

Safe Routes to School News: LA Bikes!



Santa Monica High seniors Rachel Horn and Alex Richter welcome fellow cyclists on Bike Day 2007

Santa Monica High tackles global warming with bicycles...and popsicles.

Santa Monica High School students organized the **Samohi Solar Alliance** to promote renewable energy at their school. Under the leadership of students Rachel Horn and Lulu Mickelson, the club teamed up with Owen Gorman, president of the newly formed **Samohi Bike Coalition**, to organize the school's first ever **Samohi Bike Day** in October 2007. The concept was simple: encourage students to rediscover the joys of biking to school, and decrease the impact of their trip to school on global warming. The secret weapon: free popsicles at lunch for all students who biked, or skateboarded, or walked.

The two clubs held four Bike Day events in 2007-08, and despite the graduation of the original leaders, are on track to continue the tradition this year. Meanwhile, the number of students biking to school has grown steadily from about 30 in October 2007 to 125 at the most recent Bike Day in October 2008. The club plans to broaden the effort to other clubs, with a goal of 400 participants who walk, bike or take the bus to school.

Students enjoy Bike Day for many reasons:

"I always look forward to Bike Day. Not only does it help the environment and unify the school, but it is also such a blast to ride

to school with my friends." -Liz Rawson (Junior, SSA Member)

"Bike Day inspires others to start riding by showing how fun and easy biking to school can be." -Daniel Redick (Junior, SSA Member, avid cyclist)

"So much of our school's carbon footprint comes from student pick-up and drop-off. By promoting and rewarding alternative forms of transportation, Bike Day helps shift the car mentality of our school." -Lulu Mickelson (SSA co-president)

The **Parent Teacher Student Association**, or **PTSA**, provides bike helmets and locks as prizes for cyclists. Despite initial skepticism from parents and students about the willingness of students to wear helmets, **helmet use has climbed steadily**, along with ridership. The PTSA has distributed 60 free bike helmets so far, along with reminders that helmets are mandatory for cyclists under 18. For four years, the PTSA has worked with **City of Santa Monica and Big Blue Bus** staff to promote walking, biking, and bus use with prizes and bus information at registration. Surveys showed many students wanted to bike to campus, but it took the power of popsicles and peer pressure to get it to happen.

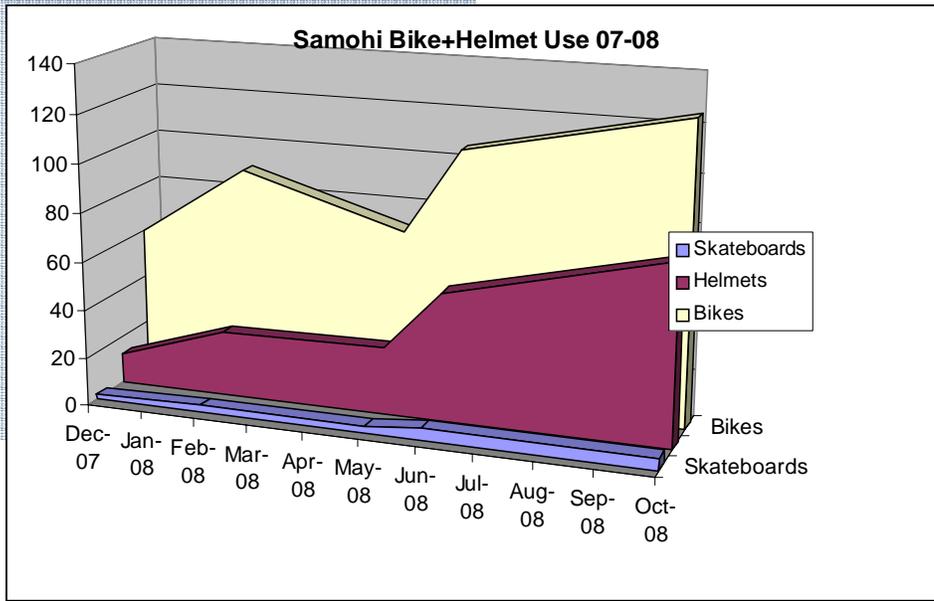
TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR OWN BIKE TO SCHOOL MOVEMENT

1. **Form a club with other students who love biking and care about the environment.**
2. **Find a teacher to advise your club and get approval for club events.**
3. **Ask the Parent Teacher Student Association for help to provide funding for prizes and help with organizing events**
4. **Work with City staff:** Traffic Safety and School Resource Officers (Police), Parks and Recreation staff, Planners, and Traffic Engineers in Public Works.
5. **Set Dates for Bike to School Days** October, January, April, June
6. **Get the Word Out.... with Bike Safety Information**
-Public announcements, posters, city bike maps, local newspapers
-Get in touch with local bike shops to support your work with prizes
7. **On Bike Day: Banners, Music, Prizes, Popsicles...make it fun!**
8. **Count Bicycles and Helmets and Celebrate Success in school PTSA and local newspapers.**
9. **Advocate for Better Bike Facilities at School Board and City Council.**
10. **Plan for the Future.....pick leaders for next year and broaden your coalition of groups.**



BIKE AND HELMET USE AT SAMOHI BIKE DAYS – 2007 to 2008

Count conducted in Dec 07, Feb, May, June and Oct 08 show Bike Day participation and helmet use growing steadily over the past year.



Santa Monica High Bike Days Start Movement

LA County Bicycle Coalition members helped organize a **Road One Bike Skills Class** for Samohi students in May 2008 to address concerns about the safety of biking to school. Samohi teacher Holly Dreier advises the Bike Club and helped sponsor the Road One class. Taught by League of American Bicyclist-certified instructors, the class

covers rules of the road, basic bike maintenance, and practicing safe cycling skills on local streets. Since May, Ron Durgin of LACBC has taught three more classes in Santa Monica in order to train more future instructors.

Samohi, like many high schools in Los Angeles County, 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, and several major arterials. 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 7th 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. Alison Kendall of Kendall Planning + Design helped students advocate for student cycling needs in current plans for campus and civic center improvements.



Middle School Students start Bike to School Movement



Eighth Grade students in Susan Stivers homeroom at Lincoln Middle School decided to take on a service learning project addressing public health and planning issues. Stivers teamed up with Alison Kendall of Kendall Planning + Design, an urban designer working on involving students and parents in Santa Monica's Land Use and Circulation Element Update. Through the City's Youth Planning Project, the students taught fellow students bike safety and planning, provided input on the need for more bicycle routes to serve their school, and presented their project to the public, School Board and City Council members at a Youth Planning Forum in April 2005.

The original students have now graduated, and a new group is now forming to revive the effort.



Join the Bike to School Movement with your LA School

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*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
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Dale Benson, Caltrans

Dale_benson@dot.ca.gov

213-897-2934

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*If all 3000 students at
Santa Monica High biked,
walked or took the bus to
school just once a week,
students calculated 142
fewer tons per year of
CO2 would be released.*

BIKE TO SCHOOL!

This newsletter was produced to share success stories in the **Bike to School** and Safe Routes 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.

Here in Los Angeles County, we are often unable to share lessons learned due to the sheer size of the county and the difficulty of travel within it. This edition of LA Safe Routes to School was produced by **Kendall Planning + Design**, 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 downtown LA office: 213-897-2934 or dale_benson@dot.ca.gov.



RESOURCES FOR BIKE TO SCHOOL MOVEMENTS IN LA COUNTY:

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BICYCLE COALITION An advocacy group to promote a bicycle friendly LA Co.

Aurisha Smolarski, Outreach Coordinator, aurisha@la-bike.org 213-629-2142

Michael Cahn, Education Committee Chair, velocipedus@gmail.com 310-752-3177

Notes for a broader perspective on how to integrate cycling into the total school is here:

http://lacbc.whsites.net/wiki/index.php/Bicycle_Perfect_School

Download this newsletter and share Safe Routes and Bikes in Schools ideas on the LACBC

blog <http://sr2s-la.blogspot.com/> Email LACBC at bikes_at_school@la-bike.org

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BICYCLE SKILLS AND SAFETY CLASSES

League of American Bicyclists: Road One Bike Skills Class- learn rules of the road, bike maintenance, and safe cycling skills.

To set up a class in your area Contact: Ron Durgin rdurgin@gmail.com or website: www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/

Safe Routes to School – Help make biking to school safe and fun! www.saferoutesinfo.org

Metro -to find good bus/bike routes: www.mta.net

Interscholastic Cycling League- join other kids and learn how to and race mountain bikes: www.socaldirt.org

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Marin County Bike Coalition has been key in the shaping of Safe Routes to School Plans Nationwide

<http://www.marinbike.org/Campaigns/SafeRoutes/Index.shtml> and <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ped/bimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2002/toc.html>

MORE BIKE RESOURCES:

DIY BIKE SHOPS

Get a bike, learn how to fix your bike, and get involved with bike community at any of one these fine bicycle collectives:

Bicycle Kitchen – 706 Heliotrope, Los Angeles, 90029 – tel. 323.662.2776 www.bicyclekitchen.com

Bike Oven – 3706 N. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, 90065 – tel. 323.233.8020 www.bikeoven.com

Bikerowave – 1816A Berkeley St., Santa Monica 90404 – tel. 310.315.4383 www.bikerowave.org



**BUILDING A BETTER
BIKE-ABLE LA COUNTY**

WWW.LA-BIKE.ORG



www.kendallplanning.com

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