



Mayor Marty Blum

Santa Barbara Mayor Marty Blum

addresses the

International Symposium on Bicycle Friendly Communities

Washington, DC, on March 3, 2004

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you what the City of Santa Barbara is doing with respect to bicycles.

As Mayor, I am excited about the residents of our city bicycling around the community. It is a healthy, clean mode of transportation. People on bicycles are not grouchy, they love what they are doing.

At the turn of the last century, in the 1890's my great-grandfather Ransom Perkins was the Mayor of a small farming city near Peoria, Illinois. He owned the bicycle shop on Main Street on the Town Square. There was a big controversy, a tug of war between the farmers with their big horse-drawn wagons and the bicyclists who demanded smooth streets. The Mayor wanted to get the horses off the Town Square because they messed up the road for the bicyclists. Well, I guess you know who won the argument. The City Council voted for the farmers because there were more of them, but the Mayor made sure the hitching posts disappeared off the Town Square so the Mayor won the fight.

In Santa Barbara about 1890, bicycling became so popular that the Council passed two ordinances: the first speed limit in town, not for cars because there were none yet, but for bicycles at 7 mph and bicyclists were required to tie a cowbell on their bikes to warn the pedestrians they were coming. At the same time, the first multi-modal transportation started with the horse-drawn trolleys having bike racks on the back.

Santa Barbara sits on a shelf between the mountains and the Pacific Ocean with only about 18 square miles of land. With over 300 days of sun a year, named one of the healthiest communities in the nation, we are a perfect place for bicycling.

However, like the other cities in California, when the automobile came in it devoured all other types of transportation.

The big oil spill of 1969 was traumatic for this coastal town, and Earth Day sprang up. In 1970 on the anniversary of the oil spill, on the first Earth Day, over 1000 bicyclists showed up downtown to show support for reducing our dependence on oil.

In 1974 the City produced a *Bicycle Master Plan* which called for 33.5 miles of bikeways in 20 years. Twenty years later, there were 34 miles. I firmly believe whatever number you decide to set as a goal, you will achieve it, and we did. Instead of updating our *Bicycle Master Plan*, we did a smart thing. We decided to look at all our modes of transportation to see how they go together. A 22-member group, each person representing a stakeholding group, took four years to articulate

goals and come up with a *Circulation Plan*, adopted in 1998. It is a landmark document. Here is the vision statement on which rely today to increase bicycling in our community:

Santa Barbara should be a city in which alternative forms of
Transportation and mobility are so available and so attractive
that use of an automobile is a choice, not a necessity.

After adopting the *Circulation Element* with that vision statement, the *Bicycle Master Plan* was updated by pulling together folks with expertise and understanding of bicycles, the Bicycle Coalition with monthly newsletters, the Traffic Solutions whose job it is to reduce single occupancy vehicular travel, and COAST, the coalition to advocate for sustainable transportation.

Our Bicycle Master Plan dated 1998 outlines three goals:

1. **To get people to make a decision to ride.** We are creating a culture that embraces the bicycle as a viable, fun, healthy, economical and environmentally friendly way to get around.
Example: Our employee bike loan program with Basic Street Skills taught. Training the trainers.
2. **Improving the bicycling network.**
Example: Our Public Works employees have become sensitive to bicyclists needs. Our standard operating procedure is to add bikeways whenever possible. The railroad tracks cut right through our town and would be a perfect place for a class I bikeway.
3. **Removing destination barriers.**
Example: Bike parking, lockers, showers, design review says 1 bike parking space per 7 car parking spaces.

We are proud that in Santa Barbara bicycle use is rising in the City. Nowhere else in the County is that happening. Let me tick off some things we are doing:

- Hire a mobility coordinator.
- Sponsor Bike to Work/School Day with coveted T shirts.
- Put some of our police officers on bikes.
- Sponsor a SB Car Free program for tourists.
- Commit at SBCAG level 10% of the federal transportation dollars to bikeways.
- Supports bike transportation in the APCD clean air plan.
- Neighborhood mobility plans.
- Pedestrian master plan.
- Safe routes to school.

As Mayor I am sending out a message that the quality of life of our residents is important. I have joined America on the Move to encourage walking and biking to make the city a healthier place. Your slogan "Let's get moving" fits right in.