**CITY OF MERCED**
**Development Services**

TO: Bicycle Advisory Commission
FROM: Bill King, Principal Planner
DATE: October 23, 2012
SUBJECT: Draft 2013 Merced Bicycle Transportation Plan, Section 2

---

ACTION REQUIRED:

Bicycle Advisory Commission vote on draft and recommended language for Section 2.

BACKGROUND

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) drafted Section 2 of the *2013 Merced Bicycle Transportation Plan* (BTP). Section 2 deals with the plan's vision, goals, and policies. Staff anticipates a need to update and revisit this section based on comments to be received at a future community meeting concerning proposed bicycle facilities.

City and MCAG Staff will also need to perform a consistency assessment of the draft BTP policies and those located in the City's General Plan and Climate Action Plan, and the Merced County Regional Transportation Plan.

DRAFT LANGUAGE

Staff has prepared a draft vision statement, and framed the plan's goals and polices around six "E's" of bike planning, and include:

- Engineering
- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement, and
- Evaluation.

Inspired by the City of Davis Bike Plan, the sixth "E," Equity, is added to the list to ensure the equal treatment of bicycles as a transportation mode in all regions and for all users of bikes in Merced.

MCAG crafted the draft language of Section 2 based on their review of the feedback from the Fall 2011 Bicycle Friendly Community assessment (Attachment A), and public comments from the community meeting about existing bicycle facilities (Attachment B). Planning Staff carried forward the policies from the 2008 BTP. Staff encourages the BAC to review these attachments, and suggest amendments or new vision, goal, or policy language for BAC consideration and action.

ACTION

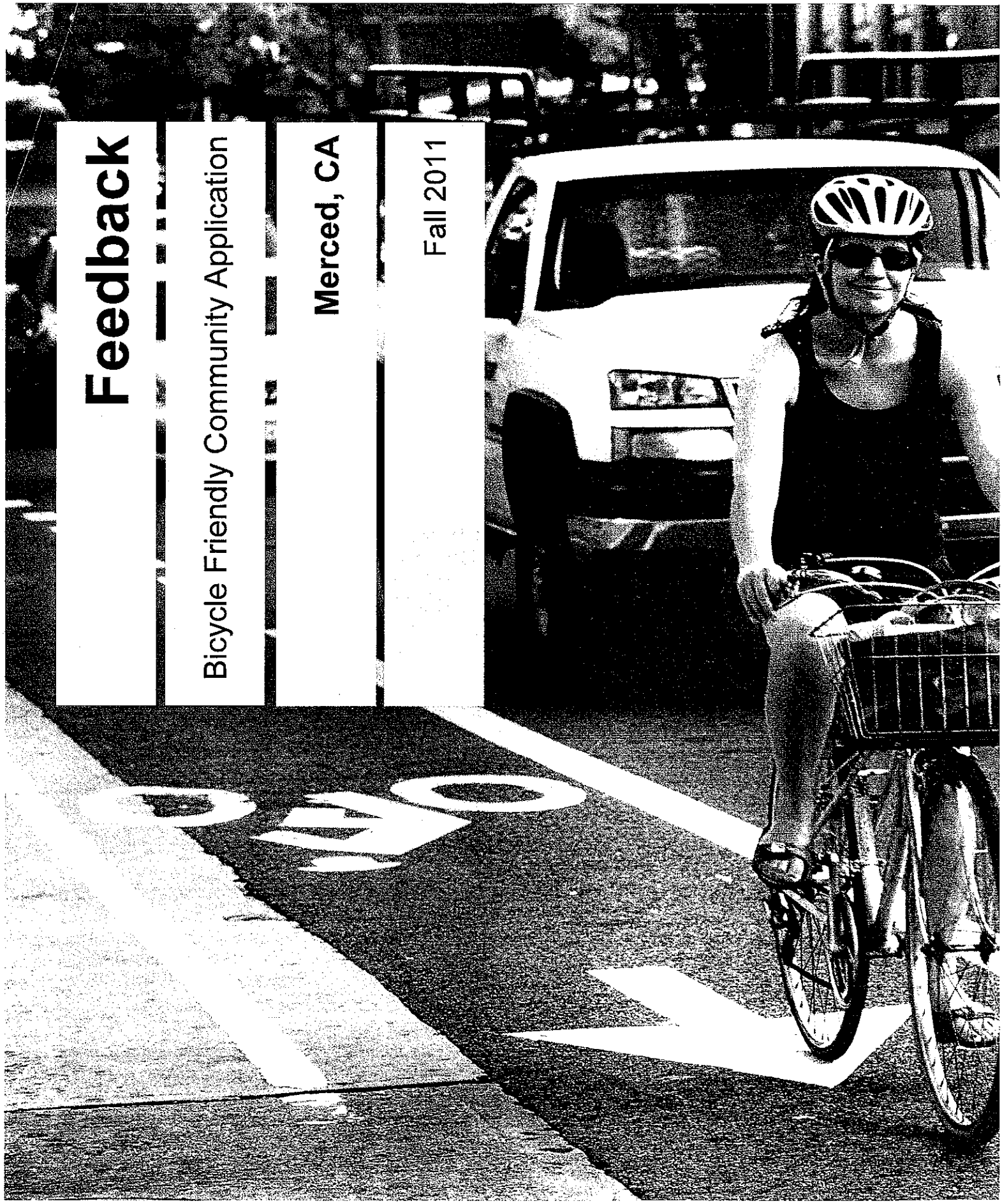
Staff requests the BAC to review the draft language and to recommended approval as presented or with modifications, understanding that opportunities for additional review of an updated section will occur later during the process.

Attachment

A. Fall 2011 Bicycle Friendly Community Assessment

B. Community Meeting Comments

C. Draft 2013 Merced Bicycle Transportation Plan, Section 2



# Feedback

Bicycle Friendly Community Application

**Merced, CA**

Fall 2011

ATTACHMENT A

***Bicycle Friendly Community***

Bicycle Friendly Community

Though **Merced, CA** has not yet reached Bicycle Friendly Community status, the reviewers felt that notable steps are being made in the right direction:

- **Engineering** Merced recently developed a policy to engineer streets with the consideration of bicyclists and is beginning to develop a trail network. Community and transportation planners, and civil engineers receive training in bicycle and pedestrian planning and engineering. Bike parking facilities conform to the currently recognized standards. Most public busses are equipped with bike racks. About twenty percent of roads accommodate bicycles and a third of arterial streets have bike lanes or paved shoulders.
- **Education** Merced has recently educated motorists and bicyclists on sharing the road safely through a dedicated bike page on the community website and share the road signs. Community requires safe driving training for transit operators and school bus operators.
- **Encouragement** Merced promotes National Bike Month through a city proclamation, a community ride, a mayor-led ride, a guide to Bike Month events, a Bike Month website, commuter breakfasts and energizer stations, and a trail construction/maintenance day. Community celebrates cycling outside of Bike Month through community rides and a trail construction/maintenance day.
- **Enforcement** Officers have received specific training on the relationship between bicycling and law enforcement. There are specific penalties for failing to yield to a cyclist when turning and/or it is illegal to park or drive in a bike lane (intersections excepted). There are penalties for motor vehicle users that 'door' cyclists. There is a ban on cell phone use while driving. There is a ban on texting while driving.
- **Evaluation & Planning** Merced is familiar with the needs of cyclists and has a bicycle master plan with dedicated funding. There is a trip reduction ordinance or program.

A particular **highlight** was the homeless' Wheel Solutions program.

The BFC review team expects good things in the future given the good local team.

Below, reviewers provided recommendations to promote bicycling in Merced in the short and long term. Increasing bicycle use can **improve the environment** by reducing the impact on residents of pollution and noise, limiting greenhouse gases, and improving the quality of public spaces; **Reduce congestion** by shifting short trips (the majority of trips in cities) out of cars. This will also make cities more accessible for public transport, walking, essential car travel, emergency services, and deliveries; **Save lives** by creating safer conditions for bicyclists and as a direct consequence improve the safety of all other road users. Research shows that increasing the number of bicyclists on the street improves bicycle safety; **Increase opportunities** for residents of all ages to participate socially and economically in the community, regardless of income or ability. Greater choice of travel modes also increases independence, especially among seniors and children; **Boost the economy** by creating a community that is an attractive destination for new residents, tourists and businesses;

**Bicycle Friendly Community**

**Enhance recreational opportunities,** especially for children, and further contribute to the quality of life in the community; **Save city funds** by increasing the efficient use of public space, reducing the need for costly new road infrastructure, preventing crashes, improving the health of the community, and increasing the use of public transport; **Enhance public safety and security** by increasing the number of "eyes on the street" and providing more options for movement in the event of emergencies, natural disasters, and major public events; **Improve the health and well being** of the population by promoting routine physical activity.

**The *key measures* Merced should take to improve cycling in the community are:**

- Expanding the bicycle and pedestrian manager's time focused on bike projects would help in scaling up your BFC efforts. Current work of the BPAC and TDM staff could be complemented by a staff person devoted to acquiring bike/ ped grants and making the community bicycle-friendly. See this report on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff. http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/why_bike_ped_staff_april_2010.pdf

- Increase the amount of secure bicycle parking at popular destinations such as transit stops, schools, recreation and entertainment facilities, retail and office clusters and churches throughout the community. Regulations that require bike parking, e.g. as part of new developments, can secure private funding for bike parking. More and more communities also ensure that multi-family residential developments provide secure and covered bike parking. See bicycle parking ordinances of Madison, Wisconsin and Santa Cruz, California.

- Accommodate bicycles at intersections and multi-use path crossings to improve efficiency and safety of all road and path users. At intersections, time traffic lights for bicycle speeds and incorporate microwave cameras, loop detectors or bicycle signal heads, and include on-street pavement markings that indicate where cyclists should locate their bicycle to trigger the signal. Consider adding bike boxes to make bicyclists more visible to motorists. Consider incorporating grade separated multi-use path crossings or other high-visibility treatments on medium and high traffic roads. Ensure that both path and road users are clearly informed about who has the right-of-way at every crossing.

- Ensure that bicycle-safety education is a routine part of public education and that schools and the surrounding neighborhoods are particularly safe and convenient for biking. Work with your Bicycle Advisory Committee and local bicycle advocates to develop and implement Safe Routes to School programs that emphasizes bicycling for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. Strongly encourage all schools to participate. In Arlington County, Virginia, Department of Public Works, Police and school officials assessed every school regarding its accessibility by bicycle. A list of problems was developed and measures were identified. Short-term projects such as painting crosswalks were implemented immediately, while larger construction projects are on-going. Funding is

available through the federal transportation bill SAFETEA-LU, among several other sources at both the federal and state levels. See www.saferoutesinfo.org for more information.

- It is vital to make motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road. Continue to expand public education campaigns to promote the share the road message and the rights and responsibilities of all users, e.g. through public service announcements, a community newsletter article or a bicycle ambassador program. Consider taking advantage of your local bicycle advocates for content and strategy development and manpower. See a motorist education video at http://www.bikelib.org/safety-education/motorists/driver-education/. Also, see the excellent Look Campaign from New York City: http://www.nyc.gov/html/look/html/about/about_us_text.shtml.

**Reviewers provided the following menu of recommendations to further promote bicycling:**

**Engineering**
Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Ensure that new and improved bicycle facilities conform to current best practices and guidelines – such as the *NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* and your DOT's own guidelines. Consider innovative bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle tracks, contra-flow bike lanes or colorful bike lanes.

- Provide ongoing training opportunities on accommodating bicyclists for engineering, planning staff, and law enforcement. Consider hosting a *Smart Cycling* course for city staff to better understand cyclists' needs, behavior, and their right to use city streets as well as multi-use paths for transportation. Your local bicycle advocacy group are a great resource for this kind of training.

- Install way-finding signage at strategic locations around the community. Here are some best practices from the Washington, DC area Council of Governments: http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/t1dZW1k20070516090831.pdf

- Improve the coordination and communication between city departments and state paving and rehabilitation projects and facilities maintenance. Consider offering oversight to state DOT staff and contractors working within municipal boundaries. Ensure that facility design follows current best practice and that they are properly installed.

- Consider measuring the bicycle level of service (LOS) on community roads and at intersections, to be able to identify the most appropriate routes for inclusion in the community bicycle network, determine "weak links" in the network, prioritize sites needing improvement, and evaluate alternate treatments for improving bike-friendliness of a roadway or intersection: http://www.bikelib.org/bike-planning/bicycle-level-of-service/ (roads) and http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/library/details.cfm?id=4425 (intersections).

- Consider road diets in appropriate locations to make streets more efficient and safe. Use the newly created space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities: http://www.walkable.org/assets/downloads/roaddiets.pdf

Long Term Goals:

- Since arterial and collector roads are the backbone of every transportation network, it is essential to increase the number of wide shoulders or bike lanes along these roads to allow bicyclists of all skill levels to reach their destinations quickly and safely.

- Continue to expand the bike network and increase network connectivity through the use of bike lanes, bike tracks, shared lane arrows, signed routes and bicycle cut-throughs. On-street improvements coupled with the expansion of the off-street system will continue to increase use and improve safety. These improvements will also increase the effectiveness of encouragement efforts by providing a broader range of facility choices for users of various abilities and comfort levels.

- Allow access to suitable public lands for mountain bicyclists. Ensure to connect any off-road trails and facilities to the overall bicycle network. Look for ways to bridge the divide between the bike community and equestrian community by creating dedicated trails for each user group and multiuse trials where feasible.

- Develop a system of bicycle boulevards that creates an attractive, convenient, and comfortable cycling environment welcoming to cyclists of all ages and skill levels. See more on how to do it at http://www.ibpi.usp.pdx.edu/guidebook.php

**Education**

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Improve the reach of the community's bicycle safety campaigns. Use valuable information from the League's Ride Better Tips in your outreach education and encouragement efforts. See the Ride Better Tips pages at http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/better/index.php , PSA's http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/psas.php and the downloadable Bicycle Safety Tips for Adults video at http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/shortversion.wmv. Again, consider taking advantage of your local bicycle advocates for content and strategy development and manpower.

- Add bicycling and motorist education messages to local routine activities such as drivers licensing and testing, or include inserts in utility bills.

- Start a bicyclist and motorist ticket diversion program. Road users given citation are offered an opportunity to waive fees for violations by attending a bicycling education course. This should include a classroom and on-road component. See what Pima County has done: http://bikeped.pima.gov/Safety%20(pdfs)/April%20-%20May%202011%20Bicycle%20Diversion%20Class%20(No%20Locations).pdf

- Education on bicycling is not only important for bicyclists but for all road users - including motorists. Start a motorist education programs for professional drivers such as bus and taxi drivers in the city. See what San Francisco has done http://www.sfbike.org/?drivertraining Classes can be offered by League Cycling Instructors or local bicycle advocates and material is available through the League of American Bicyclists.

- Continue to improve bicycling education opportunities for children and adults. The essential *Smart Cycling* curriculum can be integrated into motor vehicle violation diversion programs, Safe Routes to School, as well as motorist education classes for city and private sector employees.

- Host a League Cycling Instructor seminar to increase the number of certified League Cycling Instructors in your community, who can teach both adult and child classes. Having local instructors will enable your community to expand cycling education, recruit knowledgeable cycling ambassadors, deliver education to motorists, provide cycling education to adults, and have an expert to assist in encouragement programs. Contact the League office or visit http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/ for information.

- Team with a local advocacy group, bicycle shop, or League Cycling Instructor to offer regular public maintenance classes to residents at public parks, libraries, community centers and in conjunction with city events. A short tutorial on how to change a flat tire can empower a person to ride their bike more often. You can find local instructors and bike shops here: https://members.bikeleague.org/members_online/members/findit.asp

- Offer bicycling skills classes, Traffic Skills 101 classes and commuter classes on a *frequent* basis or encourage a local bicycle advocacy group, club or shop to do so. You could invite a League Cycling Instructor (LCI) to conduct the classes. Ideally the instruction would incorporate a classroom portion as well as on-road training. For examples of educational materials visit: http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/. To find a local LCI go to: https://members.bikeleague.org/members_online/members/findit.asp

**Encouragement**

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Reach children with bicycling education outside of school through recreation programs, bicycle repair co-ops, family-friendly community bicycle events and through youth bike

clubs. Here is an example from Portland, OR - http://www.communitycyclingcenter.org/index.php/programs-for-youth

- Promote, host, sponsor and/or encourage a variety of bicycle-themed, fun and family-friendly community events year-round, such as a bike movie festival, a 4th of July bike parade, an "increase-your-appetite" Thanksgiving community ride, a dress-like-Santa community ride before Christmas, a kids triathlon, a bicycle fashion show, a Halloween bike decoration competition, a bike to the arts event, etc. Work closely with local bicycle advocacy groups, bike clubs, bike shops, bike teams and schools. Provide appropriate safety measures such as road closures or police escorts.

- Encourage local businesses to promote cycling to the workplace and to seek recognition through the *Bicycle Friendly Business* program. Businesses will profit from a healthier, happier and more productive workforce while the community would potentially profit from some bicycle-active businesses as well: increasing the bicycle mode share, less commuter traffic, better air quality, public bike parking in prime locations provided by businesses, new and powerful partners in advocating for bike infrastructure and programs on the local, state and federal level, and public bike events, skills and maintenance classes hosted or sponsored by businesses. The city should be the model employer for the rest of the community. For more information about the free program please visit http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/bicyclefriendlybusiness/.

- Consider passing an ordinance or local code that would require larger employers to provide bicycle parking, shower facilities, and other end-of-trip amenities.

- Encourage local institutions of higher education to promote cycling and to seek recognition through the Bicycle Friendly University program. College and university campuses are unique environments for their high density, stimulating atmosphere and defined boundaries. These factors make them ideal environments to incorporate bikes. Many colleges and universities have built upon these good conditions and embraced the enthusiasm for more bicycle-friendly campuses by incorporating bike share programs, bike co-ops, clubs, bicycling education classes and policies to promote bicycling as a preferred means of transportation. The community could potentially profit as well: Communities near a BFU such as Stanford or University of California at Davis have a very high number of regular bicyclists (as many students bike to campus, shops and restaurants), less congestion around campus, safer streets and university-hosted public bicycle events, programs and classes." See what Stanford University is doing for cyclists: http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/communities/bfc_stanford_university.php

- Actively involve the local bicycle community in community planning efforts, policy development and public outreach.

- Set up and promote bicycle-themed community celebrations and/or rides each time the community completes a new bicycle related project. This is a great way to show off the city's good efforts and introduces new users to the improvement.

- Design and publish several local bike maps in paper and online, addressing diverse needs and skill levels (commuter, visitor, sport cyclist, mountain biker etc). Each map should outline the existing on and/or off road bicycle network by infrastructure type and skill level (if applicable). In addition, maps could identify the location of landmarks, greenways, low-traffic streets, public restrooms, bike routes, designated scenic routes, bike stations, bike repair stations, bike parking and transit stations. See Portland, Oregon's commuter bike map: http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=39402&a=322407

- Consider offering a 'Ciclovia' or 'Summer Streets' type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events. http://cicloviarecreativa.uniandes.edu.co/english/index.html

- Consider partnering with a local bicycle advocacy group or bike club to launch a bike buddy or bicyclist mentorship program for inexperienced riders. A bike mentorship program that teams experienced cyclists with newcomers is a great way to encourage and educate novice commuters. See what Spokane, Wash. and Charlotte, N.C. are doing http://groups.google.com/group/bikementor, http://www.spokanebicycleclub.org/bikebuddy.htm

- Ensure that there is a place for visitors and community members to rent bicycles.

- Implement a mechanism that ensures that facilities, programs and encouragement efforts are implemented in traditionally underserved communities.

Long Term Goals

- Develop a series of short (2-5 mi.) (themed) loop rides around the community and provide appropriate way-finding signage. Integrate these rides into local bike maps.

- Consider launching a bike sharing system that is open to the public. A bike share system is a convenient, cost effective, and healthy way of encouraging locals and visitors to make short trips by bike. See what is being done across the country at http://streetswiki.wikispaces.com/Public+Bike-Sharing+Programs

- Recreational bicycling can be promoted through facilities and programs like mountain bike parks, velodromes, cyclocross course or similar bicycle amenities. Ensure that the facilities are accessible by bicycle, so that there is no need to drive to ride.

**Bicycle Friendly Community**

**Enforcement**
Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Invite a police officer to become an active member of the bicycle advisory committee. Appoint a law-enforcement point person to interact with cyclists.

- Actively facilitate stronger connections between bicycle advocates, the wider bicycling community and law enforcement. Ask police officers to use targeted information and enforcement to encourage motorists *and* cyclists to share the road. This could be in the form of a brochure or tip card explaining each user's rights and responsibilities. Have information material available in Spanish, if applicable. Also increase the number of police officers patrolling multi-use paths *and* streets on bike, as it gives officers a better understanding of the conditions for cyclists and keeps secluded multi-use paths safe.

- Local laws that discriminate against cyclists, or restrict their right to travel, or reduce their relative safety, should be repealed.

**Evaluation/Planning**
Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Expand efforts to evaluate bicycle crash statistics and produce a specific plan to reduce the number of crashes in the community. Available tools include *Intersection Magic:* http://www.pdmagic.com/im/and PBCAT. See the report *Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005*

- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community. See what Portland, OR has done: http://www.altaplanning.com/App_Content/files/fp_docs/2008%20Portland%20Bicycle-Related%20Economy%20Report.pdf

Long Term Goals

- Integrate the implementation of the bike plan into the master plan, all land use plans, zoning ordinances and larger development projects.

- Allow and encourage a mix of uses, a well connected street network and compact development patterns throughout the community to shorten the distances people need to bike.

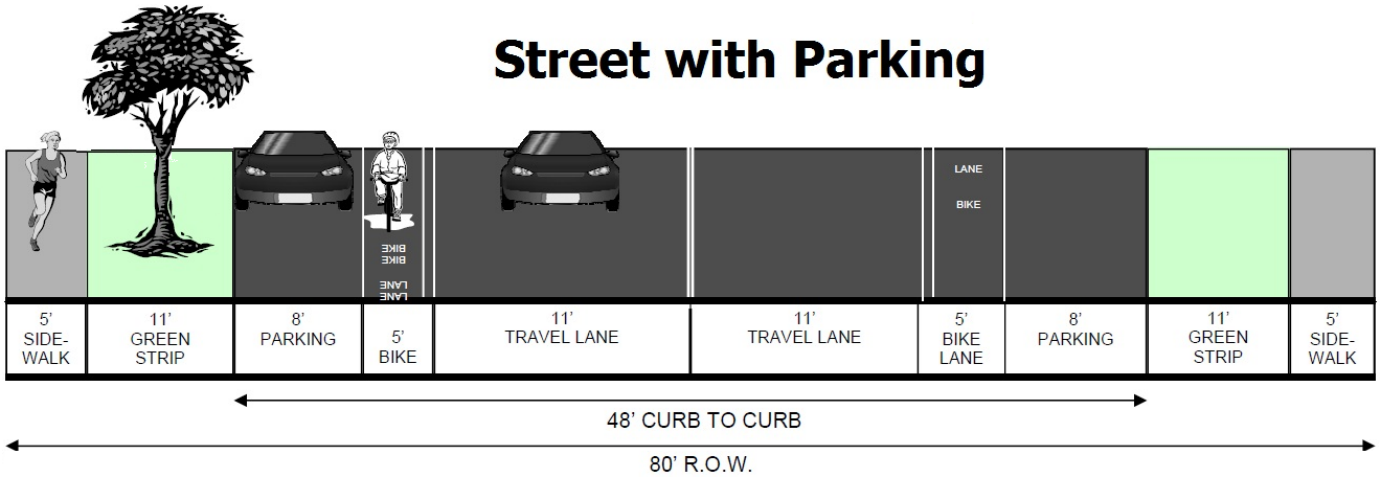
- Work with the mountain biking community to develop a plan for off-road access and increase opportunities for single-track riding within the city.

**For more ideas and best practices please visit the Bicycle Friendly Community Resource Page.**

# AUGUST 2012 WORKSHOP COMMENTS RECEIVED

- Government "gets serious" about bike transportation
  - Bike Plan be a higher priority
  - Bike Plan should have a stronger **vision** and better follow-through (implementing)
  - Funding the improvements
  - Implementing design standards (currently for short- and long-term bike parking…need for bikeways)

- Co-use bike lanes (i.e. along "M" Street south of Yosemite Avenue; along 18th Street)
  - "No Parking" = Safer bike lanes
  - Allow for more width (change standard width) for "door zones"- currently at least 12' from curb to allow for car parking, door opening, and bikes…the following illustration depicts the standard, which was attached to Merced's CMAQ re-striping application (submitted to MCAG in Nov. 2011)




- Safer and connected for marginal cyclists
- Segments of "M" Street not safe for cyclists

- Bike facilities support
  - Signal detector loops that "see" or detect bikes
  - Way-finding signs

- Safer crossings: Blinkers, narrower crossings, x-walks
- Retrofit older sidewalks with ramps and cutouts (i.e MLK, South Merced streets)
- More cutouts

- Maintain bikeways
  - Especially along Bear Creek, streets
  - "M" Street…see maps
  - More frequent maintenance

- Bike racks
  - Not enough
  - Replace deficient ones
  - Should be required at destinations (i.e. stores)

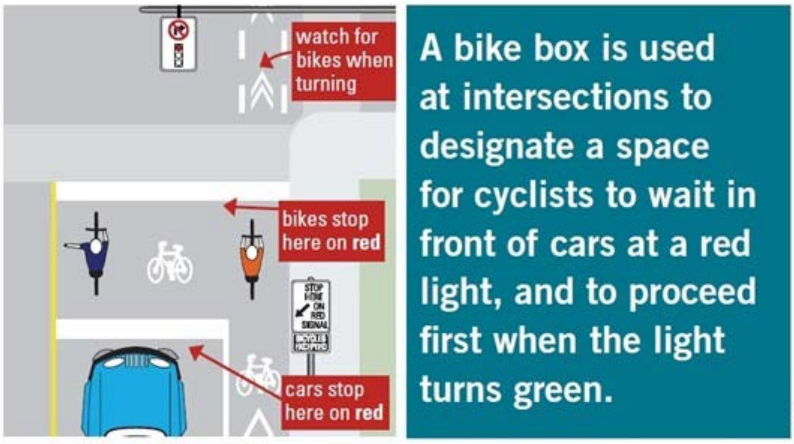
**ATTACHMENT B**

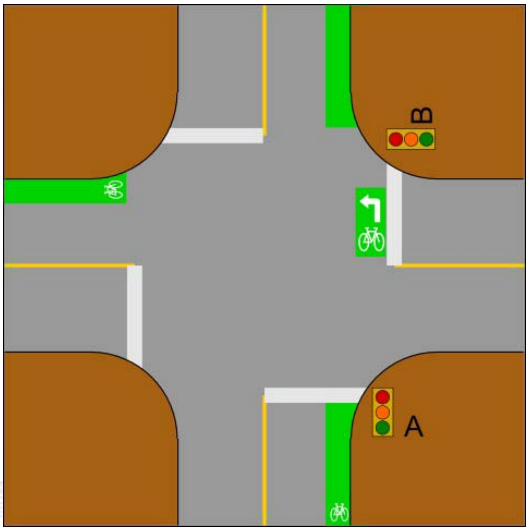
- Public "**Education**"
  - Seeing "wrong way" riders (educate bicyclists on laws and rules of road)
  - City utility bills to educate public on bike-related matters
  - Educate motorists – DMV test questions
  - "Urban biking" education could be Ad-Hoc too

- Promotion ("**Encouragement**")
  - Weblinked app ( www.saveagallon.org ) to quantify benefits (i.e. health) of bicycling compared to costs assoc. w- driving
  - Monetary incentives for biking (insurance, Dero ZAP ( http://www.prweb.com/releases/Commuting_Bike/RFID_Dero/prweb8863082.htm ))

- More funding for **Enforcement**

- "Bike Box" for through traffic and for left turns




- Schools should have "safe routes" designated (how students could bike to schools safely)
  - Bike lanes near schools
  - **Childs Ave**?

- $300K too much for re-striping bike lanes

- Use B.A.C. as forum/line of communication to the City

- U.C. Merced connections / Bike alliance / Partner – David Noble

- Parsons Ave. would be best North-South thoroughfare for bikes- build a bike/pedestrian bridge over Bear Creek

- Close roads to cars on some days (i.e. Main Street on Sundays)

- Bicycle boulevards (like in Minnesota)

**COMMENTS ON THE MAPS**:

- Maintenance:
  - Fix Yosemite Avenue Bike Lane from Gardner Avenue to Lake Road
  - Maintain McKee Road north of Bear Creek
  - Maintain McKee Road near Bear Creek (pockets of County jurisdiction)

- Should not allow car parking in bike lanes on McKee Road north of Bear Creek

- Way-finding signs at Fahrens Park Bike Path, and on other bike paths

- Disapproval of extending Bear Creek Bike Path from 24th Street south to 16th Street

- Unsafe bicycle crossings at "V" and "R" Streets in proximity to Highway 99

- Install bicycle/pedestrian bridge on Parsons Avenue over Bear Creek, and add new bike lanes on Parsons Avenue

- Safe routes to school: Improve Childs Avenue on west side of Highway 99 to all for safe student traffic to schools east of Highway 99
  - Install sidewalks (and possibly bike lanes) from "B" Street to Highway 99. This would make a great "safe routes to school" project.

# BICYCLE PLAN WORKSHOP (08/29/2012) SIGN-IN SHEET

| # | Name | Address | Contact # | Source? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Robert Tyler | 682 Redwing | (209) 723-3361 | BAC Vice Pres. |
| 2 | Lisa Kayser-Grant | 1425 W. N. Bear Creek Drive | (209) 384-1016 | BAC member |
| 3 | Kara Middlebrooks | 3425 Sueno Court | (209) 383-3503 | BAC member |
| 4 | Pat Bauer | 3065 “M” Street | (209) 726-7452 | BAC member |
| 5 | Ricardo Maciel | 517 Canal Street | (209) 723-2760 | |
| 6 | Larry Harris | 913 Clemson Court, 95348 | (209) 722-9016 | Merced Sun-Star |
| 7 | Sandy Erb | 471 Collins Drive, # 8, 95348 | (209) 819-1083 | BAC |
| 8 | Mark Hendren | 3336 “M” Street, # 7, 95348 | (209) 261-7119 | MBC member |
| 9 | Kelly Rose | 260 E. 15th Street, 95341 | (209) 381-1032 | Work-<br>Merced Co. Health |
| 10 | David Burke | 711 Juniper Court, 95348 | (209) 631-1077 | Online |
| 11 | Tom Grave | | | |
| 12 | Rod Webster | 345 E. 20th Street | (209) 723-4747 | Sierra Club |
| 13 | Jesus A. Perez | 688 Suzanne Court | (209) 723-3176 | |
| 14 | Susan Borda | 3743 San Jose Ave, # 3, 95348 | (209) 631-8961 | BAC |
| 15 | Sara McDonnell | 3743 San Jose Ave, # 3, 95348 | (612) 331-1001 | BAC |
| 16 | Mike Cuehva | 2117 Guinevere Court | (209) 724-9217 | BAC |
| 17 | John Derby | 2465 Parsons Avenue | (209) 723-5815 | Merced Co. Times |
| 18 | Remedios Navarro | | | |
| 19 | Suzane Kallmann | 2022 Pebble Beach Court | (209) 726-3967 | |
| 20 | Ana D. Cintron | 82 Emde Lane, 95341 | (209) 777-7326 | Flyer by mail |
| 21 | Patricia Villiroyle | 665 Gannet, 95341 | (209) 947-5538 | Prefer Spanish |
| 22 | Maria V. Perez | 688 Suzanne Court, 95341 | (209) 723-3176 | Prefer Spanish |
| 23 | Griselda Villa | | (209) 385-5490 | GVHC |
| 24 | Minerva Perez | | | GVHC |

# SECTION 2: VISION, GOALS & POLICIES OF THE BIKE PLAN

### Vision

The bike Plan envisions the expansion of an integrated system of bikeways and support facilities that provides and encourages safe and convenient travel and recreation for bicyclists throughout the plan area. The following are more specifically-defined goals and policies of City of Merced Bicycle Plan, as organized by the six "E's:" Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Equity, and Evaluation. These are in addition to the goals, objectives, policies and implementation actions of the Merced Vision 2030 General Plan, the City's Climate Action Plan, and the Regional Transportation Plan (Appendix ____).

## Education

Education, which is an integral part of a successful bike plan, will promote bicycling as a viable and attractive transportation mode, and will also lead to fewer bike-related collisions. To improve the safety of bike riding, adult bicyclists are not the only group to educate. Parents and schools should learn the bicycle laws and safe-riding techniques in order to safeguard their children. Motorists should also be reminded to be aware of and be respectful of bicyclists sharing the roadways or crossing intersections and driveways. Increasing the public's awareness of bicyclists will enhance ridership safety.

**Goal**: Educate the public, specifically cyclists and motorists, of their responsibility to operate their vehicles in accordance with traffic laws.

**Policies**

- Conduct bicycle safety programs in employment centers and local schools; adopt a more proactive approach to bicycle safety education, including holding yearly, even mandatory, safety classes at local schools at the beginning of the school year.
- Educate drivers and bicyclists by publicizing and promoting safe bicycle commuting.
- Update and produce a double-sided Merced area bikeway map for public use. Display map on one side and safety tips on the other.
- List bike repair facilities on updated bikeway map.
- Dedicate a new page on the City's website to bicycle transportation, recreation, education; include links to this Merced Bicycle Plan, bicycle laws, safety tips and other such helpful resources.
- Consider the use of the City's "Your City Connection" newsletter as a means of distributing bike safety information to the general public.
- Continue with programs that educate the general public on the health benefits of bicycling.

## Encouragement

Encouragement includes partnering with local bicycling champions to support bicycling education and fun activities. The City of Merced, in a leadership example role, is doing its part as a major employer by implementing "eTrip" measures to encourage its employees to use alternative modes of transportation to get to/from work. Coordinating bicycle planning and implementation with the local interest entities, i.e. employers, school districts, Merced College, U.C. Merced, commercial and industrial businesses, will build the sense of benefit through ownership. Educating the public of the financial, health, and environmental benefits of bicycling will provide further encouragement for this mode choice.

**Goal**: Promote the financial, health, and environmental benefits of bicycle commuting

- Encourage and assist employers to implement bike-to-work incentive programs at the workplace.
- Continue to support cycling sports, family fun rides, and other cycling events in the City as a means to encourage bicycling.
- Encourage the use of bike transportation by providing students and school faculty with safe and direct bicycle facilities.

## Engineering

Continuing to improve the bikeway system involves the coordination of the City's planning and engineering departments with the public. This coordination addresses the major consideration to provide safe, convenient, and complete bikeway system access from residences to destinations. As funding is made available, this coordination will ensure the implementation of the most-beneficial, high priority improvements. For the existing bikeway system, measures could be implemented to optimize its attractiveness and usefulness.

**Goal**: Provide safe and convenient bikeway access and support facilities to all destinations within the city and other regional destinations, including the U.C. Merced campus.

**Policies**

- Provide bikeways that link residential areas with employment centers, schools, shopping centers, parks and other major target areas.
- Develop a system of bikeways that fits the needs of commuters, while serving recreational and exercise purposes.
- Provide bicycle support facilities such as bike racks, lockers, water fountains, etc. along bikeways and near destination areas.
- Plan bicycle facilities in coordination with the development of UC Merced.
- Integrate bicycling with the transit system.
- Seek funding from various sources to implement the bicycle plan.
- Create a “Bicycle Buddy” website.
- Design bikeways that fully integrate with the City’s Parks and Open Space Masterplan.
- To support those who choose to use bicycles as their sole means of transportation, provide facilities that consider night riding in addition to daylight use.
- In order to better meet the needs of the anticipated increasing ridership and to install the best designs possible, continue to provide training in bikeway design to all City staff involved in land use and infrastructure development.
- Use cities designated by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) as Platinum or Gold cities as models to follow for the best bikeway designs and encourage staff to seek advice from other bikeway planning professionals through the use of professional organizations to use as resources.

## Enforcement

Enforcement means more than just police officers handing out tickets for violations. Enforcement is also about implementing proactive measures to improve the safety of bicyclists.

**Goal**: Provide a safe system of bikeways as an alternative to motor vehicle travel. Establish and maintain routes that are designed to ensure safety.

**Policies**

- Plan bikeways that avoid conflicts between bicyclists, vehicles and pedestrians.
- Design bikeways that conform to the Caltrans Design Manual standards for bikeway classifications.
- Maintain existing bikeways.
- Provide police patrol on bike paths.
- Provide well lit bicycle facilities
- Reduce the number of bicycle theft.
- Reduce the incidents of bicycle-related collisions with enforcement that emphasizes education, compliance, and proactive measures.

## Equity

When considering the transportation needs to accommodate the growth of the community, improvements to the City's bikeway system should be equitably explored and pursued alongside the consideration of enhancements to other transportation modes (i.e. vehicular, transit). It is also important to make sure that bicycle system improvements benefit all sectors of the community. Reaching out to all regions of the community in workshop settings will provide opportunities for the City's populace, to address their comments and suggestions during the planning process.

**Goal**: Ensure the equal treatment of bicycles as a transportation mode in all regions and for all users of bikes in Merced.

**Policies:**

- Update and upgrade the City of Merced Design Standards regarding all biciycle facilities consistent with the goals, poilicies and listed projects of the 2013 Bike Transportation Plan.
- Continue to include an assessment of bike transportation issues in City reports of discretionary project, and environmental reviews.
- Where consistent with City policies, consider adoption of a code amendment concerning bike-related facilities.

## Evaluation

To determine the benefits and successes associated with implementing the measures addressed in the Bicycle Transportation Plan, routine assessments will need to be conducted.

**Goal**: Develop means to consistently and accurately measure bicycle use for transportation purposes, and assess the condition of bikeway facilities.

**Policies:**

- Conduct surveys at schools and major employers to measure bicycle ridership from year to year.
- Measure bicycle traffic at various areas along the bikeway system at regular intervals.

- Create a system whereby bicyclists can easily report bikeway maintenance issues (i.e. sweeping, overgrown vegetation, lack of support facilities, vandalism, etc).
- Maintain the bicycle plan by updating it on a biannual basis or as needed.
- Diligently ensure that the Bike Plan is followed and considered as the City develops.
- Explore the possibility of forming a Bicycle Advisory Committee, perhaps a sub-committee of the City's existing Parks and Recreation Commission; members may include representatives from local cycling clubs and organizations, community leaders, City staff, and other government agencies.
- Explore the possibility, feasibility, and long-term commitment impacts in seeking the City of Merced's inclusion on the League of American Bicyclist's list of "Bike Friendly Communities" at some point in the future.