is regularly used for travel between the employee’s residence and place of employment. For further details check www.bikeleague.org.



BikeAlameda Free Teen/Adult Urban Biking Safety Classes

by Joyce Mercado

Are you saying to yourself “But I’ve been riding for years. I don’t need a bike class.”? Well you might want to consider: you don’t know what you don’t know until you learn it. I thought I knew everything there was to riding safely and avoiding “incidents” with vehicles, until I took the Day 1 Urban Riding Skills Safety Class a few years back. On my very next ride in Alameda, I applied about a half a dozen tricks I learned in class. Even if you pick up one tip which helps you avoid an accident and possible injury, that is time well spent.

Andrea, a graduate of one of our Fall 2008 Day 1 classes reported: “THANK YOU for the class (and the helmet!). I went in a little skeptical that we would need 3 hours, but can see that we could easily have done even more. Jason is a great presenter, very genuine, engaging and informed.”

If you’ve never taken a formal bike class, invest a few hours in your safety on a bike. Tune up your urban riding skills with one of our free bicycling classes this Spring. We are offering two Day 1 Urban Biking Safety Classes (classroom setting) and one Day 2 On the Road Class.

In the Day 1 classes, Jason Agar, a Certified League Cycling Instructor, will be teaching the basics of safe and enjoyable cycling, riding in traffic, required equipment, crash avoidance and legal rights and responsibilities. The Day 1 classes will be held at Crosstown Coffee Community Center at 1303 High Street in Alameda, on Saturday March 28th and Saturday April 18th from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Attendees must be 14 or older. A bicycle is not required for the Day 1 classes.

And, extra good news: we are offering a Free Day 2 Road Class as well, at the Alameda Point Collaborative Headquarters, Mural Room, 677 W. Ranger Ave., Alameda on May 16th from 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., thanks in part to generous funding by EBBC (East Bay Bicycle Coalition). This 6-hour course provides an

opportunity to put into practice what was learned in the Day 1 Street Skills class, including emergency maneuvers and riding in various traffic conditions, to test your knowledge of vehicular cycling skills. Registration is required as space is limited (must be 16 or older for this on the road class, and under 18 must have parental consent form). A bicycle and helmet are required, and completion of a Day 1 Bike class is a pre-requisite for attending the Day 2 class.

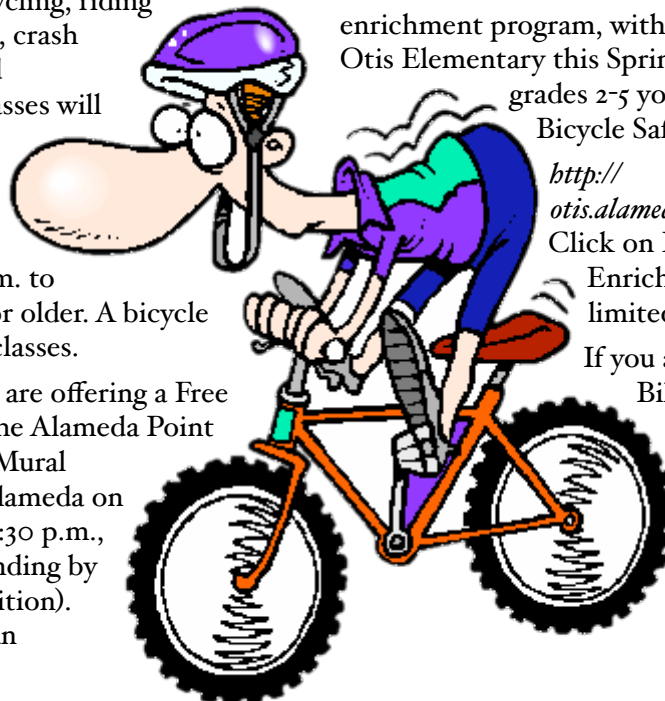
A free helmet will be provided to those who complete the Day 1 class, while supplies last, thanks to an IBM Community Grant. One of the two Day 1 classes was made possible by a generous donation from BikeAlameda members Stephanie Lipow and Anthony Walecka. Thank you Stephanie and Anthony! We’d also like to acknowledge Alameda Hospital’s great support printing all of the student manuals for the three classes. See <http://www.bikealameda.org/event/safetyclasses/> for more information on any of these classes and to register online. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL CLASSES!**

BikeAlameda is also venturing into offering bike classes at elementary schools through Alameda Education Foundation’s after school enrichment program, with our first set of classes at Otis Elementary this Spring. If you have a child in grades 2-5 you can enroll them in a Bicycle Safety Skills Class at:

<http://otis.alamedausd.ca.schoolloop.com/>.

Click on PTA, then click on Enrichment. Spaces are limited.

If you are interested in adding BikeAlameda kids’ classes to your elementary school’s AEF after-school program, contact Bonnie Wehmann at bonnie@bikealameda.org.



Valet Bike Parking

The good weather is almost here, and with that come our annual outdoor festivals and biking!

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank some of our superstars of valet bike parking from last year! Here are the top seven folks who put in the most hours last year:

Tom Russell	21 hours
Connie Branson	17 hours
Shelley Reed	12 hours
Joyce Mercado	10 hours
Marc Lambert	9 hours
Alex Plumb	9 hours
Loretta Chohey	9 hours

Shelley and Alex were kind enough to share what they get out of valet bike parking.

Shelley Reed

“For me, the most fun part is seeing so many people on bikes, including whole families with tandems and trailers for the smallest children.

The most rewarding thing for me has been chatting with riders, introducing them to the BikeAlameda Biking/Walking map and to BikeAlameda itself - they usually appreciate the map, and may decide to support our efforts.”

Alex Plumb

“I park bikes to contribute in a way that has an immediate positive impact on Alameda’s public environment.

Meeting new people makes bike parking fun. Bikes are great conversation starters.

The most rewarding part is protecting so many treasured objects. People really appreciate the peace of mind we provide. As someone who has had two bikes stolen in Alameda, I truly enjoy telling people that their baby will be safe till they return.”

This year BikeAlameda will provide free valet bike parking at the following events:

Earth Day	Apr 25, 2009
Spring Festival	May 9,10
Crab Cove Concerts	May 9, June 12, July 10 and Aug 14
Meals on Wheels Wine Tasting	Jul 12, 2009
Art and Wine Fair	Jul 25, 2026
Webster St. Jam	Sept 12, 13
Classic Car Show	Oct 10, 2009

Additional information can be found at www.bikealameda.org.

We parked more bikes than ever in 2008 and expect to continue breaking records with the ongoing environmental awareness and rising gas prices.

We were fortunate enough to be allowed the use of the Wienerschnitzel parking lot for Spring Festival this year. Alameda Bicycle has been fantastic in allowing us to use their parking area, but we had some overcrowding issues last year and needed to find a larger space to accommodate all the bikes. A good problem to have, if you ask us!

We hope to be allowed continued use of the lot for future events. Bikers wanting to show their thanks can do so by making a purchase at Wienerschnitzel.

We are always looking for volunteers to park bikes. It takes a lot of people to cover all the events. If you like to get outside, be a part of local events and help the biking community send an email to: bonnie@bikealameda.org or call 748-9117 to book a short shift at your event preference.

Biking over the Fruitvale Bridge needs Improvement

by Lucy Gigli, President, BikeAlameda

On our Bicycle Master Plan Update (BPUR) ride last August, BikeAlameda members rode over the Miller-Sweeney bridge (AKA Fruitvale Bridge) and talked about this important route to BART.

Several problems were voiced by participants. Some are bad enough to stop many people from taking this route. It has become obvious that getting off the island by bike is not very easy and definitely not enticing. We need to work harder to improve this access point so that everyone can feel comfortable biking the relatively short distance.

The Fruitvale corridor is our major access to regional transportation – busses and BART. It is less than one mile from Fernside and Tilden Way to the Fruitvale BART station. From the bridge, just a one mile ride in Alameda can get you to the Grand Street, Alameda Towne Centre, or Lincoln Park neighborhoods.

In February, BikeAlameda members Ricardo Pedevilla and Lucy Gigli met with Public Works staff to discuss the problems on this route:

1. **Speed limit** is too high. Entering Alameda the sign says 35MPH.
2. **Blind curve** entering Alameda, just after the bridge. This is extremely dangerous for bicyclists.
3. Bicyclists riding on the **sidewalk** create conflicts with pedestrians. The sidewalk is narrow. There seems to be an increase in both peds and bikes, so incidents of conflicts are increasing.
4. The **free right turn** onto Alameda Avenue heading into Oakland. This turn is taken at fast speeds by motorists, endangering pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Alameda Ave. The number of cars making this turn has increased since Home Depot and 24 Hour Fitness opened.
5. The **railroad tracks** at Blanding Avenue are dangerous.
6. **High Street bridge closure** (5/4 to 8/28) will increase Tilden corridor traffic. This will make riding in this corridor even less safe during the summer when biking will be at its highest.

Results:

1 & 2. Although the speed limit is set by factors out of our control (state regulations), because of the blind curve there might be special provisions to lower the limit.

3. We hope to address this by making the streets safer by reducing speeds in the short term.

4. We will work with Oakland to change the configuration of this turn to slow drivers down.

5. The city may be able to fill the edges of the tracks, by permission from the owners, to smooth the transition.

6. During the High Street bridge closure, a safer way to get to BART may be via Park Street bridge and E. 7th Street – a longer option.

We will continue to work with the Public Works Department for these short-term fixes. In the longer term, a good update to the bike plan for this corridor would include bike lanes with a road diet (fewer auto travel lanes) to better serve the needs of bicyclists.



Bike to Work Day

To celebrate National Bike Month, the San Francisco Bay Area will celebrate the 15th annual Bike to Work Day on Thursday, May 14. Bike to Work Day is a grand celebration that promotes bicycling as a healthy, fun, economical and viable form of transportation.

For the 9th year in a row BikeAlameda will run four morning energizer stations and this year add one new afternoon station in Alameda:

- City Hall** 6:30a - 9:30a
- Bay Farm Bridge** 7:00-9:30
- Onboard Alameda/Oakland Ferry** 7:15a, 8:20a, 9:25a
- Onboard Harbor Bay Ferry** 6:30a, 7:30a, 8:30a
- Marina Village**, Date 911: 2021 Challenger, 1-6 PM

Volunteers are needed to put up posters in town, stuff bags at EBBC on May 1 and hand out bags at energizer stations on May 14. Please email bonnie@bikealameda.org if you would like to volunteer.

3.5 in.

2.0 in.

Interested in placing a business ad to support BikeAlameda's newsletter? Contact Joyce Mercado at joyce@bikealameda.org



Paperless Newsletter Option Now Available



Over the ten years that BikeAlameda has been around, we've tried to be as "green" as possible. All printing is done on the back side of used paper that is donated to us (except for "official" correspondence). Most of our office supplies, like pens, folders and envelopes come from the East

Bay Depot for Creative Reuse (www.east-bay-depot.org) and we use email and our website as much as possible.





Our newsletter is one of the few ways we communicate on paper. Some of you have asked us to eliminate your paper newsletter. We can finally offer this option.

Ironically, we've been limited in our ability to keep track of those of you who want to receive our newsletter only electronically. Our original membership database could not handle it, but now that we have migrated to a more modern database we can implement this option.


To sign up for email newsletter only, please send an email to lucy@bikealameda.org.

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BikeAlameda's mission is to encourage the everyday use of the bicycle in and around 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, walkable business districts and neighborhoods. We are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) California corporation.

Newsletter Production: *Editor in Chief: Lucy Gigli • Managing Editor: Bonnie Webmann • Copy Editor: Shelley Reed •*

Thank you to all of you who have responded and continue to respond to our Annual Campaign request.

100% of your contributions go to our projects like valet bike parking, bike to work day, bicycle education classes and advocacy.

Christian Fritze & Catherine Atcheson • Howard Ashcraft & Marilyn Ezzy • Andrew Dubois • Sandy Threlfall • Sustainable Technologies • Stephanie Lipow & Tony Walecka • IBM • Nancy Benson • Diane and Stan Lichtenstein • Lucy Gigli & Dan Wood • Cyndy Johnsen & Michael Sullivan • Grizzly Peak Cyclists • Joanne and Jade Robinson • Jim Strehlow • Dan and Jan Lufkin • Joan Steber • East Bay Bicycle Coalition



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



Membership Benefits

- This helpful quarterly 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 (see our website)

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



- East Bay Bicycle Coalition reciprocal membership
- Satisfaction knowing you are improving bicycling here!



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

Personal Information Print Clearly

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

Name(s) _____

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Membership Fees (yearly):

- Individual \$25
- Household/Family \$35
- Business \$70
- Benefactor \$100 + _____
- Volunteer 6 hours (contact us for details)
- Attach a check & send to:**

BikeAlameda

PO Box 2732

Alameda CA 94501

Membership dues are tax-deductible



Commuters, with kids, stop by the Energizer Station at last year's Bike to Work Day. BikeAlameda is expecting record numbers of Bike commuters this year.



PO Box 2732
Alameda, CA 94501
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- March 16: Estuary Crossing Committee Meeting, Otaez, 7 PM
- March 19: Board of Directors Meeting
- March 28: Free Urban Biking Safety Class (Day 1) 2 PM-5 PM
- April 16: Board of Directors Meeting 7 PM
- April 18: Free Urban Biking Safety Class (Day 1) 2 PM-5 PM
- April 20: Estuary Crossing Committee Meeting, Otaez, 7 PM
- April 25: Valet Bike Parking, Earth Day, Washington Park
- April 30 Summer Newsletter Team Meeting
- May 8 Valet Bike Parking, Crab Cove concert (**new event!**)
- May 9-10 Valet Bike Parking, Park Street Spring Festival
- May 14 Bike To Work Day
- May 16 Free Urban Biking Safety Class (Day 2) 10 AM-4:30 PM

Pass this newsletter along to a friend!