

**An Evaluation of Locations for Bicycle Skills Courses in
McKinleyville, California, and of Strategies for Sustaining Bicycle
Skills Training in Eureka, California**

Melanie Williams, M.A., M.A.
Owner, BikesThere
League Cycling Instructor #2338
Safe Routes to Schools National Instructor
Humboldt County Safe Routes to School Task Force member

*Funding for this report was provided by a grant from the California Office of
Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*

Background

Humboldt County, California, has a well-established bicycling culture which extends into the local K-8 schools. Membership on the Safe Routes to Schools Task Force is diverse, including representatives from the school districts, County and City law enforcement, County and City Public Works and Engineering departments, Humboldt County Association of Government staff, County Public Health, Redwood Community Action Agency, BikesThere, PTO members, elected officials, and community volunteers.

This leadership group has, throughout the last decade, received grant funding through SRTS and ATP applications with which to pay for both infrastructure improvements and non-infrastructure educational programs. OTS funds received by DHHS as well as the City of Eureka have also provided Bicycle, Pedestrian and Motorist education throughout the area.

These educational programs in the last decade have included classroom pedestrian and bicycle safety courses, school safety assemblies, after-school week long pedestrian education for elementary and junior high students in 4 Eureka schools, a 3 year long Junior High Leadership Program which included a student led Walk Audit, Photovoice Project and Safety Campaign, and countless bicycle “rodeos.”

DHHS funding has paid for Train the Trainer workshops and the development of Pedestrian and Bicycling Toolkits for Elementary and Jr. High After-School programs to be used by school program staff.

Specific to bicycle education, the Eureka School District has an 18 bike fleet and a trailer which is used in after school programs at 3 low income elementary schools, the Middle School, and Junior High. DHHS is in the process of establishing a bicycle fleet.

Student cyclists from the Eureka schools programs have participated in the annual Rhododendron Parade and the 10 and 22 mile family rides offered at the annual Tour of the Unknown Coast.

These successes and countless more have inspired the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian education to new communities including McKinleyville and Fortuna. The completion of a 3 year SRTS grant in Eureka has also fueled the need for new strategies to sustain programs underway in the local schools.

Rationale for creating skills courses

Throughout the US and Europe there are many designs for cycling training facilities with increasing degrees of both complexity and expense. Courses can be located on municipal or private property, maintained and operated by municipalities or private entities, and staffed by trained paid educators and/or volunteers. Insurance liability varies from state to state and nation to nation.

The recommendation of this report is to continue to maintain, design and install skills courses throughout Humboldt County.

A Few Definitions

Skills Courses: Permanently painted drills stations used to teach basic cycling skills and to introduce vehicular cycling. These courses are fully separated from automobile traffic and are well suited to teaching young and new cyclists to be more competent and confident.

Examples: Eureka City Schools (see below)

Safety Towns: Safety Towns exist throughout the United States. These replica mini town facilities can include bicycle and pedestrian training areas and often include a wide variety of other safety foci including home fire safety, boating safety, poison control, etc.

Examples:

Boys and Girls Club Corvallis, Or
<http://www.bgccorvallis.org/programs/safety-town/>

Safety Town, Brookhaven, NY
<https://www.brookhavenny.gov/193/Safety-Town-Facility>
https://business.facebook.com/pg/brookhaventown/photos/?business_id=673450742777105&tab=album&album_id=1230357090419798

Bicycle Safety Town, Peoria, Ill.
<https://peoriaparks.org/facility/bicycle-safety-town/>

Traffic Gardens: Traffic gardens are much more elaborate. A recent example, designed by Alta Planning + Design, has been installed in Seattle.

Traffic gardens in Europe often incorporate full sized traffic installations and even buildings. There are instructional areas as well as areas for parents/adults to rest and observe children. Often these facilities include other modes of transportation including scooters and miniature cars to expose students to road safety for all users.

Examples:

Traffic Garden in USA

Alta Planning and Design
<https://altaplanning.com/resources/white-center-traffic-garden/>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/gr5wv4vyjr7qvis/Screenshot%202018-09-23%2020.10.23.png?dl=0>

Seattle Traffic Garden

<https://www.seattlebikeblog.com/2016/10/03/white-centers-newest-playground-also-helps-kids-learn-to-bike-safely/>

Traffic Garden: Utrecht, Netherlands

<https://planetsave.com/2011/12/18/traffic-garden-of-utrecht/>

Traffic Playgrounds: Are even more elaborate than traffic gardens. They can include additional facilities including bike repair facilities and instructional areas, classrooms, simulated car washes, picnic areas.

Example:

Copenhagen

<http://danishdesignreview.com/blog/2015/10/1/trafiklegepladsen-in-copenhagen>

Locating skills courses in communities

Public schools are ideal locations for skills courses. Locating a skills course at a school means that both Pedestrian and Bicycle Education can be incorporated seamlessly into the school curriculum. The permanent, ready availability of a skills course means that teachers and after school program staff can easily plan age appropriate activities throughout the school year without hours of additional preparation needed to create a course by chalking it or the additional expense for chalking equipment and its storage.

In Humboldt County few if any schools have joint use agreements with the community which allow access to school grounds after school hours, on weekends or during the summer months. The lack of such agreements makes it impossible for local children and their families to use the courses painted on school grounds. With joint use policies in place, these courses could also be places where children could practice and ride on their own.

Public property, such as areas under the jurisdiction of the county, city or a Community Service District, often a parking lot, park, or trail, offer other ideal locations for siting skills courses. These locations can facilitate use by children and community members throughout the day, week and year, without special permission or costs. Private

property owned and operated by non-profits, gyms, churches, civic groups, also can be well suited to providing space for a skills course.

Humboldt County Successes

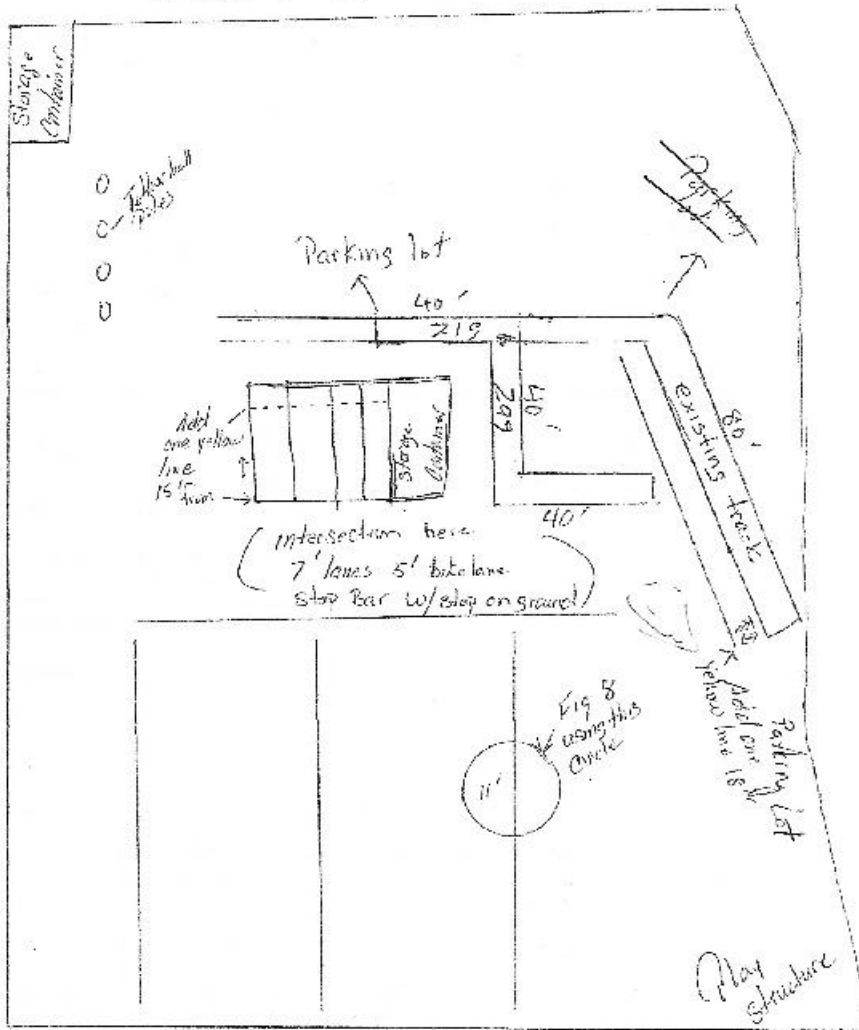
BikesThere (a local Bicycle Education and Consulting business) in conjunction with Eureka City Schools has, since 2014, designed and installed bicycle skills courses at four schools. Working closely with the Eureka City School Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation Department Director and the Lead Painter, courses were designed to fit on each playground with as little disruption to existing markings for games as possible. Special attention was given to separating cycling from the normal flow of playground activities to ensure safety and facilitate the simultaneous use of the playground by cyclists and others. All of the skills stations were painted in yellow to contrast them from the games painted in white. The school district provided the supplies and equipment as well as the staff time to paint the courses once they were designed.

Two examples are provided here below to illustrate both the process and outcome.

Grant Elementary School Skills Course Sketch

Note that the design incorporated the existing track and a circle already on the playground to minimize the amount of staff time, paint and number of lines needed.

Grant Playground bike Rodeo



Sketch by Randy Lingard, Lead Painter, Eureka City Schools 2015

Winship Middle School Aerial View

This course was designed with older students in mind. An instructional Intersection was added to the basic skills course to allow for teaching more advanced road riding skills. In the Academic Year 2015-16 every sixth grader had a nine week cycling course as part of their regular curriculum. Additionally, there was an after-school bicycle club which used the course.

This course has gained both state and national attention.

See Appendix for details

[Winship Middle School Bicycle Education Program Eureka, CA Oct. 7, 2017](#)
[Roll Up to a Bicycle Clinic](#)



Recommendation for installing Bicycle Skills Course in McKinleyville, CA

McKinleyville is well suited for the installation of several bicycle skills courses.

During the last several years, community members have engaged in design charrettes and community planning sessions to detail local safety improvements and transportation enhancements. OTS funding has paid for communitywide safety messaging and education programs for youth to compliment infrastructure improvements including the striping of bike lanes, installation of pedestrian refugia, and flashing pedestrian signals. School personnel as well as a community representatives are active participants on the County Safe Routes to School Task Force.

Parks and recreation staff have worked with DHHS/Public Health staff to provide a summer bicycle training camp for children and have met with staff and this author to discuss the feasibility of skills course installations on Parks and Recreation properties.

Hiller Park

The first proposed site for McKinleyville detailed below is for the installation of a basic bicycle skills course and an instructional intersection in the Hiller Park parking lot. This location is ideal because of its proximity to the Hammond Trail, a heavily used multiuse trail which runs through this sports complex which includes a dog park, public restroom, soccer and baseball fields, batting cages, generous amounts of parking and access to local neighborhoods.

Pierson Park

The second proposed site, also under the jurisdiction of the McKinleyville Community Service District and the Department of Parks and Recreation is Pierson Park.

The proposal is for the painting of a basketball key and Figure 8 cycling station in the small parking lot in front of the Teen Center for use by the youth ages 11-15 who frequent the center. Again this location is easily accessed by Junior High students from the local school and by those living in the adjacent neighborhood. Ideally the youth from the teen center could be involved in fitting the key and figure 8 station in this space. Perhaps they could chalk it prior to the painting.

The second installation in Pierson Park would be at the roundabout on Hummingbird Dr. The suggestion is to use the existing mini roundabout as the central feature in an instructional station. This would allow older more competent cyclists the opportunity to learn how to negotiate a roundabout, a skill which is need by both cyclists and motorists throughout the county.

Ideal installation schedule and cost

Leslie Frisbee, Director of Parks and Recreation, suggests that the ideal time to have Hiller Park painted would be between the end of the youth baseball season in June and the beginning of the youth soccer season in August. This corresponds well with the dry season in the area. She also was willing to look into and provide the resurfacing and maintenance schedule for both Hiller and Pierson Parks. Painting the courses in July of 2019 would allow time for training the trainers in their use during the Spring of 2019 and the possibility that a summer camp cycling program could make use of them in August.

The MCSD does not have the equipment necessary to paint the course and would need to work in conjunction with the road maintenance department for the County. Greg Orsini is the General Manager for the MCSD and he can be reached at (707) 839-3251.

There is also the possibility that the work could be done by a private contractor. There are several asphalt companies in the area capable of doing this work.

Dan Piers, Director of Eureka City Schools Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation Department and Randy Lingard, the Lead painter for Eureka City Schools responsible for painting the courses in Eureka, are both available as resources for this project.

Future Sites

Clam Beach

There are a number of other sites along the route of the Hammond Trail which could, in the future, with negotiations with the County, lend themselves to the installation of a cycling skills station or two. These include the parking lots at both the north and south end of Clam Beach County Park.

Local Schools

As illustrated by the success of the Eureka City School District, schools are an ideal location for school day, school year, cycling education activities. Cycling to school is on the rise in McKinleyville for a number of reasons including infrastructure improvements, a change in grade level combinations at the elementary schools, and educational efforts around cycling in the school curriculum.

The local Elementary School Superintendent is an active, long time member of the Safe Routes Task Force who started as a principal in Eureka. She is a well informed champion who is committed to grant writing and collaboration to fund, design, and install improvements for her students. The principal at the Junior High and the staff at the elementary school are also active in Safe Routes efforts.

Painting skills course at the McKinleyville public K-8 schools is a logical next step.

Sustaining Bicycle Education and Skills Facilities in Eureka, CA

Zane Jr. High School

Eureka City schools have four well developed skills courses and a proven record for engaging students in bicycle education which has been funded through SRTS grants.

OTS funds, which provided for a messaging campaign in the City of Eureka, also provided educational materials which have been used with Junior High students and their parents.

Those grant funded programs have run their course and there is now a need to sustain the programs which have been started. The school district, as well as several of the schools, have small fleets of bikes. The need continues to train staff, purchase helmets, maintain the fleets, and fund educational programs.

A change in the Junior H. S. and Middle School after school program has meant that students are bussed from Winship Middle School, where there is a well-developed skills course, to Zane Jr. High where there is no such course. In the last two years there has been a lunchtime bike maintenance course at Zane but no sustained on the bike training.

The proposal here is to replicate the advanced course at Winship at the Zane campus. This would allow for the establishment of an after school bicycling club for middle school students. This is significant as there are many students who have participated in bike clubs in elementary school who look forward to continuing in junior high.

Alice Birney and Lafayette Elementary Schools

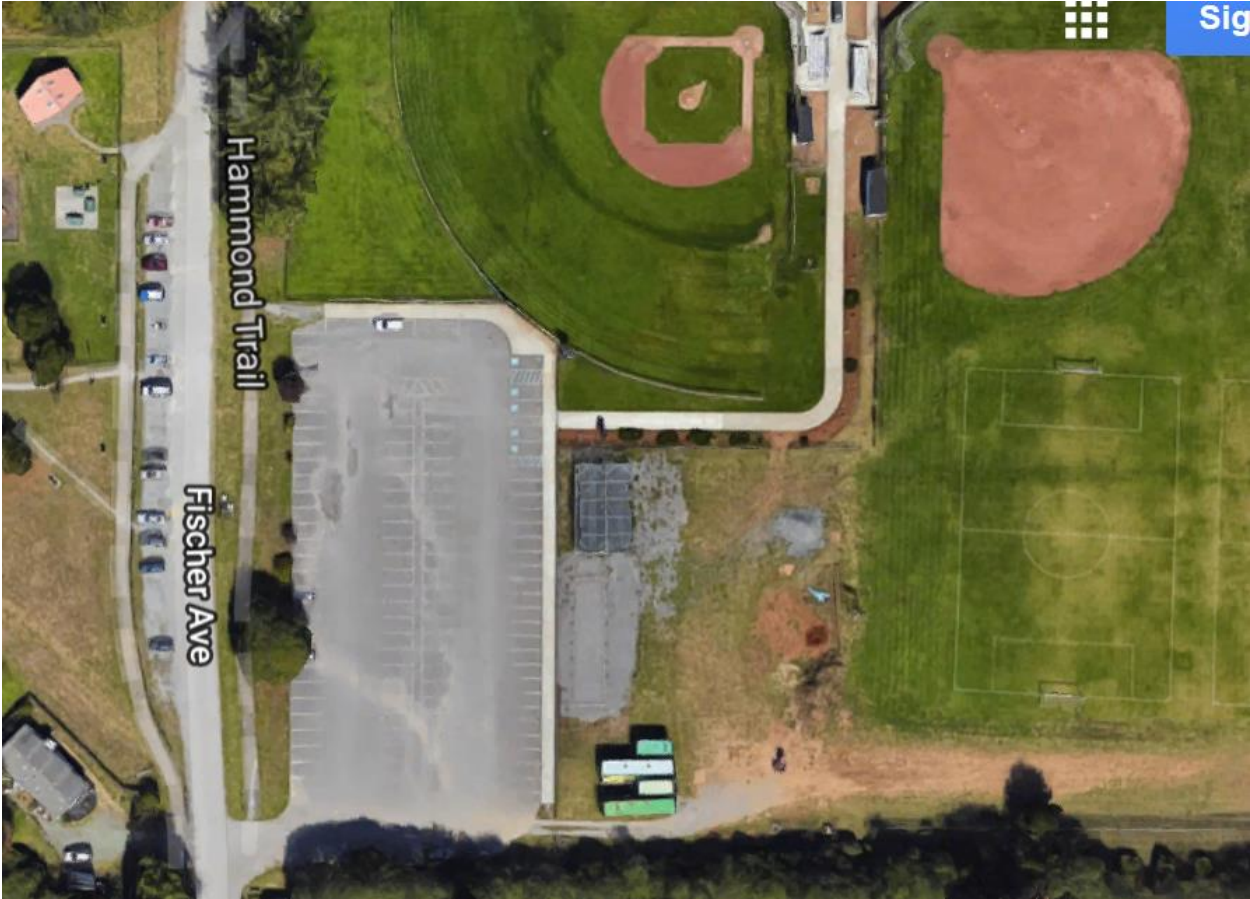
Both of these elementary schools have had robust yearlong after-school cycling programs for a number of years.

These programs currently have no funding with which to purchase supplies, maintain bikes, or pay trained staff to run programs.

It is imperative funding be identified to maintain and expand these programs.

McKinleyville Skills Course Project Proposals: Hiller and Pierson Parks

Hiller Park Aerial View

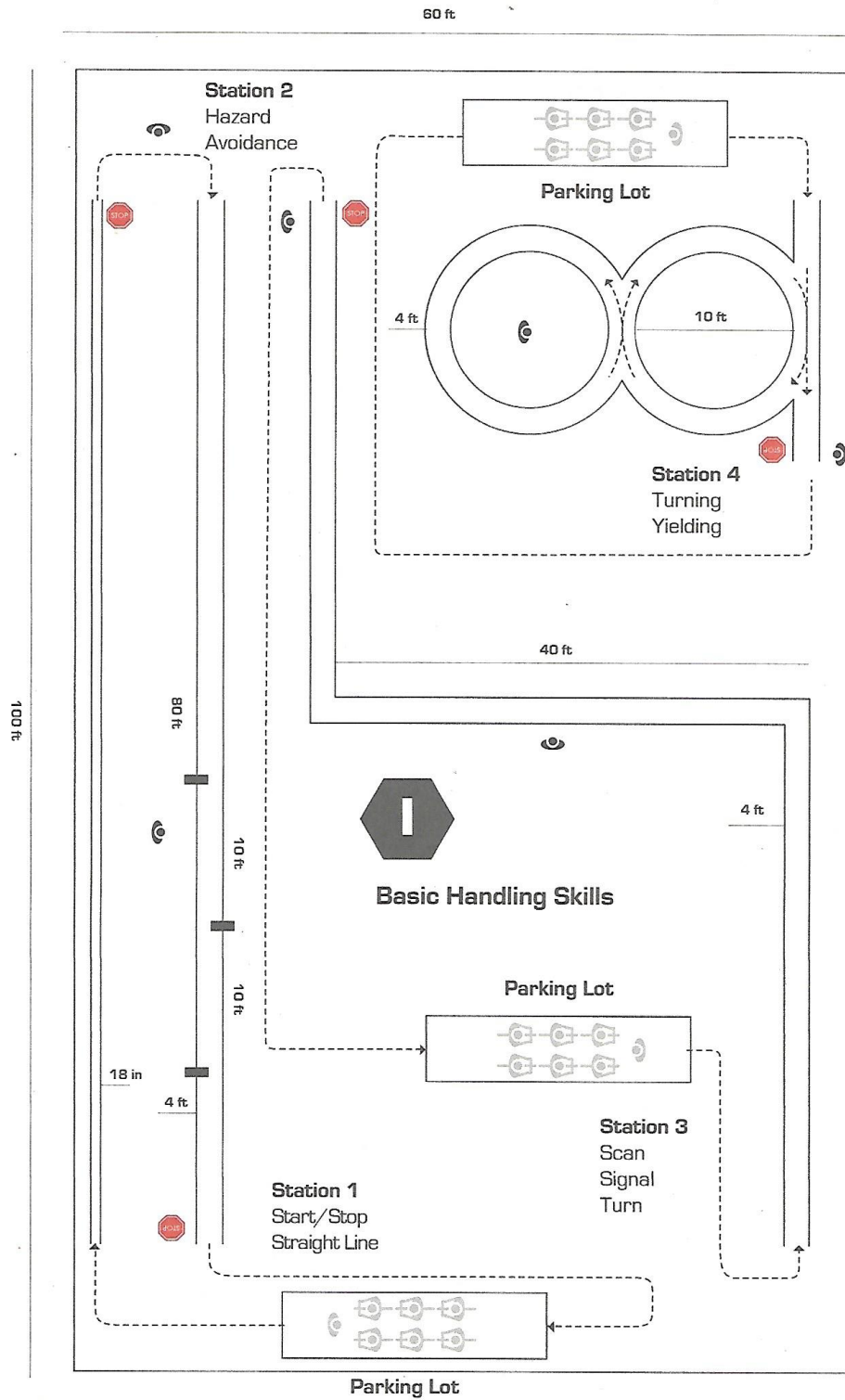


Hiller Park Parking Lot Northwest Area

100' North to South x 73' East to West from measuring line
Proposed for installation of basic skills course stations

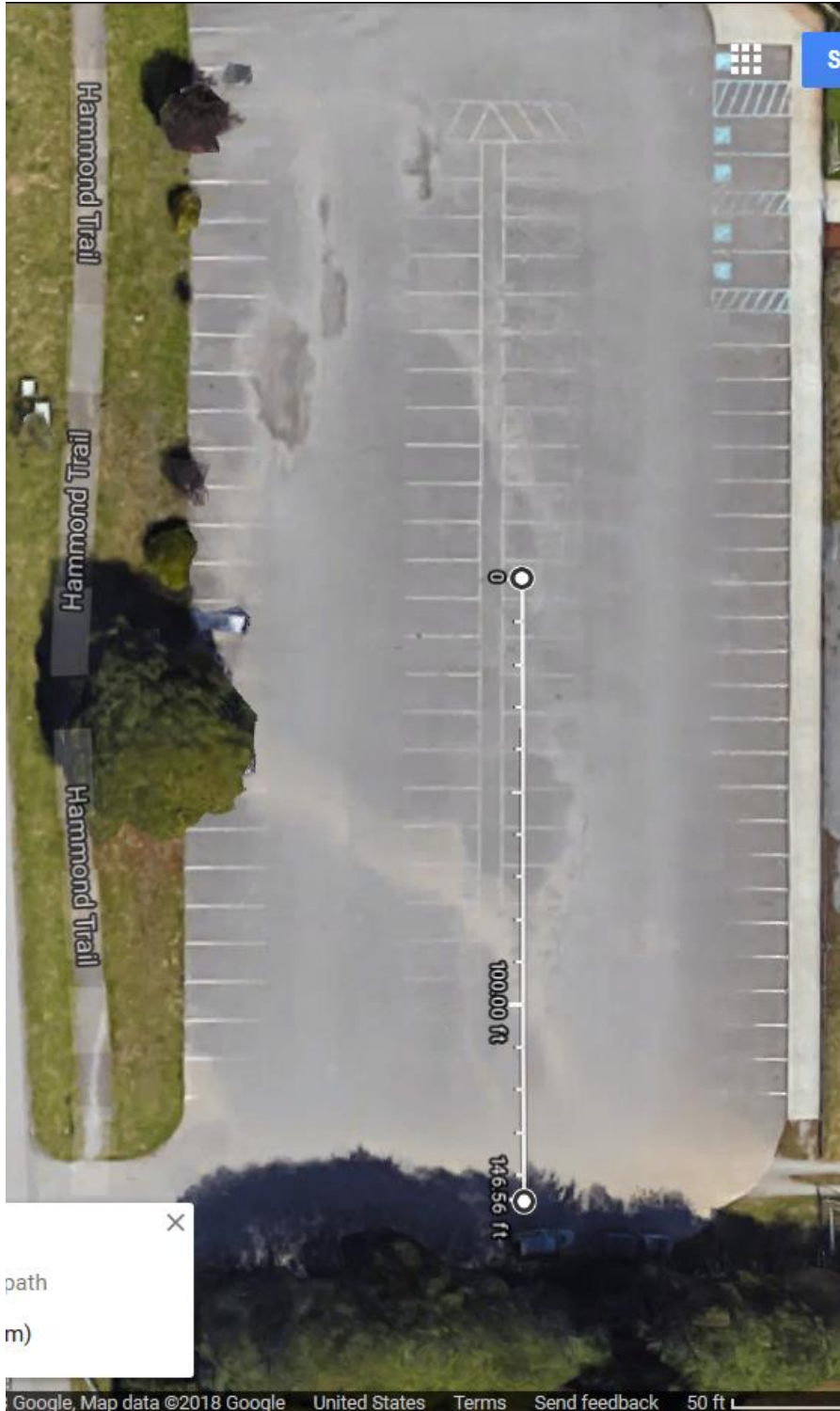


BASIC SKILLS COURSE SKETCH to be installed in Northwest area of parking lot



Hiller Park Parking Lot Southern Portion
146' North to South x 129' full width East to West

Proposed area for instructional intersection



Instructional Intersection Layout to be installed in southern portion of Hiller Park parking lot

Yellow lines 146' (top to bottom) x 100' (left to right)



Hiller Park Parking Lot: Northernmost curb

Proposed location for DOOR ZONE STATION

Paint arc indicating full sweep of open driver's door in parking space at north end of area indicated by white car in aerial view.



INTERPRETIVE SIGN CONCEPT

The interpretive sign should help children and their parents use the stations on the course by explaining the skills required and the goal for each station. Each activity should be offered as a challenge, phrased as a question, with a clear outcome.

The language should be geared to upper elementary level readers

The graphics should be in full color and use pictures from the actual course.

Example

[Station name] STRAIGHT LINE RIDING

[Photo] PHOTO OF STATION FROM COURSE

[Challenge] **Can you ride from end to end inside the yellow lines?**

Basic Skills Stations:

- Starting, Stopping
- Straight Line
- Avoiding Hazards
- Balancing Slow Race, Figure 8

Traffic Skills Stations:

- Scanning
- Signaling
- Turning
- Yielding

THREE PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

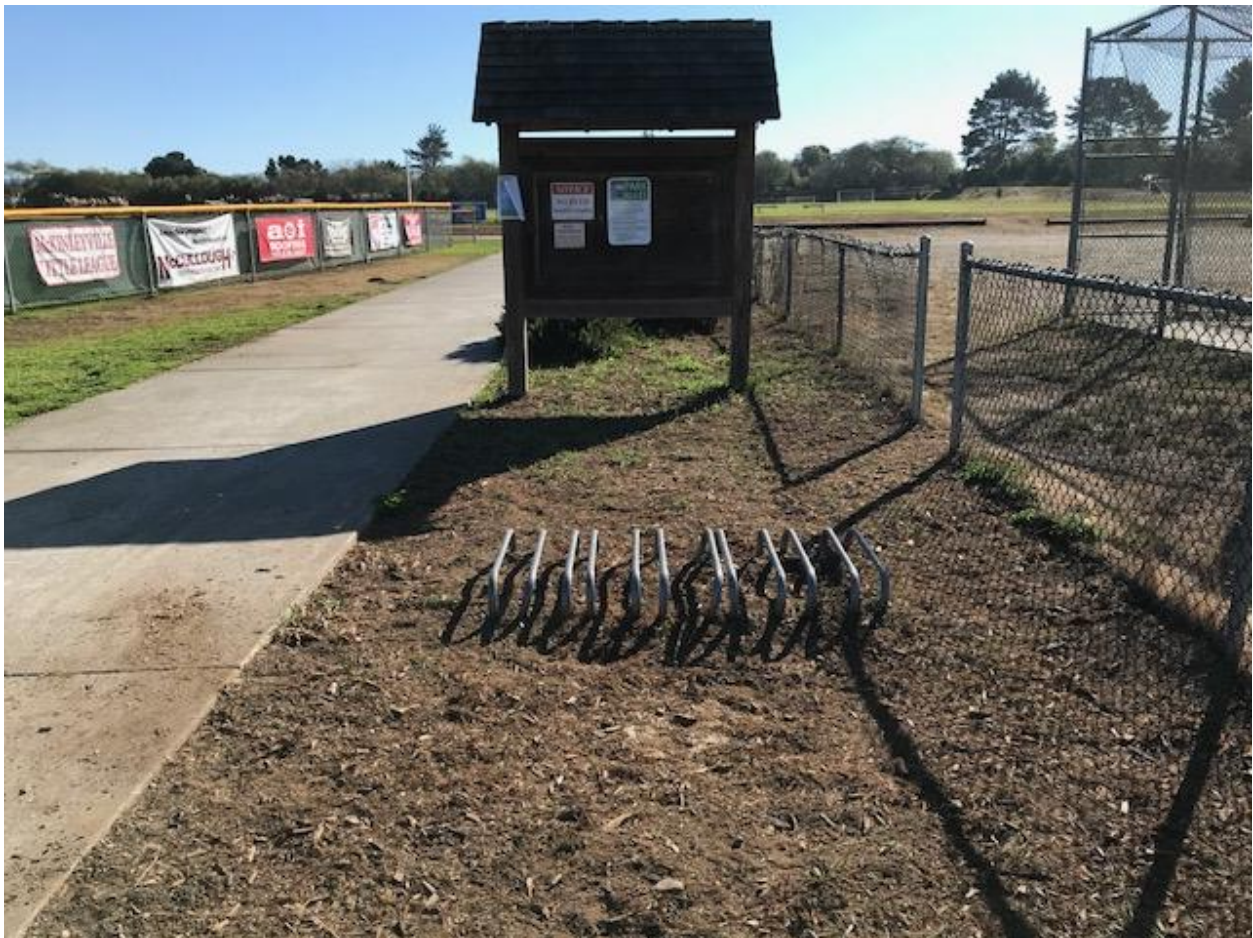
1. Bike Racks

These existing racks are ineffective. Having a bike stand up or locking a bike to them is virtually impossible.

The location, inside a fence, along the sidewalk, between the baseball/soccer fields and batting cages is a good one as there are then eyes on the bikes.

The recommendation would be to purchase new racks of an approved design and have them securely installed. Covered, lit parking, is the “gold standard.”

The location of this bike parking should, at a minimum, be indicated on the interpretive signage. A separate sign indicating this bike parking location would be helpful.



Bike rack designs

Recommendation: “ Bike Staple” design, for example,

Dero

<https://www.dero.com/product-category/commercial-bike-racks/>



2. Installation of An Air Pump and Fix-it Station

The location of Hiller Park along the Hammond Trail and at a sports complex makes it an ideal location for family and youth cycling. Providing amenities such as an air pump and a fix-it station make families and young riders feel more secure and they facilitate the use of bikes. Additionally, both of these tools could be incorporated as stations in a “bike rodeo” skills training setting or bike summer camp class.

<https://www.dero.com/product/air-kit-2/>

<https://www.dero.com/product/fixit/>



(Pump sold separately)

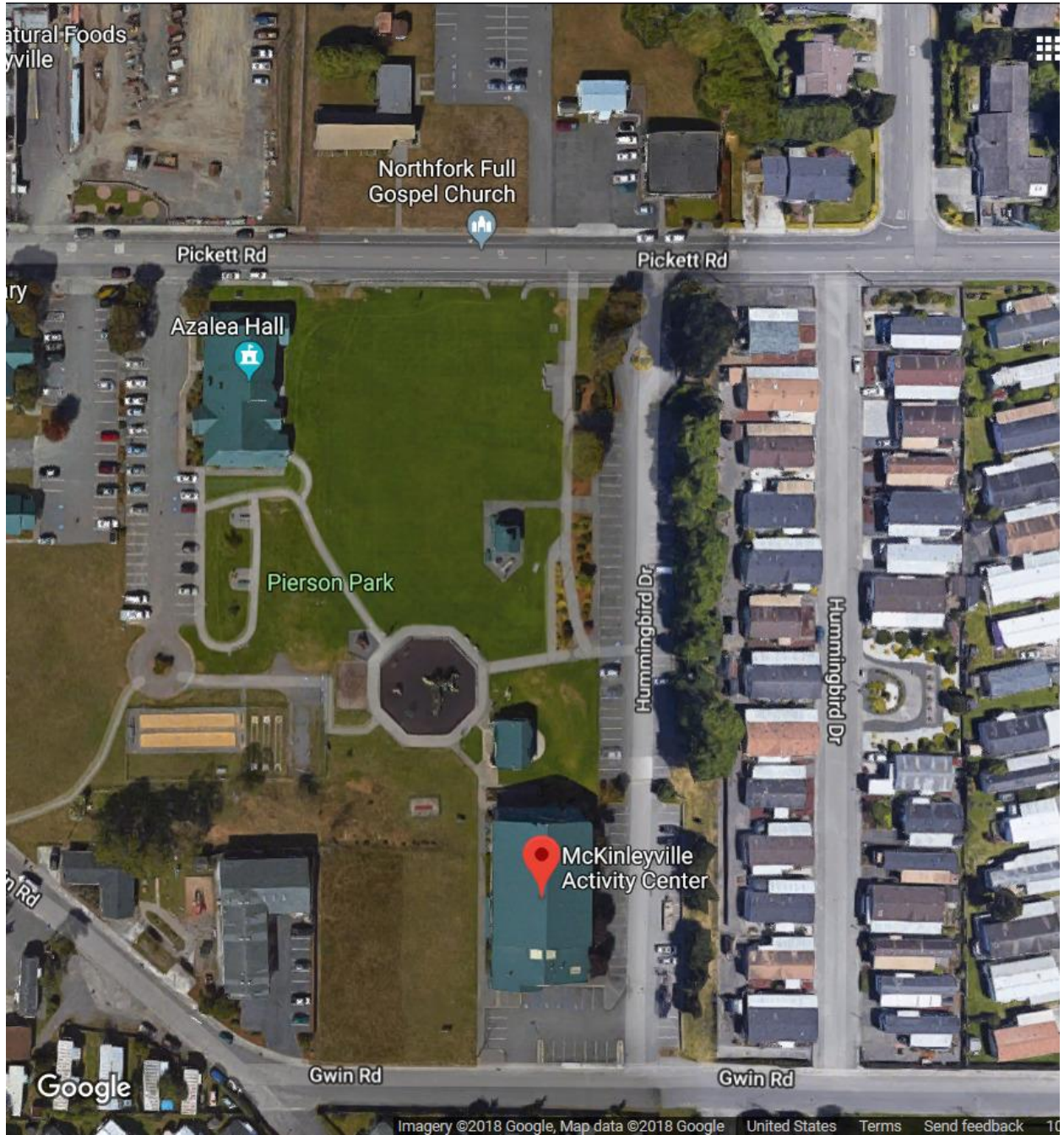
The installation of an air compressor is another option. There is power available near the batting cages not far from bike parking. Such stations are used throughout the country. The City of Blue Lake has installed one in front of Stardough's Café at the corner of Railroad and H streets.



3. Train the Trainers Course for Parks and Recreation Staff

Leslie Frisbee, McKinleyville Parks and Recreation Director, requested training for Parks and Recreation staff in the use of the proposed facilities. She indicated she would have at least six staff to train and welcomed the suggestion of involving law enforcement, school staff, community members and others who would be trained to use the facilities for instructing youth in their proposed use. Spring of 2019 was suggested by her as a good time to prepare staff for the use of the new course during the summer of 2019 and beyond.

Pierson Park Boys and Girls Club Teen Center Aerial View





1750 Gwen Road Mickinleyville, CA 95519

After school programs for youth 11-18

Area Director

Keon Gaither

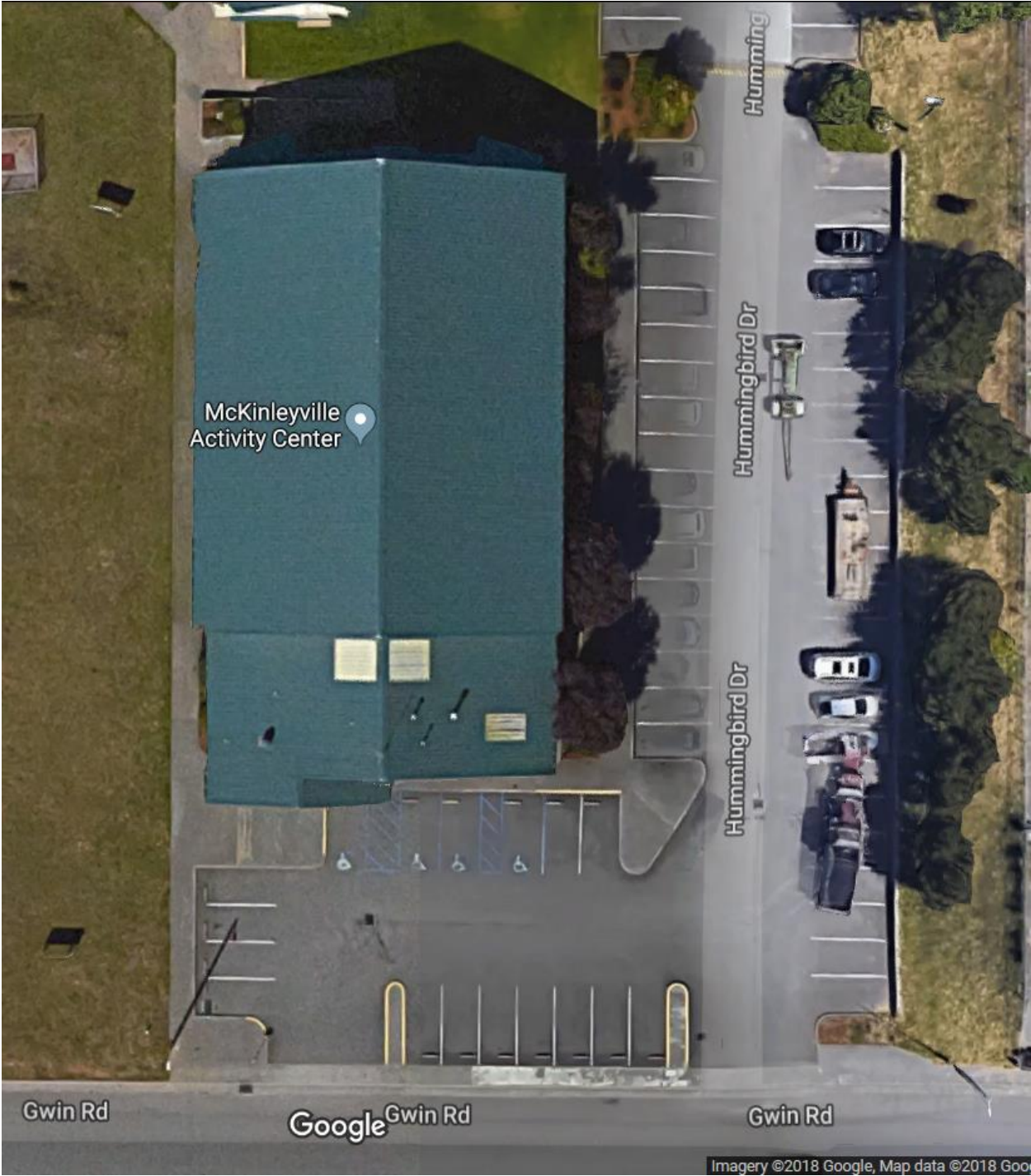
Office (707)441-1030

Direct (707) 502-1239

kgaither@bgclubredwoods.org

www.bgcredwoods.org

Pierson Park Teen Center Parking Lot



PROPOSED LOCATION FOR BASKETBALL KEY AND FIGURE 8 SKILLS STATION
There are currently 2 Basketball Hoops
20' x 28' Area



PROPOSAL: Basketball Key and Cycling Skill Figure 8 Station

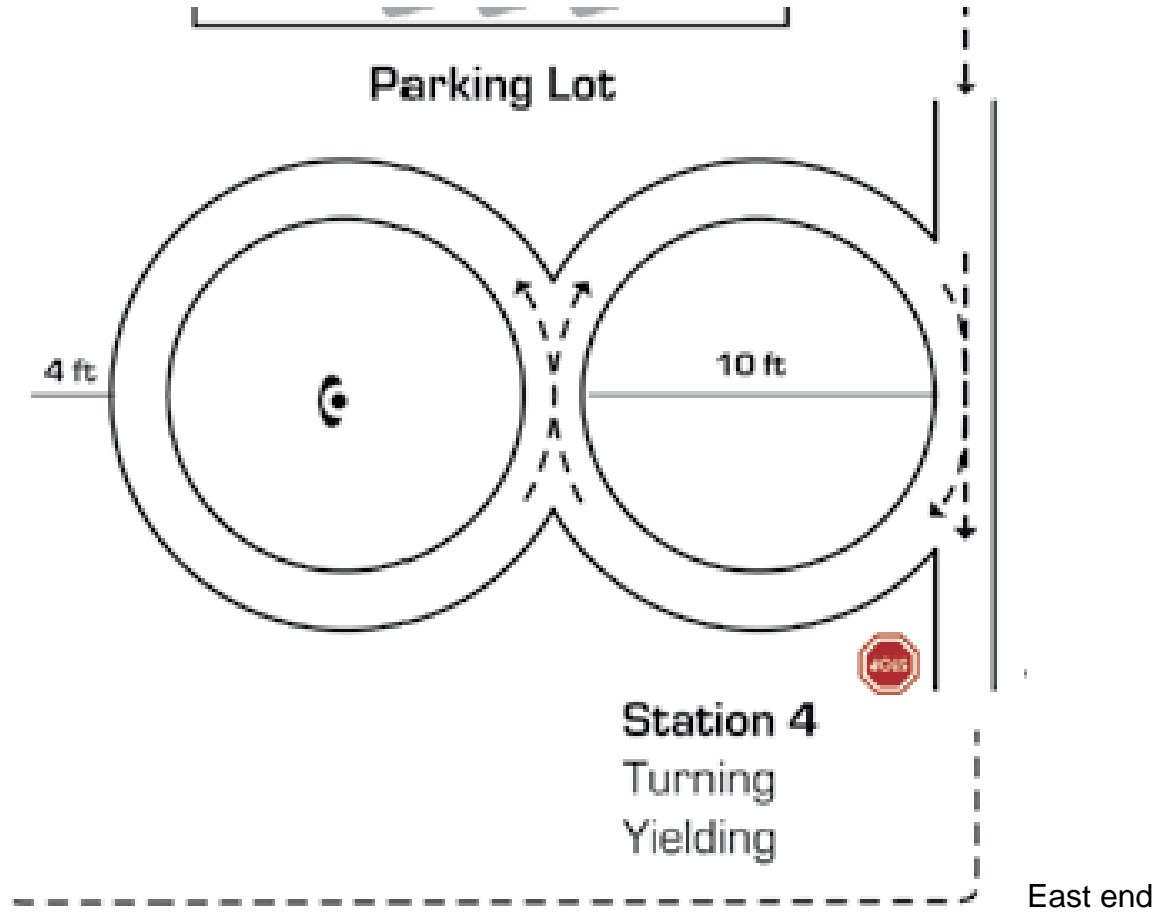
- Paint a Basketball Key in white aligned with the hoop on the south side in white
- Paint a figure eight cycling station running east to west in yellow overlapping basketball key where necessary.

BASKET BALL KEY



<http://www.decorstob.com/basketball-court-ideas-stencils-layouts-dimensions/>

FIGURE 8 STATION IN YELLOW RUNNING EAST TO WEST



PROPOSAL: ROUNDABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLING STATION

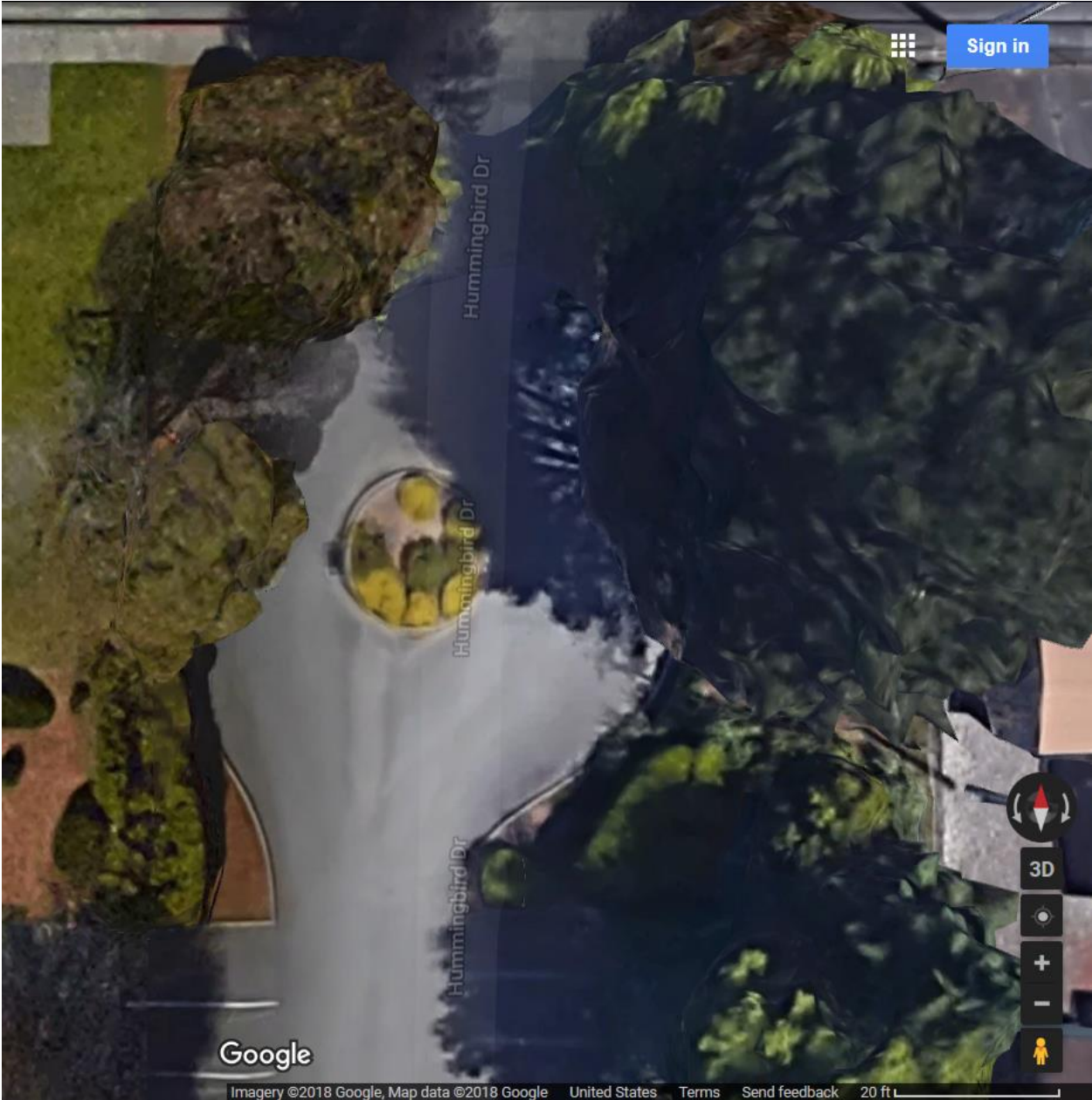
Work with County engineering to ascertain what instructive markings would be permitted to enhance existing roundabout on Hummingbird Dr. to create an “instructional station” for youth and adult riders.

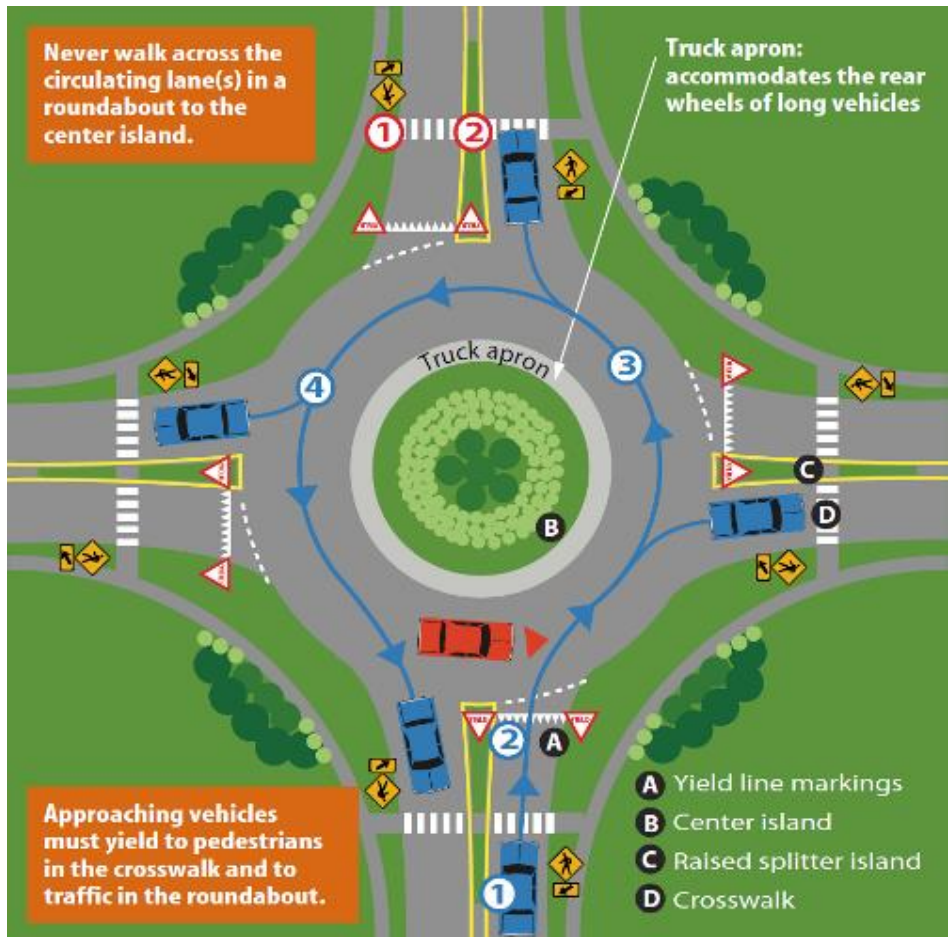
Such markings, (in contrasting paint color) could include

- adding a center line from the south approaching the roundabout
- adding a bike lane in both directions on the south side of the roundabout

The station would be blocked off with cones and sawhorses during instruction to prevent cars from entering the driveway from Pickett Rd.

AERIAL VIEW OF HUMMINGBIRD DR. ROUNDABOUT





For visual reference only

For detailed discussion of Mini Roundabouts

<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/intersections/minor-intersections/mini-roundabout/>

Future Skills Station Installation Opportunities

Clam Beach County Park south and north parking lots along the Hammond Trail.



APPENDIX

Roll Up to a Bicycle Skills Clinic

<https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/fact-sheet/roll-bicycle-skills-clinic>

Roundabouts—Another Safe Intersection: An Educational Activity Book

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Roundabouts+another+safe+intersection+an+educational+activity+book&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-1>

Smart Cycling Bicycling Skills 123 Youth Instructor Manual League of American Bicyclists available at www.bikeleague.org LCI Portal LCI Resources

Smart Cycling Bicycling Skills 123 Skills Instructor Manual League of American Bicyclists available at www.bikeleague.org LCI Portal LCI Resources

Winship Middle School Bicycle Education Program Eureka, CA Oct. 7, 2015

CONTACTS

Proposed Skills Course Locations in McKinleyville

Teen Center (Boys and Girls Club)
1705 Gwen Rd.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone: (707) 840-0304
<http://mckinleyvillecsd.com/teen-center>

Hiller Park (Parks and Recreation Department)
1656 Sutter Rd.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone: (707) 839-9003

Pierson Park (Parks and Recreation Department)
1656 Pickett Rd.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone: (707) 839-9003
<http://mckinleyvillecsd.com/pierson-park>

McKinleyville School Contacts

Morris Elementary (Grades 3-5)
2395 McKileyville Ave.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone (707) 839-1529
Principal

Dows Prairie
3940 Dows Prairie Rd.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone (707) 839-1558
Principal Kevin Scheffler

McKinleyville Middle School
2285 Central Ave.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone (707) 839-1508
Principal Julie Gianniini-Previde

McKinleyville High School
1300 Murray Rd.
McKinleyville, CA
Phone (707) 839-6400

McKinleyville Union Elementary School District
Jan Schmidt, Superintendent

2275 Central Ave.
McKinleyville, CA Phone (707) 839-1549

Government Contacts

McKinleyville Community Service District
1656 Sutter Rd.
McKinleyville, CA 95519

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 2037
McKinleyville, CA 95519

Phone: (707) 839-3251
Fax: (707) 839-8456
Emergency Phone:
(707) 601-9241
Email: mcsd@mckinleyvillecsd.com

<http://mckinleyvillecsd.com/board-directors>

McKinleyville Parks and Recreation Department.

Lesley Frisbee
Recreation Director
707-839-9003

Jens Andersen
Recreation Coordinator
707-839-9003

Humboldt County Supervisor 5th District

Ryan Sundberg through December 2018
Steve Madrone beginning January 2019
825 5th Street, Room 111
Eureka, CA 95501
Direct line: (707) 476-2394

Potential Skills Course Location in Eureka

Catherine Zane Jr. High School
2155 S St.
Eureka CA 95501
Principal Randall Simms
Phone (707) 441.2470

School Contacts

Eureka City School Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation Department

Dan Piers, Director Safe Routes Taskforce member
Phone: (707) 441-2503
Fax: (707) 441-0290

Randy Lingard, Lead Painter

Government Contacts: Humboldt County

4th District Supervisor: Virginia Bass Safe Routes to Schools Taskforce member

825 5th Street, Room 111
Eureka, CA 95501
Direct line: (707) 476-2394
vbass@co.humboldt.ca.us

Board of Supervisors: 707-476-2396

Humboldt County Public Works Department

1106 2nd St.
Eureka, CA 95501

Department
Ph: 707-445-7491
Fax: 707-445-7409

Public information
Ph: 707-445-7652
Fx: 707-445-7409

Public Works Engineering
Tony Seghetti, Deputy Public Works Director SRTS TF member
TSeghetti@co.humboldt.ca.us
Phone (707) 445-7377

Government Contacts: City of Eureka

Engineering Department

Eureka City Hall
531 K Street - Third Floor
Eureka, CA 95501-1146

Monday- Friday 8:00 a.m. 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Telephone/Voicemail: (707) 441-4194
Fax: (707) 441-4202 (please specify Engineering on the cover sheet)

Department E-mail: engineering@ci.eureka.ca.gov

Scott Ellsmore
Traffic Project Manager
sellsmore@ci.eureka.ca.gov
707-441-4181

City of Eureka Transportation Safety Commission

Meets every second Tuesday of the month
Council Chambers 3:30pm to 5:00pm
707-441-4194

