

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NEWS

HUMBOLDT COUNTY JUNE 2020



IN THIS ISSUE

CRAZY FOR E-BIKES

**THE CONNECTION
BETWEEN COVID AND
AIR QUALITY**

**PRIORITIZATION TOOL
UPDATE**

FOGGY GLASSES?

**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IS
NOT A GAME**

Crazy for e-Bikes

by Jenny Weiss

Electric bicycles have been getting more popular in recent years but they were not really on my radar until the Redwood Coast Energy Authority announced it was providing over \$40,000 in rebates for the purchase of electric bicycles to existing residential electricity customers. Since then, I have seen more electric bikes on our local roads and trails than ever before.

The program was created with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Humboldt County. By replacing car trips with electric bicycle trips, county residents can help improve air quality while

getting exercise at the same time. Using an electric bike can help make bike commuting more feasible by eliminating the barriers that can prevent people from cycling, such as headwinds and steep hills. Adding a power assist can help extend the range cyclists go in hopes of encouraging more people to ride rather than drive.

In order to determine which type of electric bike is right for you, you will need to assess what you will be using it for and under what conditions will you be riding. You may be looking to transport children to school or carry groceries back home. Perhaps you want to be able to keep up with a more fit cyclist, or maybe you are looking solely for a means of transportation. These factors will play a part in helping you determine which bike would work best for you. Electric bikes come in many styles with a variety of features and components and prices range from around \$600 all the way up to \$7000. Electric bikes are also considerably heavier than conventional bicycles so this is another consideration when deciding whether or not to purchase.

Let's not forget the fact that e-biking is also one of the most convenient and inexpensive forms of transportation out there. Electric bikes can help you go further for less money than any other form of transportation. A study first conducted in 2012 and later updated in 2018 to reflect inflation determined that while \$1 will get you 12 miles in a motorized sedan, 23 miles on a motorcycle, and 43 miles on a scooter, that same dollar will get you 628 miles on an electric bike.

It is important you take the time to do research if you are interested in learning more about electric bicycles. Wired magazine, focusing on technology, culture, and the economy put out out a helpful

[article](#) comparing different models by price. [People For Bikes](#) also has a wealth of e-bike information on their website. Redwood Energy Authority's electric bike rebate program began on Earth Day and continues until October 2020 or when funding runs out. For more information about the Redwood Energy Authority's e-bike rebate program or to determine if rebate funds are still available, visit their [website](#) or call 707-269-1700.



The Connection Between Covid-19 and Air Quality



Researchers have been busy studying the link between air quality and the severity of coronavirus cases. There is evidence that air pollution is contributing to a more severe outbreak of COVID-19 and has led to more fatalities from the disease than there would have been with less air pollution. The reason? Air pollution particles may be acting as a vehicle for the transmission of the virus.

You may have been hearing about how coronavirus quarantines and lockdowns have actually improved global air pollution. Satellite photos have shown drastically improved air quality in places like China, Korea, and India as well as in the US. Formerly murky canals in Venice are becoming visibly cleaner and residents are seeing wildlife return for the first time in many years. These unintentional consequences are likely the result of people staying home and the outcome is less pollution from fewer carbon emissions released into the atmosphere.

While this is welcome news during distressing times, new findings have shown that the more fine particulate matter there is in the atmosphere (pollution) the higher the number of coronavirus deaths there are. For example, the amount of air pollution that New York state typically has (measured in micro grams per cubic meter) is consistently higher than the safe limit threshold designated by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization. Researchers think this could have played a part in the scale of coronavirus deaths in New York which has had more deaths than any other state. The study, which looked at 3,080 counties in the US, suggests that people who live in places that are more polluted over time are more likely to die from coronavirus. A similar study in Italy also found a connection between coronavirus deaths and poor air quality.

This information is especially important to minority and low income communities who studies have shown are more likely to be exposed to air pollution because they are typically in a lower socioeconomic position, tend to have fewer educational opportunities and are often located closer to major sources of pollution. This means poorer people and some racial and ethnic groups may face more health challenges than nonwhite people and have a higher rate of mortality from coronavirus.



Therefore, improving air pollution is not only a public health issue, it is an matter of social justice. If, when lockdowns ease up globally, we go back to the same polluting technologies and habits, air quality is expected to worsen again. Focusing on improving air quality as much as we can may help reduce the likelihood

of a second wave of coronavirus.

As many active transportation advocates already know, one way to achieve this is to ease up on our intensive use of fossil fuels by making it safer and more convenient to get around by foot and bicycle. Some cities are already stepping up to create better mobility options rather than going back to single passenger car trips once lockdowns are lifted. Investing in infrastructure and education to encourage more walking, cycling, and transit use will not only help improve public health on an individual level, it could also greatly contribute to sustained improved air quality and contribute to fewer coronavirus deaths in the longrun.

The Humboldt Bay Area Bike Map



Taking a bike ride is a great way to get exercise, clear your mind, and connect with nature during these stressful times. Plan your route by using the **Humboldt Bay Area Bike Map!** The 2018 edition includes route suggestions appropriate for families and more advanced riders, safety tips, and local cycling resources.

The map is available [online](#) or to receive a free copy, contact the Humboldt County Association of Governments by calling 707-444-8208 to make arrangements for pickup.

Prioritization Tool Update for Humboldt

Most large pedestrian and bicycle safety improvement projects in Humboldt County are made possible by federal and state grants. Funding is set aside to reach goals such as improving pedestrian and bicycling safety, enhancing walking and bicycling opportunities for equitable transportation,

and decreasing car trips to reduce greenhouse gases. For many years, Humboldt County and the cities within the county acted on their own accord to apply for available funding. This created competition for limited funding among local jurisdictions.

In 2012, the Humboldt County Association of Governments, along with Redwood Community Action Agency, developed a tool to determine which schools have the greatest need for safety improvements as well as the capacity to carry out Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. The tool looks at internal and external need as well as school readiness in order to prioritize schools and streamline the decision making process. External need criteria included looking at existing speed limits, collision data, and assessing whether or not schools have existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in place, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes leading up to school campuses. Internal need meant looking at factors such as percentage of students receiving free or reduced meals and the health status of students. School readiness was also factored in to ensure there was a support system in place, such as a school champion, to keep SRTS momentum moving forward and help sustain programs. This was accomplished by making school inventory calls and speaking directly with school staff to get a better idea of their needs. The criteria were selected to give every school a fair shot at ranking high enough to be prioritized for improvements and education programs through federal and state grants such as Safe Routes to School and the Active Transportation Program. After collecting all the data, each school received a score and was ranked in order to inform jurisdictions countywide which schools not only had the greatest need and capacity but also had a higher likelihood of having their grant successfully awarded.



Above: Eagle Prairie Elementary 2nd graders practice safe walking through an Active Transportation Program grant.

The Countywide Safe Routes to School Task Force was also formed during the initial creation of the Prioritization Tool to help provide input and guidance for the project. Up until the coronavirus epidemic forced school closures and meeting cancellations, the Task Force had continued to meet regularly to provide walking and bicycling safety expertise and assistance to schools and districts.

Since the completion of the Prioritization Tool there have been at least ten SRTS or ATP grants awarded to jurisdictions within Humboldt County that have provided infrastructure improvements and/or education and encouragement programs benefiting more than 15 schools or districts. Even more schools have received improvements through other funding sources and efforts since the implementation of the tool because of the interest and momentum for safe walking and bicycling that the tool created.

Currently, the Humboldt County Association of Governments is making an update to the tool to reassess what we've accomplished and where we still need to provide assistance. They have been determining which schools and districts have received funding for improvements and which ones are next in line for assistance. When schools receive funding for improvements and education programs, it provides a benefit to the entire community. The Active Transportation Program (ATP) is the main source of funding and applications for ATP Cycle 5 will be due by September 15, 2020.



GOT NEWS?

Share it!

Contact weiss@nrsrcaa.org to share stories,
resources or content for this newsletter





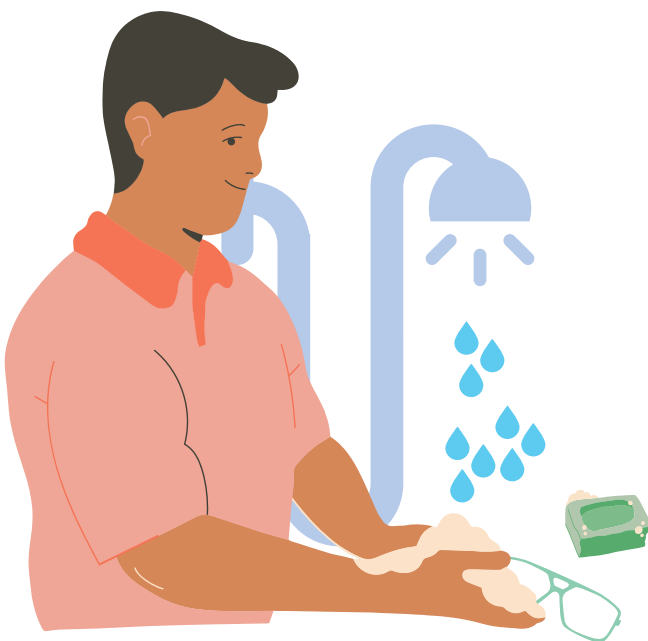
Foggy Glasses?

Do you wear prescription glasses or sunglasses and find them fogging up every time you wear a mask? It can be extremely frustrating having to constantly wipe them let alone dangerous if you are cycling or doing other physical activity.

Wearing a mask forces your breath upward

instead of in front of you. This helps keep droplets that could contain the coronavirus from spreading further in the air and possibly contaminating other people. The Humboldt County Public Health Department has asked all residents to wear a mask when leaving their homes and when visiting or accessing essential indoor services. While wearing a mask you can help prevent the transmission of coronavirus, when you exhale it creates steam on your lenses. A simple fix is using soap and water much like you would use soap and water to combat COVID-19. Soap cleans away the virus and it also reduces surface tension on the lenses of your glasses. Washing your glasses with soap and water and drying them thoroughly helps the water molecules from your breath distribute evenly instead of ending up on your glasses making it difficult to see.

It is also helpful if you ensure a good seal (as much as you can) at the bridge of your nose and be sure to wear your glasses over your mask, not under.



Pedestrian Safety Is Not a Game!

Going outside for a walk is important to maintain good physical and mental health but you must be alert to prevent collisions and injuries. Understanding the reasons for common crashes involving pedestrians can help you be proactive and stay safe! During the Shelter in Place order, be sure to always maintain social distancing guidelines. Wear a face covering any time you leave your home, maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others, wash your hands regularly, and stay home if you are feeling sick.

Common Issues For Pedestrians		Pedestrian Safety Prevention Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Walking/Jogging along road ✗ Crossing streets mid-block ✗ Distracted drivers ✗ Vehicle backing up ✗ Cars turning (right or left) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk/run facing traffic, wear bright colors Be predictable, use crosswalks Be alert, Don't use phones when walking Give yourself space in parking lots, be visible Obey traffic signals, make eye contact with drivers



Above graphic is available for reproduction.
 Contact weiss@nrscaa.org

RESOURCES

(Virtual) Humboldt Trails Summit

Save the date and please join us for the first virtual Humboldt Trails Summit on **Saturday, June 6th, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. via Zoom and Access Humboldt.** State Senator Mike McGuire will join trail supporters and local trail experts for the Summit, and will provide updates on local trail projects, on-location videos, and a status update on the Great Redwood Trail.

VIRTUAL TRAILS SUMMIT
 Trail updates with local experts and Senator Mike McGuire
Saturday • June 6, 2020
 9:00 am - 11:00 am
 Tune in via Access Humboldt or register for Zoom at humtrails.org or HTC on Facebook
 Submit questions to HumboldtTrailsSummit@gmail.com

Supporting Humboldt County Trails!
 Facebook.com/HumboldtTrailsCouncil
www.humboldtbytrail.info

More details about the event and how to connect will be available at

<https://www.humtrails.org/> or the [Humboldt Trails Council Facebook page](#).

The public is encouraged to send their questions about trails in advance to HumboldtTrailsSummitquestions@gmail.com

Please register for the webinar at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4ZwdoLuEQLKIUhctG9Gj5Q
 Or view the Trail Summit on Access Humboldt.

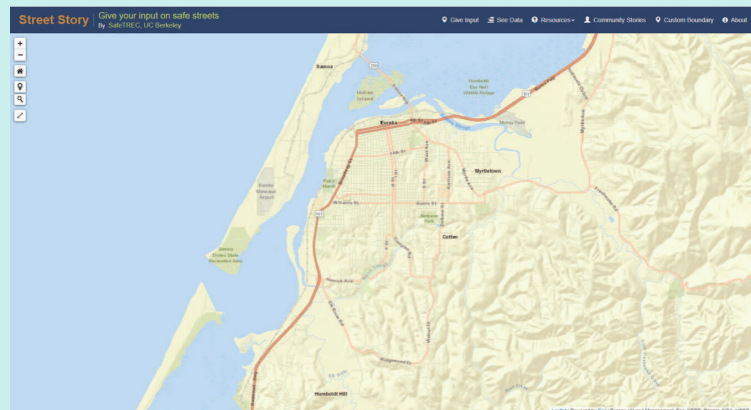


Street Story is Your Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Reporting Tool

Street Story is an online tool that allows individuals, organizations, and governments report and collect information about traffic collisions, near misses, and hazards.

The data can be publicly accessed and used for local needs assessments, transportation planning projects, and project proposals. It is also a great way to notify public works departments about safety improvements

needed. It is easy to use and is available for use by anyone over the age of 18. Access street story [here](#) and get more information by contacting streetstory@berkeley.edu.



MORE RESOURCES



Pandemic Food Stamps Available for Families with Children

A temporary assistance program will be providing one time benefits for families with children that are eligible to receive free or reduced meals at schools. The Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer card (P-EBT) is an emergency disaster benefit administered by the Department of Social Services to help alleviate the tremendous hardships for families during the coronavirus epidemic. **The state of California is providing up to \$365 credits per child for qualifying families that can be used to purchase food and groceries**, even online from Walmart or Amazon. For families already enrolled in CalFresh, Medi-Care or foster care the cards with credits will automatically be mailed. For those not already enrolled, **the deadline to apply is June 30**. Residents regardless of immigration status may apply and benefits will not be impacted by families currently picking up meals from schools.

For information or to apply, visit <https://ca.p-ebt.org/en/info>



Looking for a fun outdoor activity? Try a Redwood EDventure Quest!



Get closer to nature with Redwood EdVentures Quests

Redwood EdVentures Quests are a great way to explore Nature in Humboldt County - Family friendly fun!

A **quest** is a scavenger hunt leading you through many North Coast parks. They take 30-60 minutes to complete.

Once finished, you will need to answer a question or you will find a phrase hidden in a park.

When you have found the phrase, [click here](#) to fill out a form and a Redwood Edventure Quest patch will be mailed to you!



To learn more about what **Natural Resources Services - RCAA** is up to, visit our website [here](#).



This newsletter has been developed for school teachers, administrators, transportation planners, public health, and pedestrian and bike safety advocates in order to keep you informed of the latest news involving our local Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School efforts and programs. For more information contact weiss@nrsrcaa.org or (707)269-2062.

