

Pedal Pushers

A San Francisco architect cycles to promote quality affordable design.

Looking for a way to work out on the job? One architect has found a solution: David Baker grabs his trusty bullhorn and leads bicycle tours of well-designed multifamily projects in California.

"We go from project to project," says Baker, a partner at San Francisco-based David Baker + Architects. "And we'll have a couple of tours of buildings." That's a definite plus, because it's hard to get inside many of these properties, he adds.

Baker, an avid bike rider, came up with the idea in 2002 from the local bike advocacy group. "They go to ice cream



places, recycling facilities, all kinds of crazy stuff like that, so I thought why not do [a tour] of urban housing?" he says. The idea was a big hit. The bike tours, held at least annually, attract about 50 riders, from land planners and architects to bicycle activists. Tours include Baker's properties as well as other high-density urban projects.

The most recent tour sped off May 21, co-sponsored by the San Francisco Bike Coalition and the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition. Stops included two of Baker's recent affordable projects: Folsom Dore Apartments, a 98-unit supportive housing community, and Soma Studios and 8th + Howard Apartments, a family and small studio complex.

These tours promote the need for quality affordable housing in the city, says Kate White, executive director of the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition. "We are not building enough affordable housing, and people commute two, three hours to work in San Francisco," she says. "We would really like to see that trend reversed." Bikers, keep those wheels in motion.

—Rachel Z. Azoff

PUMPED UP: Bikers discover high-quality design options for affordable, urban housing communities.