



## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911 • (831) 460-3200 FAX (831) 460-3215 EMAIL [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org)

June 11, 2013

John Presleigh, Director  
Department of Public Works  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street, Room 410  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: East Cliff Drive Parkway improvement recommendations

Dear Mr. Presleigh:

I'm writing on behalf of the Bicycle Committee of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to forward bicycle related recommendations for improvements to the East Cliff Drive Parkway.

The RTC Bicycle Committee serves to assist in the development and maintenance of a complete, convenient and safe regional bicycle network. As such, the Committee reviews projects, preliminary designs or policy related initiatives and makes recommendations as needed. After complaints from the public and members' own observations regarding unclear travel behavior and corresponding indicators, as well as deficiencies in serving west bound bicycle travelers on the new East Cliff Drive Parkway, the Committee concluded that improvements were needed. An Ad-Hoc Committee was formed to conduct observations, meet with Public Works staff and make recommendations. The Ad-Hoc Committee noted that the project represents a huge leap forward with respect to the aesthetic of East Cliff Drive and encourages active transportation and recreational opportunities. However, some clear deficiencies currently exist that could be addressed with minimal effort. The Bicycle Committee, through a motion that was passed unanimously, requests that the County Public Works Department consider the following improvements and process:

1. Re-configure the eastbound travel lane to include sharrows and any necessary signage
2. Install a westbound contra-flow bike lane using the remaining roadway area (which currently serves as an eastbound bicycle lane). Design the contra-flow bike lane to conform with established best design practices
3. Install signage, stenciling or striping to better inform pedestrians and bicyclists of shared path conditions and uses (directional arrows, center line and/or "Keep Right" stencils)
4. Modify path and roadway design at the entry and exit of the parkway to direct faster moving bicycle traffic to the shared roadway or contra-flow lane, and sightseeing or slower recreational bicyclists to the multiuse path facility
5. Until a contra-flow lane is installed, improve facility design and signage to make intended uses obvious and to discourage "wrong-way" riding on the roadway
6. Install stop signs or user activated controls at pedestrian crossing at 41st Ave end of parkway
7. Get design feedback from the Bicycle Committee, stakeholders and facility users prior to final design and construction

The Ad-Hoc Committee report, which was endorsed by the full Bicycle Committee, is attached for background information.

The Bicycle Committee believes that the facility has the potential to develop into a conflict free, valuable transportation and recreational resource for locals and tourists. The Committee urges you to make the recommended improvements to further enhance this community jewel.

Please feel free to contact the RTC's Bicycle Coordinator and staff to the Bicycle Committee, Cory Caletti at (831) 460-3201 or by email at [ccaletti@scrtc.org](mailto:ccaletti@scrtc.org), for this and any other Bicycle Committee related matters.

Sincerely,



David Casterson  
Bicycle Committee Chair

Attachment 1: Ad-Hoc Committee Report regarding East Cliff Drive Parkway improvements

cc: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Bicycle Committee  
John Leopold, District 1 Supervisor

**June 10, 2013**

**From: SCCRTC Bicycle Committee East Cliff Parkway Ad-Hoc Committee**

**William Menchine  
Kem Akol  
Nick Mucha**

**To: SCCRTC Bicycle Committee**

## **Consolidation of Subcommittee Findings on East Cliff Parkway Project and Recommendations**

### **Background**

Subcommittee members had an opportunity to observe, walk and ride the East Cliff Parkway to gain a better understanding of the design issues and possible solutions for improving the East Cliff Parkway facilities for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

### **Overview**

The project design as built represents a major improvement for the general public in terms of access and aesthetics as a result of the construction of a multi-use path, parking and roadway improvements along East Cliff between 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave and 41<sup>st</sup> Ave. The success of the project is evident in the high numbers of users seen in the afternoons and on weekends. There is no doubt that the project has resulted in an increase in foot and bicycle traffic along this section of East Cliff. Unfortunately, the lack of a dedicated lane for westbound cyclists has resulted in a facility that is less than optimal for the needs of utility bicyclists, bicycle commuters and cyclists wanting to travel at speeds exceeding a walking pace.

From the perspective of a transportation or utility cyclist, the changes to the roadway that resulted in one-way eastbound traffic eliminated an efficient and scenic roadway that had served as coastal “bike route” and had been in use for decades.

The intent of planners was to channel westbound bicycle traffic onto the multi-purpose path but this has resulted in some confusion and potential danger due to a lack of signage and separation. As it stands, there are no indications to inform users where to ride or walk on the pathways. The resulting bikeway is “asymmetrical” in that eastbound riders can travel in a bike lane at higher speeds where westbound riders are forced to ride through and around pedestrians and other path users.

The dual path concept of decomposed granite (DG) to serve as a jogging or walking path and asphalt concrete (AC) as the “bike lane” is not necessarily obvious to different user groups. This was evident when observing pedestrians and bicyclists using both pathways and by the number of westbound bicyclists that chose to avoid the path altogether by riding the wrong way in the dedicated eastbound bike lane. It is clear that there is an immediate need for some form of “tweaking” to the facility to improve safety and reduce potential conflicts between user groups.

### **Observations**

In observing and analyzing the East Cliff Parkway facility “as built” and in discussing the design intent of the project with County Public Works and Redevelopment Staff, our subcommittee has developed a summary of observations, suggestions and possible improvements.

### ***Path Markings***

It is clear that the path facility has been designed to function as a bi-directional bike path intended for slower bicycle traffic and separate from the roadway. As such, this path should be clearly marked as a bikeway with a separating line for directions and/or a regular stencil of graphic to educate and encourage all users to “Keep Right”. This change alone would help to reduce some of the conflict and chaotic movements and interactions between parents pushing strollers, children and families on casual bike rides and pedestrians.

In addition, it would be useful to have signage explaining path rules and etiquette placed at several point along the Parkway. This should include information to educate and encourage joggers and pedestrians to use the DG pathway and likewise discourage bicyclists from riding on the DG path and limiting speeds on the AC path to less than 10mph.

### ***Entry and Exit Improvements***

There is a need for better signage and possible redesign of the bicycle and pedestrian path and crossing at the east end of the Parkway near 41<sup>st</sup> Ave. The design as it exists is particularly confusing for bicyclists heading west as to where to ride and how to enter the path. It is also not obvious to drivers as they approach the crosswalk that this is a Bike and Pedestrian crossing. This may need to be controlled with a stop sign or a “push to cross” warning system with lights.

Likewise, the west end of the parkway needs some way to indicate to bicyclists how to enter and exit the pathway legally and safely. This could be handled by signage, painted pavement and or a system of rubber curbs or barriers to allow westbound bicyclists to continue on East Cliff after exiting the Parkway.

### ***Contra-Flow Lane***

From a bicycle transportation perspective the East Cliff Parkway facility is compromised by the lack of a separate and dedicated bike route for westbound bicyclists. It is the opinion of our subcommittee that this should be addressed and corrected by re-configuring the roadway to include sharrows in the eastbound travel lane and use the remaining roadway area for a separated, westbound contra-flow bike lane. The placement of the contra-flow lane is potentially challenging given the design of the

parking pullouts on the ocean side of the street and presence of driveways and streets entering East Cliff on the north (inland side) of the road.

The typical configuration of a contra-flow lane on a “one-way” street replaces the “normal” opposing travel lane with a separated bike lane. This preserves conventional turning maneuvers and traffic interactions at intersections and driveways. While recognizing that there could be potential challenges, the north (inland) side of the roadway is the preferred location for a contra-flow bike lane on East Cliff Parkway.

*It is unfortunate that the addition of a contra-flow lane will be as a modification or afterthought to an otherwise first class facility. Whatever direction the design of a contra-flow lane takes, it is important to get it right. It is our committee’s request to be included in preliminary design and configuration studies to provide informed feedback and critique. It is strongly recommended that flexible (prototype) solutions be tried in advance of committing to the construction of a final hardscape design.*

### **Summary of recommendations for improvements to the East Cliff Parkway:**

1. Re-configure the eastbound travel lane to include sharrow markings and any necessary signage
2. Install a westbound contra-flow bike lane using the remaining roadway area to conform with established best design practices
3. Install signage, stenciling or striping to better inform pedestrians and bicyclists of shared path conditions and uses (directional arrows, center line and/or “Keep Right” stenciled on pathway)
4. Modify path and roadway design at the entry and exit of the parkway to direct faster moving bicycle traffic to the shared roadway or contra-flow lane and sightseeing or slower recreational bicyclists to the multiuse path facility
5. Improve facility design and signage to make intended uses obvious and to discourage “wrong-way” riding on the roadway
6. Install stop signs or user activated controls at pedestrian crossing at 41<sup>st</sup> Ave end of parkway
7. Get design feedback from the Bicycle Committee, stakeholders and actual facility users prior to final design and construction

### **Conclusions**

The East Cliff Parkway represents a huge leap forward with respect to the aesthetic of East Cliff Drive and as an enticement and encouragement of active transportation and recreation opportunities for the community. The facility clearly has the potential to develop into a well-used and valuable transportation and recreational resource for locals and tourists. We are hopeful that through some redesign, improved signage and the application of new ideas it will become an even better facility and more effectively serve the needs of all users.

RTC East Cliff Parkway Ad-Hoc Committee  
WM for KA and NM



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June 11, 2013

John Presleigh, Director  
Department of Public Works  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street, Room 410  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: County's Capital Improvement Program recommendations

Dear Mr. Presleigh:

I'm writing on behalf of the Bicycle Committee of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to comment on the draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and suggest bicycle project modifications and additions.

The RTC Bicycle Committee appreciates Public Works staff's partnership in developing and maintaining a complete, convenient and safe regional bicycle network that promotes active and sustainable transportation and recreational options. The Committee reviews pertinent plans, projects, preliminary designs and policy initiatives to further advance those objectives. In reviewing the County's draft CIP, the Bicycle Committee, through a motion that was approved unanimously, recommends the following changes and additions:

- For the Green Valley Road Chip Seal project: include bike lanes where possible and sharrows otherwise in order to increase awareness of cyclists on this high-use corridor
- For the Boulder Creek Elementary School project: review bicycle lanes for possible inclusion as a jumping off block for further bicycle facilities to be constructed later that will provide safe avenues for parents and kids to get to school by bike
- Add all segments of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (as defined in the project's Draft Master Plan) that are within the jurisdiction of the unincorporated county
- In general, support all projects that include bike facilities and seek Bicycle Committee input into preliminary design proposals

Please feel free to contact the RTC's Bicycle Coordinator and staff to the Bicycle Committee, Cory Caletti at (831) 460-3201 or by email at [ccaletti@sccrtc.org](mailto:ccaletti@sccrtc.org), for this and any other Bicycle Committee related matters.

Sincerely,

David Casterson  
Bicycle Committee Chair

cc: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Bicycle Committee

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