

# Santa Cruz lauded as good, safe place to pedal

National cycling group recognizes city's efforts

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SANTA CRUZ — Some 46 miles of bike lanes, strong educational programs and a visible biking community make Santa Cruz a bike-friendly city.

That's the message from the Washington, D.C.-based League of American Bicyclists, which has designated the city a "Silver Level Bicycle-Friendly Community." Santa Cruz joins Steamboat Springs, Colo., in achieving the distinction this year and the 14 other towns across the nation that have received the honor in the past.

"We stand above a lot of other communities in terms of providing good and safe facilities for bicycling," said Piet Canin, a longtime pedaling advocate who worked on the application to the league.

In bestowing the honor, the group said "in addition to a good all-around cycling program, [Santa Cruz] has strongly enforced guidelines to protect the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and disabled travelers during road construction."

About a third of the cities that apply

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The League of American Bicyclists has honored Santa Cruz as a bicycling-friendly city.

Dan Coyro/  
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## If You Go

**WHAT:** A celebration of Santa Cruz's designation as a League of American Bicyclists Silver Level Bicycle-Friendly Community. It will feature presentations on what makes Santa Cruz a bicycling town.

**WHEN:** The celebration is set for 6 p.m. today at the Civic Auditorium at 307 Church St. The award will be officially presented at 7:15 p.m. in the Santa Cruz City Council chamber at 809 Center St.

**INFORMATION:** The award ceremony is being coordinated by the Santa Cruz Bicycle Industry Coalition, city of Santa Cruz, People Power, the Santa Cruz County Cycling Club, Community Traffic Safety Coalition, Ecology Action and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Bicycle Committee.

## Cycling

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receive some type of recognition, league spokeswoman Elizabeth Preston said Monday.

"It's a pretty tough designation to earn," she said.

The league evaluates communities on five E's — engineering, encouragement, education, evaluation and enforcement.

Silver designations mean a community has met two to three of those criteria, Preston said. For Santa Cruz, that meant engineering bike lanes with street work, encouragement with events such as the annual Bike-to-Work program and education.

The state's only platinum designation — the highest awarded — belongs to the city of Davis. Palo Alto has a gold. Santa Cruz's silver puts it on par with Santa Barbara, among other cities.

Canin pointed to achievements by the city in recent years such as the two-lane bike thoroughfare on Beach Street and the installation of bike lanes along Soquel Avenue.

"That's something a lot of people thought would never happen," he said of the latter.

Moreover, the city boasts an array of high-end bike shops as well as manufacturers of bikes and safety equipment, and a program at Harbor High School that trains bicycle mechanics.

The league's designation must be renewed every four years.

In the future, bike advocates would like to work to improve the

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ELIZABETH PRESTON,  
LEAGUE OF  
AMERICAN BICYCLISTS

lane on Murray Avenue, which has a designated bike path that is a little thin, Canin said.

While the city has a wealth of designated lanes and paths, and there is a consciousness about biking, there have been tragedies during the past year. Most recently, an 18-year-old cyclist was killed while riding his fixed-gear bike at East Cliff Drive and Jessie Street. In August, a teacher died when he collided with a truck at the intersection of Bay and Mission streets.

Canin said continuing safety awareness and improving lanes is always a priority for the bike community.

The county as a whole has more bike-related injuries than elsewhere in the state, said Santa Cruz police spokesman Zach Friend, adding the county also has a higher-than-normal share of people using alternative transportation.

Mission Street is a particular concern to traffic enforcement, he said.

"That ... has historically been a corridor we've been concerned about for pedestrian and bike safety," Friend said.

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