

# Bike Fever Hits Middle Schools!



Lincoln Student organized Bike to School Day in 2005. New students are planning another.

## Samohi Bike Day movement spreads to Lincoln and John Adams

Students at Santa Monica High School's **Solar Alliance** are joining their younger brothers and sisters in middle school to promote **Bike Days at Lincoln and John Adams Middle School**.

Inspired by unanimous support of a **Bike to School Day Resolution** by the **SMMUSD Board of Education**, Samohi Solar Alliance co-presidents Lulu Mickelson and Theo Benjamin have been providing Lincoln and John Adams students with tips on how to organize Bike Days at their own schools.

**Lincoln Middle School** students came up with a long list of great ideas to promote Bike Days, from student-made videos to prizes, music and bike competitions. They will hold their Bike Day **Wednesday, June 10, 2009**.

**John Adams Middle School** will hold their event **Friday June 12, 2009**, to reduce conflicts between cyclists and traffic from Santa Monica College, which does not hold classes on Fridays.

Modeled on recent Samohi **Bike Days**, the middle school events will reward students

for getting to school without a car. Students are encouraged to bike, walk or take the bus, and are rewarded with popsicles and prizes. The number of students biking to Samohi has grown steadily from about 30 to 125 cyclists from October 2007 to October 2008.

The Samohi **Parent Teacher Student Association**, or PTSA, provides bike helmets and locks as prizes for cyclists. While some high school students resist wearing helmets, helmet use has climbed steadily. Samohi PTSA has distributed 80 free bike helmets so far.

**Teen oriented videos** shown during homeroom at both middle schools remind students to wear helmets and obey traffic rules. An email campaign to parents has included reminders that **helmets are mandatory for cyclists under 18**. The penalty is \$108 including court fees for parents of students violating the law. The PTSA, local cycling organizations, and Santa Monica police are working together to raise awareness of the law and provide bike skills and safety training at middle school sites.

## SMMUSD Board of Education Adopts Walk or Bike to School Resolution

*Unanimous April 2, 2009 vote supports Bike and Walk to School Days, Safe Routes to School and related initiatives at all Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District schools.*

### RESOLVED:

- District should encourage students, parents and school staff members to walk, bike or take a bus to schools instead of driving.
- District and school safety staff will work with PTSA, local police SROs and cycling organizations to maximize opportunities for safety education...including promoting use of bike helmets, knowledge of traffic rules and cycling skills.
- District will encourage schools to document unsafe pedestrian and bicycle routes to schools...District will actively pursue Safe Routes to School grants.
- District will offer staff commute alternatives programs... so staff and teachers become commuting role models for their students. District will host safe cycling course for staff and teachers.
- District will collaborate with LA County Bicycle Coalition to develop Bicycle Policy Guidelines to be adopted by the District Health and Safety Advisory Committee...
- By 2012 all school in the district are to have safe and secured bicycle parking facilities...

## Safe Routes to School News: Bike Fever Hits Middle Schools!

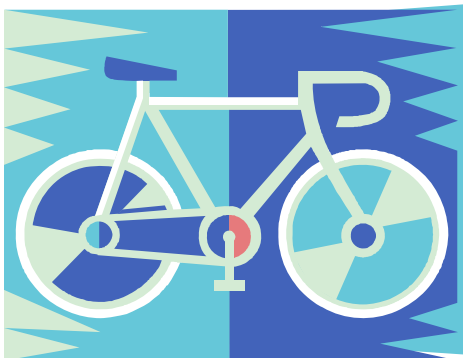
*Is a joint effort of Kendall Planning + Design and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.*

*For more information on Bike to School and Safe Routes to Schools efforts in LA County:*

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## Samohi and City of Santa Monica Plan for Bike and Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Santa Monica High School staff, students and parents met with City planners and traffic enforcement officers to discuss the major traffic and bike safety hazards faced by students walking and biking to school. The group generated a long list of suggested improvements used by City staff and Alison Kendall of Kendall Planning + Design to identify priority improvements for potential funding through a state **Safe Routes to School** grant. These improvements include cross-walk improvements at Lincoln and Michigan, Pico and 6<sup>th</sup>, etc

Santa Monica High School is not located in an ideal area for biking. Bordered by Interstate 10, the school is surrounded by heavily traveled major arterials, with no bike lanes. Students who walk and bike to school have to cross two hazardous freeway on-ramps.

Samohi students attended public meetings to **advocate for bicycle improvements** to the campus and surrounding area. Among their suggestions: rebuild a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the freeway at 7<sup>th</sup> Street to provide an

alternative to hazardous Lincoln Avenue, and extend Michigan Avenue as a pedestrian and bicycle route through campus and the Civic Center to the beach. Students have also advocated for cyclists needs in current plans for campus and civic center improvements.

An important component of the Samohi **Safe Routes to School** grant and planned programs for middle and elementary schools is the provision of **Bicycle Skills classes** taught at school sites. Currently, Santa Monica Police provide elementary school bike skills education. Local cycling instructors certified by the **League of American Bicyclists** have offered street cycling classes for teenagers and adults in a growing number of Santa Monica and Westside locations. The Board of Education resolution and growing Bike to School movement provides an opportunity for the police and local cycling instructors to work together on safe cycling classes for all school age youth.

**This newsletter** was produced to share success stories in the **Bike/Walk to School** movement in Los Angeles County. Many parts of the country have successful and well-established **Safe Routes to School** programs. These programs promote the safety, convenience and health benefits of walking and bicycling to school.

This edition of Safe Routes to School News was produced by **Kendall Planning + Design**, a sustainable planning and urban design firm, and by the **Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition**. LACBC is sponsoring an ongoing blog and Education Committee effort focused on educating the next generation of bicyclists in Los Angeles County schools.

The **Safe Routes to School Program** offers Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Engineering grants which can be used by cities, school districts and community members to improve the pedestrian and bicycle safety of their communities. If you'd like more information on the local SR2S programs, contact Dale Benson at Caltrans LA office: 213-897-2934 or [dale\\_benson@dot.ca.gov](mailto:dale_benson@dot.ca.gov) or check out our blog [www.srts-sm.blogspot.com](http://www.srts-sm.blogspot.com)

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