

MTC Regional Bicycle Working Group Meeting
SUMMARY
July 15th, 2010

Introductions

Napa County requests the addition of the Napa Valley Vine Trail to the Regional Bikeway Network

- Sean Co, MTC, announced that Napa County is requesting that the Napa Valley Vine Trail be added to the Regional Bikeway Network. The county is requesting a dollar-to-dollar swap of 6 smaller unbuilt bikeways in exchange for the Napa Valley Vine Trail, for a total request of \$15 million. The other six bikeways would remain part of the RBN if built, but the vine trail running through Napa Valley would be prioritized for funding.
- **Eliot Hurwitz , Napa County**, explained that the Napa Valley Vine Trail will be a class I bikeway that will run the length of the Napa Valley, completing the currently poor north-south bikeway connectivity in the valley and connecting to local bikeways. The \$40 million project has attracted the strong support of a number of vintners and land owners in the area, a number of whom sit on the board. The supporters want to fund the trail largely through philanthropic donations, but are seeking government funds wherever possible. There is funding for the first mile of the trail in Yountville, and the first ground breaking for trail construction happened recently. The main challenge of the trail is Napa's strict agricultural preservation zoning. The county and project supporters are seeking to get property easements from the landowners directly to get around these strict codes.
- **Rochelle Wheeler, Alameda County**, pointed out that the new trail will not only appeal to existing Napa Valley tourists, but will likely create a new market for bike tourism in Napa, to which **Eliot Hurwitz** agreed.
- Mr. Co said that since the Napa Vine Trail fulfills the RBN criteria, he will recommend that MTC fund it for Napa's portion of the Cycle I RBN funding cycle. However, the Cycle I allocation is only \$19 million for the Bay Area, meaning that Napa's Cycle I RBN allocation will be around \$300,000.
- **Alan Forkosh** raised concern that public agencies do not have a lot of accountability requirements on bike funding decisions
- **Lee Huo** raised concerns about the RBN funding criteria for the future, such as incorporating short-term vs. long-term costs, and whether the criteria prioritize bikeway miles, or bikeways that increase connectivity and fill gaps.
- Mr. Co said that, since Cycle II will be under a new RTP and **Transportation Act**, counties will not be held to the current RBN rules. He clarified that the money for these funding cycles ultimately comes from federal CMAQ funds, channeled through MTC

SB 375 Sustainable Communities assessment of bike/ped benefits

- Mr. Co explained that MTC is working on creating performance measures and standards for capturing the benefits and biking and walking investments that are not currently showing up in the MTC performance evaluation.
- Erin Machell, MTC intern, outlined some of the methods MTC is proposing for capturing health benefits of increased biking and walking. These included setting a performance target for % of people meeting adequate physical activity recommendations due to walking and biking, and a

benefit-cost evaluation that would calculate the health care savings of increased physical activity or reduced obesity levels due to walking and biking.

- Mr. Co and Ms. Machell solicited feedback from the group. The group gave generally positive feedback about the ideas presented, though some concern was expressed that transportation agencies don't go far enough in demonstrating the many advantages of biking.
- Group members suggested a number of other possible avenues for demonstrating the benefits of biking, including demonstrating the increased property values near bike lanes, especially as compared to values near freeways; tourist dollars, crime reduction, and the reduction in the chemical exposure that results in time spent in cars, demonstrating the reduction in storage space required of bikes compared with cars, and looking at increased accessibility.
- Mr. Co explained that one of the limitations faced by MTC is insufficient data on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and bike and pedestrian counts. Rochelle from the Alameda County Transportation Commission suggested looking at case studies of parts of the Bay Area for which better data is available, to demonstrate the benefits of biking.

Announcements

- Fehr & Peers has been selected as a consultant for MTC's Safe Routes to Transit performance assessment that will include bike and ped counts for the State of the System Report. This September the counts will be conducted for 100 locations with counts at two different time periods each, at the same locations where counts were previously done in September 2003.
- MTC is looking for cities to host free bike/ped training workshops for planning and government organizations. The workshops, conducted by Fehr & Peers, will include a neighborhood audit walk with a discussion of the latest engineering treatments for bike and ped safety. MTC would like for workshops to be held on the peninsula, in the North Bay, and in Contra Costa County.
- The Pro Walk/Pro Bike conference will be held in mid-September in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Mr. Co will be on a conference panel about the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Suggestions for future meetings

- Presentation on CycleTracks and its findings. It was mentioned that CycleTracks will be publishing some really interesting results of its bike tracking very soon.