

BikeMobile Pilot Program to Encourage Biking to School

Bike Experts to Offer Free Repairs to Get Broken Bikes on the Road Again

A new BikeMobile program is being launched in California's Alameda County to encourage more children to ride their bikes to school. It's part of an effort to promote children's health while easing traffic congestion around educational facilities.

The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) have partnered with the non-profit Cycles of Change to offer the bicycle fix-it program and a newly designed BikeMobile. The vehicle was introduced at an inaugural ceremony at Rosa Parks Elementary School in Berkeley as part of an April Fix-a-Thon event.

Schools or community groups can book a BikeMobile Fix-a-Thon through an online sign-up form at www.bike-mobile.org. Students can bring their ailing bicycles to the brightly decorated BikeMobile and get expert help with repairs. BikeMobile staff provide the parts. Locks, lights and bike helmets also are available in an effort to promote bicycle safety and encourage kids to consider riding their bicycles to school.

The pilot program will run through November 2013. It's being managed under

the Alameda CTC's Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) program, which began in 2007 as a way to reduce traffic congestion and promote healthy habits by working with kids, parents and teachers to encourage walking, biking and carpooling to school.

Cycles of Change runs the BikeMobile program, with oversight by the Alameda CTC. Cycles of Change has been around since 1998, promoting cycling as a safe, enjoyable, accessible, inexpensive, healthy and sustainable mode of transportation. Since the program's inception, the Cycles of Change staff has found many children who aren't riding their bikes because the bikes need maintenance or repairs. Many of the kids don't live near bicycle shops or have the means to get their bikes fixed.

Organizers anticipate the BikeMobile will make up to 275 site visits during the pilot program. It will appear at many schools taking part in the SR2S program, as well as some that are not. The repair vehicle can also be booked for appearances at community centers, parks or local events throughout the county.

Some of the funding for the BikeMobile and the SR2S programs comes from Mea-

sure B, which is Alameda County's half-cent transportation sales tax. It was initially passed by voters in 1986 and again in 2000. The majority of the funding for the BikeMobile pilot is coming from the MTC's Climate Initiatives Program. Cycles of Change approached Alameda CTC in 2010 about making a joint application for a grant from the MTC. Later that year, the MTC awarded \$500,000 to the BikeMobile program. Under terms of the grant, Alameda CTC is kicking in additional matching funds to bring the grant total to \$565,000.

The MTC's \$80 million Climate Initiatives Program was approved in 2009 with the goal of reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. The BikeMobile program is one of four pilots the MTC is supporting to encourage children and their families to use alternative means of transportation to lighten their carbon footprint.

For more information, visit: http://www.alamedactc.org/news_items/view/7624 or <http://www.cyclesofchange.org/>.



A child's bicycle being fixed through the BikeMobile program. (Photo: Courtesy of Alameda CTC)

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