

Avenues Neighborhood Transportation Forum
January 5, 2009

Complete Comments

Station: Alternative Transportation

1. \$ incentives for employees that use alternate transportation.
2. Improve the two Northwest paths, Warner, Holly, and Oleander for better bicycle flow.
3. Better publicity about bike routes.
4. Free transport days on buses to help folk see how easy it is. Incentives for trying. Free transport zone around town/CSUC.
5. Smaller vehicles for public transportation rather than large, empty buses. More frequent between downtown and enloe.
6. Better accessibility for school buses.
7. Light rail plan for high density travel corridors: Perhaps: Ivy/5th St., Warner & 5th Ave., Esplanade Creek to Creek.
8. Better access to North Bridge for bikes at Palm Ave.. Better access to South through campus this is why I quit ridding a bike.
9. Increase frequency of bus service on route #1.
10. More frequent bus stops. Make buses more accessible to those w/disabilities.
11. Less time between buses. Affordable prices, safe pick-up/drop off points.
12. Make riding the bus "cool" w/teens @ Chico High.
13. Concerned about traffic problem @ 1st and Oleander at least once a month, there is a bad accident!!
14. Develop "Safe Routes" to schools.
15. Bike lanes on W. Sac. around CHS for safe bike transport when CHS is closed off.
16. Biking thru CHS, keep bike path near tennis courts.
17. Please CSUC: maintain low parking ratio of .15% and be proud of it! Provide satellite off

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site or remote parking instead. Try SW Chico.

18. Don't reverse traffic direction on Esplanade side streets.
19. Please keep timed lights on Esplanade but add more signs indicating such.
20. On side drives, of Esplanade why not yield signs for bicyclists only so we're not forced to stop at every intersection.
21. Smaller and more buses running on the quarter hour.
22. City buses that actually do the speed limit, they speed down Oleander by CJHS.
23. CSU Chico open campus to limited bike access.
24. Increase bus lead times.
25. Small buses only! Lots more bike paths all over town.
26. Get a car! Why don't cyclist's obey the traffic rules?
27. Need urban core transport loop for Esplanade area to feed CSUC, all Enloe downtown, etc.
28. Issue: traffic from parents driving kids to school: To make it safe for kids utilize senior citizens as "crossing guards" to make it safe for kids to cross streets. Crossing guards could also be "eyes and ears" for police, like park watch for park ranger, in the park. Kids can walk to school. I see them walking everyday in rain and hot. Issue: Enloe, University staff driving to work: Park cars when they get to work but then. Use bikes to do errands during the day!
29. 1st Street opened to bicycle traffic across campus.
30. Traffic calming on Sacramento and First Avenues.
31. Bike education program development.
32. Chico police encouraged to ticket errant bicycle drivers.

Some thoughts on CANA and CSUC Transportation Demand Management

I guess my first question is in regards to the stated goals and objectives of the TDM Plan, in that they fail to specify their target group: is it the student body, staff, and/or the faculty?

If the target group does in fact include the staff and faculty, why haven't those groups appeared to have been studied as well, with similar graphs provided which illustrate their findings, i.e., graphs detailing the number of staff and/or faculty members living within ½ mile, 1 mile, 2 mile, and 5+ mile distance of campus? If a primary goal of the university truly is sustainability, then information like this becomes a compelling consideration in any future plans for effective and cooperative management of campus traffic.

Should studies determine that the bulk of the staff and/or faculty live well beyond the campus proper (as I suspect they do), then incentive programs might be considered to attract CSUC employees in using alternative forms of transportation or in resettling central city neighborhoods in closer proximity to their respective workplaces. It's provocative, on broader level, to imagine how far a shift in university demographics like this might go in instilling better behaviors and a deeper sense of community and civility in the student body; that is, with instructors, administrators, and students living amidst each other. I'd bet our neighborhood noise issues would have received more attention and concerted action than they have in the past.

I also question is whether the CSUC parking ratio of 0.15% is actually a negative statistic, and whether it couldn't be better framed in a positive context of sustainability, practicality, and convenience: something in direct and positive contrast to the car culture familiar to many CSUC students arriving from southern CA and the Bay Area. If studies are correct, and parking structures actually increase traffic counts, then are they even necessary, and shouldn't CSUC be reconsidering their construction, especially considering their tremendous cost?

On the other hand, one has to question the rational of current campus policies that discourage SOV (single-occupancy drivers) and encourage bike transportation while prohibiting bicycle use altogether on the campus. Certainly some crucial east-west, north-south routes could be identified which would safely integrate bike and pedestrian traffic through the campus core? Certainly some funding could be generated by the recent increase in CSUC parking fees to provide the additional bike racking the campus so desperately needs?

From what I understand, the need for bike/ped access across Chico High School has been acknowledged by all parties involved, which is positive news. Given the current CSUC bicycle policy, however, how can CSUC possibly suggest and/or request a route(s) traversing CHS while prohibiting bike use on its own campus?

An unofficial, unimproved bike/ped path across the CHS playing fields has existed for decades at Citrus Avenue and Lincoln; I've used it myself without incident for many years.

Unfortunately, the south entrance is awkward and is worsening, and the dirt path across often broken down and muddy in inclement weather. It seems like the logical placement for bike access, but it doesn't connect directly to the Class 3 bike route at Arcadian Avenue. One alternative, a bike path which would traverse CHS at Arcadian Avenue, is disadvantaged since it would bisect the busier high school campus core where there is more pedestrian traffic. Perhaps Citrus Avenue should be redesignated as the north-south bike route instead? This would distance the bike traffic away from the busy Enloe Hospital area; unfortunately, it would also skirt Citrus Elementary School, which has its own set of traffic issues. Last week's announcement of planned construction on CHS property will also need thoughtful consideration, with future bike access integrated into planning asap.

Another bike connector requiring serious reconsideration is the one adjacent Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, an area poised to become even busier following the completion of the Museum of Natural History. As it stands now, bikes entering the area from the Esplanade are routed rather awkwardly across the front of the Mansion through at least five hazardous bollards (poorly-lit in night hours) to narrow So-Wil-Len-No Avenue. Perhaps an alternative route could be identified concurrent with plans for the construction of Modoc II/AS Child Care Center (with special regard to child drop-off/pick-up considerations), which could T into West Legion Avenue and provide another crucial east-west bike artery.

The historic footbridge that connects to the Class 1 bike path in the Children's Park is another potential hazard for cyclists and needs attention: its entrance is hidden, its width too narrow to allow comfortably for passing bikes, and its wooden surface slippery when wet. It is especially dangerous for very young, inexperienced cyclists/park-users who exit the bridge onto woodsy So-Wil-Len-No and aren't expecting oncoming vehicular traffic.

The west end of on So-Wil-Len-No is currently a dead-end for cyclists: it's a direct and natural access across the campus core and in my opinion, should be opened to bike traffic.

South of So-Wil-Len-No, the Class 1 bike path south through Children's Park comes to an abrupt and awkward end downtown and really needs reconstruction in the form of an improved approach, a smoother transition to 1st Street, or even rerouting altogether. I've never understood why West 1st Street is closed to bicycles, especially as it is amply wide to accommodate high bicycle/ped traffic demands (formerly a city street) and may provide one essential east-west artery through campus to Warner Street.

On the topic of Warner Street, I was surprised to learn of President Zingg's announcement last summer of hopes to acquire Warner Street between West 2nd Street and Legion Avenue. If these reports are accurate (and they may not be) and a planned parking structure is eventually constructed at the Nettleton lot, then Mansion Park neighborhood truly is destined to die a horrible death as a university thoroughfare. While the roman-grid pattern of city street planning is generally considered to be the most equitable, and any street closure considered a last resort, the permanent closure of Legion Avenue at Citrus may become essential in preserving the integrity of this vintage residential neighborhood.

Basically, any improvements in campus transportation which would reduce vehicular traffic and the ugly problems associated with it, including circulation, neighborhood parking, speeding, noise, and emissions, would be applauded by permanent residents of the avenues; however, strict enforcement would become essential. Those streets closest to CHS and CSUC need particular attention to traffic calming, especially West and East 1st Avenues, Sacramento Avenue, Warner Street, West 2nd Street, and the streets of the vulnerable Mansion Park area. Whether my perceptions are accurate or not, there seems to be a rise in cyclists circulating central Chico, with many novice riders cycling incorrectly: without benefit of helmets, the wrong way on city streets, on sidewalks, disregarding traffic signals, etc. Improved monitoring of all traffic is crucial for quality-of-life concerns in the avenues as campus density rises and the University completes its build-out. Lowering bike violation fines and issuing more tickets may help. CANA can assist in advocating for town/gown cooperation with the traffic issue.

The development of campus programs which support alternative forms of transportation will provide one hopeful solution towards effective traffic management. Creative educational and incentive programs are promising, but the value of role-modeling by campus staff and faculty should not be underestimated: they should be expected.

Other ideas for consideration include remote parking (especially in the southwest Chico area west of Park Avenue, with an extended 'rails to trails' Class 1 bike path which would link directly to CSUC), the prohibition of car use by freshman, and the designation the new Legion Avenue dorm as a 'green' housing alternative, with accommodations offered first to conscientious students pledging not to bring cars to campus (or 'priority-placement'): these are all measures which CANA neighbors have previously suggested to campus administrators. Without real cooperation and mutual respect, it's difficult to know just which of our proposals are being taken seriously. Whatever the case, the University is committing in the next ten years to improving its sustainability, hoping to become known as the green campus of the CSU system. We'll know their efforts have truly become successful when CSUC administrators (like Enloe executives) resettle their respective neighborhoods in the avenues and rediscover the beauty and ease of livability within them.

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