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A section of the Metro Orange Line Bike Path runs past the Desoto station, near the intersection of Desoto Avenue and Victory Boulevard in Canoga Park. Photos by Jori Stern.



Valley Residents Find Path to Happiness Along Metro Orange Line

By JORI STERN

(April 20, 2007) You might not recognize it when you see it, but the bike path between Warner Center and North Hollywood is an integral part of the Metro System.

The Metro Orange Line Bike Path, which opened in 2005, began in 1999 with the idea of "making the Orange Line more than just a bus line," says Transportation Planning Manager Lynne Goldsmith.

In 2006 Metro came up with a plan called the Metro Bicycle Strategic Plan, its entire focus being how to deal with bicycle transit and eliminate car trips. The Metro Orange Line Bike Path was born.

For bicycle riders on the Orange Line what are the most popular routes? According to Goldsmith the most traveled route would be to the North Hollywood station.

She also points out that the bike path near Balboa and Reseda stations is heavily used due to the nearby colleges, commercial real estate and medical facilities.

With so many people using the bike path, is safety ever an issue? Goldsmith says the entire path is "lighted in all places that are not adjacent to the street."

On the bike path near De Soto Station, a runner named Michael, 39, claimed to run about five or six days a week on the pedestrian pathway. "I've never had any safety problems myself."



Michael ,39, uses the bike path to run five or six days a week.

‘Looks pretty nice’

Michael also appreciated the appearance and cleanliness of the bike path. "The gardeners are always here keeping the path up, so it looks pretty nice."

Michelle, 35, and her son John, 15, who were headed on an errand,

ride their bicycles about three to four times a week. Michelle usually rides with her other son from the De Soto Station to the North Hollywood Station, which takes about four hours.

"We ride the Orange Line, the Red Line, the Blue Line, we take everything," Michelle said. She enjoys bicycling along the Orange Line path best. "It's nice to have your own designated area, where you don't have to deal with cars."

Nathan Bell, 21, who was out for a short run before work, shares that view. "It's good that the bikers and walkers have their own path that takes you away from traffic. The trees and shading kind of blocks the buildings so it's nice, I really like it."

Not that distance does not play a part in his opinion. "I live over by Van Owen and Woodley, about a half-hour from work, so it's a great ride."

Feeling of safety

At the College Park Station, Valerie, 47, who runs the path about four to five times a week, enjoys her five-mile trek in part because of the feeling of safety she experiences. "I feel safe on it; for whatever reason. I usually travel in the mornings when there are more people on it."

Anna, 45, sees the bike path in a different light, not only its positive aspects, but how to expand the path.

"It works great for shorter distances, and the path is so clean, I love it," said Anna. "There should be more paths, though. I'd like to see Metro put a path in the Valley by the Aqueduct near the Los Angeles River."

Gil, 25, who rides twice a week to Fallbrook and back, shares that sentiment. He enjoys the fact that the path stretches from one side of the Valley to the other and hopes that Metro will build a stretch next to the river.

Gil prefers to ride in the mornings. He finds the bike path, "Great for getting out in the fresh air." He also enjoys riding along the bike path in the afternoons, "When the sun comes and it's nice and warm for rides."

Two men at the Van Nuys Station who were walking along the bike path for the first time had the best answer of all. Asked why they were taking the path that day Joel, 65 said, "Life is short, and you never know which path you're going to end up taking."

