

Cabrillo's new hub: Bike cooperative coming to community college

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It's not the kind of space that Timmie Bone and Will Scott envisioned, but it's a start for the Cabrillo College students.

Last week, the bicycle enthusiasts got word from the Cabrillo College administration that it was OK to start a bicycle cooperative behind the Student Activities Center on campus -- inside a small storage room next to the elevator.

"It wasn't the space we were shooting for, but it's a space nonetheless," said Scott, a member of The Bike Club, which was formed a few months ago to facilitate the process of starting a cooperative.

A bike cooperative is generally a place where people tinker with their bikes, share their experiences and wisdom in bike mechanics. It's a sort of club house for those who live to ride or for those who have no other choice but to ride because they don't have a car or they've chosen to boycott one for the good of the environment.

There's a bike cooperative in Santa Cruz called the Bike Church. There's a bike cooperative at UC Santa Cruz. And now, one's coming to Cabrillo, and some students are pretty excited about it.

The founders are envisioning a \$20 a year membership, available to any student who wants to learn more about bike mechanics -- whether it's fixing flats, adjusting the brakes or just tuning up your two-wheeler or beach cruiser.

Originally, The Bike Club, with its dozen members, were aiming for the former storage room next to the old book store, where there's a small plaza out front -- the perfect place to set up bike racks, they said. But the college, which is in the midst of shuffling many of its classrooms and services, decided that the co-op, since it was a new idea, would be better off in a smaller space for now.

"I understand the philosophy," Bone said. "We're going to start out small, then once we prove ourselves, maybe we can move on to a larger area. It all sounds like a good idea."

The co-op should be up and running in a month or two, Bone said. The Bike Club is now hoping it can convince the administration of the benefits of painting some sort of mural on the side of the brick wall so that students will know where the cooperative is located.

The idea for the cooperative is the latest attempt on campus to persuade students to bike to school instead of taking a car. A recent survey of 456 students showed that the vast majority of them, 72 percent, drive to college, followed by 16 percent who take the bus and 12 percent who car pool.

Sesario R. Escoto, dean of student services, said he can't wait until the bike cooperative opens.

"I have issues with flat tires," said Escoto, who biked to work last week from his home in Aptos. "But the point is to dream. When you dream, you can do anything."

Here's the cooperative's mission statement: The mission is to provide students and the surrounding community with the tools, space and education to use bicycles as a means of sustainable, low-cost transportation. This promotes safe bicycling, greater bicycle use, hands-on learning opportunities, classes and volunteer training. Our intent is to create a hub for the sustainability community at Cabrillo College. Written by Will Scott and Timmie Bone, members of The Bike Club and founding members of the new Bike Cooperative at Cabrillo College