

EASY RIDERS

Bikestation Claremont set in motion with grand opening celebration.

See page 4



Claremont Bikestation officials including Mayor Corey Calaycay (center) and Mayor Pro Tem Linda Elderkin with Covina Mayor Walter Allen III (left) celebrate the grand opening of the Bikestation on Wednesday at the Claremont Depot. For more photos, visit www.claremont-courier.com.

COURIER photos/Steven Felschundneff

Inside today's paper



Young boy with cerebral palsy prepares for a 26.2 mile marathon journey with a little help from his friends.

See page 10



Claremont resident Mel Boynton tries out the bike racks inside the newly opened Bikestation during a grand opening event at the Claremont Depot. The Bikestation will provide secure bicycle parking, lockers, a changing area, basic supplies and a repair service for local cyclists.

New bike station will help riders in the fast lane

Claremont's new bike station at the Train Depot is now open for business. The Bikestation offers secure storage space for up to 36 bikes for people traveling to and from Claremont using the Metrolink.

Bike enthusiasts and city officials mingled at a grand opening ceremony Wednesday morning to celebrate the new project. After the event, about 50 cyclists rode from Claremont to Covina where a second bike station had its grand opening ceremony.

Andrea White-Kjoss, president and CEO of Mobis

Transportation/Bikestation, the Long Beach company that developed the station, said bike stations are a critical way for people to feel comfortable about using their bicycles and public transportation.

With the existence of the station, cyclist can be assured of having a safe place to store their bikes. The station also addresses the issue of "the first and last mile" where commuters on the Metrolink can get to work or their final destination after exiting the train, she said.

Claremont mayor Corey Calaycay and city councilmember Sam Pedroza also took part in the ride to Covina. Mr. Pedroza said he occasionally uses the Metrolink

BIKESTATION CLAREMONT
continues on the next page



COURIER photos/Steven Felschundneff
ABOVE: Covina Mayor Walter Allen III, right, leaves the Village on Wednesday during a group ride from Claremont to Covina. The ride was part of the joint dedication of new Bikestation locations in the two cities.

AT LEFT: Bikestation CEO Andrea White-Kjoss demonstrates the pull out bike racks Wednesday during a dedication ceremony for the new Bikestation at the Claremont Depot.

Biking in so Cal: words from a seasoned cyclist

by Steven Felschundneff, photo editor

The opening this week of the Bikestation in Claremont reminds me of a story.

It was 1984 and I was drinking coffee at Nick's Cafe in the Village when a friend said, "Did you hear that Los Angeles passed a law requiring all employers to have non-smoking areas for their workers?" He took a drag from his clove cigarette, "Next thing you know they'll ban smoking in all public places." We both laughed.

The Bikestation, which held its grand opening Wednesday, is a multi-use site where bicycle commuters can safely lock their bikes, buy supplies, store their stuff and even get repairs made. The cost is reasonable and it provides a needed link for cyclists who transfer to the train for the next leg of their commute. However, with only three sites in L.A. County—Claremont, Long Beach and Covina—the practical application is limited.

Not that I am trying to discourage the idea. For five blissful years I was a bicycle commuter in San Francisco. I loved it. The bike was faster than the bus and a lot more convenient than owning—and parking—a car. But San Francisco is not Los Angeles. L.A. is so vast and disconnected that bicycle commuting is a daunting prospect.

One of two things would have to happen before riding bicycles become an attractive alternative to driving. First, owning and operating a car would have to become so expensive that the average wage earner could not afford one. Second, riding a bike would have to be easy enough to make it attractive on its own.

Some of the attendees at the Bikestation dedication felt that we had already reached the point where the car is too expensive, and they see the development of resources like the Bikestation as the final step to making widespread bike commuting a reality.

As bicycling advocate Mark von Wodtke said, "The combination of operating expense and the toll on the environment have made it time we came to grips with the cost of driving." He described a multi-modal transportation network where people drive, walk, take the bus, ride a bike and take the train to get around the L.A. area.

A small change can have a big impact. According to Bikestation CEO Andrea White-Kjoss, of the 80 memberships offered at the Claremont Bikestation, 30 percent represent people who would have driven in the past. Multiply that by every Metrolink station and regional transit hub and it is easy to see the potential.

The benefits of bicycle commuting go beyond the wallet and the air. Riding a bike to work provides an op-

portunity for daily exercise. We have become a largely sedentary society and it is taking a toll on our health. According to the non-profit Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, 30 minutes of cycling five times a week reduces the risk of serious health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and the most common form of diabetes.

In the spirit of journalistic transparency I must admit that I routinely drive the three miles to my job at the COURIER. I could make some kind of excuse about the amount of driving I do as part of my job but instead I will use myself as an example. Riding a bike to work would be easy, but I am concerned about securing my bike while on assignment. Dorothy Le of the Los Angeles Bicycle Coalition said that in a survey of potential bicycle commuters, a safe place to lock bikes is the number one priority. She credits the Bikestation with solving this problem with its secure entry and racks to lock bikes.

I hope the Bikestation idea works; I really want it to. I still believe that bicycle commuting will eventually become popular. If I get cynical, all I need to do is revisit the many positive changes that have taken place over the last two decades.

COURIER Photo Editor Steven Felschundneff has been an avid cyclist for 30 years and has an ever-changing collection of bikes and unicycles cluttering his garage.



Water usage regulations pass; businesses have mixed feelings about new sidewalks

Water efficiency ordinance will comply with state requirements

The city council passed a water efficient landscaping ordinance to comply with a new state mandate.

The ordinance applies to landscaping projects for public agencies or private developers that are at least 2500 square feet or landscaping by new homeowner that is at least 5000 square feet. It will affect mostly new development or large rehabilitation projects, City Planner Chris Viers said.

The original staff-proposed ordinance came before the council last month. Council members were not satisfied with some of the criteria and asked staff to provide additional information.

"Staff has tried to tailor the ordinance to be as business and home-owner friendly as possible while meeting the stringent state requirements," said city planner Chris Viers.

Exempt from the ordinance are properties on local or state historical registers, ecological restoration projects with no permanent irrigation system, mining projects and botanic gardens open to the public.

To address water shortages, the state of California has mandated that all cities in the state adopt similar ordinances based on a model released by the State Department of Water Resources in September.

city council

Village sidewalk improvements on hold

Once again, the city council discussed sidewalk improvements in the Village area. At the previous council meeting, the council decided to limit the amount of improvement work done due to complaints from business owners afraid of losing business for up to 4 days during the construction activity.

The Chamber of Commerce pushed for the council to reconsider doing the work after presenting a survey of business owners who supported the project. Other business owners still against the construction signed a separate petition to announce their opposition.

After a lengthy discussion, the council voted to do much of the work during the off-season for businesses in mid-July to August, but the vote was failed on a 2 to 2 vote. In the end, the council decided to delay a decision and asked city staff to bring back more research.

Youth scholarships for after school programs

The council approved changes to how the Human Services Department will determine who is eligible for scholarships for participation in Claremont after school programs.

Established in 1993, scholarships for the sports and activity programs are awarded to low-income families with children in the Claremont Unified School District, including non-Claremont residents.

Under the current policy, city staff determines scholarship amounts based on federal HUD income figures. The new policy will streamline the process by allowing city staff to determine income and scholarship amounts based on the school district's reduced-price meals program.

"That's a more standard system that's used throughout the city," said Human Services Director Mercy Santoro said. "By streamlining the process, it reduces the work for staff and increases the ease at which parents will access our sports and our youth programs throughout the city," she added.

This year, a total of 66 children are using the scholarship program. Of those, 16 are not Claremont residents. The change in policy passed on a 4 to 1 vote, with Mayor Corey Calaycay opposed.

"I don't feel very comfortable with the city paying for people who are not residents directly of our community," Mr. Calaycay said. "Some of these people are coming from Montclair or Pomona, and I think those communities have some responsibility for providing funding for their residents, especially a community like Montclair where they have a mall and our citizens are spending money there."

— Tony Krickl

BIKESTATION CLAREMONT continued from the previous page



Claremont Mayor Corey Calaycay, left, rides down Bonita Avenue in La Verne on Wednesday during a group ride between Claremont and Covina. The ride was part of the joint dedication of new Bikestation locations at the two cities.

to travel to work and sees the benefits of having a bike station at major transit centers.

"It was a fantastic ride," Mr. Pedroza said. "It proved to me that there are so many routes that are safe that can crisscross our local communities. With some route adjustments and bike lanes, we can really have a dynamic regional bike transit system."

The Bikestation is one part of the development of the Train Depot building. There is still an empty room in the building that city officials and cyclists hope will be leased by a cafe or other similar business.

Wednesday's ceremony was the culmination of several years of planning and developing the concept. After the city sent out a request for proposals to consider new uses for the Train Depot, Claremonter and avid cyclist Mark Von Wodtke submitted the original proposal for the bike station. At Wednesday morning's ceremony, Mr. Von Wodtke said he was "delighted" to see his vision become a reality.

"I'm hoping this becomes a catalyst for other Bikestations to be built throughout the region," he said. "The key now is to getting more people out of their cars and

Neighborhood meeting set to discuss 7-Eleven

The city is organizing a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposed 7-Eleven at the corner of Mills Avenue and Foothill Boulevard. The meeting is scheduled for Monday beginning at 7 p.m. at city hall.

Residents in the immediate area were sent letters this week inviting them to attend the meeting along with city staff and the proposed business owner.

The meeting is "to discuss options with regard to bringing a viable 7-Eleven store to the commercial property located at 601 E. Foothill Boulevard."

At last week's Planning Commission meeting, over 20 residents living near the proposed site spoke out against the business. They complained about potential crime issues, traffic hazards at the intersection and the idea of a 24-hour business that would sell alcohol as late as midnight so near to their homes.

The Planning Commission voted down a permit for the business, but the business owner can still appeal the decision to the city council.

— Tony Krickl

enjoying cycling. There are so many benefits, your personal health, less emissions in the air and fuel saving. So I hope we can start to see more people on their bikes."

The Bikestation will offer annual memberships to as many as 80 cyclists looking to use the facility. Members can use the electronically secured indoor bike parking, a repair stand and tools, retail accessories and a restroom and changing room. The station is 600 square feet and offers members access 24 hours a day.

— Tony Krickl