



Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Fact Sheet

www.marinbike.org

Who We Are:

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) is a nationally recognized 501 (c)(3) non-profit membership-based organization, formed in 1998, whose mission is to promote safe bicycling for everyday transportation and recreation. As of January 2007, we are 1,500 members strong; they range in age from 4 to 84, are fitness-oriented, well educated, and interested in improving the quality of their personal life, local community and physical environment. We are making Marin County a model bicycle community for the nation by collaborating on bike/ped facility projects and providing bicycle safety education. Our work contributes to increasing our non-motorized transportation options, providing long-term transportation solutions, improving safety, fostering public health, and providing environmental benefits.

What We Do:

In order to promote safe bicycling for everyday transportation and recreation, MCBC works with the County and local Public Works Departments to improve and create bicycle and pedestrian facilities (multiuse paths, bike lanes, bike routes and sidewalks). Our participation on advisory committees, in public meetings, and through partnerships with local agencies keeps MCBC involved in the implementation of all of these projects. We also serve as a contractor for the Transportation Authority of Marin to implement the Safe Routes to Schools program in Marin's schools. We promote motorist and cyclist education and safety through our Share the Road campaign, provide free valet bicycle parking and tabling at dozens of public events, and influence regional, state and federal policy decisions to promote bicycling and walking as a means to enhance community vitality. Since our inception, MCBC has helped our towns and the County to acquire over \$65 million in government grants to complete their bicycle and pedestrian facilities. *Not a penny of these funds goes to MCBC.*

Our Programs:

MCBC considers education a critical component to achieve our mission. In addition to educating public agencies about cyclists' safety needs, we are educating community members and visitors about the needs and legal rights of bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Our educational outreach is provided through five main programs:

- **Building Marin's Bicycle and Pedestrian Network**

The County and nine of Marin's 11 towns have adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Maser Plans. These documents contain, among other things, lists and descriptions of the local infrastructure improvements desired within each jurisdiction (bike lanes, pathways, sidewalks, etc.). Only projects included in a plan can receive state or federal funding. The goal of the County's adopted plan is for bicycle and pedestrian usage to account for 20% of all trips by the year 2020. MCBC works with each jurisdiction to prioritize and help advance the planning, engineering, funding and construction of their planned bicycle and pedestrian network. One of the difficult things MCBC and its members face is the fact that these projects require a long-term commitment, and accomplishments are often slow and incremental.

In addition to the local plans, MCBC promotes the North-South and East-West Greenways as two primary bike/ped routes that will link our Marin communities to each other as well as provide connections between homes, schools, shopping, transit, workplaces, and all major destinations. The Greenway routes follow railroad right-of-ways parallel to Highway 101 and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and will physically separate bicycles and pedestrians from traffic wherever feasible.

MCBC helped Marin County to receive federal designation in fall 2005 as a Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program community. This designation comes with a four-year funding allocation of \$25 million to build out Marin's bicycle and pedestrian network. MCBC will be a major partner in ensuring the success of this program to shift the transportation mode share to greater walking and bicycling countywide.

MCBC produces the *Marin Bicycle Map* to illustrate the bicycle-friendly routes to local destinations throughout Marin: the Greenways, bike paths, bike routes and off-road trail locations. Approximately 20,000 maps have been distributed to date. Members receive this outstanding resource as part of their membership, and it is sold in local bike and other shops.

▪ **Safe Routes to Schools**

MCBC was selected by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in the year 2000 to develop a national model Safe Routes to Schools program. The program began in nine Marin schools. MCBC developed the national model Safe Routes to Schools program in Marin that now partners with 43 schools and reaches 18,000 students in Marin County. In addition to developing curriculum and coordinating numerous activities for the program, MCBC staff wrote a *Safe Routes to Schools Toolkit* summarizing how to conduct a successful program. The *Toolkit* was published by NHTSA and to date 20,000 *Toolkits* have been distributed nationwide. Since the production of the *Toolkit*, MCBC has presented its contents at dozens of statewide and national conferences and at two international conferences. Our Safe Routes to Schools Program Director speaks with dozens of people per year nationwide who are interested in starting a Safe Routes to Schools program, and she conducts workshops on how to start a new local program.

▪ **Share the Road Campaign**

Most of Marin's roadways were built many decades ago, are quite narrow, and are the only option for reaching a particular destination. Our rural and mountainous terrain results in road conditions that include blind corners, slow uphill, fast downhill, and heavily traveled corridors. Unnecessary motor vehicle and bicycle operator conflicts occur due to a lack of understanding of each other's rights and obligations when operating on our roadways. MCBC provides education to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians to "Share the Road" so all user groups can travel safely on our public roadways.

Our Share the Road educational activities have included: installing approximately 70 Share the Road signs countywide; distributing printed information and window decals to children and their parents through our Safe Routes to Schools program; hosting "Checkpoints" with law enforcement that distribute Share the Road information to motorists and cyclists; providing ongoing, alternate-month free "Basic Street Skills" traffic safety classes in collaboration with Marin General Hospital. As an expansion of these efforts, during 2005-

07, MCBC developed a ‘*What is Share the Road?*’ powerpoint presentation and Share the Road Toolkit for national distribution with funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The powerpoint has educated hundreds of people through employer, community and athletic club presentations.

▪ **Public Outreach Projects**

Our public outreach is accomplished with a tremendous amount of help from our supportive member volunteers. We conduct annual activities to spread the word about MCBC’s work, solicit new members, and develop partnerships with like-minded community organizations. Our biggest public outreach event of the year is our annual membership appreciation party, the *Big Bike Bash*. Additional MCBC outreach activities that occur throughout the year include: hosting *Valet Bike Parking* at local events (26 events in 2006); sponsoring educational bike rides and workshops; hosting *Bike to Work Day* Energizer Stations each May; participating in parades with our “Open the Tunnel” float; tabling at events such as the Marin County Fair, the Tour of California bike race, and the Marin Century; attending professional conferences and bicycle industry conventions; providing local, state and national presentations; producing our quarterly *Pedal Press* newsletter (3,000 copies distributed per issue); sending weekly email bulletins; and providing all the latest news on our www.marinbike.org website. MCBC campaigned for Measure A in November 2004, the transportation sales tax that was approved by 71% of Marin County voters. To help pass Measure A, MCBC organized phone banking, rallies, and email alerts, published articles and press releases, and organized sign-holding by volunteers on the morning of the election. In fall of 2006, MCBC also conducted the Measure R (SMART) grassroots campaign. To work on these projects, MCBC staff coordinates the efforts of over 300 volunteers each year.

▪ **State and National Bike Advocacy**

Bicycle advocates need to be vocal at the national, state and regional levels as well as locally, to ensure that legislative policies and funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure continues to be made available for years to come. We successfully helped create a national Safe Routes to Schools program, based on Marin’s successful local model, and are now helping structure a national support organization. MCBC and its staff have emerged as leaders for the national bicycle movement, and our local programs have been replicated in many other communities. We participate on advisory boards and in advocacy campaigns at the regional, state and federal levels. MCBC staff is often invited to speak at conferences about our vision to make bicycles the preferred transportation choice for conducting local trips and making connections to transit. The potential to increase bicycling in the United States is tremendous. Forty percent of all trips are two miles or less – the perfect length for walking or bicycling. In addition, the United States has the lowest bicycle and pedestrian mode share of any first world country. Working to promote and build more bicycle facilities has the promise to help solve some of our nation’s biggest problems – increasing traffic congestion, the rise of obesity, air pollution, and improving mobility and safety.

Awards Received:

MCBC and its staff have received many awards including: the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s “Active Living Hero”; a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Award for Public Service; a League of American Bicyclist’s Bicycle Educator of the Year Award; and awards from the American Lung Association, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, *Marin Independent Journal*, and Marin Community Foundation.