

## Foot power: Report reveals Marin's biking, walking habits

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Every day, Marin residents log more than 131,000 miles by bike and on foot, according to the first report on the county's participation in a \$100 million nationwide pilot project aimed at getting people out of cars.

The percentage of daily trips made by bicycling or walking is an estimated 13.6 percent, according to the study. That's better than the national average of 9.5 percent.

The report to Congress, released Wednesday, details baseline data for the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program, which is in its second year. The next report, showing the impact of the pilot, will be issued in 2010-11.

Marin and three other communities - Minneapolis, Minn.; Sheboygan County, Wis.; and Columbia, Mo. - were picked for the trial in which



each community was given \$20 million for bike paths and other improvements aimed at increasing biking and foot traffic.

The goal is to decrease auto-related pollution and fuel consumption, which will help fight global

warming and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Marin's travel statistics are based on resident surveys and traffic counts conducted in communities along Highway 101 in 2007.

Some 82 percent of Marin's daily trips are made by car or truck, according to the report. Nearly 12 percent are made on foot, 1.8 percent are by bike and 3.2 percent are via bus.

Marin's average daily trip by bike is 8.6 miles. By foot, it is 2.3 miles.

Compared with the other three counties, Marin residents have the longest average commute - 32 minutes, topping Minneapolis, which posted a 22-minute commute.

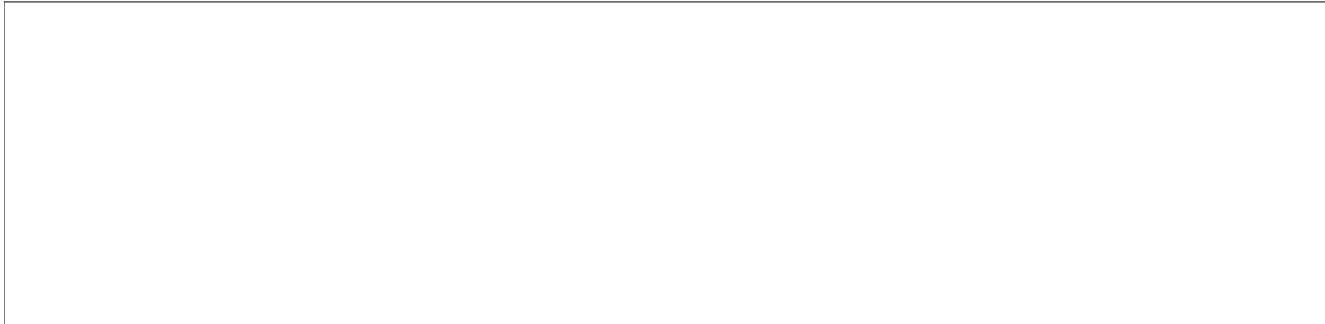
Marin's plan includes 23 capital projects and planning studies, ranging from bike path improvements along Mahon Creek in San Rafael, Alameda del Prado in Novato and Doherty Drive in Larkspur to a study on opening the Alto Tunnel for a Mill Valley-to-Corte Madera bike path and bike improvements between Fairfax and San Rafael.

"This program and its legacy will change the face of transportation in communities across the country," Marin Supervisor Steve Kinsey said. "Its contribution, and that of walking and bicycling, to the nation's fight against global warming will be notable."

Deb Hubsmith, advocacy director of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, said the report shows that Marin residents are already doing better than average in terms of walking or biking to where they need to go.

"It provides a baseline and it also shows, surprisingly, we do a lot already," said Hubsmith,

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who was instrumental in having Marin named as a pilot county. She's hoping that the projects and studies will help result in a 25 percent increase in people logging more miles biking and walking rather than driving cars.

The proposed improvements will make it easier and safer to make that choice, she said.

Supervisor Judy Arnold said she's hoping bike path improvements along Alameda del Prado in Novato make it more inviting for people to walk or bike to the bus stop.

"I think anything we can do like that is great," she said.

With \$20 million in federal money available for the projects, it's up to Marin to show the investment generates results, Arnold said.

#### ON THE NET

- The Marin bike report is posted at the Federal Highway Administration Web site: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/nt pp/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/nt_pp/)

- Marin's program: [www.walkbikemarin.org](http://www.walkbikemarin.org)

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