



BIKE/WALK PILOT PROFILE

MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

*Pilot Funds Energize Existing Community Efforts
to Increase Bicycling and Walking*

Overview

Marin County, Calif., has been concertedly working to expand and connect its network of pathways, bike lanes and sidewalks for more than a decade. Encouraging active transportation has been an ongoing community goal, and with Marin's selection as one of four regions participating in the federally funded Bike/Walk Pilot¹, these efforts have been greatly energized. Dedicated pilot funds have resulted in a deepened community commitment to closing key gaps in Marin's non-motorized transportation system, including gaps in the North-South Greenway, which serves as an alternate, non-motorized route to Highway 101. The program focuses on promoting bicycling, walking and ridership on buses and ferries, with many infrastructure projects providing safe, non-motorized connections to transit. Pilot stewards have been able to successfully leverage millions of dollars in additional resources, as well as achieve notable local policy victories to support the effort.

Early Accomplishments

With the majority of Bike/Walk Pilot¹ infrastructure projects slated for completion in 2010, already Marin County's early accomplishments are significant. Program visibility and corresponding infrastructure improvements completed to date have led and contributed to the following key awareness and mode shift indicators:

Bicycle counts conducted at 20 locations in 2007 and 2009 show:

Weekday bicycling has increased by 23 percent.

Weekend bicycling has increased by 60 percent.

Pedestrian counts at 20 locations in 2007 and 2009 show:

Weekday walking has increased by 13 percent.

Weekend walking has increased by 28 percent.

Surveys administered to random Sausalito residents before and after a targeted, four-month educational/marketing program in 2008 show a 12.8-percent increase in the number of people who bike and walk for everyday trips in just this short time period.

In 2006, in order to develop a policy supportive of the Bike/Walk Pilot's goals, the **Marin County Public Works Director adopted the "Complete Streets"** model. This policy ensures that all new and reconstructed Marin roads include safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists and bus riders when possible, fully considering the needs of non-motorized travelers in the planning process.

In 2008, to support the Bike/Walk Pilot's goals, the **County Board of Supervisors designated**—for the first time—the advancement of **bicycling and walking as one of its top five priorities**. The board also allocated additional funds for the program.

¹ The Bike/Walk Pilot is referred to as the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program in Section 1807 of SAFETEA-LU, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. In addition to Marin, Calif., funds have been provided to Columbia, Mo., Minneapolis, Minn., and Sheboygan, Wis.



Project Updates

Marin County has approved more than 20 major Bike/Walk Pilot infrastructure projects to be completed by the end of 2010. The primary goal of these projects is to connect the existing bike/walk network, closing gaps in the current system to improve safety and increase mode shift. Encouraging transit use through bicycling and walking to transit hubs is also a primary program goal. Below is a status update of some of Marin's key projects.



New pathways and bike lanes have been added throughout the county, as well as new **bicycle signage, road striping and bicycle parking facilities**. At the pilot's conclusion, it is expected that 93 miles of bike lanes and pathways will comprise Marin's non-motorized network, a 45-percent increase in the network since the beginning of the program.

The **Medway Road improvements** in the Canal District of San Rafael are complete, resulting in a **31.7-percent increase in pedestrian and bicyclist activity** based on counts conducted before and after the improvements, between 2007 and 2009. A new bike route, widened sidewalks and improved bus stops have made this area much more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. This area has one of the highest volumes of combined bicycle and pedestrian activity in the county, with 1,142 pedestrians and bicyclists over a combined two-hour weekday and weekend period. The Canal District is a densely populated area and includes both residential and nonresidential development, accounting for 20 percent of the city of San Rafael's population.



New sidewalks, bike lanes and other features designed to make bicycling and walking possible to and from the newly opened **County Health and Wellness Center** (Health Campus) in the Canal District of San Rafael have also been completed. The Health Campus primarily serves a low-income population, where many residents living and working nearby do not own cars and are now able to access medical services in one central location by using transit, bicycling and walking.

Perhaps the most high-profile project receiving pilot funds is the **Cal Park Hill Tunnel project**. The formerly abandoned railroad tunnel has been rebuilt to accommodate passenger train service and includes a parallel "tunnel within a tunnel" bicycle and pedestrian pathway. The illuminated bicycle and pedestrian passage has its own walls and concrete ceiling, separating it from the train tracks just a few feet away. The new route will make it faster to bike than to drive from downtown San Rafael to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, cutting the current bicycling time from 20 minutes to 5 minutes. The Larkspur Ferry provides service to San Francisco for more than 6,000 commuters each day. Construction is well underway, with a much-anticipated 2010 opening expected.



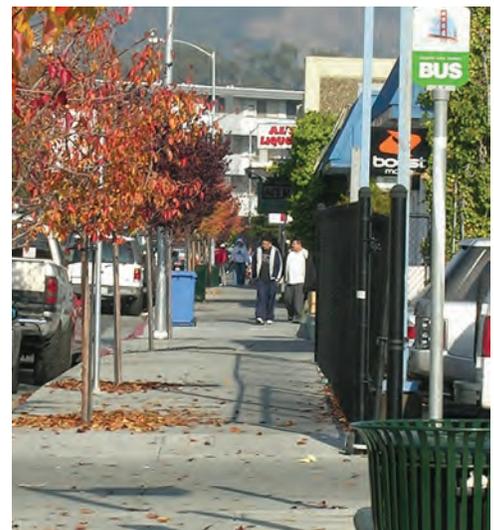
Photos of the Cal Park Hill Tunnel and the Medway Road are courtesy of Marin County Department of Public Works; the remaining photos are courtesy of David Hoffman, Marin County Bicycle Coalition.



Numerous gap-closure projects are underway to provide safe, non-motorized access between communities and major transit centers. The **Puerto Suello Hill Pathway** — a component of a freeway construction project — is currently under construction and will eventually connect the San Rafael transit center to another key project to the north that was recently completed, the **Los Ranchitos Connector bike lanes**. The transit center is a major hub for bus services within Marin as well as to and from San Francisco. Improvements to and around the **Mahon Creek Pathway** will provide safe connections between the pathway, sidewalks and bike lanes, creating **non-motorized access from the San Rafael transit center to Andersen Drive and the northern portal of the Cal Park Hill Tunnel**. These projects will greatly improve connectivity between business districts and residential areas as well as access to transit, and they are part of the North-South Greenway corridor.

Marin County also chose to invest some funding into planning and design in order to prepare projects for construction. This money has galvanized some successful cooperative work with the California Department of Transportation, such as the project along **East Francisco Boulevard**. The East Francisco Boulevard corridor serves as the primary access point for area residents to get to major shopping centers, the San Rafael transit center and downtown San Rafael. With completed design plans from the pilot program, a section of pathway was incorporated into the adjacent highway project, which starts construction in the spring of 2010.

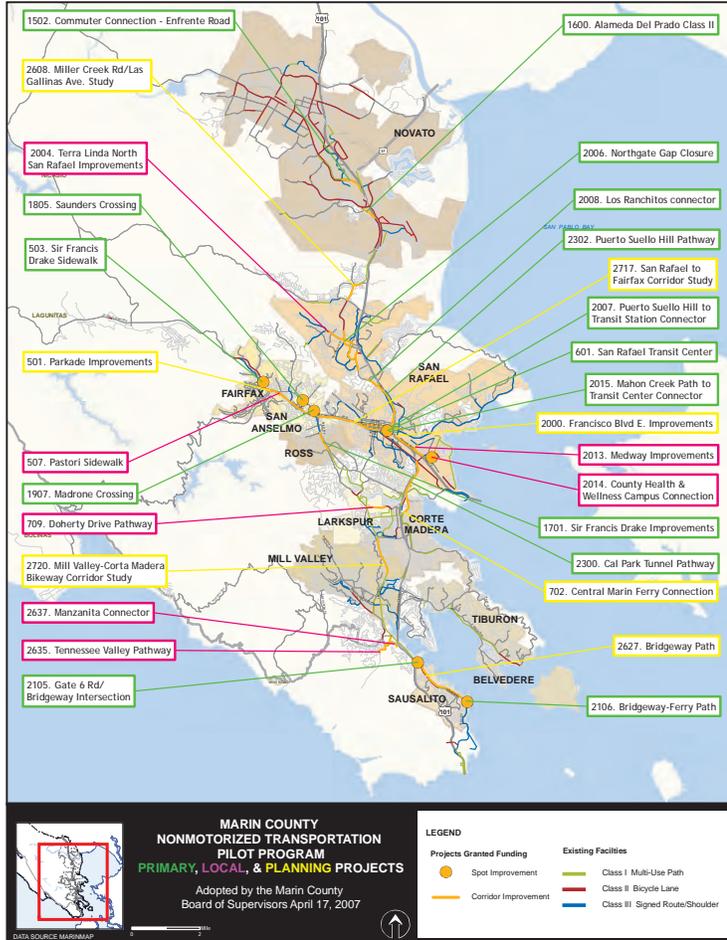
A new, cutting-edge project is underway to install 30 **bicycle traffic sensors** at busy intersections throughout Marin County. The project is important for safety as current underground sensors are only able to detect cars and trucks, leaving cyclists to sit and wait at red lights until cars approach, or risk going through red lights against the flow of traffic. Bicyclists at these 30 intersections will now be directed via street markings to wait in a designated area for the light to change; traffic signals will then be activated as a result of the new technology.





Promotion & Education Efforts

Marin uses a multi-pronged approach to promote Bike/Walk Pilot activity, including community programs, enforcement tools, bicycle training and repair courses, safety campaigns and youth bicycle workshops. These efforts represent a small part of the overall program budget but are a strategic complement to infrastructure investments to help achieve mode shift.



Way to Go is Marin's largest outreach effort, with initial program results exceeding all expectations—**more than 15 percent of all targeted residents participated.**

This concentrated effort to get more people bicycling, walking and using transit began in 2008 by inviting Sausalito residents to order walking maps, bicycling guides, transit schedules and event calendars. The program hosted **group walks, guided bike rides and various classes and workshops.** Way to Go continued in 2009 in Central Novato and Larkspur, and it will begin in San Rafael in 2010.

Street Smarts is a traffic-calming program designed to make Marin streets safer. Due to positive survey feedback, the program will continue past its original timeframe. Designed to improve driving, pedestrian and bicycling behaviors, targeting certain high-risk "hot-spots," the program educates the public about traffic laws.

The Share the Road/Share the Path campaign has directly reached thousands of Marin bicyclists and motorists, teaching them how to share the road safely. The program consists of three components: law enforcement education checkpoints, basic street skills classes, and riding with youth workshops.

Health promotion has also been a component of Marin's outreach efforts, with the **Department of Public Works** joining with the **Marin County Health and Human**

Services Department to carry out a variety of programs to educate the public about the health benefits of active transportation.

Design training courses have been conducted for engineers and others in public works, highway, planning and parks and recreations departments to educate these professionals on proper design for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These educational efforts will not only help with Bike/Walk Pilot project design, but will also lead to future, long-term Complete Streets efforts.

