Campus Biking: Challenges and Strategies

The Campus Bike-Right Project at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Photo courtesy Dan Maas

By Lois E. Chaplin
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at
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

In recent years, Cornell University has witnessed a dramatic upswing in bicycle usage, a welcome development in the face of campus congestion. However due to the lack of planned facilities, limited law enforcement, and a demonstrated minimal skill level among cyclists this trend only added to the existing confusion. As a result, many challenges were developing with respect to safety. It became necessary to take a closer look at the congested Cornell Community.

This report describes some of the efforts that were undertaken to identify and address safety concerns and the work of those who became involved in the Campus Bike-Right Project from 1991 to 1997. Although there are numerous overlaps, the activities have been presented under these major headings – Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Encouragement. The 4-H Youth Education section summarizes the components of the youth development and outreach efforts that were a part of local activities but also involved agencies and organizations throughout the state.

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Data collection and analysis

Pedestrians and bicyclists represent a significant portion of our nation’s motor vehicle crash problem. New York State’s staggering 28 percent of traffic fatalities each year that involve pedestrians or bicyclists is nearly double the national average. New York State Department of Motor Vehicle accident reports for the years 1990-1993 show that 21 percent of the traffic-related fatalities in Tompkins County involved either a pedestrian or a bicyclist.

Early campus-based data collection efforts were published in “Cornell Cycles,” a document that has served as the benchmark for engineering endeavors over the years. The first campus survey identifying cycling needs and concerns was included in that report.

The Cornell University Police were particularly instrumental in the initial stages of data collection. Essential crash data were made available through their records, providing information about accidents reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles. Each year, there is a range of 10-20 crashes involving cyclists on campus roads. A study of crash data from the city of Ithaca rounded out the information.

Recognizing that only a portion of bicycle crashes are reported to the police, a project was undertaken to collect data from persons who came into Gannett Health Center with a bicycle- or pedestrian-related injury. From these reports, a profile was developed of crash types, causes, and those involved.
Important findings included (see Appendix for more details):

1. almost half of the bike crashes reviewed in the city data occurred at night or dusk with the bike having no lights;
2. many crashes occur at a controlled intersection with the cyclist at fault for not obeying the traffic control device;
3. motorists are at fault in a significant number of incidents by making a left turn into the lane of the oncoming cyclist;
4. overwhelmingly, the cyclists involved in crashes are male and the 18-25 year olds are over represented;
5. helmet usage is observed at a very low rate;
6. many cyclists report losing control (lack of skill) as a cause of the crash.

Implications for education

The project’s vision would be to develop a campus culture where pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists can share the road - safely. Targeted messages were developed to outline what all travellers can do to realize this vision:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bicyclists</th>
<th>Pedestrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wear a helmet</td>
<td>• Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ride on the right side of the road</td>
<td>• Cross the street only in crosswalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks</td>
<td>• Wear reflective clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use a light when biking at night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wear reflective clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motorists</th>
<th>For Everyone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Obey the speed limit</td>
<td>• Be predictable: obey traffic laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow plenty of time and space when passing cyclists</td>
<td>• Make eye contact with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t travel or park in bike lanes</td>
<td>• Be alert for the unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks</td>
<td>• Don’t wear headphones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limit alcohol consumption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequent educational endeavors had the following focus:

• to increase awareness of health risks associated with cycling;
• to increase helmet usage;
• to increase knowledge of the new sidewalk diamond system (see p.13);
• to encourage awareness of state and campus regulations;
• to promote community cooperation and personal responsibility,
• and to develop safe cycling techniques.
A campus sub-committee

At the same time that data were being collected and the educational directive was forming, a group of people from several departments/units began meeting to form a committee. Representatives from CU Police, the Judicial Administrator’s Office, Transportation Services, Gannett Health Center, and a Cornell employee/cyclist (although arguably “token,” providing valuable insights from the perspective of campus bicycle users) formed the core group. Most recently a representative from Environmental Health and Safety has joined the committee. The committee’s status is that of ad-hoc advisory to TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee). Meetings are held monthly.

Its goals are to:

- Recommend strategies to increase and expand community awareness and education around safety issues;
- Formulate policies and strategies to reduce cyclist/pedestrian/motorist conflicts on campus;
- Make recommendations regarding campus facility needs that will eliminate roadway hazards;
- Recommend additional actions that will encourage and incorporate safe bicycling on and around the campus;
- Serve as a sounding board for the community’s concerns about pedestrian and cyclist safety.
Bike Registration

One of the first actions to be undertaken was to implement a bicycle registration program on the campus. This free registration has been promoted as a good way to protect one’s bike against theft, to aid in retrieval in the event of theft and to assist the university in tabulating a bike census. It is designed to serve as an educational avenue and to establish credibility for the bicycle as a viable mode of transportation.

The campus bike registration form.

Registrants receive the Bike Right brochure (see page 5) and a sticker to be placed on the bike. Recently, e-mail addresses were added to the registration card. Having e-mail addresses provides an opportunity for pertinent information to be sent to bike owners, but we are finding that the database must be modified if it is to be more useful. We are able to tell how many people have registered a bike since its inception, but the lack of a purge feature, which would remove names of persons who are no longer Cornellians, limits the generation of an accurate accounting of current registered cyclists.

In general, there has been acceptance for the bike registration program, although some resistance has been met. Students in opposition to the program resent the fact that the university has one more piece of information about them. They complain that it only can be to a cyclist’s disadvantage to register the bike, because they can then be tracked down if they are parked illegally. People who are choosing to own a bike instead of a car are chagrined at facing the administrative hassle that they were avoiding by being carless.
We still do not have a reliable way of accounting for the number of bicycles on campus. A project on the list of things to be done includes taking an inventory of the number of registered and un-registered bicycles in bike racks on campus on a given day.

The Bike Right Brochure

Another early accomplishment was the Bike Right Brochure. We felt it was important to design a document that outlined the rules and guidelines that cyclists would be expected to follow on campus. Based upon vehicle and traffic law, the brochure outlines the basic rules of the road, regulations particular to the Cornell Community and additional safety tips. It also includes a map illustrating the bike lanes and shared (cyclist/pedestrian) walkways on campus.

In One Piece, another brochure designed as a part of this initiative targets a broader audience than cyclists alone. It addresses motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and skaters, outlining the rights and responsibilities of each.

Incentives

Stickers, slap bands, leg bands and water bottles have been used as incentives and prizes for those who either registered their bike or participated in one of the drawings that were held as part of the educational displays (described later). The reflective stickers carried the safety message Be Safe Be Seen. The slap bands said Be Smart Bike Right. These messages were also featured in the brochure. The reflective and elastic leg bands were useful during the time when the educational message targeted pedestrians. The water bottles carried a message about the importance of using a light if one is cycling at night (Bike at Night? Use a Light). Bike lights were also given out as prizes and helped to reinforce the visibility concept.
Coffee mugs were designed as a thank you to those in administrative positions, who have an opportunity to influence the walking and cycling environment. The message *Try Biking or Walking... it does a world of good* was designed to encourage people to walk or bicycle and that these are healthy activities that are good for the environment and community.

**Helmet Initiatives**

The first step with Gannett Health Center on campus involved the development of a survey tool to document how many visitors through the walk-in center had bicycle- or pedestrian-related injuries. Knowing that a significant number of injuries don’t involve motor vehicles and thus don’t get reported, we decided to track this trend through the Health Center’s walk-in unit. This involved designing a survey that was easy to implement and working with the nursing staff to get their support and participation. The data provides a more complete picture of the local crash situation.

**Low-cost, quality helmets**

After reviewing injury data, risk factors and the high cost of helmets sold locally, staff at Gannett decided to focus on ways to increase awareness of the importance of helmets and to make them readily available to the Cornell Community.

A small grant served as seed money for the purchase of several hundred helmets. This bulk order allowed for the resale of the helmets at a very reasonable price of $25 per helmet. Sales went well.

Due to space limitations and the fact that helmet prices have come down, Gannett no longer provides helmets for sale. Instead they provide a list of local vendors where people may purchase helmets, along with a copy of an informative helmet brochure.

**Helmet brochure**

Another task was the development and preparation of an informative helmet brochure. The result was a very simple brochure outlining why helmets are important, what to look for when buying one and where to go to purchase one. One section included the testimony of a former student and local cycling advocate about his experience with crashing while wearing a helmet. It concluded with the phrase...“You’re an Ivy League student. Use your head; protect your investment by wearing a bicycle helmet every time you ride.”
Student involvement

Student volunteers who were recruited through the health center's volunteer program were trained in how to fit a helmet to health center customers interested in buying a helmet and how to respond to commonly asked questions about helmets and sizing procedures. The agenda in the appendix provides more details regarding the elements of the training session.

A student organization, Student Health Alliance at Cornell (SHAC) was also approached. It seemed astute to involve a student group in efforts to reach out to the student community. This group was selected because it was comprised of students with an interest in a medically-related career and proved to be a relatively successful component of the project. They were actively involved in public displays and successful at getting fellow students to take the quiz and register to win free prizes. For the most part SHAC members were not cyclists, excepting a couple of the more active participants.

Publicity about the helmets available at Gannett occurred as an integral part of the overall public awareness efforts of the bicycle project. This included the development of an exhibit panel that was part of the Bike Days display, articles in the campus newspaper and health center newsletter, and posters that were widely distributed.
Helmet brochure refinement

After a couple years, it became clear that the brochure was in need of revisions. Although we liked the looks of the premier brochure, many questions were being raised regarding its effectiveness.

After much discussion the decision was made to use an approach that would personalize the risks associated with a crash so Cornellians could easily relate the information to their everyday biking experiences. College students often don't believe that they could be in a crash, and if they were, they believe their injuries would be minor. So instead of using national statistics, a brochure using campus crash data formed the basis of one section. Specific campus locations where crashes had occurred were identified; the names of the victims were changed. The data showed that unhelmeted cyclists were much more likely to sustain severe head injuries. It concluded with a statement appealing to the students' intelligence... “Head injuries are preventable. Consider what you’re investing in your college education; consider your future with a head injury.”

One proposed revision included a photo of the cyclist who was killed in the Tour de France cycle race, laying in a pool of blood. A depiction of such gruesomeness generated much discussion and debate as to the effectiveness of using a visual message with a high fear impact. Research suggests\(^1\) that the public may react unfavorably to fear, which can result in denial, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, and faulty logic. High fear-content messages may only provoke anxiety and rejection of the message. There was again concern regarding the personal impact of the image — would Cornell students relate to an incident that occurred during an international race in Europe any more than they would to statistical data?

The challenge continues to keep improving the message as more is learned about effective communication strategies that elicit desired behaviors. The helmet brochure is being considered for subsequent revisions and improvements.

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Public Events

Information about bike registration and the diamonds policy (concerning shared walkways; see page 13) was first provided at an information table hosted by Transportation Services at student registration in the beginning of the fall semester of 1994. The information at the bicycle table has continued to be refined since its inception to include maps, brochures and a chance to register one's bike on-site. The booth is staffed by Transportation Services staff who are cyclists and familiar with all aspects of traveling the campus by bike.

Bike Days is another public event that takes place in the spring and fall of each year for three noon-hours. This event is located on a pedestrian mall in the busiest and most central part of the Cornell campus, between one of the student unions and the campus store. The purpose of the event is to encourage cyclists to register their bike and to take a quiz which serves as an educational piece. The quiz focuses on one or two concepts such as the meaning of the diamonds, the need to use lights if biking at night, or the value of wearing helmets. Suggestions for locations for additional bike parking have also been solicited. Some of the first Bike Days (renamed from Bike Safety Days) involved student volunteers from Gannett Health Center and SHAC. Their job was to engage their colleagues in discussion and encourage them to enter the drawing. Cyclists pedaling through a dismount zone are stopped by uniformed staff and informed of the campus regulations. Generally, it is an opportunity for staff to mingle with the public. CU Police, Transportation Services, and CU Environmental Health and Safety staff cyclists are involved.

Bike Days exhibit in front of the student union.
Campus-based wellness fairs have evolved as another opportunity to reach a different segment of the Cornell Community about safety issues. Gannett Health Center included bicycling and walking as a component to their health education display. A similar format, with a table-top display, a quiz and a raffle for free gifts were featured. During a recent fair, a bicycle rack that is used on all county buses was available for people to check out close-up.

Staff and volunteers from the university have participated in numerous events off-campus. This includes health or safety fairs at a local shopping center and at the Expo, a county-wide celebration of alternative transportation and recreation activities.

For each public event, a quiz would be designed and used as a way to impart a concept and to initiate discussion with passers-by. A quick look at the completed quiz would provide a good starting point for a dialog about one of the points. This format works much better than standing behind a static table display asking people if they have any questions, which they invariably don’t and keep walking. Samples of some of the quizzes are included in the appendix.

**Bulletin Board Displays**

![Bulletin Board Display Image]

A bulletin board display was in the main lobby of the health center for a period of time. Shown here is Jan Talbot, Director of Health Education.

**Print Media**

Samples of ads and articles printed in the campus newspaper can be found in the appendix.
Web Pages

A significant amount of information that's available in hard copy is now available electronically. Of particular interest to the Cornell and Ithaca Community are the following:

- Frequently Asked Questions, Bicycles at Cornell
- Bike Right brochure, cycling tips for the Cornell Community
- In One Piece, a primer for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists
- Effective Cycling Classes, cyclists need more than a shove down the driveway
- Think Helmets are a nuisance?, from Gannett Health Center, the facts about bike helmets
- Where to buy a helmet that fits, in the Ithaca area
- Cornell Police Bike Patrol, Meet the Cornell Bike Officers
- Cycling Club at Cornell, for those interested in racing, weekly road & mountain bike rides
- RIBS, learn more about Recycling Ithaca's Bicycles
- The Finger Lakes Cycling Club, an organization for all local bicycling enthusiasts.
- TCAT's Bikes on Buses site will show you how to take your bike on the bus!
- Transportation and Mail Services' Bike Main Page

For a current list of sites and URLs, visit the Cornell Bicycles Home Page at http://www. cornell.edu/campus/cycling.html

Skills Classes

It's been a priority of the project director to develop opportunities for cyclists to take skills courses in order to upgrade their traffic and handling skills. People who understand how to effectively integrate into vehicular traffic will be less likely to become involved in a crash.

The Effective Cycling Program is a series of small, user-friendly courses that cover everything from biking in traffic to safely riding off-road. The goal of the program is to make bicycling fun by making bicyclists smarter. The entry level course includes bicycle selection and fit, helmet use, basic bike handling skills, traffic rules and responsibilities, lane positioning, and minor maintenance skills. The development of the classes has been closely connected to the development of the police cyclist training program and the League Of American Bicyclists' (LAB) course development.

During the fall of 1995, instructors from LAB came to Ithaca and taught an instructor certification course for the Effective Cycling Program (see BUSA article in appendix). As a result, eight people were certified to teach the Effective Cycling course, the only nationally recognized course of its kind.

The first class conducted by the newly certified instructors was held in the fall of 1996 and two classes were held in the spring of 1997. In addition, an
expanded version of the course was offered as part of the CU Athletics department Outdoor Education Program for course credit.

Similar to the challenge of getting people to understand the ramifications of head injuries when in an accident without a helmet is the challenge to get people to take a cycling class. Most people think they know how to ride a bike; after all, they’ve been doing it for years. What the average cyclist doesn’t realize is that there is more to bicycling than balancing and there is more to cyclist education than a shove down the driveway.

Efforts will be pursued to advertise the course in a more appealing manner. Evaluations have suggested that simply modifying the title to make it sound more fun and appealing would garner more interest. Another suggestion that will be fielded is to offer one introductory session with the option of people continuing with subsequent sessions if they find the program of interest. At a minimum, the one session provides an opportunity to introduce the basic concepts that the course prescribes. Those who choose not to continue have at least been exposed to the basic tenets of the program.

A Video Tape

A video tape was produced in 1994, entitled *The E’s of Cycling, encouraging safe cycling on the Cornell University Campus*. This fifteen-minute production outlined the activities in support of bicycling that were underway on the Cornell Campus. Copies were distributed to other universities and interested parties.

Judicial Administration

The campus judicial administrator (JA) has been an active player in the Bike-Right Program from the beginning. Key elements have included her involvement in policy development and in finding ways the JA’s office could become involved in educational activities.

The JA has received referrals of students who were cycling in dismount zones (sidewalks and pathways marked with a red diamond). There has been discussion of requiring some violators to attend a cycling class. Unfortunately, the first person who was assigned to a class ended up not taking the class because it was cancelled. This option has much potential, and will be pursued. Many communities have found a “safety school” an enhancement to their community’s education and enforcement program.
Engineering

Roadway design

The Cornell Bikeway Project was initiated by the Office of Transportation Services at the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Bicycle Committee in their final report of April, 1991. The project mandate included a comprehensive survey and analysis of bicycling on the campus with the aim of producing the groundwork for a bicycle transportation master plan. The philosophy underlying this plan was a desire to make the campus a safer and more efficient environment for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The University made a commitment to incorporate bike facilities into all road repairs and renovations wherever possible. Bike lanes are being added, with the ultimate goal to have a complete network of bike lanes throughout the campus.

Diamonds project (bikes on sidewalks)

An important issue to address has been the bicyclist and pedestrian conflict on sidewalks and walkways. The status quo of unmanaged chaos was not acceptable, and the diamonds project was born. The colored diamonds make up a system which designate bike exclusive lanes with white diamonds; yellow diamonds are used to mark shared paths which ensure cyclists access within about 50 feet of any campus building or facility. Pedestrians have the right-of-way even on shared paths; cyclists must ride cautiously and yield to those on foot. Red diamonds are used to emphasize the ban on bikes on sidewalks and indicate specific dismount zones for high traffic areas and those locations where a shared path meets a dismount zone. This network of paths creates links throughout the Cornell campus.

Yellow diamonds identify shared walkways. Cyclists must yield to pedestrians.
Bike Parking

A quick tour of the campus reveals that there are more bikes than bike parking facilities in many locations. Recent actions include removal of bikes parked in Life Safety Zones and the development of a plan to increase bicycle parking sites on the campus. The issue of bike parking is on the campus bike committee's list of unfinished business.

* Bicycles parked along a fence on Cornell's central campus.

Walkable and Bikeable Communities Workshops

A series of workshops was conducted throughout the state of New York for engineers, designers and planners with the purpose of promoting the ways in which more user-friendly pedestrian and bicycle environments. The lead workshop instructor was Dan Burden, former Florida DOT Bicycle Coordinator and currently with Walkable Communities, Inc. With over 20 years of experience, he is nationally recognized for his expertise in dealing with bicycling and walking concerns from the planning and engineering perspective.

These two-day events were held in Buffalo, Saratoga Springs, Poughkeepsie and Ithaca with about 200 people attending. Collaboration with the Cornell Local Roads Program, NYS DOT, the Saratoga Springs Open Space Project and the Hudson Valley Greenway Coalition, among others insured a diverse and enthusiastic audience. The Buffalo workshop was organized by the Upstate Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

* Photo: Dan Maas
Enforcement

An effective, well-rounded traffic safety program needs the support and involvement of the law enforcement community. At the onset of the project, a letter of introduction was sent to the Cornell University Police Chief, outlining the components of the recently funded project and an invitation to become involved. In the follow-up meeting the chief was supportive, and was most interested in the potential for positive public relations. The project director subsequently maintained contact with the lieutenant who had been assigned to bike-related matters.

Bicycle Education and Enforcement

Initial inquiries resulted in an analysis of crash data and a review of policies. Subsequently, the officers were involved in teaching, the ad-hoc committee, and ultimately the development of a police cyclist unit.

The officers brainstormed ways they could become involved in education and enforcement initiatives. Suggestions included Vehicle and Traffic (V&T) stops with warnings and handing out an educational brochure, enforcement of the V&T law on motorists who drive in bike lanes, etc.

An analysis of the crash data for bike-related traffic incidents on campus was undertaken. This information was useful to the planners who were assessing the roadway designs and making recommendations relative to a roadway master plan. The data proved helpful in the direction of the educational initiatives. Information about bicycle thefts was also tabulated.

A Bicycle Notice tag was developed which was designed to educate bicycle owners about the requirement to register bicycles and information on other regulations and safe bicycling. It informed owners about bicycle parking regulations, security measures and riding responsibilities. Lastly, it encouraged public response for suggestion to report problems and provide solutions about bicycle issues on campus.

One initiative in the grant involved providing training for law enforcement officers in bicyclist education. The chief was amenable to the lieutenant participating in one of the scheduled off-campus seminars as a co-instructor with the project director. The lieutenant's involvement enhanced the instructors' credibility among the participants of the training session. His knowledge about bicycle/motor vehicle accidents was a welcome complement to the presentation. It also provided an opportunity for the lieutenant to become familiar with a strategy for teaching bicycling skills that would eventually be offered to the Cornell and Ithaca Communities. Upon the
instructors' return to Ithaca, a plan was drawn up for providing training for local law enforcement officers.

During the next year, ten classes were offered - a total of 74 hours of instruction - by a combination of instructors including the project director, the lieutenant and an officer. Participants included 18 different law enforcement agencies, in addition to more than 10 community agencies.

During this time, the Cornell Police were an active member of the Campus Committee. They participated in public education events and conducted check points for the purpose of informing cyclists about campus regulations and the vehicle and traffic law. They have developed systems to keep track of injuries and the number of violations committed by cyclists.

They were involved in the development of a set of rules/regulations to incorporate into the campus regulations governing traffic on campus which are an integral part of the Rules and Regulations Governing Traffic on the Cornell University Campus. They were also integral in the development of a bicycle enforcement policy guide for the police department. (see appendix)

The Police Cyclist Unit

The police cyclist unit has been a tremendous asset to the community. Many people were involved in the development of the Cornell-based unit and the state-wide training program.

In 1991, then Cornell Patrol Officer Fred Myers had been watching ESPN and "saw a bunch of guys riding bikes through the woods." Thinking that it was a great way to get into the woods for some exercise, he decided to buy a mountain bike, for $150. He had grown up riding motorcycles, both on and off the road, and found that he had some skills that carried over. His friend Scott Salino, a City of Ithaca police officer, was taking an interest in cycling and, similarly, soon purchased a mountain bike. The two of them then started off-road cycling together, "having a blast" riding the trails.

Within a couple of weeks, Salino was watching a television show about various police departments and saw that the Seattle P.D. has a bicycle patrol. It wasn't long before he and Myers started talking about the potential for bicycles in their respective departments. They decided that since Cornell's police chief was new, the more established chief of the Ithaca Police Department (IPD) would be the best one to approach for approval. Their thoughts turned to ways that bikes would enhance a police officer's job.

They then started making inquiries with bike shops in the three county area regarding what would be involved in acquiring bikes. They found that most
were more than willing to give free advice but not free bicycles. Then, they went to Pedal Away Bicycle Shop in Ithaca. Joe Spadolini, the owner, was willing to listen and saw the potential of the concept. Through Spadolini's manufacturer connections, the first bicycle was donated to the Ithaca Police Department.

Salino identified another IPD officer, Al Cruise, who was interested in the idea. Cruise, an avid road rider, and Salino collaborated to write and submit the bike proposal to their chief for consideration. In 1992, they paid their own way to the second annual International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) conference. When they returned to Ithaca, their bike patrol went on the road.

At about the same time, a friend and colleague, Jim Steinmetz, submitted a proposal to his chief at Ithaca College; it was accepted and Ithaca College came on board with a two-person bike patrol. Myers then submitted a proposal to his chief at Cornell, but it was rejected.

In 1993, another attempt to organize a bike patrol at Cornell was undertaken. This time, Myers had garnered the support of Lt. Moran in the Cornell Police Department. Lt. Moran was aware of the educational efforts underway with the Cornell Bicycle Safety project, and brought the project into the fold. The three worked closely together to develop an implementation strategy that had a strong emphasis on incorporating a standardized training component with the potential of statewide recognition. The strategy's first step was to send a team of police officers from Cornell, Ithaca College and the City of Ithaca to the International Police Mountain Bike Association Conference in order to become familiar with the components of a successful program and to receive skills training. Although the other units had officers on bike, none of them

* Photo: Scott Werner
had received any formal training. The pre-conference certification course enabled the officers to eventually become certified as instructors which enhanced plans to eventually offer training courses to other police units on setting up bike patrols and addressing bicycle and pedestrian issues.

The early, wintery days of bike skills training.
Left to Right: Lt. Moran, Officer Salino, Lois Chaplin, Officers Myers and Steinmetz.

Upon returning to Ithaca, the team of officers formed the Finger Lakes Police Mountain Bike Association (FLPMBA). This team was comprised of Officers Alan Cruise (Ithaca Police Department), Scott Salino (Ithaca Police Department), Fred Myers (Cornell University Police), and Jim Steinmetz (Ithaca College Campus Safety). The objective of the non-profit organization was to develop and conduct training for police mountain-bike units statewide and to keep interdepartmental politics out of the picture. By summer, they had written an instructor manual for the purpose of teaching other police officers and held the first of its kind training in NYS for police officers wanting to learn how to set up a bicycle unit in their department. About 24 police officers from around the state participated in the four-day 32 hour course. Topics covered included understanding types of bike crashes and counter measures with a big emphasis on hands-on skills. Other topics included uniform and equipment selection and community education programs.

By spring, the student manual was completed, and the second course was scheduled for June, 1994. Penny Guerrera (Cornell University Police) and Mark Depaul (SUNY Cortland) were identified as the top people from the inaugural course and were recruited to assist as instructors for the second course. The June course had 43 students representing about 25 agencies, mostly from NYS. Representatives from Canada and the states of Delaware, Connecticut and Pennsylvania were also in attendance. Evaluations were very positive and provided input into subsequent course improvements.
With the assistance of staff at the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee, a contact with the Bureau of Municipal Police (BMP), Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) was established. Mary Jane McGuire (GTSC) and Brad Silver (DCJS) came to the inaugural training conference to evaluate it and assess the potential of developing a standardized statewide program. During the next year, the members of FLP MBA worked with DCJS staff to improve the course curriculum and modify it to meet NYS standards. In order to insure the best possible course, IP MBA and the Law Enforcement Bicycle association (LEBA) were brought together in a meeting to design the state’s program. John Fox from Poughkeepsie Police Dept. and Jose Dominguez from the NYC Housing Authority, both representing LEBA, and Officer Don Barker (IPD) joined the team of Myers, Salino and Steinmetz to work together to create the BMP training program. (Al Cruise, the fourth member of the initial team resigned from IPD to become a Seattle Police Officer during this time.)

In 1995, the Division of Criminal Justice Services’ Bureau for Municipal Police, had completed development of the “Law Enforcement Bicycle Patrol Course.” The work was accomplished through the efforts of a Law Enforcement Training Committee which included many of the officers who “pioneered” the initial mountain bike patrols in NYS. This was the second year this training was presented, but the first year that DCJS supervised the sessions. At the close of 1996, DCJS applied to and received the approval of the Municipal Police Training Council (MPTC) making the course the official standard of training for law enforcement in NYS. The state course was created in concert with the materials and standards provided by LEBA and IP MBA, and received approval from both organizations for the training concepts.

With the approval of the MPTC in place, the bike patrol course would now be available at regional training academies throughout the state. This was, of course, contingent upon instructor availability to conduct the training. As of the close of 1997, courses have been presented at: Glens Falls PD (zone 5), Poughkeepsie PD (zone 14), SUNY Oswego (zone 7), and SUNY Plattsburgh (zone 9). There are currently 25 Police Instructors who are available to conduct the training. From 1995 to 1997 over 400 individual officers have been trained by this standard course. In excess of 100 law enforcement agencies have added a bicycle patrol to their operations. There are currently over 170 agencies who now utilize bicycle patrol officers.

Requests for information concerning the equipment, training, concepts and procedures for applying bicycle patrols to local enforcement are received on almost on a daily basis at DCJS. It is anticipated that the interest and applications of law enforcement bicycle patrols will continue to expand in the future. The utilization of Community Oriented Policing Strategies (COPS) which are now becoming standards for many law enforcement agencies only
strengthen the applications of bicycle patrol. The concept of COPS places officers in more direct and accessible contact with the communities they serve, a concept which adapts perfectly with officers conducting bicycle patrols.

Fred Myers, left, has since resigned from Cornell University Police to take a position with the Ithaca Police Department. He is now a member of the IPD bike unit, clocking many on-duty hours on-bike. On a personal note, he has upgraded his bike from his original $150 purchase to a full suspension GT in the $1,500 range.

Kathy Zoner, pictured as an officer with the Cornell University Police, is currently a Sergeant in charge of the CU Bike Unit.

Police on Bikes Programs are now being established in departments throughout the state and county. Locally, IPD currently has ten bike officers, each with their own bike. Plans for the future include continued upgrades and an expansion of their fleet. As of March 1998, Cornell University has eight bike officers with six bikes. Ithaca College currently has five officers and bikes.
**NOTICE**

____ Your bicycle is not parked in a bicycle rack.
Bicycles may not be locked to fences, trees, or signposts.
Please use the bicycle racks provided on campus. You may send us recommendations for new bicycle parking facilities on the mail-in card on the bottom of this tag.

____ Your bicycle is parked in a Life Safety Zone.
Do not park your bicycle in a way that constitutes a safety hazard, such as locking it to a handrail, in a stairwell, to a fire hydrant, or in a fire lane.

____ Your bicycle is not registered.
Registration with the Traffic Bureau is required, and free. Call the Traffic Bureau at 255-4600 and you can register your bicycle over the phone (have your serial number and social security number handy), or ask to have registration card mailed to you.

Cornell is committed to providing a safer, healthier environment.

Please do your part:
- Lock your bicycle to appropriate facilities;
- Make sure your bicycle is registered;
- Observe the rules of the road (and campus);
- Be courteous to pedestrians, motorists, and other bicyclists;

Send us your comments or suggestions regarding bicycling on campus.

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Fill out this card and put it in a campus mail envelope and send it to:
Traffic Bureau, 136 Maple Avenue
Notice

Date: __________________ Officer: __________________

☐ Your bicycle appears to be abandoned.
This bike shows obvious signs of disuse or is currently illegal to travel on roadways due to inoperable brakes, drivetrain and/or flat tire(s). If you fail to either make your bike legally rideable or move it to private storage, your bike may be impounded.

☐ Your bicycle is not parked in a bicycle rack.
Please use the bike racks provided on campus. Bicycles may not be locked to fences, trees, signposts or any other non-rack fixture or plant. If you fail to move your bike to a rack, your bike may be impounded.

Nearest bike rack location: __________________________________________________________

☐ Your bicycle is parked in a Life Safety Zone, is creating a safety hazard, or is interfering with University Operations.
Do not park your bicycle in a way that constitutes a safety hazard, such as locking it in a hallway, stairwell, ramp or other means of egress, to a fire hydrant or other safety equipment, or in a fire lane. Bicycles parked in this manner may be impounded without notice.

If your bicycle is registered:
In addition to this notice, an attempt may be made to contact you via phone or e-mail regarding the violation indicated above.

☐ Your bicycle is not registered.
Registration with Commuter and Parking Services is required by the University and is free. Call 255-4600, e-mail transportation@cornell.edu, or fill in the registration card below and drop it in the campus mail to start the process. A sticker will be mailed to you and must be affixed to your bike in order to complete this process. Serial numbers are critical to registration. If you have questions regarding the location of the serial number, contact Cornell Police (255-1111) or Commuter and Parking Services for assistance.

Bike Registration Card

PLEASE PRINT

Name: ___________________________ Cornell I.D. #: ___________________________

Local address: ______________________________________________________________

Local phone: ___________ E-Mail address: _______ faculty staff student

Bicycle make: _______________________ model: ______________________

color: ________________________ trim color: ____________ ☐ men’s ☐ women’s

wheel size: _______________ style: ☐ mountain ☐ racing ☐ other ______________________

Serial number (very important): __________________________

Miscellaneous equipment: __________________________________________________________

You only need to register your bike with the University once. Your registration sticker will be mailed to you.
What the Diamonds Mean:

**White Diamonds**
exclusive bike lanes—
cyclists have the same rights
and responsibilities as motorists

**Yellow Diamonds**
shared walks—cyclists may ride on
these paths, but must yield to pedestrians

**Red Diamonds**
dismount zones—cyclists either dismount
and walk their bikes or circumvent the
area using bike lanes, bike routes,
and shared walks.

*Remember: Protect your head—wear a helmet.*

For more info and a bike map, get the *Bike Right* brochure.
Call 255-4600, or send e-mail to transportation@cornell.edu.

You can find more Cornell-related bike information at:
http://www.cornell.edu/Campus/Cycling.html

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**Cornell University**
Commuter and Parking Services
116 Maple Avenue

Cornell Campus Mail Only
Encouragement

Unfortunately, just having the option to bicycle or walk is often not enough. People need encouragement. One approach is simply to tell the public why it is so important to leave their car at home; personal health and a sustainable future for their children are just two compelling reasons. Other approaches involve setting an example and helping to reduce the hurdles that get in peoples’ way. At Cornell, we have chosen to synthesize both approaches.

Setting an Example

One of the first steps taken by the staff of Transportation Services around 1990 was to form a pedal-powered unit. Transportation Services Representatives (TSRs) who have responsibilities that require them to travel extensively around campus have the option of becoming a member of the bike unit. They are required to take a 10 hour Effective Cycling class and are then encouraged to use the bicycle as often as possible when conducting business around campus.

The benefits of this plan are numerous: the staff is setting a good example for others to witness; there are numerous teachable moments when conversations with the public take place; bicycling contributes positively to the personal health and well-being of the staff; bike hazards and problems can now be readily reported.
The Cornell Police have had a bike unit since 1993. The most recent addition to the roster of official cyclists is the office of Environmental Health and Safety. Both have realized many of the same benifits as previously cited. Currently, two of the staff are instructors for the Effective Cycling course. Good public relations are once again fostered when they serve as instructors with a class of cyclists.

Bikes on Buses

An encouragement initiative of a slightly different nature was the installation of bike racks on all the buses in the county. Although this was not one of the direct results of the Bike Right project, there was significant input and influence to insure its success. Tompkins County Area Transit (TCAT) is the first transit system in the state to have bike racks installed on its entire fleet of buses. This is a particularly appropriate enhancement to this community. The city of Ithaca sits at lake level with surrounding hills in all directions, providing a vertical challenge to all who choose pedal power.

![A bicycle in one of the TCAT bus-mounted bike racks.](image)

Just one year after the August, 1996 installation of the bike racks on buses, TCAT reported carrying 1,145 bicycles in September, 1997. September '97 is the first month that over 1,000 bikes were carried, with the previous high month being July of the same year with a total 819 bicycles carried. On average, one bike is carried for every 83 passengers, a most acceptable rate according to TCAT officials.

* Photo: Denise Weldon, Cornell University Photography
4-H Youth Education

4-H is the youth development component of Cornell Cooperative Extension which is based at Cornell University. The 4-H Bicycle Safety Education Program is housed in the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. Field staff and volunteers throughout the state are involved in a variety of project offerings including providing materials to classroom teachers, organizing skills events and offering educational workshops. In 1996, over 30,000 youth were reported to have participated in one or more of these events.

Workshops

Workshops have been presented, upon request, to groups representing law enforcement, community agencies and schools. Topics focused on providing participants with bicycling skills expertise, a perspective on youth development, and practical approaches to teaching youth.

An Organizer’s Guide to Bicycle Rodeos provided the participants with the take-home information necessary to work with youth in their communities. Younger cyclists must learn to stop and scan for traffic in the neighborhood. Older cyclists should learn how to make a safe left turn, identify and avoid hazards, select the proper lane when approaching an intersection and make emergency stops. Students of all ages should have plenty of opportunity to practice their skills on bicycles. One element always stressed in the workshops is that it takes time for people of all ages to develop the skills necessary to become proficient at bicycling.

Teacher Resource Guide

A resource for classroom teachers starting a new traffic safety program or enhancing an existing one in a school or community was written and made available to teachers and other educators. It guides the reader through some very important background materials about bicycling and walking, including information about the increase in popularity of these activities, crashes and injuries, learner profiles and synopses of educational messages. The Instructional Planning chapter provides a list of objectives to be considered in developing a plan; the Instructional Strategies chapter includes a wide range of activities and the Instructional Materials chapter has a number of worksheets that are suitable for duplication to use with students. There is also a list of additional information resources for those who wish to go more in-depth.
Getting There Safely Coloring Book

This 16 page booklet covers traffic safety tips for the 8 to 12 year old age group. Topics include walking, bicycling, school buses, and seat belts in cars. The information is presented with a theme of "walking and bicycling are fun and can be family-oriented activities." It also encourages the reader to think in terms of combining different travel modes into their trips (multi-modalism).

Police Cyclist Youth Mentor Project

This pilot project was designed to match police bicycle officers with teens in their community. The agencies and officers for the pilot were selected because of their current involvement with bicycle patrols. Each of the four pilot areas identified at least one police cyclist who was responsible for organizing an after school bicycle club with a small group of teenagers.

IPD Officer Dan Barker with a group of Ithaca teens. A parent looks on while a teen works with a young cyclist.

The objectives of the police cyclist youth mentor project were two-fold. First, participants would learn basic mechanics, bicycle handling and traffic skills. Then, they would learn how to teach bicycling skills to other youth in their community. The first objective was expected to be accomplished under the guidance of the police officer in their respective communities.

Teaching materials were provided and included:

- Effective Cycling Video - a 45 minute video covering the basics of "Effective Cycling", a cycling skills course.
- The Bicycle Project - A series of 5 lessons designed to teach basic bicycle handling skills to a group of youth.
- The Bicycle Tool Kit - A series of four lessons and accompanying video designed to teach basic bicycle repair.

The officers were responsible for recruiting the teens in their respective communities. Letters of invitation, personal contacts and some assistance from the local Cornell Cooperative Extension Youth Development staff resulted in a group of 3-6 teens for each of the officers.

The training and guidance for teaching skills to other youth was conducted as part of a two-day seminar held at Cornell University. The seminar was held twice, once in 1995 and again in 1996. The police mentors and the teens participated in a mix of classroom, on-bike, and parking lot activities. In 1995, the culminating event was the group running a rodeo for the neighborhood youth. Upon completion of the seminar, the teens and mentors returned to their communities and participated in a range of activities including group rides, presentations at schools, and running rodeos in local communities.

The program was modified for the 1996 seminar, based upon the evaluations and the experience of the first year. More emphasis was placed on developing the teens’ cycling skills and less emphasis on how to run a rodeo. This format provided for a more hands-on level of activity for the teens; they appeared to have more fun, and it was evident they were learning the necessary handling skills. The seminar was held at the end of June, just a few days into summer vacation. This was another reason for having the seminar more hands-on and less like a classroom situation.

The teaching responsibilities were shared among the project director, a Cornell Cooperative Extension youth educator and the police cyclists. All instructors were certified with either the League of American Bicyclists as an Effective Cycling Instructor, and/or the International Police Mountain Bike Association as a Police Cyclist Instructor. Both certifications insured a high standard among the instructors.

The officers who participated as mentors were positive about the project and had recommendations to enhance this type of program.

Recruitment

The venue for the training program for youth and mentors was a component of a Cornell-based statewide program, “June Events.” Because of the age restrictions (minimum age of 16) governing youth attendance, officers were limited as to whom they could recruit to participate. Those who recruited solely through the school system were limited by the time
frame that schools were in session (weekends were excluded). Some resistance regarding liability issues was met from administrators, and activities off school grounds were discouraged. A site that used a local neighborhood organization to recruit participants did not have the above mentioned problems. Another potential contact point suggested for future endeavors is that of summer recreation programs run by municipalities.

Liability

The concerns of liability are being addressed through the Cornell Cooperative Extension system. People who are enrolled as either leaders or youth members of the 4-H program are covered by the organization’s insurance when participating in sanctioned 4-H activities. Future endeavors should include efforts to make this point more clear to the participants.

Officer orientation

Due to the short start-up time of the project, orientation of the officers was limited to providing them with a packet of printed materials. Officers later reported that their lack of experience in working with youth was a limiting factor. It was suggested that some initial time should be spent in training the officers on how to more effectively work with youth. They agreed that utilizing groups such as scouts, explorers, 4-H clubs etc. would provide them with readily assembled groups and their existing leadership, both of which would be beneficial in implementing the program.

In conclusion, those involved felt the concept of this project had merit. It provided an opportunity for youth to work together with members of the local law enforcement community. The benefits included the participants’ increased cycling skills and experience in working with others in their community. It also provided an opportunity for the youth and the police officer to spend time together in a positive, mentoring environment.

The Future

The NYS 4-H Bicycle Safety education program continues to make advancements in its offerings of classroom materials, workshops and trainings. A new booklet, called *Getting There* is being field tested in the spring of 1998. Adults are being recruited to participate in a skills course to prepare them to more effectively teach on-bike skills to youth, and other developments are being explored as they arise.
Conclusions

The people involved in the bicycle and pedestrian initiatives of the last few years on the Cornell University Campus are to be commended for their contributions. This genuinely collaborative approach has resulted in the development of public awareness/educational initiatives, bicycle units in three campus departments/units, a registration program, a cyclist/pedestrian/motorist safety committee, and numerous other accomplishments that confirm the university’s commitment to engendering an environment of safety and mutual respect for pedestrians, bicyclists, in-line skaters, and motorists.

At present, many of the people who have been involved in this project have come forth in a volunteer capacity. Those who are involved are more than happy to participate and their sincerity is evident. But unfortunately, in too many situations when time pressures become overwhelming, their less official duties pertaining to the bicycle committee’s agenda are set aside. This is understandable. Perhaps the development of a bicycle and pedestrian program manager position for the university, a person with official responsibilities, would begin to address this problem. At a minimum, an in-depth review of a description for a dedicated position is due.

A person with program manager responsibilities would be able to coordinate efforts to insure that projects progress in a timely manner. The need for adequate bike parking on the campus is an example where numerous departments/units are involved and coordination is requisite. Continued educational and enforcement efforts would similarly benefit as would initiatives such as the development of a “commuter club,” a recognition and encouragement program for those who bicycle to school or work. This, and other suggestions have much potential for good public relations and avenues to make the campus more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

It must be pointed out, however, that the work of these last few years is only the beginning if Cornell University is to truly realize its commitment. A genuinely comprehensive approach will require the continued commitment from representatives of the engineering, planning, enforcement, adjudication and education fields on campus.