


# BICYCLES IN CITIES



Vol. XI

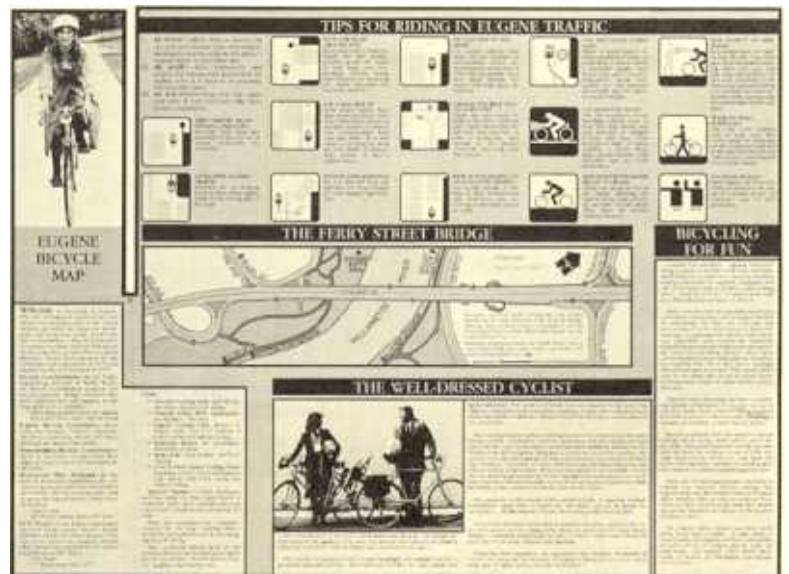
## PROMOTION, EDUCATION, AND ENFORCEMENT

 Promoting bicycling in Eugene is like selling ice cream at a Fourth-of-July picnic: it is an attractive product with a ready market. Educating cyclists to ride effectively and safely has proven to be trickier. The notion that bicycling is a playful activity that just "comes naturally" is hard to stamp out.

**PROMOTION.** An already-enthusiastic cycling population has readily accepted the City's promotional efforts. The City offers maps and brochures about the Eugene bicycle system to the public. A bicycle safety brochure and a simple map of the proposed system were the first promotional materials tried in 1971. Updated every few years, these materials chronicle the City's developing program. The most recent map, printed in 1982 on water-proof paper, is packed with useful information. In addition to route designations, it marks schools and other major destinations, indicates the locations of major hills and danger points, provides safety and educational information, and indicates bicycle rental locations and repair shops. For the first time, there is a charge for the map.\*



**Multi-colored bicycle map, 22" x 28"**, is printed on tough, water-proof paper. The wide gray lines circling the city center, isochronal lines, estimate distances bicyclists can ride in 5 minutes. Lines are closer together in hilly southern sections of city. Map back (**below**) sells bicycle safety.



\*Map available from Traffic Engineering, City Hall II, 858 Pearl, Eugene, OR 97401. Send \$2.00.



City-provided maps and brochures promote as well as educate.

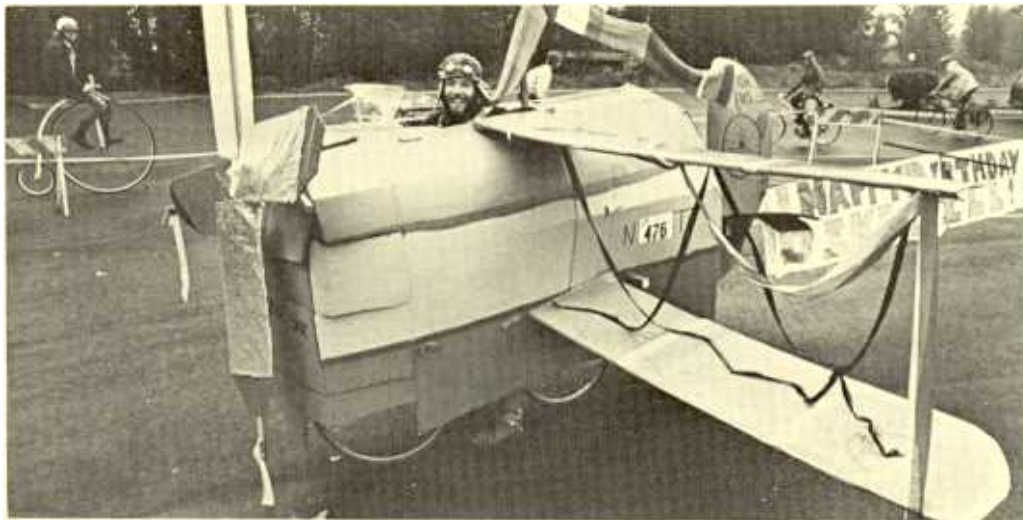
A police department brochure says "protect your investment" and urges bicyclists to engrave the driver's license number of the owner or parent on the bicycle.

Another pamphlet makes a direct effort to lure new commuter cyclists. Members of the Eugene Bicycle Committee took advantage of rush hour traffic stall to give the pamphlet to motorists waiting on a traffic-clogged bridge. The pamphlet title is "Save Time, Ride a Bike".

A booth at the County Fair proved to be a good promotion center. Lane County's week-long fair attracts one-third of a million visitors. Bicycle Committee members took turns manning the booth, giving out

materials and answering questions. A suggestion box and questionnaires helped identify bicycle trouble spots. However, county fairs consume not only cotton candy but also vast amounts of volunteer time. After five years, when the City's bicycle program was well accepted, the Committee gave up the fair booth with evident relief. During the program's infancy, the booth helped win public support.

When major new bicycle facilities such as bicycle bridges or important independent paths are put into service, dedication ceremonies net the bicycle program wide publicity. Dedication events include bicycle decoration contests, brass bands, plaque unveilings, ice cream, and speeches by local, state and national elected officials. One path dedication also commemorated the 10th anniversary of the state law that provides bikeway funding. A banner trailing a decorated bike read, "Happy Birthday, Bike Bill."



Dedication ceremony includes bike decoration contest and nets wide publicity for bicycle program. "Plane-o-bike" won first prize; but when pilot prepared to leave, rain-sodden machine fell apart.



Also important to the City's promotional program are the rides and tours conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department. These complement the activities of three local cycling clubs which offer tours and racing.

**BICYCLE COORDINATORS.** The City's two half-time bicycle coordinators, working in the Traffic Engineering Division, play a big part in the education and promotion efforts. They serve as a ready source of information about the City's cycling program. They speak to schools and civic groups and are a contact for the news media.

**EDUCATION.** The City's education efforts have had a frustrating side. Efforts to develop a safety education program in the schools have been stymied by a lack of curriculum time to devote to bicycle safety. A series of lunch hour commuter workshops designed to educate potential cyclists received only a lukewarm response from the business community. And, as the newspaper's Letters-to-the-Editor column suggests, there is still a wide gulf of misunderstanding between cyclists and the general public regarding the on-street behavior of cyclists.

On the brighter side, the Parks Department teaches a popular series of classes and workshops on effective cycling. Classes on bicycle maintenance have proven particularly popular. The local newspaper has been an effective voice, running a number of well-written feature articles about cycling. Articles have ranged from general cycling safety to a discussion of helmets or riding the Riverbank Trail System. Twice-yearly bike safety campaigns are conducted by the Rotary Club. At the request of the Eugene Bicycle Committee, the local office of the Division of Motor Vehicles redesigned the route of its motor vehicle driving test to include driving next to and turning across an on-street bike lane.

Public service announcements aim at both motorists and bicyclists. One radio spot warned motorists: "The next bicyclist you hit might be your neighbor, your grandmother, or even your Mayor!"

**LICENSING FAILURE.** Mandatory bicycle licensing, begun in 1972 and repealed by the City Council in 1977, did not discourage bicycle thefts nor generate revenue.

Problems with the licensing program centered on the use of existing bicycle frame serial numbers. The numbers were often incorrectly read or recorded, e.g. 4's look like A's, and coordination with other agencies proved impossible. Other licensing problems were: frequent changes in ownership and address; a sample effort to renew by mail yielded only a 17% response rate; enforcement was not practical; and costs exceeded revenues. When purported benefits, such as enhanced recovery of stolen bikes, did not materialize, voluntary compliance declined and bike shops stopped cooperating.

The City's current program is not mandatory. Community service officers or volunteers stamp driver's license numbers on bikes at community events. Since driver's license numbers are already part of the inter-agency computer system, information retrieval for stolen bikes is simplified.



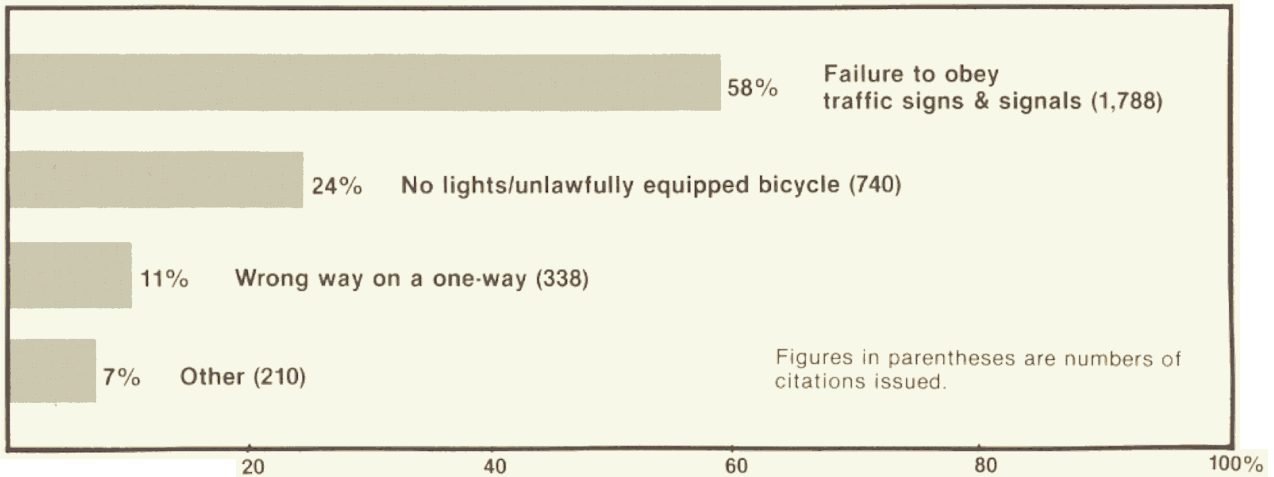
City Bicycle Coordinator since 1976, Diane Bishop has taken two maternity leaves and currently job shares with Charles Nordgaard.



The county's five Rotary Clubs conduct twice-yearly safety campaigns.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT.** Eugene's success in putting large numbers of cyclists on the street makes brushes with the law inevitable. Statistics from the Eugene Police Department shed some light on the frequency of traffic violations by cyclists. During 1979, 1980 and 1981, a total of 3076 traffic citations were issued to cyclists. As the accompanying table shows, failure to obey traffic signs and signals led the list by a wide margin, followed by various equipment violations, mostly related to failure to use lights at night.


Citations Issued to Eugene Bicyclists (1979 through 1981)



Source: Eugene Police Department

Controversy continues to surround bicycle behavior at stop signs. Most bicyclists treat them as yield signs. Some officers ignore these violations; others interpret the stop sign requirement strictly. More bicycles seem to be adequately lighted than ever before -- probably the result of police ticketing, safety campaigns, and the availability of better bike lights.

Bicycle theft is a continuing and disheartening problem in Eugene. Most stolen bicycles are not recovered. However, the present practice of engraving driver's license numbers on bicycles increases the return of convenience thefts. Occasional bicycles are even returned from out-of-town locations.

An innovative effort to extend the long arm of the law to the City's off-street bicycle system involves putting police officers on bicycles and mopeds. During the Summer, uniformed and plainclothes officers patrol independent paths at irregular intervals to enforce cycling laws and generally make their presence known. This method of providing police visibility is particularly suited to the Riverbank Trail System. 



Information from cyclist extends eyes and ears of police investigating riverbank trail problem.

**BICYCLES IN CITIES**  
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