

COAST

COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

COAST is a Santa Barbara County regional organization promoting environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable transportation and reduced dependency on automobiles.

How to reach us

COAST

P.O. Box 2495

Santa Barbara, CA 93120

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info@coast-santabarbara.org

www.coast-santabarbara.org

E-mail discussion list

Participate in discussions of local and regional transportation issues; receive notices of meetings and events. Subscribing is free and easy. Just send a message to:

Coast-subscribe@lists.riseup.net.

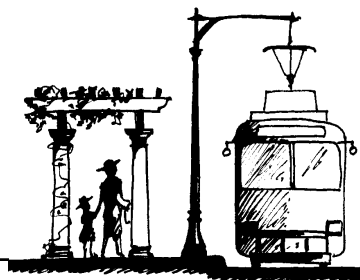
Leave the subject line and the body of the message blank.

COAST Happy Hour

Please join us the second Thursday of each month from 5-7 PM at the El Paseo Restaurant in Santa Barbara.

Join COAST

Support COAST by becoming a member. Just use the enclosed envelope. Thank you!



Late Breaking News

COAST is awarded a grant from the **Fund for Santa Barbara** to work on Measure D.

COAST NEWS

COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

SUMMER 2007

WWW.COAST-SANTABARBARA.ORG

You are invited to our fourth annual "Top of the Town" Solstice Party!

Come and enjoy food, drink, merriment, and a great view of the parade.

When: Saturday, June 23, 11 AM to 2 PM

Where: Balboa Building Rooftop Terrace

735 State Street, sixth floor

\$20 suggested donation. Children are free.

To RSVP, please call

875-3562 or e-mail

kate@coast-santabarbara.org

Thank you!



Above: Revelers at last year's solstice party.

CoastalRailNow – What's New?

CoastalRailNow continues to campaign for commuter rail as a cost and time effective way to ease the congestion in the Highway 101 corridor. A COAST delegation including **Dennis Story** and **Grant House** met with State Assemblymember **Pedro Nava** and asked him to help identify state funding for rail improvements and equipment. There appears to be \$6.8

million in the State budget for a new rail siding between Santa Barbara and Ventura. Working with the City of Santa Barbara's Rail Sub-Committee, consultant **Paul Dyson** and Pedro Nava, we will search for creative ways to include rail in a half-cent Measure D and make the train a viable alternative to driving.

Your Chance to Help "Plan Santa Barbara"

This summer, the City of Santa Barbara will revisit and update a key component of its General Plan; the Land Use Element. In the process, certain transportation policies in the Circulation Element may also be updated, although that element already underwent a major overhaul as recently as 1998. Originally named "Santa Barbara 2030", the process is now officially called "Plan Santa Barbara".

Last week, City Council showed support for the "Plan Santa Barbara" process by declining to preemptively introduce new development policies that had been recommended by some current and former

members of the Planning Commission. First up was a recommendation for an interim height restriction on new development in the heart of downtown ("El Pueblo Viejo"), reducing the maximum height from four stories to three stories. Council members unanimously voted to study the matter further and get more input from the public, and then deal with it as part of the General Plan update process.

Next, the Council considered whether or not to accept the recommendations in the Upper State Street Study, which had been described as the "lead in" to the General Plan Update. The main focus of the study

Plan Santa Barbara

Continued from page 1

was on improvements to traffic flow and to bicycle and pedestrian accessibility that could be implemented within the next ten years. Those improvements were readily accepted with little or no controversy. However, while the study was ostensibly *not* about land use, the Planning Commission had added two further recommendations to Council: (1) that developers not be allowed to increase the floor area of new development by moving parking below ground, and (2) that a minimum setback of 20 feet from the sidewalk be maintained for all parcels. Once again, the Council declined to accept such recommendations before the public had a chance to weigh in during the General Plan update.

While policies to limit the height and area of new developments are often proposed in the name of aesthetics and preserving the charm and character of the city, they are just as often proposed in order to prevent an increase in traffic congestion. In that regard, we view such proposals as short-sighted. Santa Barbara needs new, affordable housing for its workforce, and the best place to locate such housing is as close to jobs and transit routes as possible. (A prime example of such a location is the proposed MTD Transit Village at Chapala and Carrillo streets.) In that way, each new unit of development causes the least possible increase in auto use. Otherwise, Santa Barbara employees will have no choice but to find housing in more distant neighborhoods, and most of them will have to drive on city streets to get to work.

In June and July, the City is holding four public workshops to hear your views on these issues and other land use and transportation issues, The times are:

Wednesday, June 13, 6– 9 PM

Faulkner Gallery, 40 E. Anapamu St

Saturday, June 16, 9 AM–12 PM

Casa de la Raza, 601 E. Montecito St.

Thursday, June 28, 6– 9 PM

Westside Comm. Center, 423 W. Victoria

Saturday, July 7, 9 AM– 12PM

Hope School, 3970 La Colina Road

Please check the Plan Santa Barbara website at www.YouPlanSB.org

About Density and Tall Buildings

Santa Barbara's general plan update ("Plan Santa Barbara") started with a bang on May 8 at City Hall. In marathon session City Council hosted the perennial debate between urban and suburban philosophies while pondering a moratorium on 4-story buildings and Upper State Street guidelines.

Over the years discussions regarding parking, street width, number of lanes, pedestrian factors, urban design guidelines, building setbacks, mixed-use developments, transit corridors and the dreaded "d-word" (density) have become a wedge within Santa Barbara's environmental community.

On one side stand "old guard" environmentalists that cut their teeth in the Oil Blowout of 1969 and who, by and large, successfully fought to preserve the cozy paradise that we enjoy today. To this group, automobile use ("traffic congestion") is the inescapable result of development. More people = more cars. While acknowledging the environmental impacts (some also recognize social justice and child obesity connections), they regard auto-mobility as a necessary evil of modern society to be overcome by technology (like hybrid vehicles).

From this viewpoint, cars are a reality. If you want fewer cars, then you need to restrain development. You can do this is by requiring lots of parking, and by limiting buildings with setbacks and height restrictions.

On the other side stands a newer (not necessarily younger) generation advocating walking, transit, bicycles and urban form as a superior choice. This group regards small European towns as successful examples of healthy human habitats and are, overall, more receptive to taller buildings with sidewalk cafés, pocket parks and street life. This group points out that lowering density with auto-mobility planning leads to the sprawl and banality exempli-



Can buildings be tall AND have a human scale?

fied by development in Upper State and the Goleta Valley.

Adding to the complexity of the discussion is the inter play of development interests and housing advocates. There is money to be made with density, and developers are first in line to spouse "smart growth", "workforce housing", "transit oriented development", "green building" and other worthy labels.

Developers' self-serving enthusiasm for sound planning concepts is mirrored on the other side by "old guard" suspicious claims of "canyonization" and "preserving quality of life". What, exactly, is the "quality of life" worth preserving on Upper State Street? Yes to mountain views, but little else. "Canyonization of Lower Chapala" is another oxymoron, as the street is much too wide to ever become "a canyon".

It's going to be a long summer...

Bike to School Day 2007

Over a thousand students from 13 schools in the greater Santa Barbara area biked to school on Bike to School Day, Tuesday May 15. B2SD is an important and ever growing part of Bike Week, celebrated in Santa Barbara County May 14-18. It also ties in with the international Safe Routes to School movement which seeks to enable children to walk or bike to school safely.

On B2SD, Kids on bikes arrive at school fresh and energized, streets around schools are calm. Parking lots are half empty while bike racks are full. There are tables to greet the bikers with small prizes and snacks. Some schools bring the band out. The younger kids ride with parents, teachers and principals in a big bike parade.

At **Santa Barbara High School**, the Don Riders, the newest club on campus, took the lead in promoting



Three members of the Don Riders Club at SBHS

Bike to School Day. Under the guidance of intervention instructor **Pedro Menchaca**, thirteen boys meet once a week and build their own super cool lowrider bikes or trikes. These stupendous machines feature polished chrome parts, fat tires with lots of spokes and a VERY low ride. Pedro and his Don Riders promoted B2SD with a table in front of the school featuring information, prizes and posters they had painted in the school colors, yellow and green. This is only the beginning: Pedro intends to make SBHS a bike friendly campus. Go Don Riders!

Safety Training



Safety trainings are an important part of our SR2S program. These events include a presentation by law enforcement, a walk around the block or bike rodeo and bike helmet distribution. A dedicated group of volunteers including members of the **Bicycle Coalition** and the **Goleta Valley Cycling Club** is available to help. For the bike rodeos we set up a little "safetyville" in the schoolyard to simulate situations where accidents are known to occur: the "demon driveway," the car opening its door and more.

We are now working to replace some of our aging wooden props with newer ones, made here in Santa Barbara by local handyman **Dave Beasley**. Dave worked for thirty years in the movie industry as a prop maker, participating in many famous movies, including Star Wars. Thanks to a generous grant from the **Goleta Valley Cycling Club**, we were able to have a beautiful new prop made that is lightweight, durable and folds for easy transport. We hope that more are to come!

Left: Dave Beasley with his "demon driveway" prop

Montecito Safe Routes

There is a new grassroots movement underway in Montecito to make the community safer for people who walk, especially its many school children. **Supervisor Carbajal** is a strong champion for the safety of children walking to school while still respecting Montecito's unique character.

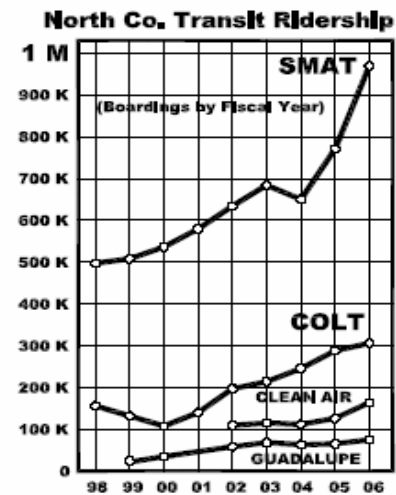
On May 2nd, a Friday afternoon, just about the entire Caltrans District 5 office, including director **Richard Krumholz**, traveled to **Cold Spring School** to attend a meeting called by the supervisor. The topic: Safe Routes to School for CSS students. The school is on busy Sycamore Canyon Road, an old State Highway still under Caltrans' jurisdiction. About 25 people walked along SCR to see the many obstacles that walkers face as well as the progress that's been made. Luckily, everyone survived. Parents **Tracey Singh** and **Don Miller** are leading the drive to make the Cold Spring School area more pedestrian friendly.

At **Montecito Union School**, a petition is circulating in support of a footpath on San Ysidro Road south of the school. With over 400 signatures and counting, virtually every MUS family has signed it. What's more, a member of the MUS Safety Committee phoned the affected residents along San Ysidro Road and so far found only positive reactions. This would be a rural path with a natural surface connecting the upper and lower villages, two schools, a major park, and the YMCA. County Public Works, directed by the supervisor, is currently preparing an engineering report on walking issues in Montecito. COAST gratefully acknowledges a grant from the Montecito based **Green Park Foundation**. This enables us to be an active participant in this exciting process.



Coalition for Sustainable Transportation
 P.O. Box 2495
 Santa Barbara, CA 93120

Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT) ridership is going off the chart!



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Legislative News

AB 57 (Nell Soto and Pedro Nava): This bill would make permanent the successful CA State Safe Routes to School grant program. The bill passed the Assembly Transportation Committee 14-0 and is now in the suspense file. COAST sent a letter of support for this bill.

AB 321 (Pedro Nava): This bill would extend school zones to 1000 ft. each way and drop the speed limit in the core zone to 15 mph. This bill also passed the Assembly Transportation Committee and is in the suspense file. COAST wrote in support of this bill as well.

AB 1358 (Mark Leno)

Complete Streets: The bill would require local government to accommodate all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, when revising the circulation element of the general plan. This bill is in committee. For more information on Complete Streets, visit: www.completethestreets.org.



Kate Bechtel, COAST's Executive Director, fits a helmet on a young customer at the Santa Barbara Children's festival in May. Sharing a table with the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition, we put more than 60 helmets on little heads. In addition to the Children's Festival, we had displays at the Earth Day Festival and the Santa Barbara Running event in April. It's been a busy spring!

Become a COAST Member

Our newsletter is now quarterly and is mailed to our members. To continue to receive this newsletter, and to help us promote sustainable transportation, please join COAST by returning the enclosed envelope. Thank you.

We thank our Supporters

We thank the **Green Park Foundation** for its generous grant. In addition, we thank **Pedro Nava, the Goleta Valley Cycling Club, the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition, Cottage Hospital, the Santa Barbara Sailing Center, The Territory Ahead** and many other businesses and individuals who made contributions large and small this spring. We couldn't do it without you!