

Bodega Ave Bike Lanes the City Council Is Planning Will Not Be Safe

This is the judgment of many bike professional and **all** of the experienced area bikers consulted. Following is why, along with documentation.

Summary of issue

In multiple ways the use and design of the Bodega bike lanes do not meet standards adopted by the State of California and National Standards, particularly for lanes with no separation from traffic.

*The bike lanes do not meet the fundamental goal of the Sebastopol Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, “ to provide safe routes for all abilities and ages.” The bike lanes do not support VisionZero, or Safe Routes to School.

*Unprotected bike lanes are not recommended for roads with traffics counts over 3,000/day. The Bodega Ave traffic count was 12,600/day in 2016, and is significantly higher now and climbing.

*The Bodega Ave bike lanes will suddenly end ¼ mile west of Main St, at the Jewell Ave. To continue requires bikers to merge with traffic lanes in the most highly congested vehicle traffic area in town. This situation is far worse on warm weather weekends. Then traffic often backs up Bodega Ave well over a ¼ mile.

*All bike professionals consulted have judged the proposed Bodega bike lanes **not safe** for most bike riders. This includes the following people. (15)

- All Sebastopol bike shop owners (4)
- The last two retired executive directors of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition.
 - The owner of Bicycle Solutions, a SF based bike way designer for Sebastopol’s Hwy 116 bike lanes.
 - The areas most experienced road bikers familiar with the plan -12.

*The highest frequency of car/bike collisions occurs with right turning drivers pulling out of driveways or intersections into bike lanes. The fast downhill side of Bodega Ave has **40 such hazard** situations. Half of the Bodega driveways do not have a turnaround so drivers need to **back out** into Bodega Ave across the bike lanes.

*The long uphill section from Nelson Way to Gold Ridge Ave is too long and steep for most regular bikers to ride up or ride without weaving.

*Bikers will normally be going quite fast when going down hill in this same quarter mile section. Toward the bottom of this area bikers will ride closely between fast traffic and a rock retaining wall.

* For several weeks a year the sun sets directly in front of drivers. The road slopes up due west. A blinding setting sun shines directly into driver's eyes on the top half Bodega Ave.

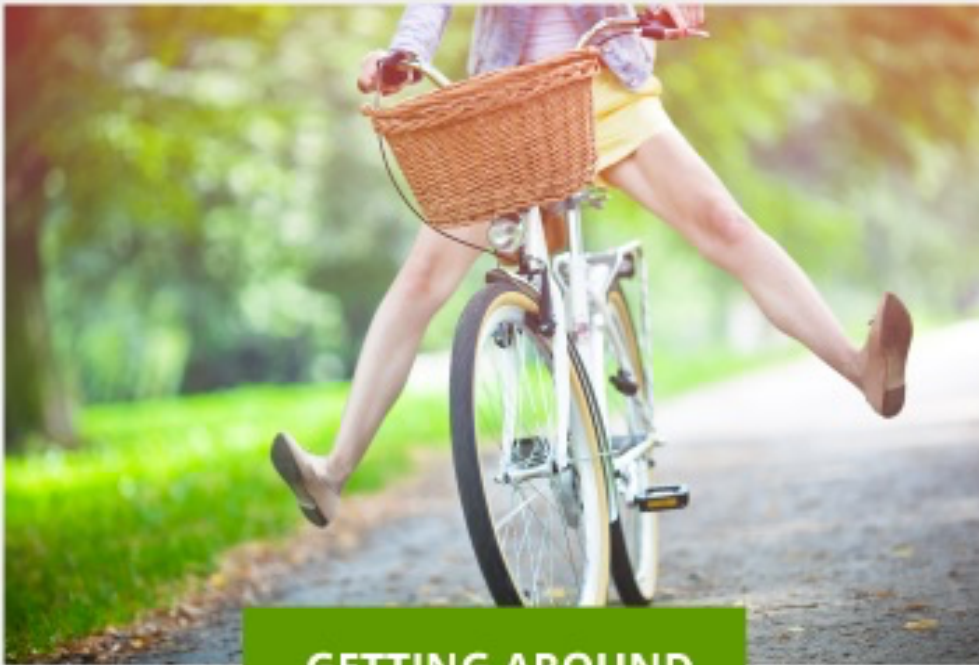
*In Sonoma County impaired drivers are the leading cause of traffic fatalities. Bodega is a main route to the coast where many partake. Biker lane rider are most vulnerable.

*The two most important things people look for in a neighborhood are "How walkable is the neighborhood" and "How bikeable is the neighborhood." Bodega Ave lanes do not support the most significant community needs.

SUMMARY END

Documentation of Sources below

Copied from a Zillo Survey of the Ten Most Important Things People Look For In A Neighborhood – number one and two are below.



GETTING AROUND

1. How walkable is the neighborhood?
2. How bikeable is the neighborhood?





National Association of
City Transportation Officials

Bikeways that provide comfortable, low-stress bicycling conditions can achieve widespread growth in mode share. Among adults in the US, only 6–10% of people generally feel comfortable riding in mixed traffic or painted bike lanes.⁸ However, nearly two-thirds of the adult population may be interested in riding more often, given better places to ride, and as many as 81% of those would ride in protected bike lanes.⁹ Bikeways that eliminate stress will attract traditionally under-represented bicyclists, including women, children, and seniors.



National Association of
City Transportation Officials

What are the main causes of bicycle injuries?

Among the most common causes of cycling accidents are:

- Vehicles Turning Into The Path Of **Cyclists**. ...
- Drivers Failing To See **Cyclists** When Turning Or Changing Lanes. ...
- Vehicles Pulling Out Of A Junction. ...
- Vehicle Doors Opening In Front Of An Oncoming Cyclist. ...

SPEED

High motor vehicle speeds and speeding introduce significant risk to all road users, narrowing driver sight cones, increasing stopping distance, and increasing injury severity and likelihood of fatality when crashes occur.²¹ Most people are not comfortable riding a bicycle immediately next to motor vehicles driving at speeds over 25 mph. Conventional bike lanes are almost always (with rare exceptions) inadequate to provide an All Ages & Abilities facility in such conditions.

Local bike shop owner statements

These people hear what Sebastopol bike riders have to say.

Denver Booker

Owner | Uber Bike LLC / Sebastopol Bike Center
denverb@uber-bike.com

“A lot of people, customers tell me that it is a scary road to ride. Most people will not use it even with the lanes. Not a good idea. I won’t ride it up hill and I am not your usual rider.”

Fergus Recks, owner, West County Cycle Service

“Will bike lanes on Bodega make it safer? Definitely not. Something is going to happen. I ride my bike to work every day on Hwy 116. I feel safer riding in the center of the traffic lane. I do not use the bike lanes.”

Nick Sanders, long time previous owner of West County Cycle Service

“It will be really scary to ride on. Not many will use it. A poor allocation of resources.”

Daniel Howes, owner, Revel Bikes

“I live in Valley View. Bodega is the short way to my shop. I never ride on it, would never recommend anyone riding on Bodega. Too much traffic. Not safe. I cringe when I see bikes on it.”

John Ciccarelli

Bicycle Solutions -- Planning, Design, Parking/Storage, Education/Training,
Expert Witness

San Francisco, CA

415-912-6999 mobile/text

www.BicycleSolutions.com

“In the absence of other alternative bikeway riding downhill in the center of the lane was the best/safest place..... judges the Bodega bike lanes as “not appropriate for inexperienced bicyclists.”

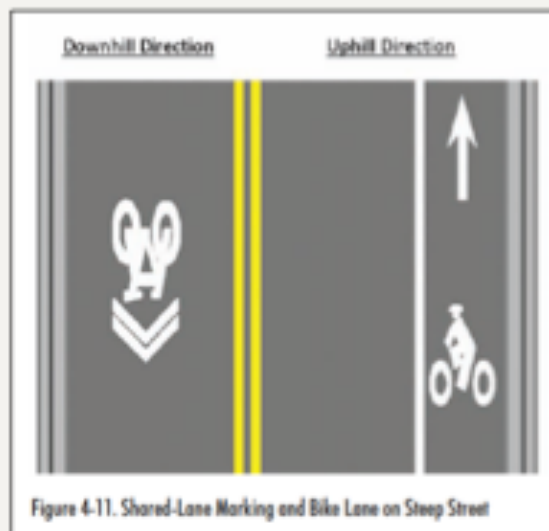
Ciccarelli was a consultant and designer on the Hwy 116 bike lanes, and provided the below example of how Bodega Avenue should be designed.

Recommended to design to accommodate biking on grades

American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials. Bike Design Guide, 2012 Edition. See Topic 4.6.2 see illustration



Steep hill: bike lane up, sharrows down
(bikes climb slowly but descend rapidly)



Thoughtful letter from a local bike professional

Copy of a letter sent to Council and staff from Denver Booker, owner of Sebastopol Bike Center, and biking tour business. He is as knowledgeable as they come on bike issues. This meeting was in response to the negative community response to the Hwy 116 bike lanes.



City council meeting: Bike lane discussion, Oct. 30

The public is invited to take part in an open conversation about the new bike lanes in Sebastopol during the Oct. 30 city council meeting. ... [Read more](#)

Hi,

I enjoyed attending the workshop yesterday evening and I pretty much liked all of the ideas that I saw. However I think, with regard to cycling, it fails on the goal as stated in the meeting invitation - "to make your neighborhood a safer and more comfortable place to bike and walk for people of all ages and abilities". The greatest unrepresented group of bicyclists in your plan are those at the beginner level. Unfortunately, beginner level cyclists is also where the greatest number of cyclists are. As an experienced cyclist, any of these proposed improvements will do little, if anything, to make cycling here better for me personally. As a bike shop owner (Sebastopol Bike Center) I constantly hear from people that want to ride a bike more but don't because they don't feel safe.

I think that a lot of design for cyclists addresses just the tip of the iceberg. That "tip" is the enthusiast type of cyclist and those cyclists are what would be considered advanced or intermediate level cyclists. The unseen and largest part of the iceberg are the beginner level cyclists. If you look at a cross section of cyclists in a bike-friendly location, like Copenhagen or Amsterdam, you would see a lot of cyclists and most of them would fall into the category of beginner cyclist. They don't wear lycra, rarely wear helmets and are generally using their bicycle as an extension of walking. On the other hand if you look at a cross-section of cyclists here you would mostly see cycling-enthusiasts and very few beginners-cyclists. Those beginner cyclists exist here just like they exist in Copenhagen and Amsterdam but because they don't feel safe on a bike they instead drive a car. When it comes to design of bike infrastructure designers tend to plan for what they see, i.e. the tip of the iceberg, and ignore the biggest part of their "customer base".

For urban designers to really fulfill the desires for those wishing to bike or walk the main rule to follow is SEPARATION FROM TRAFFIC. Cyclists and pedestrians will always prefer a route that is more removed from traffic.

The next rule is whatever you do IT HAS TO MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SAFE. Separation from traffic is a good start to making pedestrians and cyclists feel safe, but what standard can we use when designing something that will make people FEEL safe? I don't know if there is such a standard but I

have a suggestion – design it so that the average 12-year-old would be trusted to navigate it safely. I picked this because I remember that it was about that age when I started exploring neighborhoods on my own bike.

Comments and unanswered questions:

1. Who will maintain the Class II bike lanes? On busy roads, like Bodega Ave., the road shoulder, or Class II lane, quickly turns into a grabage lane. It collects the flotsam and jetsam of vehicles, gravel from vehicles and intersecting driveways, glass (especially just after garbage pick-up) and encroaching vegetation. Adding shoulders to existing roads is expensive and it seems pointless to do this if it will become just another garbage lane like so many other Class II lanes. These hazards usually mean the best place to ride is in the vicinity of the white line closest to the traffic lane.

2. Class II bike lanes next to parallel parked cars are dangerous and expecting cyclists to ride within the bike lane is sending expecting them to put their life and limb in danger. The only safe place to ride is in the vicinity of the white line closest to the traffic lane. Was this hazard considered in the design? Did anyone consider using sharrows in the center of the drive lane (not in the door zone as was recently done on Willow Street) and install signs saying "BIKES MAY USE FULL LANE"?

3. You can make a bike lane but that doesn't mean cyclists will use it. For example, the map that was part of the workshop invitation indicates an existing Class III route on Washington Ave. (I actually didn't realize this was a Class III route) which joins with the double black diamond route on Bodega Ave. I thought this was odd because I rarely find that route preferable and instead prefer using Dutton and Huntley Streets. Most cyclists seem to agree as this can be found on a something called a Strava heat map. Anyone can go online and access this information. Anyway, the point is cyclists will pick the route that gives the best separation from traffic and makes them feel safest.

Again, I pretty much liked all of the ideas presented but had hoped to see "people of all ages and abilities" better represented. Connecting the West County Trail, Ragle Park, Ives Park, Libby Park and the Joe Redota Trail for "people of all ages and abilities" would transform Sebastopol.

Thanks for your time and feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Denver Booker

Owner | Uber Bike LLC / Sebastopol Bike Center
denverb@uber-bike.com

Letters

*One of 50 plus individual letters and emails sent to the Council asking for some action on proposed **trails**. This is likely a record number of letters for the community **supporting** something. **No** letters or emails are on file with the City Clerk requesting or supporting the Bodega Ave **bike lanes**.*

From: Nell Hergenrather <nell@nellhergenrather.com>

Subject: Budget and Bike Trails

Date: June 6, 2016 at 10:00:14 PM To: unaglass@coastwalk.org, fyreder@comcast.net,

"sarahcouncil@yahoo.com" <sarahcouncil@yahoo.com>, "rjacob@sonic.net" <rjacob@sonic.net>, "ps.sebcc@gmail.com" <ps.sebcc@gmail.com>
Cc: hmikus@cityofsebastopol.org, lwmclaughlin@juno.com

Hello City Council Members,

I am writing to you all tonight to urge you to do the study that will enable our city to move forward with bike trails in and around Sebastopol. I feel like this issue has stalled so many times and really, there is no better time to get our city on board with more trails and access to our community! The culture we are creating by driving all over town- all the time is not inclusive, serene or healthy!

I know I speak for hundreds of families with school age children as I am actively involved in 3 school communities in the Sebastopol area. Give us options! Give us our community in reach. Mothers, fathers and children want to bike our streets safely and navigating the options now is not only dangerous but limited.

I look forward to our city moving in the right direction by setting aside the money to do the study for multi use trails this year, so that the landowners who have pledged their support by use of their property are still around and willing.

Seize the day!

In community and most sincerely,

Nell Hergenrath

Teacher, Parent and Fine Artist

From Grant Application for Bodega Avenue Bike Lanes, 2017

The highlighted area below states the bike lanes will end ¼ mile short of the Main Street intersection, and bikers must merge with the traffic to continue. This is merging into the most congested area of Bodega Ave with traffic well backed up the much of the day. The reasoning "Since it was preferable to maintain the parking".....



Name:

Bodega Avenue Bike Lanes and Pavement Rehabilitation

Description:

The project proposes to add approximately 0.7 miles of Class II bike lanes on Bodega Avenue between Pleasant Hill Avenue and Jewell Avenue as well as rehabilitation of the pavement on the section between Pleasant Hill Avenue and High Street. As shown on the attached map, there are five identified bicycle projects on sections of Bodega Avenue: Section D – OBAG2 Grant Application: The City is currently designing Class II bike lanes which will fit within the existing curb to curb street section by narrowing existing lanes. The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) rating for the majority of this segment is in the range of 38-46 which indicates the need for rehabilitation/replacement. Therefore, pavement rehabilitation/replacement is included in the grant request as well as the striping to create the bike lanes. Section E – OBAG2 Grant Application: Previous studies determined that there is not sufficient pavement width to stripe standard bike lanes if on-street parking in front of the residential uses were maintained. Since it was preferable to maintain the parking and the traffic signal at Bodega Avenue/Jewell Avenue will allow bicycle traffic to disperse via local streets including Jewell Street to Willow Street which would then connect with the West County Trail to the east, the City has plans to install Sharrow markings for this designated Class III Bike Route.

Sebastopol Bike Coalition Members thoughts on bike lanes

Below are original phone notes from talking randomly to Sebastopol's Bike Coalition members last spring. Hwy 116 bike lanes often came up. One in six would use Hwy 116 lanes. None would consider riding in bike lanes on Bodega Ave. SCBC members are generally capable bike riders.

These notes below are clearly written here.

*116 lanes, "Big element of danger. Much prefer trails."

*116 lanes "Hate it , scary."

*116 lanes, "Never really comfortable. Not comfortable at all."

*116 lanes, "Was hit by a right turn car coming out of Safeway. Totally her fault. Seb police said so. I thought it was safe. It is a false sense of security. Never again."

*"Ok with 116 bike lanes. But not on Bodega Ave"

*"Stupid .No substitute for a trail. Never would use it. Not for my kids. Never. Not safe for a bike."

atheson@comcast.net

- not ride.
ft@sonic.net

off of Lone Pine.
Parkinson.

narkmcdonellcpa.com

Handwritten email

116
Big element of danger
much prefer trails

zman@hotmail.com

Wine
Maybe hill
Landscape arch

nchla@comcast.net

116
Hate it. Scray!

@sbcglobal.net

116 lanes
Never really comfortable.
Not comfortable at all

kris@gmail.com

rney.seb@gmail.com

@earthlink.net

@gmail.com

1@gmail.com

Older bike rider
Colonial Mason
articulates
call back
intersected
car
driver

roach101@gmail.com

scott2009@gmail.com

omca@comcast.net

High Sch Rd

116 Totally hit fault.
Was hit by rt turn car!
pulling out
I thought it was safe. It is!
False sense of security.
Never again

williamsonmft@gmail.com

OK with 116 lanes. Not on Boday

@gmail.com

on@comcast.net

by_laura@yahoo.com

116 Stupid. Not a substitute
Never would use for trails
Not my kids, would

Cost: Trails vs Bike lanes

Cost of .7 miles of Bodega bike lanes bike lanes would be four times that of the 1.2 mile Apple Blossom Trail.

Engineers Estimate **\$2,701,000** by Henry Mikus, January 2017

The City's match was a little more than \$300,000

The City is now planning to apply for a \$3,000,000 grant and has recently budgeted about \$300,000 for design work. This unusually large number is mostly to cover road shoulder renovations.

*Jeff Peters estimated the cost of the Apple Blossom Trail within the City limits at less than **\$700,000**. Peters owns Questa Engineering which has done the majority of feasibility studies and designs for trails in the North Bay. Ken Tam, who leads trail development for Sonoma County Regional Parks estimated \$600,000 in 2014.*

Funding has been; Bike trails receive 90% grants, Bike lanes have gotten 80% funding. If new funding continues in this way the cost of the Apple Blossom Trail to the City would be less than one fourth the cost of the bike lanes.

Hwy 116 bike lanes have a high frequency of accidents.

The Bodega Hwy bike lanes will likely have many more accidents with greater severity according to studies of similar condition and **all** experienced bikers and professionals who have evaluated this bike lane proposal.

Since instillation Sebastopol's the little used Hwy 116 bike lanes have averaged three injury accidents a year according to police records. However, not all injury accidents are reported. According to Denver Booker, owner of Sebastopol Bike Center, there are many more. He says he repairs collision damaged bikes, from Hwy 116 bike lane accidents every month or two.

His latest example, (November,) is Sebastopol resident Karli Allen. A Fed Ex truck turning right across the bike lanes cut in front of her. Seeing a collision coming and hard breaking limited her injuries which kept her down for a week. The truck driver gave her insurance information, an apology and left. Karli was disoriented and did not consider notifying police.

November 29, 2021

SEBASTOPOL POLICE DEPARTMENT

Accident Search Results

555 State Hwy Rel is True , 555 Veh Invld With Matches G , , Date Between 1/1/2018 a

Case #	Date	Time	Location	Speed Limit	Minor Injuries	Major Injuries	Fatal Injuries	DUI
18-0428	05/01/2018		1152406 N MAIN ST	25	1	0	0	F
18-0897	09/17/2018		1257130 S MAIN ST	25	1	0	0	F
19-0254	03/11/2019		1439N MAIN ST/WILTON AVI	25	1	0	0	F
19-0491	05/21/2019		1654N MAIN ST/WALLACE S	25	1	0	0	F
20-0020	01/05/2020		1124N MAIN ST/KEATING AV	25	1	0	0	F
20-0268	03/04/2020		1430122 N MAIN ST	25	1	0	0	F
20-0525	06/16/2020		1323218 N MAIN ST	25	1	0	0	F
21-0104	02/09/2021		1528PETALUMA AVE/MCKIN	25	0	0	0	F
21-0370	06/06/2021		19327824 COVERT LN	30	1	0	0	F

9 Accidents

In May of this year a drunk driver struck two bikers riding in the bike lanes near Analy Highschool. One was killed, one was severely injured and lost his leg.



Bodega Hwy has a high percentage of drunk drivers. It is a main road to the Sonoma coast beaches which contributes to the occurrence of drinking and driving. A picturesque example: In August of this year on Bodega Hwy a driver going too fast lost control, **crossed the bike lane**, and drove **through** the Bodega General Store. The vehicle exited the side wall of the store.



The sun low over Bodega Av going west. One actually sees total glare across the windshield.

