

# Alternatives

## Hills man seeks bike paths to offset motorized traffic gridlock

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Transportation officials don't talk about building bike paths to the 21st century. A Farmington Hills man thinks they should.

Fred Dore, 63, an avid cyclist, is making his plea to county and city officials about the need for non-motorized transportation to be considered in the effort to offset the traffic glut. The answer to gridlock is not building more roads, he said.

Money is there. A new six-year federal road package includes \$136 million for development of non-motorized transportation programs, which is more than double what the Federal Highway Administration previously allotted.

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**■ 'We're not saying that you have to build every road with a bike lane. We simply ask that in the planning process ... they give serious consideration to bicyclists.'**

*Fred Dore  
—Avid cyclist*

Dore, who rides with the Working Wheelers Cycling Club. "You simply ask that in the planning process ... they give serious consideration to bicyclists."

Michigan Department of Transportation and Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments have "progressive" non-motorized policies in place, Dore said. The problem is those agencies are not always the ones putting road projects together.

Part of the problem is a need for education. Bike paths are largely seen in terms of recreational pursuits, and not alternatives to motorized transportation, Dore said. The result has been a mishmash of unconnected trails.

Not only would he like to see separate paths connected, Dore and his cohorts want bicyclists to be included on the road. He suggested engineers design roads, when feasible, to include 14-foot-wide outside lanes to handle

cyclists and motorists alike. Bicyclists need not be afraid riding with traffic, Dore said.

"It depends on the individual person. I'm comfortable out in the road riding out with the cars," he said. "Me being out there and other bicyclists being out there creates aggravation for some other motorists ... but we have a right to be out there."

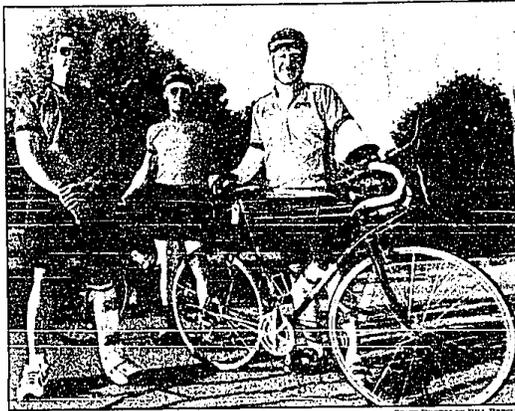
On the contrary, Dore believes side paths that intersect with neighborhood streets and driveways are more dangerous.

"The other day, I saw a couple little kids riding on their bikes with training wheels about 100 feet ahead of their parents and they weren't looking around them at all," he said. "The danger they're (side paths) posing scares the hell out of me."

An Oakland County roads spokesman said balancing motorist and biker concerns is hard.

"We do include those (bike paths) in some projects when we can get the funding for them," said Craig Bryson, road commission public information director. "It would be hard to take money from repairing roads that are crumbling to build bike paths."

Bike enthusiasm goes beyond advocates such as himself, Dore said. He cited a Farmington Hills Parks and



Ready to go: David Harper (from left), Jon Carter and Fred Dore pose before their evening ride around the community.



Non-motorized: Cyclist Jon Carter heads north on Drake Road during rush hour.

Recreation survey during the millage renewal campaign, where respondents listed biking among their favorite top-five activities.

"That tells us there is a groundswell of people that are in need of this," he

said. "Our residents are being short-changed by this. They've already said they want to ride bicycles ... but they're not sure where they can go."

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