

## **Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting – March 4, 2024**

### **Handout for Item 12: Updates related to the Construction Zone Subcommittee provided by Scott Roseman**

Scott met with Public Works staff at Santa Cruz County. Met with Steve Wiesner, Russell Chen, and Katie Beach (Katie manages the projects) from Public Works. It was a good meeting, and they appeared to sympathize with what we are dealing with here and want to do what they can to support us. They indicate that they are guided by the state's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) regulations, and I also shared with them the suggested guidelines from our Community Traffic Safety Coalition (CTSC), which they said they pretty much follow. They do have requirements in the contracts with the companies doing the work, and they have people on sight to monitor. I would encourage you and others on our larger committee to take photos of these zones when you come upon them, especially if there are issues with them. You can send them to me, and I will compile them to send off.

One issue we spent some time on was the signage. While they do require that "Bicycles May Share the Lane," I asked them about stronger language. We also discussed sign placement. In both cases, they are limited by what the state's rules are, set by California Traffic Control Devices Committee sets. I have reached out to a couple of members of that committee, specifically the two who are appointed to represent Active Transportation. I'll keep you posted on that.

Scott also met with Matt Starkey, Transportation Manager for the City of Santa Cruz. Matt was very supportive and is working to tighten things up around this issue. Like the County, they are constrained by regulations, but they are open to putting more emphasis on bike safety with adequate signage.

Paula reports on her meetings with other jurisdictions.

Capitola

I spoke to Kailash Mozumder, CE

He also stated similar to Santa Cruz. They can't deviate from the manual (MUTCD). For larger projects Public Works requires a traffic management plan. Small projects (one day duration for example). The City Public Works might take a look at the the construction signage in a construction zone, but mostly complaint driven (lack of time resources). He said they can only use signage in the manual since that is the standard. He heard of the CTSC guidelines. education and enforcement

are needed, staffing limits. They are open to suggestions to make it safer and he usually attends the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) meeting for the City.

SV

I spoke to Athena Cheung, Asst Engineer, and later Steve Jesberg, Interim CE (was Capitola PW Director). Same as Capitola, He heard of the CTSC guidelines but did not have a copy. I will email. Steve said he is happy to help further & may attend ITAC. They do have a contract inspector on staff now.

Watsonville

I am still working on contacting; I could not get a response from Murray Fontes or Patrice Theriot (traffic). I called customer service and spoke to Marco Diaz who is super helpful and was referring my email to Jaime Rodriguez, Traffic Services. I hope to speak to someone the week of 2/20 to 2/23 to wrap up.

Problems & solutions

The manual is somewhat vague. Section 6D.101 "Bicycle Considerations" (vague), measures to "support" considerations, "Guidance" and standards (specific, directive). I suggest more specific considerations and guidelines would be an improvement. I don't feel like I am knowledgeable to comment on what would improve further than what is already written for bikes. For example, the ongoing County Soquel Drive project adding sidewalks, ADA curbs and bike lanes was just as spotty as all other construction zones. Maybe a share the lane sign, maybe not, Maybe a sidewalk closed sign, maybe not and nothing else. Most glaring is they need to do something for the mobility limited (wheelchairs, partially sighted and others). Inconsistency is a big problem, education and enforcement are needed. It is most dangerous for them, they cannot be pushed into the traffic lane like bikes, when bicyclists can share a lane. The problem may not be the measures, it seems that the CTSC already identified the problems.

Pedestrian issues are different than bicycle issues as bikes can easily go around a construction area. The manual states that if the sidewalk closed one needs a sign in advance, for example a nearby crossing with a crosswalk and so on. Often there is no nearby crosswalk that is practical due to long distances in between (such as on Soquel Dr).

My suggestion is that PW staff should educate (have a conversation and a handout for contractors) as part of their permit (encroachment and maybe building permits) when sidewalks may be blocked by vehicles.

There should be temporary measures such as making the bike lane & sidewalk clear at the end of the work day. If blocked either during the day and ongoing, a traffic plan with effective signage for bicyclists and peds. Then there needs to be follow-up to see if the measures are implemented an opportunity to correct, then possible enforcement.

I also spoke to Janet Edwards at the Elderly and Disabled Traffic Advisory Committee (E & D TAC) and she referred me to Veronica who I have not heard from after multiple attempts and re-contacting Janet. But maybe this inquiry is better directed to the RTC CTSC since they wrote the recommended guidelines for bicyclists and pedestrians? We may not need new info, but to problem solve on the MUTCD.

Paula later met Jaime Rodriguez in the City of Watsonville and believes he is the Interim City Engineer. He is a contractor/consultant and works for two firms: Traffic Patterns and Smart City Signals. He has worked for many jurisdictions all over the state, Salinas, Palo Alto to name a few so he has experience across many PW jurisdictions. Implementation of traffic control plans and standards varies depending on staff resources and experience. He uses several resources for traffic control plans and safety including CA Highway Design Manual: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Publications and NACTO.

He emailed traffic plans for bicycles and peds for the city of Palo Alto for example. These are detailed examples of signage and detours for construction zones. Palo Alto is different in that the City does all its own PW and utility work, staff rather than contractors. This would make it easier to implement the safety measures.

He also emailed a Traffic Control Plan Power Point workshop for San Mateo County. This was done as a brown bag (free I believe). It is possible that our local jurisdiction could ask his firm to present the same locally.

Interesting to note - Smart City Signals has created an app for bikes & peds with virtual detection for signalized intersections. When a a bike or ped is approaching a signal, the signal will detect their approach and the light will change without having to use the button on the light pole. It is being implement in Millbrae right now and is the first City in the country to do so.

Also, notable - this spring/summer Watsonville is constructing bike infrastructure on Harkins Slough Rd behind the Overlook shopping center, between Ohlone Blvd towards Ramsay Park