



bicycle programs

Image Source: City of San Antonio



BICYCLE PROGRAMS
education
promotion
safety
enforcement

“Bicycling is a big part of the future. It has to be. There’s something wrong with a society that drives a car to workout in a gym.”

~Bill Nye the Science Guy

A safe and well-connected bicycle network alone will likely not increase bicycling. This chapter identifies current bicycle programs and activities in San Antonio as well as recommends new initiatives that support this plan’s goals and objectives. Following each of the recommendations is a list of benchmarks to help San Antonio monitor its progress.

Bicycle facilities don’t automatically make people better cyclists, nor make motorists suddenly understand how to safely drive around bicyclists. Education is a crucial component of increasing bicycling while maintaining a safe environment for everyone. It is essential to equip all road users with the knowledge and skills to share the road. To do this, all users should understand their rules, rights, and responsibilities.

Education, encouragement and promotion of bicycling are important elements of getting San Antonians on bicycles. Education and encouragement strategies often go hand-in-hand, as their purposes and methods often overlap. To be effective, promotional programs should not only be for the general public, but also target specific populations and audiences of San Antonio residents, such as recreational cyclists, youth, employees in certain targeted areas, and new bicyclists.

Consistent enforcement of the rules for bicyclists and motorists as they pertain to bicyclists is a critical component of creating a safe and bicycle-friendly environment. This element focuses on efforts to enforce the existing laws in a consistent fashion, and ensure that law enforcement officers are properly trained to enforce bicycle laws. This component overlaps with efforts to educate bicyclists and motorists of those laws.

The City of San Antonio already knows what it takes to provide education, encouragement, and enforcement programs, and over the past decade has fostered strong relationships among departments, agencies, and advocacy groups. Because of this, an opportunity exists to strengthen efforts already in place by building upon these partnerships to further bicycle programs. Various City of San Antonio departments, including the Office of Environmental Policy, Metro Health, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Human Resources, and the Police Department have engaged in promoting bicycling to further the city’s sustainability and health goals.

The MPO has been engaged with education and promotion efforts at the regional level through their Walkable Community Program. VIA has been a major proponent of bicycling as a form of alternative transportation that supports transit. The Alamo Area COG hosts a regional

commuter challenge in the fall to promote alternative transportation.

School-age children in San Antonio are an important population to teach and encourage bicycling. Though half of U.S. school-age children live within two miles of their schools, three-quarters of the households questioned in the 2009 National Household Travel Survey take their children to school in a private vehicle - a huge increase from the 15% that were driven in 1969. According to data released in November 2010 by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the dramatic increase in the use of private vehicles to transport children between 5 and 15 partially results from children living farther from school than they used to. The Safe Routes to School program is strong national program established to encourage and equip children to bicycle and walk to school (K through 12). In the San Antonio region, TXDOT provides support for Safe Routes to School programs at area school districts, and many school districts and the City of San Antonio have been awarded funding through SRTS or other health related grants to develop SRTS plans or implement their plan recommendations.

Additionally, local bicycle advocacy groups have formed through major employers, bicycle retailers, and among the regional citizenry that have played a key role in educating and promoting bicycling among their members. All of these parties are already at the table, engaged in the conversation about increasing bicycling. Continuing in and strengthening these relationships will be instrumental in providing the necessary programs that support bicycling.

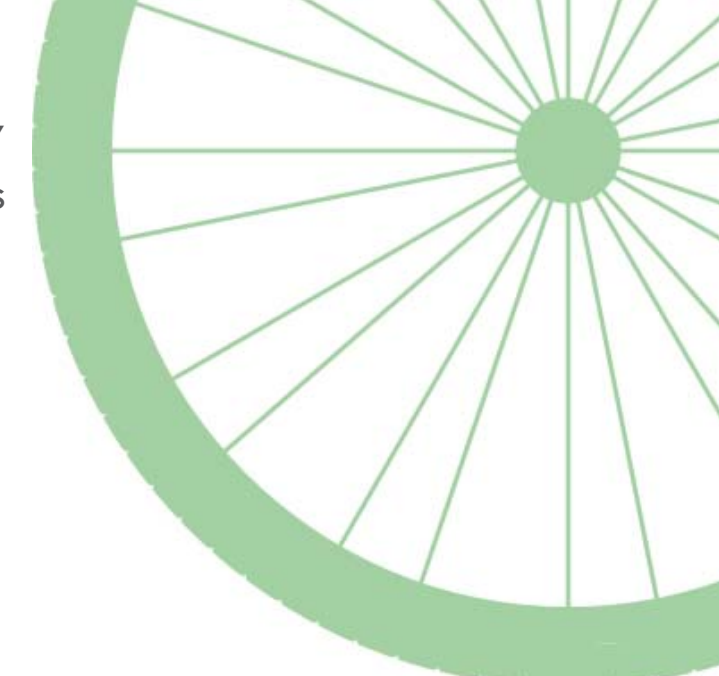
BICYCLE PROGRAMS GOAL & OBJECTIVES

Provide educational, encouragement, and enforcement programs that support bicycling in San Antonio.

Objectives:

- I. **EDUCATE** all road users of all ages and abilities of their rules, rights, and responsibilities.
- II. **ENCOURAGE** bicycling as a form of transportation and exercise.
- III. Consistently **ENFORCE** laws of the road.





I. EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Formal bicycle training is not a part of San Antonio's educational system (nor is it in much of America). The MPO and City of San Antonio must provide opportunities to improve the road safety education of its citizens.

Before establishing recommendations for future actions to meet the goal and objective, it is important to identify bicycle education opportunities that are already accessible to the public. There are programs and activities that are administered at the state, regional and local level that support this goal, even if the purpose of the program and activity does not directly relate to bicycling.

San Antonio's Existing Bicycle Education Programs and Activities

The City of San Antonio

The City of San Antonio offers a number of bicycle education programs, as well as health programs where bicycle education content can be easily incorporated. The San Antonio Police Department has a Bike Rodeo Program similar to that of the MPO where Safety Officers host Bike Rodeos at schools. Each officer covers 12 to 14 schools totaling 425 schools at 250 events annually. Student participation varies from 50-600 students per Bike Rodeo. The annual citywide Bike Rodeo has approximately 800 participants.

In 2010, the City launched "Get Cyched," a bi-lingual safety and awareness campaign for bicyclists and motorists. The campaign includes billboard advertisements, radio spots, and print media targeting various bicycle constituencies such as recreational cyclists, urban bicycle commuters, and family-oriented bicyclists.

The City television station broadcasts a video called Neighborhood Adventures in Bicycle Safety about bicycling rules of the road. This video is broadcast five times a week.

In 2010, the City passed two ordinances that directly affect bicyclists. The Safe Passing Ordinance requires automobiles to leave a 3' passing buffer when passing "vulnerable road users" such as a bicyclist or pedestrian. Also, the Bike Lights @ Night Ordinance requires all

bikes to have a front white light and rear red light or reflector when operating a bicycle between dusk and dawn. The "Get Cyched" campaign reinforces these ordinances.

The Mayor's Fitness Council has helped spearhead efforts that increase bicycling and walking as part of its mission to improve the health and fitness of San Antonians. One example is extending the hours of certain community centers so that people can use them to exercise. Considering the significant health benefits of bicycling, there is an opportunity to coordinate other outreach and education efforts with those of the Mayor's Fitness Council and Metro Health Department.

The Metro Health Department has played a key role in efforts to improving the health of San Antonians, and, therefore, bicycling. Metro Health oversees the Steps to a Healthier San Antonio, a program that encourages good nutrition, increased physical activity, and smoking prevention to help reduce diabetes, obesity, and asthma. This program and Metro Health has been the source of funding or materials for education and promotion of bicycling and other active living programs in San Antonio.

The web portal www.sabalance.org has been created as a one-stop location to learn about access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities in San Antonio. The web portal also provides users the ability to have a fitness assessment, make personal pledges, and learn about current fitness research and nutrition information.

In 2010, the Metro Health Department was awarded a Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant to develop Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans for seven schools (1 middle and 6 elementary schools) in the City of San Antonio. As part of this process, they will be identifying infrastructure improvement needs, opportunities for education, encouragement,

and enforcement programs, and methods to evaluate the programs' effectiveness.

San Antonio-Bexar County MPO

At the regional level, the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO uses the Walkable Community Program as a forum of education and promotion. The Walkable Community Program has three components: Walkable Community Workshops, Safety Classes, and Bicycle Rodeos. The program is available to neighborhoods, schools, and community groups to evaluate their community, identify infrastructure improvements to increase bicycling and walking, and to provide education about the benefits of walking and bicycling.

Walkable Community Workshops - On average, 3 to 4 Walkable Community Workshops are held a year, with an average of 20 people per meeting. The Workshops identify bicycle or sidewalk facilities that are needed in the neighborhood to improve



Bicyclists in front of a mission
Image Source: City of San Antonio



NuRide: Rewards for Bicycling

NuRide is a national rewards program for people who use a mode of transportation other than driving alone, such as walking, bicycling, telecommuting, carpooling, vanpooling, taking mass transit, or even working a compressed week. It's free to join, and users track their trips and earn rewards.

The City of San Antonio, Alamo Area Council of Governments, USAA, HEB, and BikeWorld are among the partners who have worked with NuRide to promote "greener travel."

Since 2008, 3,890 San Antonians have become members of NuRide! According to statistics on NuRide's website, San Antonian NuRiders have saved 594,731 gallons of gas and not driven over 11 million miles.

bicycling and walking. Other agencies often partner with the MPO for these workshops, including the City of San Antonio, the BMAC or PMAC committees, Bexar County, TXDOT, and VIA.

Safety Classes – The MPO hosts approximately 25 safety classes per year at schools, churches, and other community organizations across the region. When available, helmets are given away at these classes. Again, the MPO coordinates with other agencies to provide this service. The City of San Antonio provides a drivers' education class for city employees which includes a component on bicycle safety, and Safety Classes are held in conjunction with VIA's "Bike Roadeo" program.

Bicycle Rodeo – The Bicycle Rodeo program targets elementary and middle school students to provide bicycle safety information and guidance. Approximately 15 to 20 Bicycle Rodeos are conducted a year.

The MPO publishes and distributes a regional bicycle map to bicyclists through the Internet and printed copies at events, city offices, and other locations. In addition to informing people of the network, the map also includes basic bicycle education regarding traffic laws and safe bicycle operation. Another MPO publication for bicycle education is a Bicycle Safety Brochure that highlights awareness and safety for bicyclists.

To increase bicycle outreach to younger populations, the MPO launched MPO Kids in 2010. This program utilizes games and puzzles to teach youth about bicycle safety. The program is currently web-based, but print material will be available in 2011.

Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)
While there is no Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program at the City or MPO, the Texas Department of Transportation district office has a representative to help schools assemble grant proposals. However, the assistance is contingent on the schools preparing a SRTS Plan. Despite the limited resources, two elementary schools in the region were awarded \$495,000 in federal SRTS funding in 2010 to implement parts of their SRTS Plans. Additionally, seven middle schools in Harlandale

ISD, San Antonio ISD, and Southside ISD City received a grant from the Center for Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) to develop preliminary SRTS plans.

Private Bicycle Advocacy

Advocacy groups play a large role in providing education about safe bicycling. In San Antonio, several bicycle shops and organizations provide basic safety and bicycle maintenance classes to their customers and members. BikeWorld offers a bike maintenance and basic safety class to those who purchase a bicycle. South Texas Off-Road Mountain Bikes (S.T.O.R.M.), a local organization of bicyclists, does a talk twice a year at the Central Library about bicycle safety, and also has basic safety and maintenance classes for their members.

Support for bicyclists is being seen elsewhere. Several locations in Downtown San Antonio, including the Blue Star Arts Complex and Pearl Brewery will have B-Cycle Bike Share stations. These establishments recognize the economic benefits of targeting and providing support services to bicyclists.

Major employers are also a source of bicycle advocacy. USAA, who employs around 14,000 people, is a League Bicycle Friendly Business (Bronze). A significant number of USAA employees are members of NuRide.

In addition, 3 League of American Bicyclists (League) Certified Instructors in the San Antonio region are certified to teach courses that instruct bicyclists how to ride safely on the road, as well as motorist education courses. Expanding on the League education program is another opportunity for offering bicycling education in the San Antonio region. Several bicycle advocacy groups and shops teach bicycle maintenance classes that include a few "road-use tips." While these courses are not League Certified, they do present the opportunity for partnerships and expansion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING BICYCLE EDUCATION IN SAN ANTONIO

It is clear that San Antonio has a strong foundation for providing bicycle safety education to the public. The following section describes complementary actions that the City can take to further improve bicycle safety education.

Recommendation 1: Continue to distribute and update information on proper use of bicycle facilities.

The City should continue to provide residents with information about the purpose of new bicycle facility treatments (e.g., bicycle lanes, shared lane markings, etc.) and safe behaviors for using these facilities as they are being designed and installed. One way to extend the reach of the road safety messages is to develop web pages hosted on the City's website that include information about each facility type. It is beneficial to provide as many graphics and visuals as possible. In some cases, the best way to describe a safe maneuver is with a short video.

Police should receive training on the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists and motorists and then temporarily increase local police patrols for a period of time to help roadway users adjust to new on-road facilities when they are installed. These police patrols should not be used to punish or serve citations. Rather, it is an opportunity to educate users on safe and unsafe behaviors, particularly how unsafe or illegal behaviors could jeopardize the safety of others. The City can develop educational pamphlets that patrol officers could distribute when talking to residents. Officers should not target any one mode, as unsafe behavior by both motorists and bicyclists' needs to be corrected.

Recommendation 2: Expand the Safe Routes to School efforts to a region-wide program.

Most children start to ride bicycles at a very young age. For adolescents yet unable to drive, either due to age or cost, bicycles can offer independence and self-reliance. Therefore it is important to teach students safe bicycle skills as early as they can comprehend the messages, and reinforce that message as they approach driving age. One way that cities across the nation have addressed the





information gap is to provide a citywide Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. The federal government created the nationwide Safe Routes to School Program in 2005 as a part of the transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU. The purpose of the program is to encourage children to walk and bike to school where they are not currently doing so, and to make it safer where students are walking and biking. A key component of the national program is educating students on safe walking and bicycling behavior. The City should work with the School Districts, MPO, and TXDOT and use a coordinated SRTS program to look comprehensively at bicycle education being provided by the various agencies, then collaboratively establish bicycle education for all students. To reach young students, a full time SRTS Coordinator could work with school districts, to incorporate bicycle safety education into the regular curriculum. Additionally, the SRTS Coordinator could help in matching certified instructors with the school districts as well as investigate funding opportunities to compensate the instructors.

Recommendation 3: Expand bicycle education opportunities

Several groups in San Antonio independently provide bicycle safety skills courses. However, these opportunities are not always well publicized, and there are few certified instructors. The City should partner with advocacy groups and League of American Bicyclists certified instructors to provide a central information source and marketing for all bicycle education events. In addition to marketing bicycle safety education opportunities, the City should continue to support efforts to increase the number League of American Bicyclists Certified Instructors in the San Antonio region.

For adults and adolescents, the City could provide a way for people to sign-up for classes held by various groups around the region and possibly offer discounted rates for San Antonio residents. It would be beneficial for the City to target college students and integrate bicycle safety courses into the orientation programs held at the beginning of each school year. Likewise, it would be beneficial to offer incentives for employers to have employees become certified instructors and regularly

offer classes to their employees. The more confident people are in their bicycling abilities and safety knowledge, the more likely they are to substitute some of their short car trips with ones on bikes.

There are also opportunities to partner with other City departments and agencies in the region to build off of existing education programs and develop new ones that target specific populations. For example, the City could work with VIA to provide media and publications on integrating bicycle and bus transit options; coordinate with area colleges and universities to provide educational material that target college students. These are just a few of a multitude of opportunities to develop partnerships to expand bicycle education to the entire region.



The City's Bicycle Program staff poses with representatives from B-Cycle. In the Spring of 2011 the City launched a public bike share program in the downtown area with 14 locations. Image Source: City of San Antonio, Office of Environmental Policy



II. ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Encouragement and promotion of bicycling is an important element of getting San Antonians on bicycles. Promotion is another form of education that highlights the many benefits of bicycling. As with education, the City of San Antonio and other area agencies have a number of encouragement programming activities already established, providing a strong foundation from which to build.

San Antonio's Existing Bicycle Encouragement Programs and Activities

In recent years, San Antonio has increased its efforts to promote bicycling as a viable form of transportation and recreation through several high profile events.

- The longest running promotional event is the annual Walk and Roll activities held each May in support of National Bike Month. The event is conducted in partnership with the City of San Antonio and other transportation partners of the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO. This event has been drawing approximately 700 participants each year. Several bicycle rides start and/or convene at the Walk and Roll event held at different locations in the downtown area.
- San Antonio is home to Bike MS, formerly known as MS-150, a charity-based bicycle ride of 150 miles over a 2-day period. The event benefits the National MS Society with approximately 3,500 cyclists and 1,500 volunteers participating. The City and MPO support the event by participating in the kick-off rally and Expo the day before the ride. Also, the City provides the facility for the Expo at a reduced rate, and the SAPD Bike Patrol recruits off-duty bicycle patrol officers to provide support during the ride.

San Antonio has also been expanding its efforts to promote bicycling to visitors. In 2010, the City of San Antonio Office of Environmental Policy, San Antonio Convention and Visitors' Bureau, and City Parks and Recreation Department produced the "Downtown Bike Rides" pocket map, which identified suggested routes between popular tourist destinations in the downtown area.

San Antonio began installing B-Cycle Bike Share stations at 14 destinations in Downtown San Antonio in 2011, and plans to expand the system in future years. The B-Cycle

Bike Share program will promote bicycling for residents and visitors to use for quick daytime trips in the downtown area. The B-Cycle stations are at key tourist destinations. San Antonio Bike Share, a non-profit 501(c)3, maintains and operates the system. A central "hub" in HemisFair Park offers customer support, tours, and rental bikes for longer rides.

The City of San Antonio has actively promoted bicycle use to its employees.

- The City offers a bike share program for City employees to use for City business in the downtown area. Approximately seven repurposed SAPD bicycles are available to downtown City employees to encourage them to bicycle for meetings, errands, and lunch.
- The City is one of many sponsors of NuRide, a green commute incentive program that rewards participants for choosing trips that are taken on foot, bike, transit or in a carpool.
- The City has a Wellness Program that provides incentives to City employees for wellness. The City is working to incorporate use of the B-Cycle Bike Share and employee bike share program to the Wellness Program and its benefits.
- In 2010, the City of San Antonio had its first annual "Manager's Ride" for CoSA employees. Approximately 200 employees attended, including the Mayor and City Manager, as well as other department heads.

The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) also promotes bicycle use among the youth and commuters in the region. AACOG has a Bicycle Buddy Program to foster and encourage bicycling to school among the region's youth. Additionally, AACOG hosts a commuter challenge (called the Walk & Roll Challenge) in October to challenge employees to commute using a mode other than driving alone.

Finally, the City Metro Health Department is in the planning phases of a Cyclovia event in San Antonio. Cyclovias are events that close selected roadways in key locations to all motorized traffic to create temporary plaza space. Three have been grant funded, and the City is seeking a corporate sponsor to take over the event. The first Cyclovia is scheduled for May 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING BICYCLE ENCOURAGEMENT IN SAN ANTONIO

Recommendation 1: Garner bicycle commuting support from the Mayor.

The Mayor's Fitness Council has helped spearhead efforts that increase bicycling and walking as part of its mission to improve the health and fitness of San Antonians. One example of this is extending the hours of certain community centers so that people can use them to exercise. Considering there are significant health benefits for bicycling, there is an opportunity to coordinate other outreach and education efforts with those of the Mayor's Fitness Council and Metro Health Department. The City should encourage bicycle commuting by providing information about economic benefits, health benefits, and potential commuting routes to employers and employees.

CASE STUDY: Commute Programs that Encourage Cycling

A non-motorized commute program is an excellent way to encourage cycling amongst city employees. As an example, Arlington, VA employees who walk or bike to work at least 50% of the days in any given month receive a \$35 per month stipend. The stipend is paid out in a lump sum twice a year. Arlington County also offers a "Guaranteed Ride Home" program and actively promotes Bicycle-to-Work Day.



Advertisement from the "Get Cyched" media campaign to encourage bicycling, done in 2010. Image Source: City of San Antonio, Office of Environmental Policy



Recommendation 2: Incentivize bicycle commuting to City employees.

The City already has several initiatives in place to encourage bicycle use. However, public agencies can be model employers by considering the following additional actions:

- One encouragement program that tends to be very popular and well attended across the country is Bike-to-Work Day. This encourages employees to participate in the event by bicycling to work on that particular day as a demonstration for how it can be done regularly. Many communities choose to build on Bike-to-Work Day and use it as the centerpiece of a larger community event focused on the local bicycling community. This could easily fold into the Walk and Roll fest that already has as strong tradition in San Antonio each May.
- Offering monetary incentives for employees who bicycle to work
- Providing showers and lockers for employees. Another element of this strategy is to require that all new and existing public buildings owned and operated by the City will be required to provide services for bicycle commuters such as showers, and long and short-term parking. All projects (public and private) exceeding certain thresholds (size, density, use, etc) will be required to provide bicycle services.
- Working with local bicycling groups to provide “bicycle mentors” to demonstrate to employees who have always driven to work how it may be possible to bicycle to work
- Establishing “Guaranteed Ride Home” programs for people who do not bring a car to work but need a car in case of emergencies or inclement weather.

Recommendation 3: Incentivize bicycle commuting for the region’s employers.

Leading by example as noted above is a great way to show the City’s commitment to improving bicycling conditions. The City can also encourage other employers to do the same. Low cost strategies can include educating employers on federal tax benefits of energy efficient efforts by hosting workshops on a regular basis.

The City can take their promotion a step further by promoting employer achievements on an annual basis with an award program. Honoring local employers for their efforts to incentivize bicycle commuting promotes the awareness of bicycling and also showcases the efforts of leading examples. Employers get the benefit of the positive press, and the city benefits from the increase in bicycling.

Finally, the City can work with VIA to create an incentive program for combined bicycle/transit trips.

Recommendation 4: Analyze student transportation options when building new schools.

A generation ago, it was common practice to locate schools in neighborhoods where students could easily walk or bike to school. Local community colleges and universities were built near towns and urban centers, making them accessible to students of all ages and backgrounds. Current trends for school design now include large campuses with expansive fields and activity centers on the urban fringes. To achieve the



Concepts for VIA bus wraps to promote SA Balance.
Image Source: City of San Antonio, Metro Health Department



current demand, schools are purchasing land on the outside of town where the tracts are large enough, and still competitively priced. While these new campuses are economically attractive, they are often separated from neighborhoods by highways, stream valleys, and generally long distances without adequate non-motorized facilities. Students are facing barriers to walking and bicycling that their parents never did. It is no surprise that students are significantly less likely to walk or bike to school than was the norm for the previous generation. However, this trend does not have to continue as there are strategies that can find a way to provide enriching scholastic experiences in places that are walkable like neighborhood cores.

The City should require school districts to evaluate the potential for walking and bicycling to school as an element of the site selection process. Some schools have opted to build schools near public athletic and community centers to supplement the needs of extra-curricular programs. Such grouping of facilities that are used through all times of the day also allows sharing the often large and expensive parking lots these facilities would each require if placed farther apart. The City can also help to prioritize bicycle network improvements near existing and new school sites. These factors should also be considered in the siting of new college and university campuses.

Recommendation 5: Implement a citywide social marketing program

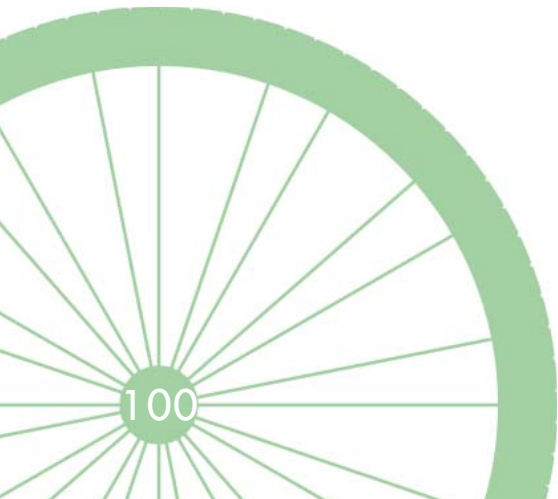
Continue to utilize a regionwide social marketing campaign, such as Get Cyched, that will encourage people to bike and bring awareness to bicyclists. The campaign has two primary elements with two different audiences. The first element is aimed at the general public and will focus on publicizing safety tips as well as advertising messages that promote bicycling as a convenient mode of travel. Successful campaigns do not victimize or blame any mode type. Motorists are told to drive the speed limit, and be mindful of bicyclists. Bicyclists are reminded to behave predictably and obey the rules of the road. Highlighting the responsibilities of both parties shows that a safe environment is the result of

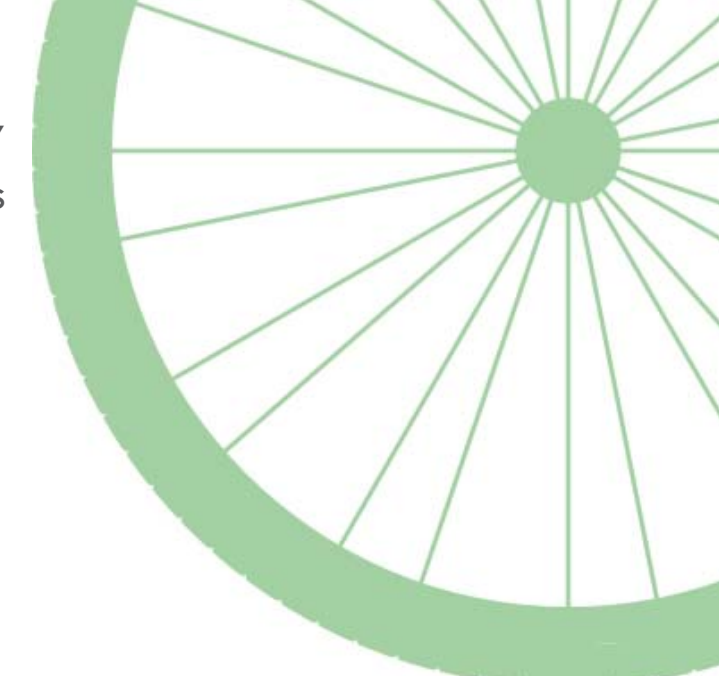
cooperation from all users.

Burlington, Vermont developed a campaign that coupled low-cost engineering solutions with non-infrastructure education, enforcement and encouragement strategies aimed at the downtown and surrounding areas. The campaign was so popular, that the stakeholder workshops and media campaigns have become an annual tradition for the City.

Another element of a social marketing program is aimed at the decision makers and law enforcement officers at the state and local levels. These decision makers need to be aware of the existing policies, programs, guidelines, regulations and resources (including funding) that are currently in place. This focus on providing training opportunities for the decision makers also creates mechanisms for monitoring progress. Progress can be demonstrated by the successful implementation of policies and regulations as well as the successful expenditure of available funds.

Another way to show support for bicycling in a visual way is to increase the capacity of bicycle parking in high density, mixed-use areas. Some cities are even designing their bike racks as pieces of art to show that bicycling is a welcomed travel mode. In 2008 New York City hosted a design contest for the next bicycle racks, emphasizing both form and function. Washington, D.C. branded their own bicycle racks by including their logo as part of the design. It is important to remember that the bicycle racks should still be recognized intuitively as bicycle racks. Additionally the design should not impair the innate function of the rack as a parking device.





III. SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

Enforcement can be a tricky aspect of a program. To be effective, the enforcement program should focus on awareness and education, rather than punishment. If people start to vilify the enforcer, the program may actually result in an increase of the undesired activity. It should be noted that enforcement alone does not usually achieve long-term effects. Enforcement needs to be partnered with strong education and encouragement efforts as well as physical improvements where necessary.

A major issue with enforcement policies is that one party will be labeled the enemy and the other the victim, without any regard for either party's behavior. It is important to treat all parties fairly and consistently. There must be consequences for all infractions. Consequences should include warnings with short explanations and then a gradual increase in penalization.

Also, the entire jurisdiction must support the enforcement program. Officers should not enforce differing rule sets in different parts of San Antonio as this can result in a "zone" mentality where people will not exercise the same consideration City-wide. Following the institution of increased penalties, progressive ticketing is recommended, as it increases contact between motorists, bicyclists and police.

Another important aspect of a successful enforcement program is to recognize the nature of the problem. If the majority of users practice unsafe behavior, there may be a problem with the physical design, and it would be ineffective to station an officer at the site and issue citations. When the vast majority of users are breaking the law, an analysis of the physical environment may reveal that changes should be made to the infrastructure.

Cities throughout the country often require offenders (both drivers and bicyclists) to take a course on specific laws that relate to pedestrian and vehicular safety. It is beneficial for students to learn from people directly involved with enforcement process. Instructors of the course can include emergency trauma and medical staff, police officers, transportation advocates and even judges. In some communities, a citation is removed after an offender takes this course. It would be advantageous to create a publicly accessible city- or regionwide policy that explains when offenders have the option or are required to enroll in the course. This should be made available in Spanish as well as English.

The City should work with the Police Department to develop an enforcement program to reduce bicycle and motor vehicle crashes. This should take a balanced approach to improving behaviors of both bicyclists and motorists. Motorist behaviors that should be targeted include:

- Turning left and right in front of bicyclists
- Passing too close to bicyclists
- Speeding
- Parking in bicycle lanes (where signage prohibits parking)
- Opening doors of parked vehicles in front of bicyclists
- Rolling through stop signs or disobeying traffic signals
- Harassment or assault of bicyclists

Bicyclist behaviors that should be targeted include:

- Ignoring traffic control (particularly traffic signals)
- Riding the wrong way or against traffic on a street
- Riding on sidewalks illegally
- Riding with no lights at night

Bicyclist safety is a shared responsibility between all roadway users. Enforcement priorities should be established through a collaborative process. Additional enforcement programs are described below.

As discussed earlier, the City of San Antonio passed two ordinances to improve bicycle safety in 2010: a safe passing ordinance and a bike light ordinance. The City has also engaged in programs to reinforce these laws, including creating a safe passing bookmark to remind citizens of the law and the Bike Light Program, through which the City is providing and installing bicycle lights.

PROGRESSIVE TICKETING

1. Educating

Establish community awareness of the problem. The public needs to understand the rights and responsibilities of both motorists and bicyclists. Raising awareness about the problem will change some behaviors and create public support for the enforcement efforts to follow.

2. Warning

Announce what action will be taken and why. Give the public time to change behaviors before ticketing starts. Fliers, signs, newspaper stories and official warnings from officers can all serve as reminders.

3. Ticketing

Finally, after the warning time expires, hold a press conference announcing when and where the police operations will occur. If offenders continue their unsafe behaviors, officers issue tickets.

Source: Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, www.walkinginfo.org



San Antonio's Existing Bicycle Enforcement Programs and Activities

All SAPD officers are fully-certified Texas Peace Officers who have received the state licensing academy of basic police officer training as well as the City's own academy of additional hours of training including local ordinances, policies, and procedures. In addition, officers hired since 2008 have completed a required 40-hour police mountain bicycle training course as provided by the International Police Mountain Bike Association as part of their initial training. Among the police force of 110 patrol officers and 14 patrol Sergeants, 62% of officers and 64% of Sergeants are bike-certified. The San Antonio Police Department has 23 members of the Bike/ATV Unit, all of whom are bike-certified. At one time, 14 FTE bicycle patrol officers are on duty.

The City also has a Creekways Patrol to patrol the new Greenway Trails along Salado Creek, Leon Creek, and Medina River. The City budgeted for 3.15 Park Police Officer for every 5.5 miles of developed trail.

SAPD Safety Patrol Officers schedule Bike Rodeos with schools across the City of San Antonio. Each Safety Patrol Officer has 12 to 14 schools on their rotation, however, not every school schedules a Bike Rodeo.

A combined education and enforcement effort is the City's "Bike Bright San Antonio" campaign, a bicycle light program launched in 2010 to equip bicyclists with lights and reinforce the City's bike light ordinance. In 2010, the Office of Environmental Policy purchased 5,000 light sets with funds from the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant from the Centers of Disease Control. As of March 2011, nearly 1,200 light sets have been installed on bicycles or distributed at a variety of community events.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING BICYCLE SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT IN SAN ANTONIO

Recommendation 1: Implement regular training for all Officers on road safety for all roadway users.

Bicycle transportation safety laws are a part of every patrol officer's training. However, if on-road bicycle use is not yet part of the mainstream, it is not surprising that some officers are not as familiar with laws that pertain to bicycles as compared to vehicles, which they no doubt interact with regularly. Unfortunately, what likely happens in these cases is that unsafe behavior by bicyclists and motorists goes uncorrected. It is the City's responsibility to emphasize the need for bicycle safety law enforcement. To do this, the City should provide regular training on traffic safety laws as they pertain to bicyclists and motorists. As bicycling in the City increases, it will be important for all patrol officers to be prepared for potential conflicts and incorrect behavior. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has several resources that can be inserted into regular trainings to keep the message fresh and engaging for officers.

The Police Department should offer educational training to officers about bicyclist rights and responsibilities as well as aggressive motor vehicle behavior toward bicyclists. For example, the Maryland Office of Highway Safety organizes safety training events for officers to raise awareness about rights, rules, and appropriate responses to incidents involving conflicts between motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The Federal Highway Administration offers a DVD that is an excellent training tool.

Recommendation 2: Enhance and increase the San Antonio Police Department Bicycle Patrol fleet, and encourage other municipalities to establish Bicycle Patrol fleets.

The best way for officers to understand bicycle safety laws is to make bicycling part of their regular routines. As patrol officers on bikes, they will be more familiar with the bicycle environment and the demands of legally bicycling in mixed traffic. They will come to appreciate why it is important for motorists to behave safely when sharing the road with bicyclists. Conversely, bicycle patrols will likely have better rapport with other

Current Bicycle Crash Statistics

- Average of 2.3 fatalities from bicycle crashes per year over last 6 years
- Average of 148 crashes with injuries per year over past 3 years (total of 443)
- 90% of the regional bicycle crashes occurred in San Antonio
- 62% of the regional crashes occurred inside Loop 410
- Of the crashes reported, 520 involved bicyclists
- 12.7% wore helmets, 12.7% unknown helmet usage, 75% no helmet

Source: SA-BC MPO Safety Program

Three Feet Please! It's the law.

THE SAFE PASSING ORDINANCE STIPULATES THAT ALL VEHICLES MUST GIVE AT LEAST 3 FEET OF CLEARANCE WHEN PASSING VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

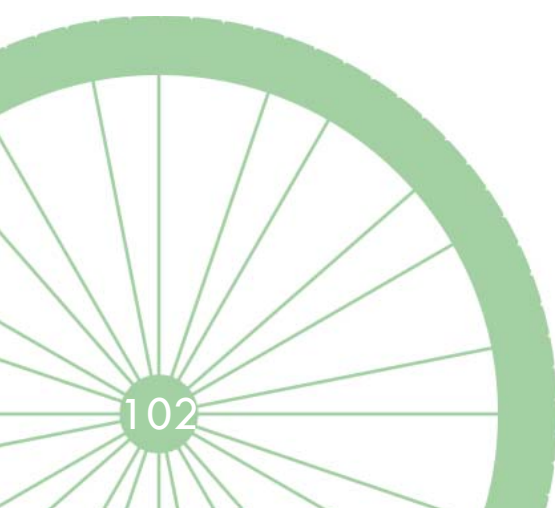
Texas Safe Passing Cities

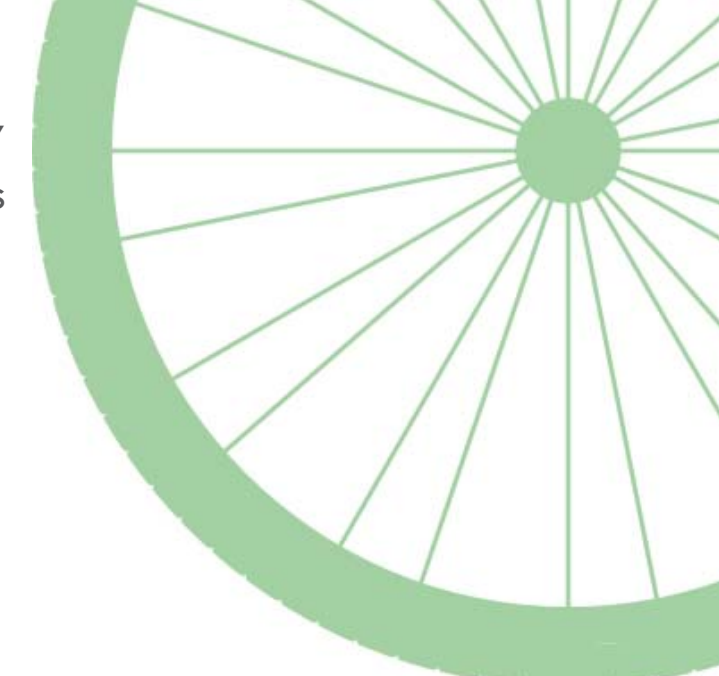
- Austin
- Beaumont
- Denton
- Edinburg
- El Paso
- Fort Worth
- Helotes
- New Braunfels
- San Antonio

AS OF 04/2011

A bookmark reminds people of the safe passing law that San Antonio and other cities have passed.

Image Source: City of San Antonio, Office of Environmental Policy





bicyclists. Receiving a warning or citation from a fellow bicyclist, can carry more weight than an officer who patrols with a police car.

As a matter of safety, bicycle patrol units can make trails and off-road facilities part of their assigned patrol routes. Most trails can support vehicular traffic from emergency vehicles, but they should only be accessed by vehicle in the event of emergency, rather than for routine patrols. Increasing the level of security for trails can help to reduce crime and sends the message that the trail is a safe option for both transportation and recreation. Police offers monitoring the trails can be equipped with maps, brochures and other informational materials to give out to trail users. To encourage safe riding, police officers can partner with bicycle advocates to give away helmets and lights.

Group rides and volunteer patrols can help monitor off-road trails in a similar way to bike patrols. Increasing the bicycle traffic on trails helps deter crime. Monitors should also be trained on how to be effective if they approach an emergency situation.

Recommendation 4: Pass a helmet use law for young bicyclists.

Currently, there is no statewide law in Texas for helmet use for any age bicyclist. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have helmet laws for young bicyclists. According to the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO Safety Study done in 2010, helmet use has been estimated to reduce head injury risk by 85%.

Many local jurisdictions throughout the country and in Texas have adopted helmet ordinances for bicyclists. In Texas, those cities include:

- Arlington, for children under 18 years old
- Austin, for children under 18 years old
- Bedford, for children under 16
- Benbrook, for children under 17
- Coppell, for children under 15
- Dallas, for all ages (ruled unconstitutional in 2009, and city appealing)
- Fort Worth, for children under 18
- Houston, for children under 18
- Southlake, for children under 15



Recommendation 3: Establish a volunteer bicycle fleet to accompany group rides.

Enforcement efforts do not need to necessarily come from police officers. Safe bicycle behavior can be established with good examples. The City can organize group rides to help people learn safe bicycling skills and responsibilities. These can be especially helpful for those venturing out on the road for the first time. Having several bicyclists riding together also reminds motorists of the presence of bicyclists and how to courteously share the road. Group rides can also help people confidently ride in the evening and night hours. Each group ride should begin with a review of safe bicycling laws and tips. Reminding people of what equipment is required can reinforce regulations. Gently reminding riders of safe behavior along the ride helps people to test the waters in a safe and welcoming environment.



The city has bought, distributed, and installed bike light sets to reinforce safety and that bicyclists need proper equipment.

Image Source: City of San Antonio, Office of Environmental Policy

