

Using Public Health Strategies to Reduce Violence in Hot Spots

Get Healthy San Mateo County Final Grant Report
December 30, 2013.

Overview:

With the support of Get Healthy San Mateo County, the East Palo Alto Police Department (EPAPD) facilitated bicycle safety classes and two bicycle audits in two “hot spots” where violent crime rates are highest. Bicycle safety training aimed at teaching East Palo Alto residents of all ages bicycle rules of the road and prepared them for bicycle audits. City staff will use information from the audits to improve the bicycle infrastructure in East Palo Alto. The project expands on EPAPD’s activation of Fitness Improvement Training (FIT) Zones that increases resident’s activity levels and knowledge of healthy living while reducing crime and violence.

The primary objectives of this initiative were to have:

1. Participants learn the rules of the road for cycling and how to safely travel throughout the city on bicycles by participating in bike safety trainings.
2. City staff learn impediments to cycling from residents during two bicycle audits.
3. City staff integrate lessons from bike audits into City plans.

Deliverables:

EPAPD identified the following five deliverables to be achieved over the course of the grant period. A thorough and detailed outline of progress and completion of the following deliverables can be seen on the attached Grant Tracking document.

- a) By January 2013, complete Bicycle Safety Training in Fit Zone A
(Completed May, 2013)
- b) By February 2013, complete Bicycle Safety Training in Fit Zone B
(Completed May, 2013)
- c) By February 2013, complete Bicycle Audit with Fit Zone A participants
(Completed November, 2013)
- d) By March 2013, complete Bicycle Audit with Fit Zone B participants
(Completed March, 2013)
- e) By December 2013, Integrate Bicycle Audit Results into City Plans
(In Progress)

Accomplishments:

Bicycle Safety Training Events:

In collaboration with Ravenswood School District's Safe Routes to School, we successfully conducted two Bicycle Safety Training events for a total of 60 East Palo Alto residents, one in FIT Zone A and one in FIT Zone B. Both events were held in safe locations with ample space to practice safe riding.

Lessons included: Bicycle safety, Helmets, Rules of the Road, Traffic simulations, Bicycle control, stopping, and signaling, Riding with Traffic, Intersections, and Emergencies.



Residents take part in Bicycle Safety Training- FIT Zone B-. 1



Residents take part in a Bicycle Safety Training- FIT Zone B- 2



Residents participate in a Bicycle Safety Training- FIT Zone A-1



Residents participate in a Bicycle Safety Training- FIT Zone A- 2

Participants from the two Bicycle Safety Training Events were asked to return in order to participate in the two Bicycle Audits. 10 participants returned for the FIT Zone A audit. 13 participants returned for the FIT Zone B audit.

Bicycle Audit – March 30, 2013

East Palo Alto Police Department staff and 13 East Palo Alto residents embarked on a bicycle tour of East Palo Alto, California. The ride included eight (8) segments:

1. Segment 1, Martin Luther King to Camelia/Pulgas Road
2. Segment 2, Camelia/Pulgas to Ravenswood 101 Retail Center
3. Segment 3, Ravenswood 101 Retail Center to YMCA/Bell Street Park
4. Segment 4, YMCA/Bell Street Park to City Hall
5. Segment 5, City Hall to Costano Elementary School
6. Segment 6, Costano Elementary School to Cooley Landing
7. Segment 7, Cooley Landing to Ronald McNair School
8. Segment 8, Ronald McNair School to MLK Park

At the end of each segment, participants discussed the road conditions of the segment, identifying impediments to cycling and discussing their perceptions regarding safety among the segment. The following is a summary of participants' overall responses:



Residents/volunteers participate in Bicycle Audit-1

Overall Positives:

- People felt safe riding their bikes through the surveyed area.
- Group felt safe riding in the bike lane despite high traffic
- Everyone in the group felt comfortable riding their bikes

Overall Negatives:

- Surveyors complained that the road was bad, i.e. cracked, broken, uneven, and lots of debris.
- Surveyors said they would not feel comfortable riding with a child on this route.

Recommended Changes:

- Create sidewalks and bike lanes

Bicycle Audit – November 9, 2013

East Palo Alto Police Department staff and 10 East Palo Alto residents embarked on a bicycle tour of the northeast portion of East Palo Alto, California. The ride included five (5) segments:

1. Segment 1, Bay Road/Demeter Street to St. Francis of Assisi Church (1425 Bay Road)
2. Segment 2, St. Francis of Assisi Church via Bay Road to Newbridge Avenue > Newbridge Avenue to Willow Road > Willow Road to Obrien Drive/Kavanaugh Drive (JobTrain).
3. Segment 3, Kavanaugh Drive to University Avenue (City Hall)
4. Segment 4, City Hall (University Avenue/Bay Road) > University Avenue to Bell Street (East Palo Alto Senior Center)
5. Segment 5, Bell Street to Euclid Avenue > Euclid Avenue to East Bayshore Road > East Bayshore Road to Bay Road > Bay Road to Demeter Street

At the end of each segment, participants discussed the road conditions of the segment, identifying impediments to cycling and discussing their perceptions regarding safety among the segment. The following is a summary of participants' overall responses:



Residents/volunteers participate in Bicycle Audit-2

Overall Positives:

- The Bay Road stretch of this segment had a bike lane that felt safe to ride on
- Group felt safe riding in the bike lane despite high traffic

Overall Negatives:

- There is limited space for vehicles to park, so they park in unpaved areas that could be better used for pedestrians and cyclists
- In heavier traffic times, cycling could feel more dangerous
- Limited space for cyclists to ride between parked cars and vehicle traffic

Recommended Changes:

- Create sidewalks and bike lanes on East Bayshore
- Expand bike lane at Bay Road and University Avenue
- Install bike sensors for traffic lights at Bay Road and University Avenue.

Plans for the Future:

The City of East Palo Alto is in the process of developing multiple plans that include cycling elements. This includes the City's Healthy Community Plan, Bicycle Transportation Plan, and General Plan Update. Data from this project is being integrated into the City's General Plan "Existing Conditions Report," which will inform other plans the City creates.