



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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April 24, 2020

Shiloh Ballard, President and Executive Director  
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition  
96 North Third Street, Suite 375  
San Jose, CA 95112

Dear Ms. Ballard:

Thank you for your letter dated April 10, 2020. The City of Mountain View appreciates the role that Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) plays in supporting the advancement of active transportation throughout Silicon Valley. We have carefully considered your recommendations for safer streets and would like to provide you with a summary of what the City is doing in this regard during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place period.

In relation to traffic speeds, the Mountain View Police Department is continuing to work to encourage compliance, enforce speed regulations, and evaluate the potential for a reduced speed advisory on residential streets based on traffic data, community needs, and traffic engineering input.

City staff is conducting field observations to identify potential locations where there are higher pedestrian volumes and where social distancing recommendations cannot be met without traveling on the roadway. At this stage, staff does not recommend street closures or implementation of quick-build/pilot projects due to concerns about creating destinations that attract bicyclists and pedestrians from other areas. Staff will develop site-specific solutions for locations experiencing social distancing challenges based on the field observations.

Finally, in relation to traffic signals, bicycle detection is currently available at all signalized intersections in Mountain View. For pedestrian signals, signal adjustment to implement "pedestrian recall" phasing (where pedestrian signals are activated without pressing the push button) at all signalized intersections would involve considerable effort and expense to the City. Staff, however, will be placing a select number of signalized intersections on pedestrian recall phasing based on observations being conducted this week to confirm intersections with high pedestrian demand.

Additional information related to these issues and the City's plan of action is provided in the enclosure.

Ms. Shiloh Ballard

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Thank you again for your input and your engagement in creating more multi-modal conditions in Mountain View.

Sincerely,

*Dawn S Cameron*

Dawn S. Cameron  
Public Works Director

DSC/TS/6/PWK  
943-04-24-20L

Enclosure

cc: City Council  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

CM, PC, TM, TE

**INFORMATION ON CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW ACTIVITIES  
IN RESPONSE TO SILICON VALLEY BICYCLE COALITION LETTER  
TO COUNCIL DATED APRIL 10, 2020**

**SVBC Recommendation No. 1: Publicize a reduced speed advisory to 15 mph for residential streets to keep everyone walking and biking safe.**

Since the County Public Health order went into effect, it is clear that Mountain View's driving, bicycling, and walking patterns have changed. However, we are thankful that the City of Mountain View has seen a decrease in the number of reported collisions, and there has been no indication of any increase in roadway conflicts or a sudden, overwhelming shift in widespread driving habits. The Mountain View Police Department has responded to complaints about pedestrians and bicyclists disregarding rules of the road but, fortunately, those incidences have not resulted in any reported collisions.

The Mountain View Police Department remains committed to encouraging compliance and enforcing speed laws, including those drivers that operate a vehicle at a speed unsafe for conditions. We appreciate the recommendation and concern of the SVBC and will continue to evaluate the suggestion for publicizing a blanket 15 mph speed limit based on data, the needs of our community, and recommendations from our Traffic Engineering division.

The Mountain View Police Department always recommends, if dangerous driving behavior is witnessed by others, to call the Police immediately. They are always available at 650-903-6395 and will respond to address the matter. They will also continue to use social media platforms to encourage public safety, including adherence of roadway safety statutes.

**Recommendation No. 2: More space for the increased number of people walking and biking.**

In relation to creating space for social distancing while people are using active transportation for exercise or essential activities, City staff is currently conducting field observations to identify potential locations where there are higher pedestrian volumes and where social distancing recommendations cannot be met without traveling on the roadway. If such locations are confirmed, staff will develop and evaluate site-specific options that could be implemented to address the issue.

City staff does not recommend quick-build projects, pilot bikeways, or soft street closures at this stage due to concerns about such actions creating destinations that attract pedestrians and bicyclists from other areas and worsen social distancing conditions.

Additionally, the volume of residential and delivery traffic on residential streets is unpredictable, and instituting soft closures is difficult for Police to effectively enforce, which can result in pedestrians having a false sense of security when using the street. A false sense of pedestrian safety can be particularly problematic for children walking, cycling, or even playing in the street.

In addition, installation of quick-build or pilot facilities would require resources to design and implement safely, and a number of legal and liability considerations would also need to be properly reviewed and addressed in relation to facilitating pedestrian movements on roadways with bicycles and vehicles. For these reasons, staff has recommended against soft street closures and quick-build facilities and will instead conduct field observations in order to develop and evaluate more site-specific options for providing for social distancing on City streets.

**Recommendation No. 3: Switch the pedestrian phase of traffic signals to be automatic and ensure that bicycles are captured at traffic signals.**

All signalized intersections that are controlled by the City of Mountain View are equipped with bicycle detection.

For pedestrian signals, staff is currently conducting field observations to identify suitable locations for implementing pedestrian recall phasing, where pedestrian signals are activated without pressing the push button.

The City of Mountain View does not have centralized control of traffic signals, which means that placing all of the City's 85 traffic signals on pedestrian recall would require a significant amount of work to make manual changes to each traffic signal controller within the City's jurisdiction. These changes would have to be undertaken by the City's traffic signal maintenance contractor (not City staff) at a cost to the City.

In addition to cost considerations, City staff does not recommend placing all traffic signals on pedestrian recall because doing so may also result in complaints and other issues related to delays to motorists and other road users who would need to wait for the WALK/DON'T WALK phase regardless of whether or not pedestrians are present. Some cities who have taken a broad citywide approach ended up reactivating the pedestrian push button for intersections with low volumes of pedestrian crossings. In addition, the noise associated with audible pedestrian messages that would be activated at all times of day and night will create a disturbance for any nearby residents.

For these reasons, City staff is taking a targeted approach to placing traffic signals on pedestrian recall based on field observations. Any traffic signals that are identified as suitable for pedestrian recall during this period of social distancing will need to be manually adjusted by the traffic signal maintenance contractor, and fliers will be posted

at each of the affected push button locations to inform users that it is not necessary to press the button.

Please note that only push buttons at signalized intersections can be set to pedestrian recall. Pedestrian push buttons at approximately 30 nonsignalized locations with enhanced pedestrian crossings (flashing LED signs, rectangular rapid flash beacons, or in-roadway warning lights) cannot be put into pedestrian recall because they are not part of a signal timing cycle. These devices are only active when a pedestrian needs them and, therefore, the buttons must be pressed to activate the flashing lights at the crossing.

Finally, signalized intersections along El Camino Real, Central Expressway, and all freeway on- and off-ramps (approximately 40 intersections) are not under the City's jurisdiction. Staff has forwarded SVBC's recommendation to agency contacts at Caltrans and the County for their consideration.

DSC/TS/6/PWK  
943-04-24-20L