

Public Correspondence Received
Ahead of the October 19, 2023
Unincorporated San Mateo County
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory
Committee Meeting

October 19, 2023



San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
San Mateo County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
San Mateo County Public Works Department

Re: Public Comment for SMC BPAC meeting Oct 19 Item 8: Canada Road

Dear SMC BPAC members,

On behalf of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC), a nonprofit creating a healthy community, environment, and economy through bicycling, we are writing to ask the County for swift and impactful bicycle infrastructure improvements on Canada Road. As you are surely aware, Canada Road is a premier cycling destination for families and people who bike recreationally in San Mateo County. It is also an important north-south transit route for many SM County residents who commute via bike. Nevertheless, we continue to see fatalities, serious injuries, and close calls for people who bike on Canada Road. In April, a driver killed South Francisco resident Lester Legarda on Canada road.

Canada Road is especially dangerous for several reasons:

- The increasing use of driving apps such as Google Maps and Waze for directions pushes many drivers off of 280 onto Canada, especially when a slowdown occurs. This problem will only worsen as more residents return to work and public transit ridership continues to struggle after the pandemic.
- Drag racers frequently use Canada given the relatively isolated location, wide and straight footprint, and low auto usage during off-peak times. Many cyclists use the road at off-peak times, too, as it is perceived as lower risk and less stressful.
- County staff have acknowledged that average speeds on Canada are well above the already scary 50 MPH speed limit.
- Cyclists aren't the only vulnerable users. Pedestrians/hikers and equestrians frequently are present or nearby.

In order to prevent future tragedies, SVBC recommends the following safety improvements:

- **Lower lane width to 10'** - The current 12' width is a major contributor to the 60+ MPH current speeds. 10' widths will result in [large reductions](#) in average vehicle speeds. Note that even [9' is acceptable](#) on lower volume rural roads. Truck volume on the road should be limited so there is no reason to have roads wider than 10'.
- **Survey and then lower speed limits** - SVBC understands the restrictions on reducing speed limits given current speeds and the 85th percentile rule. Given the recommended changes

**Building healthier and more just communities by making
bicycling safer and more accessible for all**

155 S 11th Street, San Jose, CA 95112 | bikesiliconvalley.org | 408-287-7259



above, especially the 10' widths, we anticipate that drivers will slow down. Thus, we urge the County to conduct a speed survey immediately after the project is implemented and lower speed limits accordingly.

- **Extend Bicycle Sunday to Bicycle Weekend** - San Mateo County families flock to Canada Road for [Bicycle Sunday](#) events. This is the one time that bicyclists of all abilities can bike in comfort and without fear of being hit by 60+ MPH auto traffic. Given lower, non-commute auto traffic volumes on the weekend, this is one of the few opportunities to provide safe spaces for people on bikes without greatly impacting the flow of auto traffic. Sunday morning is not a convenient time for many residents (e.g., religious and work commitments) so providing an additional Saturday option will be more equitable to those who want a safe place to ride.
- **Remove the planned two lane approach and slip lane on Edgewood at Canada** - [Staff have proposed](#) a slip lane (with a stop sign) for SW-bound Edgewood drivers turning right onto Canada. This has two problems. First, the two-lane approach on Edgewood forces cyclists in the bike lane to merge on the fly with right turning auto traffic (see the dashed, green conflict striping in the diagram). Second, the gentle right turning angle in the slip lane will encourage many drivers to roll through the stop sign. Right-turning drivers in the slip lane will have difficulty seeing cyclists heading NW-bound on Canada due to left-turning cars stopped at the intersection. Instead, we recommend: 1) Do not offer two turning lanes for drivers on Edgewood approaching Canada. Traffic volumes do not demand two lanes, especially as Edgewood only has one lane of traffic elsewhere; 2) Install a [green bike box](#) at the stop sign on Edgewood at Canada. This will improve visibility and safety for cyclists who need to move from the bike lane on the right of traffic in order to safely turn left onto Edgewood.
- **Reduce parking conflicts with bike lane** - Currently, there are several areas where parked cars can force bike riders into the traffic lane. This can be avoided through: 1) a full-time restriction on parking when the combination of bike lane and parking strip is <14-ft wide; 2) clearly marked parking to avoid overlap with bike lanes; 3) restrictions on overflow parking (and increased enforcement) on Canada near the Water Temple; and 4) clearly marked parking in staging areas for cyclists' cars - e.g., near 92 and at Edgewood.
- **Add northbound right turn lane on Canada at Edgewood** - Currently, there is no guidance to drivers on how to cross the bike lane for making a right turn at Edgewood. Further, many cyclists are fearful to "take the lane" so they stay to the right, potentially blocking drivers intending to turn right. Additionally, it is difficult for drivers to gauge the speed of many downhill cyclists in determining whether to pass the cyclist or wait for them before making the right turn. A right turn lane prior to the intersection would provide drivers with more time in determining the best point at which to cross the bike lane. If space is an issue, perhaps the left turn lane can be removed from the [current proposal](#), as that left lane

Building healthier and more just communities by making bicycling safer and more accessible for all

155 S 11th Street, San Jose, CA 95112 | bikesiliconvalley.org | 408-287-7259

serves only a few residents behind locked gates. Consequently, only a few drivers make left turns here and thus a dedicated left turn lane isn't necessary.



- **Work with Filoli to minimize driver/cyclist conflicts** - Currently, on Bicycle Sundays Filoli visitors mix with a large number of cyclists in the area around the main entrance. We recommend the County work with Filoli to encourage drivers to use their service entrance, reducing conflicts with cyclists and providing cyclists of all ages with a truly safe and car-free experience. Closure of the main entrance on the weekend would be optimal.

Thank you for your help in preventing future tragedies on Canada Road and in maintaining its status as a gem in the San Mateo County bike network.

Sincerely,

Sandhya Laddha
Policy and Advocacy Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

**Building healthier and more just communities by making
bicycling safer and more accessible for all**

155 S 11th Street, San Jose, CA 95112 | bikesiliconvalley.org | 408-287-7259

From: Mike Swire
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 7:32 AM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Comment for tonight's Item 8 - Canada Road

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Dear SMC BPAC,

I have been working on getting a letter from SVBC to the BPAC regarding Canada Road. I am not sure if we will be able to get a formal SVBC letter in place prior to the meeting tonight, so I am submitting this letter now in my name. (The content of the SVBC letter should be roughly similar.)

I am writing to ask the County for swift and impactful bicycle infrastructure improvements on Canada Road. As you are surely aware, Canada Road is a premier cycling destination for families and people who bike recreationally in San Mateo County. It is also an important north-south transit route for many SM County residents who commute via bike. Nevertheless, we continue to see fatalities, serious injuries, and close calls for people who bike on Canada Road. In April, a driver killed South Francisco resident [Lester Legarda](#) on Canada.

Canada Road is especially dangerous for several reasons:

- Enforcement on Canada Road is complicated given the two agencies that cover parts of this area. CHP and the SM County Sheriff cover different stretches of Canada and adjacent roads.
- The increasing use of driving apps such as Google Maps and Waze for directions pushes many drivers off of 280 onto Canada, especially when a slowdown occurs. This problem will only worsen as more residents return to work and public transit ridership continues to struggle after the pandemic.
- Drag racers frequently use Canada given the relatively isolated location, low risk of getting caught, wide and straight footprint, and low auto usage during off-peak times. Many cyclists use the road at off-peak times, too, as it is perceived as lower risk and less stressful.
- County staff have acknowledged that average speeds on Canada are well above the already scary 50 MPH speed limit.
- Cyclists aren't the only vulnerable users. Pedestrians/hikers and equestrians frequently are present or nearby.

In order to prevent future tragedies, I recommend the following safety improvements:

- **Lower lane width to 10'** - The current 12' width is a major contributor to the 60+ MPH current speeds. 10' widths will result in [large reductions](#) in average vehicle speeds. Note that even [9' is acceptable](#) on lower volume rural roads. Truck volume on the road should be limited so there is no reason to have roads wider than 10', unless the goal is to keep speeds high and continue to make the road dangerous and uncomfortable for people on bikes.
- **Survey and then lower speed limits** - I understand the restrictions on reducing speed limits given current speeds and the 85th percentile rule. Given the recommended changes above, especially the 10' widths, we anticipate that drivers will slow down. Thus, I urge the County to immediately conduct a speed survey after the project is done and lower speed limits accordingly.

- **Extend Bicycle Sunday to Bicycle Weekend** - San Mateo County families flock to Canada Road for [Bicycle Sunday](#) events. This is the one time that bicyclists of all abilities can bike in comfort and without fear of being hit by 60+ MPH auto traffic. Given lower, non-commute auto traffic volumes on the weekend, this is one of the few opportunities to provide safe spaces for people on bikes without greatly impacting the flow of auto traffic. Sunday morning is not a convenient time for many residents (e.g., religious and work commitments) so providing a Saturday option will be more equitable to those who want a safe place to ride.
- **Do not install stop signs on Canada at Edgewood Road** - I appreciate Public Works staff's intent in installing stop signs on Canada at Edgewood. Stop signs can have positive safety impacts in many situations. In this case, however, I don't believe this will be a net positive. This is a [rather large intersection](#). Requiring people on bikes to fully stop before proceeding will extend their time in the intersection, increasing the likelihood of a crash with an impatient driver. Also, ensure that the "pork chop" hardscape does not interfere with cyclists' likely routes; these are not very visible to cyclists and can cause crashes.
- **Remove the planned two lane approach and slip lane on Edgewood at Canada** - [Staff have proposed](#) a slip lane (with a stop sign) for SW-bound Edgewood drivers turning right onto Canada. This has two problems. First, the two lane approach on Edgewood forces cyclists in the bike lane to merge on the fly with right turning auto traffic (see the dashed, green conflict striping in the diagram). Second, the gentle right turning angle in the slip lane will encourage many drivers to roll through the stop sign. Right-turning drivers in the slip lane will have difficulty seeing cyclists heading NW-bound on Canada due to left-turning cars stopped at the intersection. Instead, we recommend: 1) Do not offer two turning lanes for drivers on Edgewood approaching Canada. Traffic volumes do not demand two lanes, especially as Edgewood only has one lane of traffic elsewhere; 2) Install a [green bike box](#) at the stop sign on Edgewood at Canada. This will improve visibility and safety for cyclists who need to move from the bike lane on the right of traffic in order to safely turn left onto Edgewood.
- **Reduce parking conflicts with bike lane** - Currently, there are several areas where parked cars can force bike riders into the traffic lane. We can avoid this through: 1) a full-time restriction on parking when the combination of bike lane and parking strip is <14-ft wide; 2) clearly marked parking to avoid overlap with bike lanes; 3) restrictions on overflow parking (and increased enforcement) on Canada near the Water Temple; and 4) clearly marked parking in staging areas for cyclists' cars - e.g., near 92 and at Edgewood.
- **Add northbound right turn lane on Canada at Edgewood** - Currently, there is no guidance to drivers on how to cross the bike lane for making a right turn at Edgewood. Further, many cyclists are fearful to "take the lane" so they stay to the right, potentially blocking drivers intending to turn right. Additionally, it is difficult for drivers to gauge the speed of many downhill cyclists in determining whether to pass the cyclist or wait for them before making the right turn. A right turn lane prior to the intersection would provide drivers with more time in determining the best point at which to cross the bike lane. If space is an issue, perhaps we could remove the left turn lane from the [current proposal](#), as that left lane serves a few residents behind locked gates. Consequently, only a few drivers make left turns here and thus a dedicated left turn lane isn't necessary.
- **Work with Filoli to minimize driver/cyclist conflicts** - Currently, on Bicycle Sundays Filoli visitors mix with a large number of cyclists in the area around the main entrance. The County should work with Filoli to encourage drivers to use their service entrance, reducing conflicts with cyclists and providing cyclists of all ages with a truly safe and car-free experience. Closure of the main entrance on the weekend would be optimal.

Please reach out to me should you have any questions or wish to discuss these recommendations in greater depth. Thank you for your help in preventing future tragedies on Canada Road and in maintaining its status as a gem in the San Mateo County bike network.

Sincerely,

Mike Swire

SVBC Member

Member, C/CAG BPAC (speaking as an individual, not on behalf of the Committee)

Member, SMCTA Citizen Advisory Committee (speaking as an individual, not on behalf of the Committee)

From: Giuliano
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 12:46 PM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Tonight's SMC BPAC meeting 10. Safe Shared Streets Video Pilot Program (Action

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Hi all,

Please make this correspondence part of the written meeting record.

I write in support of support for a Safe Shared Streets Video Pilot Program. A critical component of such a system is the ability to provide video evidence.

I'm a cyclist. I ride with 3 cameras: front, rear, helmet. Near every day I'm passed dangerously. Literally, not figuratively, sometimes every two days, more often multiple times a day. Typically these are folks who are just inattentive or unaware of the distance required to pass safely. Sometimes even of the law. Fairly often though, the unsafe pass is deliberate. The driver knows they are passing too closely, and does so in any case. They are in a hurry, they are annoyed at being "impeded", whatever. And, far too often the pass is reckless or qualifies as vehicular assault.

I have videos of all these sorts of passes. And can't get any law enforcement folks to treat this seriously. To even look at the evidence. These incidents must be taken seriously. My safety, my life is put in danger by every unsafe pass. And to deliberately choose to not look at clear evidence for reckless driving, and even worse to not take a look at evidence of assault is astonishing. This must change.

At the very least we need to start tracking these incidents. We need to know what sections of road are dangerous, and where improvements to cycling infrastructure must be prioritized. Even if you do not want to pursue action against the drivers, we at least need a system to track what sections of road are most in need of improvement.

A while back I was at a SMC BPAC advisory council meeting. One of the staff members there suggested that it might not be possible to accept video evidence due to privacy concerns. This is a strange notion. There is no expectation of privacy while in public. In particular, there's no expectation of privacy when in commission of an offense. There would be a compelling public policy interest. Can staff provide a single example of precedent supporting a privacy right while driving on a public road? A privacy right while driving on a public road and committing an offense? A privacy right where the video was taken by a private individual, who is providing it as evidence, rather than by a law enforcement officer. I've looked. I can find no such precedent.

Thank you,

giuliano carlini

Vanessa Castro

From: George Burkhard
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 3:58 PM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Comment for tonight's meeting re item - 10. Safe Shared Streets Video Pilot Program (Action).

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Hello,

In regards to item #10 on tonight's agenda, I am writing to strongly encourage the county to enact the Safe Shared Streets Video pilot program. It is very well known that there are significant issues with the general treatment of cyclists as road users with equal rights as motorists. When motorists have significant accidents, police investigate fault accordingly, and the state pursues criminal action in cases where malicious intent is involved. Cyclists are routinely subject to injury and threats to their lives by motorists passing unsafely or even intentionally close-passing, and these types of incidents are often ignored by law enforcement when reported. Dash cams, body cams, and home security systems have increased public awareness of crime and also of police actions, resulting in people being held responsible when at fault. Cyclists have increasingly been riding with cameras, and the evidence they collect will provide similar fodder to hold bad actors responsible and make the streets safer for everyone. It's time the county make use of this footage to show clear evidence of the issues with cycling in San Mateo County, which will then allow the county to increase awareness and safety, and hence encourage more people to ride when possible, easing traffic congestion and pollution.

Thank you

Vanessa Castro

From: Mike Swire
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 9:42 AM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Comment to SMC BPAC - item not on the agenda

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Dear SMC BPAC,

Thank you for your service in making the streets of SM County safer for those who walk and bike.

I am writing to encourage the SMC BPAC to increase its coordination with other groups on the Peninsula that are tasked with improving conditions for those who walk and bike. One of the largest problems in creating a safe network of bike and ped facilities in the county and decreasing driver mode share is consistency and economies of scale across jurisdictions. Currently, there are 22 or so different jurisdictions in the County which touch upon infrastructure, enforcement and education, three of the keys to making it safe for people to leave their cars at home. This hodge podge results in a variety of negative consequences:

- Bike infrastructure that ends at the city line (e.g., Old County Road in Belmont)
- Speed limit and parking policies that are inconsistent between towns, decreasing compliance among drivers
- Higher costs as projects fail to achieve economies of scale
- Inability to adequately influence large, cross-jurisdictional road projects that impact bike/ped; e.g., the recently completed widening of Highway 101, which was approved/funded by SMCTA and CCAG and led by Caltrans, resulted in the death of two major safety projects in the County - the Hillsdale Bike/Pedestrian Bridge in San Mateo and the Holly/101 Pedestrian Overcrossing Project in San Carlos. Both of these projects had been planned and funded for 15+ years but were cancelled due to the widening project taking precedence. Sadly, this will result in even more cars on the road around the 101 and decrease safety for people on foot and bike.

Currently, there are three groups that look at separate, but related pieces of bike/ped infrastructure on the Peninsula: SMC BPAC, the Citizen Advisory Committee (and Board) of the SM County Transportation Authority, and the C/CAG of San Mateo BPAC. The SMC BPAC focuses primarily on unincorporated areas of the County. SMCTA and C/CAG each provide funding to projects across the county, but these projects are often considered on a city by city basis, perpetuating the aforementioned problems of lack of a connected, countywide bike network and inefficient project scale to reduce costs.

I recommend that the SMC BPAC increase its coordination with SMCTA and C/CAG in order to improve the effectiveness of cross-county infrastructure and policies to help those that bike and walk. I currently serve on the SMCTA Citizen Advisory Committee and the C/CAG BPAC and have yet to see anything on meeting agendas concerning SMC BPAC activities and how to ensure that we are creating a county-wide network of bike & ped infrastructure instead of islands of disconnected projects, which end at the town or unincorporated border. Let me know how I can help on that end.

Thanks for your help here,

Mike Swire

Member, SMCTA Citizen Advisory Committee (but speaking as an individual)

Member, C/CAG BPAC (but speaking as an individual)