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Metro team puts bicycling on the map in Los Angeles County. The new map has a topographical face and a database ready for a surge of developer applications. Pictured from left, Sr. Programmer Analyst Patrick Soto, Bike Program Manager Lynne Goldsmith and Planning intern Nate Baird.

Metro's new Bike Map goes topo with an app-hungry database and detailed insets of L.A. County bikeways

(July 21, 2010) Thanks to a timely update of the Metro Bike Map, the millions of bicyclists in Southern California can more easily navigate the far-flung regions of Los Angeles County. And, yes, Los Angeles has hills. They're all here, furrowing the detailed insets of L.A. County's most-biked neighborhoods.



Nate Baird examines the 35-inch by 24 1/2-inch fold-out map printed in time for major distribution during BikeWeek L.A. in May.

The map details the bikeways in bold colors and

With its topographical facelift and a thoroughly comprehensive database, the new map makes great strides in satisfying the expanding needs list of the growing community of cyclists who are populating near to 1,500 miles of bike paths, on-street lanes and designated bike routes, said Transportation Planning Manager Lynne Goldsmith, who coordinates Metro's Bike Program and Policy.

What's more, the streamlined database can be continuously updated, eliminating the need to start anew when it comes time to

includes key symbols showing bike path access points and the location of bicycle lockers and racks.

Metro Rail and Metrolink lines are laid out on the Bike Map, along with the Metro Orange Line and Metro Rapid routes. There are insets showing the length of the San Gabriel River Bike Path, bikeways in western LA County, Pasadena, Downtown and Hollywood, San Pedro, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica, Long Beach and Santa Catalina Island. Several of the insets include details of the local streets.

Side panels also provide information about rules for bicycles on Metro buses and trains, tips for successful bicycle commuting and URLs for Metro, [LADOT Bicycle Program](#), the [LA County Bicycle Coalition](#) and [Bikestation](#).

The Metro Bike Map is a collaboration of several Metro departments, including Creative Services, Customer Communications, ITS, Transportation Program Development and Transportation Planning.



Check it out: online at [Bike Metro](#)

print a refreshed version.

The new map is based on a database of bike routes and paths collected from 88 cities and Los Angeles County over a period of four months, said planning intern Nate Baird, a car-free bicyclist and a recent graduate of Cal Poly Pomona, who's applied his education in urban and regional planning, as well as skills learned on the job, to the task at hand.

"A lot has happened since the first Bike Map was prepared for printing in 2005," he said. "A number of cities have implemented new projects and facilities, and the importance of being able to release the data digitally has increased dramatically."

Baird credits Sr. Programmer Analyst Patrick Soto in Information Management for guiding the formatting of the database. "He pointed me to best practices for collecting the data

into a format that will be simpler to update and maintain over time," said Baird.

The multifaceted map was a collaboration among Metro departments: Customer Communications contracted with CHK for the cartography and coordinated the printing and distribution. Research & Development funded the cartography contract and printing from a Rideshare grant. Creative Services designed the easy-to-read 35x24 1/2-inch fold-out map. ITS provided GIS and database guidance. Planning intern Nate Baird collected and formatted all the new data, and ensured that content important to bicyclists was included, such as topography and as much local street information as possible.

With current printed versions already online, Baird's next step is to ready the bikeways data for [Metro's developers site](#). "Developers will then be able to get their hands on it and create all kinds of applications that cyclists can use, such as finding bike routes on their cell phones, or even rating them according to their usefulness," he said.

"There's a high demand right now," said Baird. A total of 45,000 maps were printed one week before BikeWeek L.A., with the first hot-off-the-press quantity distributed to bicycle organizations and pitstops in time for Bike to Work Day. The rest have gone to Metro customer centers and regional distribution points throughout the county, such as visitor centers, bike shops, rideshare partners and schools and universities.

Baird and Bike Program Manager Lynne Goldsmith continue to get weekly e-mails and calls asking for Bike Maps. Sharelle Jones writes in from the City of Hope in Duarte: "Five of us biked in today, so we will be making

use of the maps & kits you sent."

What pleases Goldsmith the most is requests for bike maps from out-of-towners, such as the note from Quebec: "We are 2 guys in the fifties who do that type of travel on bikes every year. We plan to bike around Las Vegas a few days, take the bus to Los Angeles, bike a few days in L.A. and after ride the distance between L.A. and San Francisco."

"Yes, people come to L.A. to bike! Now I have proof!" she said.

The high demand for Bike Maps is the tip of the iceberg in the growing interest for infrastructure that supports bicycling as an official mode of transportation.

Speaking at the Bicycle Roundtable series initiated to work with public stakeholders on bicycle issues, Baird invited an invigorated group of cyclists to review and evaluate the map. "The new database will make immediate updates possible," he said, "and we welcome your input."

Proofreaders like that, he said, will help eliminate any errors that dare to linger.

--Gayle Anderson