

Letters of support for the public for parking restrictions along Santa Cruz Ave

October 20, 2016

To: San Mateo County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee,

Agenda: Recommendation to Board of Supervisors regarding proposed parking restrictions on Santa Cruz Avenue near Sand Hill Road.

Problem: Bike danger for riding on Santa Cruz Avenue northwest for the ¼ mile from Sand Hill Road to the Alameda Y. This is a main south-to-north bike route. Several hundred bicyclists ride this every day. There is no legal semi-convenient south-to-north alternative bike route to avoid this section.

Personal: This section of Santa Cruz Avenue is scary. Bicyclists ride in a no-mans-land of parked cars on the right and 40 MPH traffic on the left. The bicyclist's choices are 1) ride as close as possible to the parked car doors and hope the following traffic edges left to pass, 2) weave in and out of the parked cars, 3) ride as fast as possible in mid traffic lane at about 10-15 MPH slower than the traffic, or 4) stop and wait. When I ride this, I have drivers pass as close as they can even when they have room to their left and honk their horn to show they were inconvenienced.

Summary: No good choices and an opening parked car door could cause a fatal accident.

I would propose the following recommendation:

- 1) A complete 24/7 no parking restriction for this ¼ mile section of Santa Cruz Avenue northwest in order to allow an 8' dedicated right side bike lane.
- 2) There are cars that are stored on this ¼ mile section of Santa Cruz Avenue northwest parking lane for days at a time. If a complete 24/7 no parking restriction is too severe, then I would propose a compromise of an 11' right side bike lane with 2, 3 or 4 hour parking limitation.

Dave Gildea
Private citizen
435 Hermosa Way
Menlo Park

Dear Board of Supervisors,

As a Menlo Park resident and a member of the city's bicycle commission, I strongly urge you to consider removing on-street parking on northbound Santa Cruz Avenue between Sandhill Road and the "Y" with Alameda de las Pulgas. The current situation is exceedingly dangerous. I consider it to be one of the most precarious areas for bicyclists in Menlo Park.

The roadway is narrow and bicyclists are squeezed between parked cars and drivers. There is a lot of traffic on this road as it funnels traffic from many streets (Alpine Road, Junipero Serra, and well as Sandhill) as the primary approach to downtown Menlo Park from the west. The road also curves, making it harder for drivers to see bicyclists ahead.

It would be great for drivers as well as bicyclists to have a dedicated bike lane along this stretch. Please prioritize the safety of the numerous people who have to navigate this area--pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers--over a handful of on-street parking spots.

Lydia Lee

Menlo Park Bicycle Commissioner

Hi Gwen, as a frequent bike commuter in this section of Santa Cruz Avenue I can attest that the on-street parking makes this busy section of road quite treacherous to navigate. Bikes must choose between "taking the lane" for the sake of visibility, thereby aggravating cars--or riding in and out of the parking zone depending on availability, which means that drivers not expecting to have to share the lane are suddenly forced to. I think it's also probably dangerous for drivers moving out of the parking spots. I hope you will strongly consider removing parking on this stretch of road altogether.

Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Behroozi
407 Bay Rd, Menlo Park

Gwen and San Mateo County Bicycle Commissioners:

I am in support of restricting parking at certain times along this corridor. As an avid cyclist who also sometimes bicycle commutes along this corridor, I know, firsthand, how dangerous it can be as we ride through this section with cars giving us virtually no space as they accelerate through the Sand Hill intersection. I believe that during peak traffic hours, this would significantly increase safety to cyclists.

Thank you.

-Ted Huang

Dear Gwen and San Mateo County Commissioners:

I am writing in strong support of parking restrictions (or parking elimination completely) on this very dangerous stretch of Santa Cruz Ave. In fact, I would ask the Commissioners to go further and push the County to create safer infrastructure for people on bicycles moving in the southbound direction as well.

This stretch of Santa Cruz Avenue is a major north-south bicycle route (it is even identified as a bicycle route on County maps) and connector to Alameda de Las Pulgas to the north, and Foothill Expressway to the south. It serves hundreds of commuting cyclists daily and very large numbers of recreational cyclists on the weekends. Northbound cyclists in particular are at extreme risk as they try to avoid parked cars on their right and speeding motorists on their left.

I ride this section of Sand Hill Road in both directions at least once a week. I have come to memorize several parked cars that never seem to move. All of the houses on the Northbound side of Santa Cruz Ave have driveways. As we as a community seek to encourage active forms of transportation and look for ways to entice folks to give non-motorized transportation a try, we should consider our roads not as free places to park cars, but as thoroughfares that serve a variety of users, both motorized and non-motorized.

Many caring citizens over the years have tried to get the County to address this on-going danger to our growing cycling community, without any progress to show.

Please help us by voting firmly to restrict or eliminate parking.

Best regards,

Bill Kirsch

Vice Chair, Menlo Park Bicycle Commission

Hello Gwen and San Mateo County Bicycle Commissioners-

Thank you for accepting my written comment in support of recommendations for parking restrictions for Santa Cruz Ave. Thank you for considering some sort of parking restrictions for Santa Cruz Ave near Sand Hill Road. This is one of the most dangerous pinch points for cyclists that I can think of in our area. As an avid cyclist and resident of Menlo Park for 23 years, I commend you for reviewing this issue for public safety reasons. Hundreds of cyclists travel that corridor on a daily basis and it seems like thousands on any given sunny weekend.

Here are my observations and thoughts:

- I have experienced the fear and tension of riding between parked vehicles and briskly moving vehicles on this stretch of roadway. It's unpleasant and unnecessarily risky by design for people bicycling. The worst place starts at the cross walk when you have to merge over and the sidewalk forces you into the vehicle travel lane. From then on you have to contend with drivers who either pass too closely or are trying to figure out what to do.
- The parked vehicles take up space that could be used for people actively riding their bicycles for transportation or fitness. The parked cars are also huge obstacles that force bicyclist into fast moving traffic. Along this stretch, drivers are traveling at speeds that can be lethal to a bicyclist.
- I have witnessed many near misses as people attempt to back out of their driveways into moving traffic. No doubt some people park next to the curb so they don't have to back out. But the parked vehicles restrict site lines of people backing out as well as the site lines of people bicycling or driving as they pass by.
- If parked vehicles were not there, at least during peak commute hours, it would free up a lot of paved real estate to help protect vulnerable bicyclists while allowing for better flow of vehicular traffic.

As a side note:

- Many of the homes on SCA are rentals.
- Some are rented to groups of students who park on the street and ride their bikes to campus. Their cars can sit there for weeks without moving.

While I understand the way we came to expect free curbside parking, somehow we need to figure out how to prioritize safe movement of people over free storage of vehicles. All of the homes have garages and driveways. Thank you so much for taking the time and interest in working to make our streets safer for everyone.

Best Regards-

Cindy Welton

Chair, Menlo Park Bicycle Commission

650.387.4376 cell

clwelton@comcast.net