

SUMMER 2021

Placentia: Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training Youth Follow-up Event

Creating Safer Streets for Walking and Biking



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Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the Planning Committee for inviting us back into their community and partnering with us to make Placentia a safer place to walk and bike. A warm thank you to the Placentia Rotary Club and the Placentia Collaborative for providing snacks, water, and prizes for all youth attendees. We would also like to acknowledge the many community members who participated in the workshop, especially the LOT318 youth that provided their curiosity, expertise, and creativity to meaningfully inform and strengthen the workshop's outcomes.

We also want to acknowledge the Kizh, Acjachemen, and Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of the area surrounding the City of Placentia.

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LOT318 youth at the LOT318 parklet.

Executive Summary

The Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training (CPBST) is a statewide project of California Walks (Cal Walks) and the University of California at Berkeley's Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) that engages residents and safety advocates to develop a community-driven action plan to improve walking and biking safety in their communities. Through the CPBST program, Cal Walks and SafeTREC (Project Team) provides follow-up support to communities who previously participated in the program during any previous years. The goal of follow-up support is to provide technical assistance to communities in implementing community and/or Project Team recommendations outlined in the site's original CPBST Summary & Recommendations Report.

The Placentia follow-up education and encouragement event which took place on June 18 and 19, 2021, was a continuation of the [La Jolla, Placentia CPBST workshop](#) held in 2020. One of the top priorities that surfaced after the CPBST training in 2020 was to strengthen the Placentia Bicycle Club in order to create a safe space for youth to lead, organize, and gather on Placentia's streets. The community also saw a need to educate, empower, and promote community building for youth through community bike rides.

This youth education and encouragement follow-up event was collaboratively planned and facilitated by LOT318, Community Action Partnership of Orange County, Placentia Collaborative, Walk n Rollers, and the Project Team. The goals for the youth-centered event were to:

1. Expand and strengthen the Placentia Youth Bike Club by connecting with and gaining support from local community groups;
2. Educate youth on safe biking practices and behaviors on Placentia's streets to increase rider confidence and rider predictability;
3. Provide youth with an opportunity to share strengths and concerns regarding riding on Placentia's streets to identify opportunities for bike infrastructure safety improvements; and
4. Encourage more youth and community residents to bike in the City of Placentia.

The education and encouragement follow-up event consisted of:

- A biking assessment with Letty Gali, LOT318's Executive Director, to assess Placentia's main streets and identify a route that connects youth to key community resources;
- A virtual educational presentation on Safe System Biking Strategies to identify safety concerns, youth programs, and infrastructure projects needed in the community; and
- An in-person bike education safety training to teach youth the rules of the road and prepare them for a group bike ride; and A fun youth group bike ride, culminating in a competition where the youth created educational bike safety TikTok videos.

Safe System Biking Strategies and On-the-Road Bike Safety Education

The Project Team hosted a virtual training on Friday, June 18, 2021, to educate youth on bike infrastructure that can improve road safety and community programs to strengthen the youth bike club. Bike infrastructure included different types of bike lanes, bike sensors, bike boxes, biking parking, and bike repair stations. After the training, participants shared they have a better understanding of how to safely use these biking facilities after the training. For example, participants learned to safely get off and walk their bikes through the parklet in Old Town Placentia during the group ride. Community programs were also shared to encourage youth to collaborate with the City of Placentia and local community partners in their bike club activities. Programs included bike rodeos, community bike rides, how to select a bike route, participatory campaigns, earn-a-bike programs, photo and video voice, and other programs.



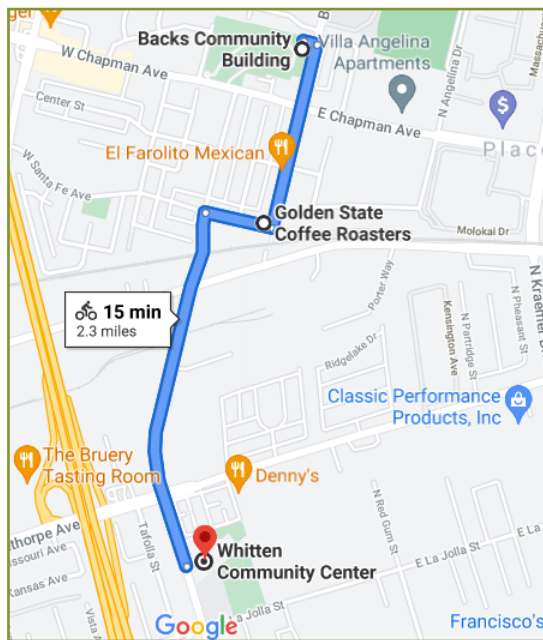
Youth walking their bikes through the parklet.

The City of Placentia received funding from the Office of Traffic Safety to provide on-the-road pedestrian and bicycle safety education to the community. The Planning Committee partnered with [Walk 'n Rollers](#) to lead a bike safety education training at the Whitten Community Center before the group ride. The training included rules of the road, essential road safety equipment, proper helmet fitting, ABC Quick Check, basic bike mechanics, choosing a bike, and how to ride in a group.



LEFT: Placentia youth at the on-the-road bike safety training. RIGHT: Walk 'n Rollers Executive Director demonstrating helmet fitting tips.

Biking Assessment and Encouragement Group Youth Ride: South Melrose Street Route



South Melrose Street Route.

Focus

On June 15, 2021, the Project Team and Letty Gali, LOT318's Executive Director, conducted an on-bike assessment with youth participants of some of Placentia's key biking routes to determine the comfort and safety level for youth riders, connect youth to Placentia's key assets and destinations, increase community ownership of the city's streets, and build a stronger biking culture amongst youth and in the larger community. The route was meant to highlight bike connections to Kramer Park, Placentia Senior Center, Old Town Placentia, the Whitten Center, Melrose Elementary School, and Valdez Middle School. The group youth ride on June 19, 2021, was 2.3 miles round trip, with stops at Whitten Community Center, Kramer Park, and Old Town Placentia. At the ride stops, youth participants provided input about the route and created educational safety TikTok videos to highlight something they learned throughout the event. The TikTok videos will be used by LOT318 and the future Placentia bike cooperative to educate other youth and adult residents.

Strengths

1. Residents walk and bike to the Whitten Community Center for free to low-cost community programs and services, including food distribution programs, COVID-19 vaccine clinic, document translation and assistance, a public pool, a playground, the Placentia Head Start program, and McFadden Park. Whitten hosted walking and biking safety workshops this summer and will hold additional classes in the fall.
2. The City of Placentia closed Santa Fe Avenue in Old Town Placentia to create a parklet for local businesses. The parklet has shaded picnic tables, potted plants, and prioritizes pedestrian access, comfort, and safety. The parklets create destinations for bicyclists.
3. Residents walk and bike to Kramer Park to enjoy its many amenities, including paved walking paths, a playground, lots of big shading trees, and a shaded picnic table area.
4. This was the first time any of the youth participants had ridden a bicycle on the street. Previously, they have only ridden on shared-use paths or on the sidewalk. Participants shared they gradually felt more comfortable riding on the road as the ride progressed.
5. Local Placentia residents and organizations such as the Rotary Club, have expressed their interest in supporting the establishment of the Placentia youth bike club. Support can include contributing their memberships' technical expertise, building relationships with the City of Placentia, and potential funding opportunities.
6. Two youth groups created bike education and encouragement TikTok videos. [The first group's video](#) showcased three steps to ensure you are wearing a helmet correct, including adjusting the straps under your ears to create a "V" shape, checking one finger fits between the straps and your chin, and that the helmet is evenly leveled on your head.
7. [The second youth group's video](#) gave a recap of the group ride including practicing bike handling skills during the pre-ride safety training, visiting the parklet in Old Town Placentia, and signaling your direction to all road users when entering Kramer Park.



TOP LEFT: Youth riding to old town Placentia, at the Bradford Avenue/Chapman Avenue intersection. **TOP RIGHT:** The Parklet on Santa Fe Avenue with participants' bicycles. **CENTER LEFT:** LOT318 youth riding on South Melrose Street towards Kramer Park. **CENTER RIGHT:** LOT318 Executive Director assessing Bradford Avenue where there is a bike route. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The shaded picnic table area at Kramer Park. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The presentation of TikTok videos.

Concerns

1. Road conditions along Melrose Street, from La Jolla Street and Crowther Avenue, are cracked, crumbling, and uneven. These conditions can cause bike tire damage and contribute to falls and near-misses between all road users
2. Drivers appear to travel above the 40 miles per hour posted speed limit along South Melrose Street. Throughout Placentia, bicyclists observed drivers' failure to yield to bicyclists, and failure to provide the minimum three-foot buffer when passing bicyclists. During the bike assessment, an aggressive driver cut in front of the bicyclists, forcing them into the left-hand travel lane, and then got out of their car to yell at them to get off of the roadway. This type of behavior is very unsettling for bicyclists and reinforces the misperception that the road is limited to one mode of transportation. Participants shared that these experiences discourage them from biking in Placentia.
3. South Melrose Street is a bike route but only two bike route signs were observed by ride participants. This causes bicyclists to feel unseen by drivers as they are forced to share the road on high-speed congested lanes.
4. Narrow sidewalks on South Melrose Street, in front of Whitten Community Center, do not provide enough space for students, and parents with strollers walking to and from Melrose Elementary School and Valdez Middle School Academy. The narrow sidewalks often force students to walk on the street, which is a high-speed road leading to a State Route 57 onramp.
5. Participants shared bus routes that run through the city and connect Placentia to the rest of Orange County do not come by frequently enough to be reliable transportation. The Orange County Transit Bus routes #153 and #30 travel along Melrose Street and Orangethorpe Avenue run every hour. Additionally, bus stops in Placentia do not have shade structures or benches, making it difficult to travel by bus.



BOTTOM LEFT: Cal Walks Staff passes the only observed bike route signage traveling north on South Melrose Street. BOTTOM RIGHT: Cracked uneven pavement on South Melrose Street in front of Whitten Community Center, during Melrose Elementary School's dismissal time.

Opportunities

The following recommendations are based on observed and experienced bicycle safety concerns, Safe System strategies, and workshop participants' priorities. Ultimately, local stakeholders, such as City staff and the Planning Committee, may need to refine the recommendations to ensure they are appropriate for the current walking and biking environment.

- An in-person bike education safety training to teach youth the rules of the road and prepare them for a group bike ride; and A fun youth group bike ride, culminating in a competition where the youth created educational bike safety Tik Tok videos. Planning Committee members would like to create a bike cooperative in Placentia to teach youth basic bike mechanics, provide bike safety education, and serve as a hub for the Placentia Bike Club. They have acquired a container for bicycle storage and are currently searching for a location to establish the cooperative.
- Planning Committee members would like to expand the existing youth bike club to adults and parents of the youth to create a stronger biking culture in Placentia. When the whole family gets involved, communities are able to raise awareness about their roles and responsibilities as drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists within the City.
- The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee partner with the City of Placentia to implement a robust safety messaging campaign geared towards drivers and bicyclists. Messaging towards drivers should include sharing the road, decreasing driving speed, and providing at least 3 feet when passing bicyclists. Messaging towards bicyclists can include riding in the direction of traffic and being visible on the road. Messages can be posted adjacent to schools, parks, community centers, and congested high-speed roads. Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Go Human Campaign provides free [Safety & Encouragement Co-Branding materials](#) that can be customized to reflect the community's culture and language needs, including Spanish.
- The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee work with the City of Placentia to host a Bike Lights and Helmet Distribution program to provide crucial safety equipment to Placentia's most vulnerable users. This will encourage safe riding, prevent head injuries, and increase bicyclists' visibility. A distribution program is usually held in conjunction with basic bike education. The City can reference [Santa Ana's bicycle safety equipment distribution program](#). The City can use the [La Jolla, Placentia CPBST 2020 crash data factsheet and presentation](#) to identify high-priority locations to distribute the safety equipment.
- The Project Team recommends that the Planning Committee work with the City of Placentia to apply for funding to implement some of the safety improvements identified. Two funding opportunities to explore include:
 - Caltrans' [Active Transportation Program](#) provides funding to communities throughout California to support infrastructure projects, non-infrastructure projects and plans to further active modes of transportation like walking and biking.
 - The California [Office of Traffic Safety](#) provides [Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Grants](#) that promote safe behaviors and the use of roadways when walking or biking. Programs are designed for high-risk populations, including youth and older community members, all in an effort to teach safer driving, bicycling, and walking behaviors.

Conclusion

LOT318 Youth Bike Club's educational and community engagement work has been essential in creating a stronger biking culture in Placentia, especially the development of Pedal Placentia, a new bike cooperative intended to teach youth bike maintenance and education. Collectively, the City's and the community's work towards creating safer streets for walking and biking has strengthened partnerships between the City, LOT318, Pedal Placentia, Placentia Rotary Club, and the Placentia Collaborative. Along with California Walks' and SafeTREC's continued support, we are hopeful that the City of Placentia and its residents will co-create just, safe, and equitable streets and public spaces.

For a more detailed discussion of the past Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Trainings this workshop references, please download the full reports on [SafeTREC's](#) or [Cal Walks'](#) websites. The 2020 La Jolla, Placentia CPBST is available [here](#).

Thank you for your interest in the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program. For more information, please visit:

<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/programs/cpbst> or <https://www.calwalks.org/cpbst>

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