

Humboldt Bike Boulevard - Questions and Answers:

How can we afford this when you consider the City's budget problems to the point where you are even laying off your own staff?

- The permanent features of this project, such as the landscaped traffic circles and new curb ADA ramps for the disabled at the 3 or (4) traffic circles, may well have to wait until the City can secure funds from regional, State or Federal grant sources.
- Be assured, very little money will come from the general fund. What money is spent will come from money that can only be spent on bike/ped funds as mandated by State laws.

Why should we spend any money on bicyclists? They don't pay any taxes to support the spending they want.

Bicyclists actually do pay for this service.

- They usually have at least one car and could actually have many vehicles for which they pay annual registration fees and tax on the fuel they buy.
- They pay Measure O sales tax just like everyone else.
- A bicycle really has virtually no maintenance effect on the roadway except for stripping unlike heavy vehicles which pound our roadways until the roadbase fails.
- It is true that additional roadway space occasionally has to be purchased to accommodate enough space for a bike but this is also mandated by the City's General Plan 2035 to design all new roadways with this needed space and to comply with State laws.

Bicyclists don't even obey the traffic laws. They often don't stop at stop signs, ride on the wrong side of the road, take up the whole lane like they own it, and don't have lights at night to see them.

- Unfortunately there are a small minority of bad driving cyclists out there.
- And actually if you think about it, there are really quite a few bad car drivers also. How many drivers do you see driving while talking on their cell phones, which is against the law? Or how about drivers who do not put on their headlights when it's raining?
- Is bad driving as obvious as bad cycling? A driver cuts someone off, but that usually happens to just one person in a car, whereas a cyclist riding the wrong way is making an impression on every motorist who passes by.

You have all kinds of people riding a bike for various reasons.

- You have children riding to school or to practice.
- You have seniors who don't want to drive anymore or no longer have a license.
- You have people with learning disabilities which prevent them from driving.

- You have a large segment of people who can't afford a car.
- You have people who have an environmental commitment to driving less in order to use less foreign oil and reduce greenhouse emissions.
- You have folks who want to get out for the fresh air and exercise on a safe enough street to feel comfortable.

Unfortunately, until recently most schools did little to educate their students on how to correctly ride a bike in traffic. Most people learned to ride according to what made them feel safer. For example, riding on the wrong side of the road against traffic may seem totally wrong to the motorist but to an uneducated cyclist they think it is safer because they can see what is coming at them and can respond.

You are denying me access to my property. How can you do this?

Everyone will still have access to their property and a minimum of parking spaces have been taken for the purpose of safety at the circles.

Why the proposed no left turns from College onto Humboldt?

- The purpose of this measure is to slightly reduce vehicle volume on Humboldt. Although the numbers may seem small, every little bit helps make Humboldt safer.
- In reality, making a left turn at College is a poor idea from a safety aspect. Over the past twenty years there have been a number of serious accidents when making a left turn here in a traffic lane with fast speeds and heavy volume. In the past the City has even considered restricting these types of movements to only locations with left turn lane pockets.
- By far, the safer route to access the neighborhood is to use one of the two dedicated left turn lane pockets at College and Mendocino and then turn right at any street of your choosing from Mendocino to get into the neighborhood.
- Fremont School and the insurance company are at or near this intersection. There are safer ways to access these destinations. For school children crossing or waiting at the corner to cross, this restriction would greatly improve their safety.

What about the diversions at Pacific? Those will definitely be an inconvenience and will increase traffic onto other neighborhood streets.

- Typically, when we review Bicycle Blvds in other cities they divert traffic as a way to reduce traffic volume.
- Diversions here also will significantly eliminate cut-through traffic in our neighborhood. Cut-through traffic typically goes faster through a neighborhood than someone who actually lives in the neighborhood.
- The safety and improved livability along the street will benefit significantly which should compensate for the small inconvenience.
- People adjust their routes once they know a diversion is in. We saw this when our 101 freeway widening was being built.

- The City will have to closely monitor new traffic patterns that this diversion would create.

The traffic circles are still confusing. Some people still don't slow down enough, some don't know the law of who yields to who, and there doesn't seem like there is enough room for cars and bikes here. I liked it better before when everyone stopped and I feel it was safer.

- The purpose of traffic circles is to slow (calm) traffic down to a safe speed to be closer to what a cyclist travels.
- The circles also smooth out traffic speeds by slowing cars as they navigate around the circles. With stop signs, some drivers accelerate from the stops to make up for the lost time of having to stop. Some neighbors have reported that the traffic is calmer at the traffic circles, compared to the stop signs.
- This stop and go style of driving also emits more exhaust, adding to our greenhouse emissions. One of the city's major goals is the reduction of greenhouse emissions and roundabouts have been shown to reduce greenhouse gases from idling.
- The circles, when landscaped along with bulb-outs, will break up the visual straightaway where you can see for blocks on a clear line of sight. If there is interesting landscape or even a sculpture at these circles people will slow down to look.
- There are over 1,100 traffic circles in Seattle and they have been proven nationwide to work in slowing traffic down in neighborhoods and reducing accidents at these intersections.
- Traffic circles have proven a success in the Ridgway neighborhood. They have slowed traffic from students driving to the high school and junior college.
- But still, the traffic circles are considered by many to not be working as planned. Staff will be looking into what further improvements can be made to improve the current condition.
- Regarding cars and bikes at the circles, you are right if you feel there is not enough room for both to navigate around the circle at the same time. If you are a motorist remember this when approaching the circles with a cyclist in front of you. The cyclist should be taking the full lane in advance of the circle and around the circle and then stay to the right to let motorists pass when safe.
- The City will look into ways to better inform all drivers, cyclists and pedestrians on the use of roundabouts.

I don't understand. It's not like the bicyclists don't already have two north-south routes with bike lanes on North Street and Mendocino. Why do they also want Humboldt?

- Both of the streets you mention are very busy arterial type streets carrying large volumes of vehicles at higher speeds from 35 to 50 mph. The #1 reason we have heard from people in support of the bike boulevard is that they would love to ride their bikes more but don't feel it is safe. Fatality rates go up significantly in

accidents with vehicles going over 35 mph. For sure almost all parents would not feel comfortable about their children riding on these streets.

- A street like Humboldt offers the opportunity for people to begin getting familiar with how to ride in and with traffic in a safer environment with slower speeds. With experience people will ride more and eventually learn to feel more comfortable on the busier streets as well.
- The key to increased ridership has been found in providing the facilities (friendlier places to ride).

I don't see any more bicyclists than before and I didn't see that many in the first place.

- The city has documented an increase in ridership, and many residents have said they have witnessed more cyclists on Humboldt, since the boulevard facilities were installed.
- It's sometimes easy to say "well I hardly see anyone riding now, so why are we spending all this money on improvements for non-existent riders?" But this is kind of the same line of thinking as saying, "why put in a crosswalk at a busy street when I don't see anyone crossing there now?" Once the permanent facilities have been installed, ridership will continue to increase, even beyond what we have already seen, .
- Humboldt offers connections to not only Fremont School, but is a safe way for high-school and SRJC students to bike to school thus reducing the congestion on Mendocino. Humboldt also has signalized crossings at the busier cross streets at Pacific and College Ave.
- Humboldt offers an important east-west connecting route from the Prince Memorial-Santa Rosa Creek trail to Chanate Road, offering convenient connections to large employment centers such as the Sonoma County government center and Kaiser Hospital.

OK, I get why we need a calmer street to ride on but why not one of the less busy streets such as Slater or Beaver?

- The purpose of a Bike Blvd is to provide a route that is parallel to a busy arterial like Mendocino. Typically these also have to be within a couple of blocks of each other.
- The Bike Blvd should be as straight as possible and not meandering. It is also important that there be as few stops as possible to allow the cyclist to make good time getting from point A to Point B.
- Only Humboldt fits all these criterion which is why in 2001 it was selected in the General Plan to be the Bicycle Blvd.
- None of the other north-south streets from Mendocino to North Street connect all the way from Lewis to College.

Why were the centerline dots removed? This could cause head-on accidents!

- By removing the centerline dots, motorists can now easily give the bicyclist more room when passing.
- Remember, essentially the cyclist is in the travel lane because they must stay 3 to 3.5' away from parked cars to avoid a door which may open unexpectedly. The lanes were 10' wide before, and cars would often try and squeeze between the yellow dots and the cyclist riding next to parked cars, which often resulted in the cyclist having to ride closer to the parked car and within this dangerous door zone.

We were OK with bikers before Humboldt became the Bike Blvd. Now there seems to be more of a problem for everyone. Why can't we just return it to the way it was?

- The consensus we got from cyclists and people who wanted to ride was that Humboldt was not a safe street on which to ride.
- It is very uncomfortable to have a one to two ton vehicle pass you going 35 mph or faster less than 3' feet away. Often a car would not cross the yellow centerline bumps and would squeeze the cyclist against a parked car, not leaving enough room to avoid a car door suddenly opening.
- The chance of a fatal or serious injury keeps many residents from riding their bikes.
- The improvements on the Humboldt Bicycle Blvd are aimed towards slowing traffic down, and reduction of cut-through traffic patterns which typically speed through neighborhoods.

You are hurting the businesses along Humboldt by restricting easy access and cutting traffic volumes down.

Retail business overall is down as part of our national economic crisis. Recently the Press Democrat ran an article about the Skyhawk market on Hwy 12 having to significantly cut employees and services, and this is in a more affluent part of town.

Won't all these traffic calming measures slow emergency response times?

There can be no denying the point that response time will be very slightly impeded, but with the new fire station recently placed on Lewis, the neighborhood benefits from significantly better response times than previously.