

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning Department**

TO: Bicycle Advisory Commission  
FROM: Bill King, Principal Planner  
DATE: April 28, 2015  
SUBJECT: "Bike Merced" Website

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**BACKGROUND**

In keeping with the purposes of the City's *Bicycle Advisory Commission* (BAC), City Planning Staff is working to create a comprehensive bicycle-related website to promote bicycling as a viable form of transportation, to improve bicycle safety, and to improve the bicycle conditions in Merced. Maria Meza, a UC Merced student intern has been charged with this task, and has prepared a draft for your review and comment.

**DISCUSSION**

Your input is requested to help form the content of this upcoming "Bike Merced" website. Planning Staff is also seeking input from other City Departments who are critical players to achieve the direction provided by the City Council when it established the *Bicycle Advisory Commission*. The attached draft is presently under review by City representatives from the Public Works Department (maintenance), Police Department (safety and enforcement), and Engineering Department (improvement installation).

**ACTION**

To review and provide advisory comments to Planning Staff.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Draft "Bike Merced" webpage Overview
- B. Laws: California Vehicle Code (VC)

# Bike Merced Webpage Overview

## HOME PAGE

### *sub-pages:*

- Programs, Events and Activities
- Bike Friendly Places
- Bikeways
- New Ridership
- Community Voices
- Laws
- Looking Towards the Future



## Homepage:

- **Title:** Bike Merced
- **Mission Statement:** *It is the City's intent to improve conditions for bicyclists; to promote bicycling as a means of transportation with associated benefits of improved air quality; to help implement policy, programs, and bike routes for all ages and users; and, to improve safety conditions for bicyclists.*
- **Tabs:**
  - Programs, Events and Activities
  - Bike Friendly Places
  - Bikeways
  - New Ridership
  - Community Voices
  - Laws
  - Looking Towards the Future
- **Calendar:**
  - April 11      [Yosemite Ride](#) with MBC
  - May 2        [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - May 3        [The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Merced-Road-Ride](#)
  - May 7        [Bike-to-Work and Bike-to-School Day with Energizer Stations](#)
  - May 9        City of Merced Director's Ride
  - May 16      [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - June 6       [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - June 13     [Monterey Ride](#) with MBC
  - June 20     [Community Ride](#) with MBC

- June 23 [BAC Meeting](#)
  - July 11 [Ride, Swim, and Picnic at Lake Yosemite](#) with MBC
  - August 1 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - August 8 [SF Ride](#) with MBC
  - August 15 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - August 25 [BAC Meeting](#)
  - September 5 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - September 12 [Sacramento-Ride](#) on the AWESOME American River Trail
  - September 19 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - October 3 [Community Ride](#) with the Fresno Bicycle Coalition
  - October 11 [Annual Pedal Merced](#)
  - October 24 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - October 27 [BAC Meeting](#)
  - November 7 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - November 14 [Annual Potluck and Election](#) with MBC
  - November 21 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - December 5 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
  - December 22 [BAC Meeting](#)
  - December 26 [Community Ride](#) with MBC
- **Current Events and Local News**
    - Once we are closer to going live with the website I will look up recent articles that we can share in this section.

## Sub-page: Programs, Events and Activities

- **Programs**
  - Bike Registration
  - Bike Index
  - Bicycle Advisory Commission Meetings
  - Safe Routes to School Programs
- **Events and Activities**
  - Bike Month
  - Ride Events/Merced Bike Coalition
  
- **Share an Event!**
  - Anyone can post to the Bike Merced Events Calendar. Simply submit your event name with a short description and it will be sent to our administrator for review and may post it if approved.
  - Post Your Event
    - Event Name
    - Date
    - Time
    - Location
    - Description
    - Organizer Name
    - Organizer Email
    - Contact Number

## Sub-page: Bike Friendly Places and Groups

- **Transportation Connections**
  - Amtrak
  - Greyhound
  - Bus
  - Cattracks
- **Bike Shelter**
  - Brief Description
  - Map and Pictures
- **Bike Parking**
  - We'll include maps of where bike parking is available
    - Mall
    - Hospital
    - Downtown
    - Shopping centers

## Sub-page: Bikeways

- **Existing City Bikeways**
  - Map: [City of Merced Existing and Proposed Bikeways](#)
  - Local Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails
    - [Bear Creek Trail](#)
      - The Bear Creek Path was constructed in the mid 1970's in three phases originating from the western end near Snelling Highway (HWY 59). The Bear Creek Path travels in the east/west direction, providing access to Downtown and shopping areas, Applegate Park, hospitals and medical clinics.
    - [Black Rascal Creek Trail](#)
      - The Black Rascal Creek Trail was constructed in the late 1970's originating at Snelling Highway (HWY 59) and extends east towards McKee Rd. This bikeway provides access to many commuters and a direct route to schools and medical offices.
    - Cottonwood Creek
      - Currently, the complete section of this path runs easterly from Fahrens Creek to Gardner Rd. The path provides easy access from residences to shopping centers, schools, medical and other offices, and a hospital.
    - [Fahrens Creek](#)
      - Fahrens Creek bike path is approximately halfway complete, with finished sections running northward from the merging point of Black Rascal Creek and Fahrens Creek just east of HWY 59 at Buena Vista Dr. to the area just north of Cardella Rd.
    - Lake Rd
      - Lake Rd. path runs northward alongside Lake Rd. between Yosemite Ave. and Lake Yosemite, outside of city limits. This path is said to most likely connect with both Cottonwood and Black Rascal Creek path systems to the south, at some point in the future.
  - Aside from our beautiful scenic bikeways, you can also enjoy a ride through town. The following are [bike lanes](#) that are within city limits but also extend out:
    - Bellevue Road
    - G Street
    - R Street
    - Yosemite Avenue

- Santa Fe Avenue
  - Gardener Road
  - Main Street
  - Mission Avenue
  - State Hwy 140 West/East
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- **Going out of town?** Don't forget your bike and visit [TrailLink.com](https://www.traillink.com) to discover a bike trail near you!
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- **Current and Upcoming Bikeway Improvement Projects**
    - Link to Engineering Department website listing of current and upcoming bikeway projects.

## Sub-page: New Ridership

- **Health Benefits of Cycling**
  - It only takes two to four hours a week to achieve a general improvement to your health! Here are some benefits to cycling:
    - Increase cardiovascular fitness.
    - Increase muscle strength and flexibility.
    - Improve joint mobility.
    - Decrease stress levels.
    - Improve posture and coordination.
    - Strengthen bones.
    - Decrease body fat levels.
    - Prevention or management of disease.
    - Reduce anxiety and depression.
  - Cycling causes less strain and injuries than most other forms of exercise, an all-around muscle workout, it's easy, great for strength and stamina, can be as intense as you wish it to be, and is a fun alternative to getting fit!
- **Women's Cycling**
  - (Add Applicable Information)
- **Students**
  - As a community we would like to encourage our younger generation to not only bike during their free time but to take advantage of the routes we have and bike to school as well.
    - Merced City School District (if available)
    - Merced Community College (if available)
    - [UC Merced Maps](#)
- **Commuters**
  - Cycling isn't just a fun recreational sport; it is also a great way to get to work! Regular cycle commuting makes you happier, healthier, and wealthier. Cycling has predictable journey times because cyclist don't get stuck in traffic like car drivers do, and are not subject to public transportation delays. Cycling is fun too! It gives a real sense of freedom and the exercise helps burn off stress. According to the US-based advocacy group Bike Portland, cyclists are the happiest commuters, so why not give it a try?

## Sub-page: Community Voices

- **Bicycle Advisory Commission**
  - The Bicycle Advisory Commission serves as an advisory body to the City Staff and City Council on bicycle related matters.
  - The BAC has the responsibility of reviewing and advising the City Council on:
    - The design of capital improvement projects.
    - Changes and updates to the [Bicycle Master Plan](#), General Plan, and Municipal Code as they relate to bicycling.
    - Promoting bicycling as a viable form of transportation and assist in the development and dissemination of bicycle awareness and education materials to the community.
    - Any other duties as City Council may assign.
  - The Commission consists of seven registered City of Merced voting members, and two ex-officio members appointed at the City Council's discretion. Regular meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of every even numbered month from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Council chambers in the Merced Civic Center located at 678 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced.
  - Get to know the current [Sitting Commissioners!](#) Contact them today!
  - Interested in sitting on the Bicycle Advisory Commission? Apply [here](#) today! We encourage all members of our community to get involved with our City.
- **Bicycle Advocates.** There are as many bicycle advocates in Merced as there are reasons to ride, including clean air, health and physical activity, affordable transportation, recreation, and well-designed communities. Click [here](#), get connected and help the City achieve its bike-related goals.
- **Comments?** Offer your suggestions, ideas, or ask a question by filling out the form below and we will be in contact with you as soon as possible.
  - The form would include the following:
    - Your Name
    - First, Last
    - Your email address \*
    - Subject
    - What's on your mind?
    - Submit

- This is an idea as to how the form should look like:

Your name

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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First                  Last

Your email address \*

Subject

What's on your mind?

Ad Inquiry?

Check here if this is an advertising inquiry.

## Sub-page: Laws

- Each year in California, more than 100 people are killed and hundreds of thousands more are injured in bicycle collisions. Here are some basic safety “Do and Don’t” tips that you should consider when deciding to operate a bicycle. To see more information about applicable laws, [click here](#) (this will bring you to the multi-page listing of laws (See Attachment 2)).
  - **Bicyclist and Motorist**
    - Never drive or bike under the influence of drugs or alcohol
    - No littering
    - A person cannot wear a headset covering both ears.
    - Yield to pedestrians.
    - Always obey stoplights and signs.
  - **Bicyclists**
    - Always wear a helmet.
    - Maintain control of your bike.
    - Be visible, alert and communicate your intentions.
    - Ride with traffic.
    - Ride in the street about two to three feet from the curb.
    - Give pedestrians the right-of-way.
    - Keep your bicycle in good condition.
    - Must be able to keep at least one hand on handlebars.
    - Do not leave a bicycle lying on any sidewalk.
  - **Motorists**
    - When passing a bicyclist, remember that there needs to be a 3 Ft. distance.
    - No vehicles in bike lanes.
    - Do not block crosswalks.

## Sub-page: Looking Towards the Future

- **Policy Making**
  - The City's Planning Department, through community outreach events, community meetings, and preparation of plans, identifies improvement projects, programs and events desired by the citizens of Merced. For example, in 2013, the City of Merced updated its [Bicycle Plan](#) and is presently seeking grant funds to prepare an Active Transportation Plan/Safe Routes to School Plan to boost our competitiveness as the City seeks grants to implement those ideas. We encourage you all to review it and let us know if you have any ideas to improve the City's bike program.
- **Current and Upcoming Bikeway Improvement Projects**
  - Link to Engineering Department website listing of current and upcoming bikeway projects.
- **Community Ideas:** The City of Merced works hard every day to make sure that we are giving our residents the best bicycling experience, but we would also love to hear from YOU. Tell us what programs and/or events you would like to see in our community.
  - Submit your idea by filling out the following form and we will contact you as soon it has been reviewed and discussed.
  - Contact Info:
    - Name
    - Email
    - Phone number
    - Which is better contact?
    - Name of Idea
    - Description
    - Are you willing to help this happen? Check box.

- The form would look something similar to this:

Your name

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------

First                  Last

Your email address \*

Subject

What's on your mind?

Ad Inquiry?

Check here if this is an advertising inquiry.

## Laws: California Vehicle Code (VC)

{Note: Some of the sections listed below have been reworded slightly and/or abbreviated. For the exact language refer to the reference sections in the [California Vehicle Code](#)}

### **For Bicyclists and Motorists**

1. ***Bicycle Defined*** (VC 231)
  - Defines bicycle as a device upon which any person may ride, propelled exclusively by human power through a belt, chain, or gears and having one or more wheels. Specifically provides that persons riding bicycles are subject to Vehicle Code provisions specified in Sections 21200 and 21200.5.
2. ***Bicycle Use*** (VC 21200)
  - Every person riding a bicycle upon a street or highway has all the rights and is subject to all the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle, including the provisions of law dealing with driving under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs, except those provisions which by their very nature can have no application.
3. ***Throwing Substances on Highways or Adjoining Areas*** (VC 23111, 23112)
  - No person in any vehicle shall throw or discharge from or upon any road, highway or adjoining area, public or private, any lighted or non-lighted cigarette, cigar, match or any flaming or glowing substance.
  - No person shall throw or deposit upon a highway any bottle, can, garbage, glass, nails, paper, wire or any substance likely to injure or cause damage to traffic using the highway.

### **For Bicyclists**

1. ***Bicyclist Responsibility to Travel in the Same Direction as Traffic*** (VC 21650.1)
  - A bicycle operated on a roadway or a highway shoulder shall be operated in the same direction as vehicles are required to drive upon the roadway.
2. ***Bicycling Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs*** (VC 21200.5)
  - It is unlawful for any person to ride a bicycle upon a highway while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug, or under the combination of alcoholic beverage and any drug. Any person arrested for a violation of this section may request to have to have a chemical test. A conviction of a violation of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$250. If the person is under 21 but over 13 years of age, his or her driving privilege will be suspended for one year or delayed for one year once the person is eligible to drive.

**3. *Bike Equipment* (VC 21201)**

- No person shall operate a bicycle on a roadway unless it is equipped with a brake which will enable the operator to make one braked wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.
- No person shall operate on the highway any bicycle equipped with handlebars so raised that the operator must elevate their hands above the level of their shoulders in order to grasp the normal steering grip area.
- No person shall operate upon any highway a bicycle which is of such a size as to prevent the operator from safely stopping the bicycle, supporting it in an upright position with at least one foot on the ground, and restarting it in a safe manner.
- A bicycle operated during darkness upon a highway, a sidewalk or a bikeway, shall be equipped with all the following:
  1. A lamp emitting a white light which illuminates the highway and is visible from a distance of 300 feet to the front and the sides of the bicycle; and,
  2. A red reflector mounted on the rear of the bicycle and visible from 500 feet to the rear of the bicycle; and,
  3. A white or yellow reflector mounted on each pedal visible 200 feet to the front and rear of the bicycle and a white or red reflector on each side to the rear of the center of the bicycle, except bicycles which are equipped with reflectorized tires on the front and the rear need not be equipped with side reflectors.
- A lamp or lamp combination, emitting a white light, attached to the operator and visible from a distance of 300 feet in front and from the sides of the bicycle, may be used in place of a lamp attached to the bike.

**4. *Bicycle Seat-One Person per Permanent Seat* (VC 20204)**

- A person operating a bicycle upon a highway shall not ride other than upon or astride a permanent regular seat, unless the bicycle was designed by manufacture to be ridden without a seat.
- An operator shall not allow a person as a passenger, and a person shall not ride as a passenger, on a bicycle upon a highway other than upon or astride a separate seat attached. If the passenger is four years of age or younger, or weighs 40 pounds or less, the seat shall have adequate provision for retaining the passenger in a place and for protecting the passenger from the moving parts of the bicycle.

**5. *Carrying Articles & Packages* (VC 21205)**

- No person operating a bicycle shall carry any package, bundle, or article which prevents the operator from keeping at least one hand upon the handlebars.

**6. *Parking Bicycles on Sidewalks* (VC 21210)**

- No person shall leave a bicycle lying on its side on any sidewalk, or shall park a bicycle on a sidewalk in any other position, so that there is not an adequate path for pedestrian traffic. Local authorities may prohibit bicycle parking in designated areas of the public highway, provided appropriate signs are erected.

**7. *Helmet Requirements* (VC 21212)**

- No person under 18 years of age shall operate a bicycle nor be a passenger upon a street, bikeway, or any other public bicycle path or trail unless that person is wearing a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet that meets the standards of the ASTM or CPSC. A violation on this section is an infraction punishable by a fine of not more than \$25.

**8. *Bikes on Freeways & Expressways* (VC 21960)**

- The Department of Transportation and local authorities may prohibit or restrict the use of freeways or any portion thereof by bicycles.
- Such prohibitory regulations shall be effective when appropriate signs giving notice thereof are erected upon the freeway or expressway and the approaches thereto.

**9. *Hand and Arm Signals* (VC 22111)**

- Left turn-hand and arm extended horizontally beyond the side of the bicycle.
- Right turn- left hand and arm extended upward beyond the side of the bicycle or right hand and arm extended horizontally to the right side of the bicycle.
- Stop or sudden decrease of speed signal- left hand and arm extended downward beyond the side of the bicycle.

**10. *Bicyclist Are To Stop At All Stop Signs* (VC 22450)**

- The bicycle operator upon approaching a stop sign at the entrance to or within, an intersection shall stop at a limit line, if marked, otherwise before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection.

**11. *Earphones and Headsets* (VC 27400)**

- A person operating a bicycle may not wear a headset covering or earplugs in, both ears. This prohibition does not apply to a person using a prosthetic device that aids the hard of hearing.

**12. *Local Licensing Ordinances & Destruction of Licenses* (VC 39002)**

- A city or a county, which adopts a bicycle licensing ordinance or resolution, may provide in the ordinance or resolution that no resident shall operate any bicycle on any street, road, highway, or other public property within the jurisdiction of the city or county, unless such bicycle is licensed in accordance with this division.
- It is unlawful for any person to tamper with, destroy, mutilate, or alter any license indicia or registration form, or to remove, alter, or mutilate the serial number, or

the identifying marks of a licensing agency's identifying symbol, on any bicycle frame licensed under the division.

## **For Motorists**

**1. *Three Feet for Safety Act* (VC 21760)**

- A driver of a motor vehicle shall not overtake or pass a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on a highway at a distance of less than three feet between any part of the motor vehicle and any part of the bicycle or its operator.

**2. *Vehicles Prohibited on Bicycle Lanes* (VC 21209)**

- No person shall drive a motor vehicle in a bike lane established on a roadway except as follows: (a) to park where parking is permitted; (b) to enter or leave the roadway; or (c) to prepare for a turn within a distance of 200 feet from the intersection.

**3. *Vehicles Yield to Pedestrians* (VC 21950)**

- The driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within any marked crosswalk or within any unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, except as otherwise provided.