

Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Meeting 9/28/22
Public Comments

From: Ross S. Heitkamp <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 5:00 PM
To: BPAC Communication <bpac@mountainview.gov>
Subject: 2022-09-28 Meeting Item 6.3 Castro Street Pedestrian Mall

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Hello Honorable B/PAC members,

I am writing you today about the Castro Pedestrian Mall - I'm a big fan of it. But, I am both troubled and very concerned about what I consider to be the dangerous and ill-conceived current intersection configuration that is planned to be continued as the mall moves to becoming permanent.

The current operation of traffic at the cross streets is a flashing red signal light - essentially a stop sign. Stop signs work for low volumes of traffic - automobile, bike, and pedestrian. They also continue to operate at least fairly with moderate or high automobile or bike traffic due to a protocol of alternation that is well established. Unfortunately, no such protocol exists with pedestrians and as the number of pedestrians rises to a level where the gaps between groups is less than the width of the street, all opportunities for vehicles to cross disappear.

This is already evident today where you see, mostly in the evenings, traffic backed up on the cross streets for a long way and frustration justifiably building in those drivers. That's where it becomes increasingly dangerous. Adding to that is that most pedestrians out at night seem to wear dark colors and are hard to even see. Couple that with induced eagerness from drivers and you've got a bad situation.

I therefore strongly encourage you to speak out in favor of dedicated crossing cycles of green lights for automobiles and WALK signs for pedestrians. If you have reviewed other well established pedestrian malls around the world you will see this is exactly what they have done.

I'll further provide that the planned street changes to direct pedestrians into the center of Castro before allowing them to cross is an attempted design kludge to try to make the stop signs work. Pedestrians won't like this and it requires ugly and unfriendly barriers to make it work.

Raising the elevation of Castro Street in the crossing, like a wide speed table, is an excellent way to enhance the crossing and insure vehicles are aware of the wide crossing and encourages them to keep their speed down. Further, a gap between the end of the green/yellow/red transition before pedestrians are given the WALK signal will help to allow cars to complete their crossing.

My final comment on this is that there was a great deal of early concern about the effects on traffic of closing Castro. A pre-requisite of the project conveyed to the community has been that cross traffic will be maintained so people can still use the parallel side streets, get to parking on each side and leave their neighborhoods. That pre-requisite is not being met, in my opinion, with the current arrangement. This could result in public backlash against the pedestrian mall and doom it.

Thank you for your attention.

Ross Heitkamp

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 9:11 AM
To: BPAC Communication <bpac@mountainview.gov>
Cc: City Council <City.Council@mountainview.gov>
Subject: 9/28/22 meeting agenda, items 6.2 (Shoreline Pathway) and 6.3 (Castro Street Mall)

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To: Mountain View Bicycle /Pedestrian Advisory Committee
From: Joel Dean, [REDACTED]
Subject: Shoreline Pathway and Castro Street Mall

Shoreline Pathway

Wonder of wonders -- DPW has agreed to put this item on B/PAC's agenda. Hopefully, it will not be treated as a you-will-eat-what-we-put-on-your-plate presentation, but as an opportunity to learn details which are shrouded in secrecy and to give feedback. It is also an opportunity for B/PAC to show that it is not just a Bicycle Advisory Committee, but is willing to stand up for pedestrians, who have been consistently been short-changed by DPW's "improvements."

The existing pathway is supposedly in poor condition and too steep. It may be too rough for bicycles, but it is still serviceable for pedestrians, who have to walk on worse surfaces in Mountain View, which places little value on sidewalks. The section between the undercrossings of the Central Expressway ramps and the overpass may be too steep for ADA compliance, but it is only about a 10-11% (6-degree) slope. That is tolerable for most pedestrians and cyclists, including many who are not entirely hale and hearty. The proposed design leaves them with a choice between Scylla and Charybdis. They can share the serpentine section with people who are not responsible members of B/PAC, SVBC, or FoSCT, and will be careening around hairpin turns at more than the prescribed but unenforced 10-MPH limit. Or they can climb a stairway which is steeper than the existing path (DPW refuses to disclose how much steeper), more strenuous (I learned that the hard way), and more dangerous (the CDC says about 10,000 people a year die from falling down stairs in the USA). Dismounted cyclists lugging their rigs up a bike channel will add to the potential for conflicts on the stairway.

B/PAC was last briefed on this project in 2015. No one who wasn't at the meeting can tell whether they gave it a thumbs-up or not, since the archives don't include audio or video and the minutes only record who attended and who spoke, but nothing about what anybody said. I ask B/PAC to break through the fog and demand more design details from DPW, specifically including (1) what safety features will keep people from falling off the edges of the pathway, and (2) the elevations at critical points. If there is enough vertical clearance, it may be possible to complete the project, bizarre as it is, by bridging over the existing path rather than obstructing it. That would give users with an alternative preferable to either offered by the proposed design, and would not require ADA compliance or funding if the path did not undergo rehabilitation it does not need.

Castro Street Mall

Converting Castro Street to a pedestrian mall is a great idea. Replacing the current improvised configuration with a 16-foot walkway down the center is another great idea. Allowing bicycles, scooters, skateboards, roller blades, etc. etc. to share the walkway with pedestrians is a wretched idea. It may be OK in Copenhagen or other civilized

places, but not here -- the hard-working, freedom-loving, rootin'-tootin' American people won't stand for rules they don't like. Why can't the City of Mountain View do something strictly for pedestrians without adulterating it this way?

A short pdf with illustrations and some appropriately snide remarks is attached.

Thank you for your attention.



100 block Castro Street 9/27/22 P.M.



200 Block




300 block

Project Goals

For Castro Street to continue to thrive it is important to...

Editorial comments:



Strengthen the character and identity of the street through a higher degree of uniformity and cohesiveness.

Mountain View prides itself on its diversity, not on uniformity.



Invite users of all ages and abilities to comfortably and safely access and move on and along the street.

Walk that bike!



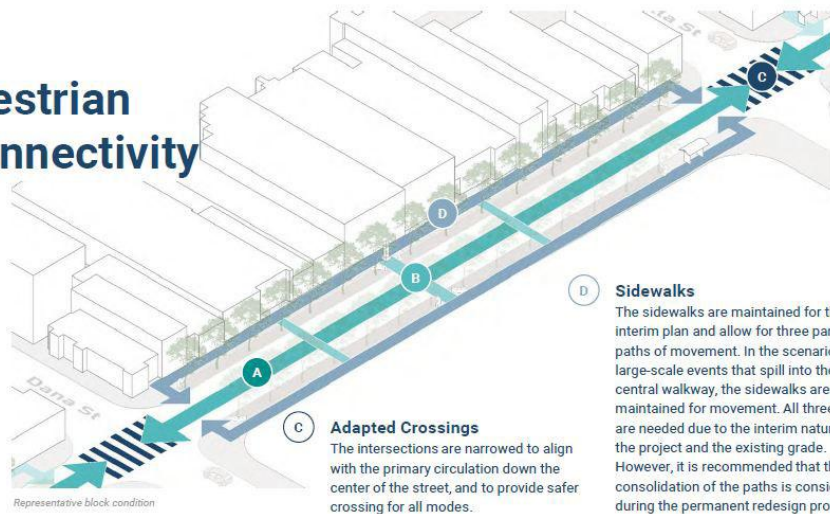
Provide a greater variety of ways to spend time that reflects the authenticity and diversity of Castro Street and Mountain View.

See?

01 Through Zone

Prioritized pedestrian comfort and connectivity

- A Central Walkway**
The primary, 16' central walkway runs throughout all three blocks of Castro Street.* The location in the center of the street allows for equal distribution of programming zones on either side of the walkway. While prioritizing pedestrians,† the central walkway allows for bikes and scooters at slow speeds.‡
- B Cross Movement Paths**
Cross-movement is integrated through a series of paths that connect to the breezeways and break down program zones to allow for pedestrian access between the central walkway and the building frontages.



* In the event of slight variation of roadway width, the central walking takes priority over program zones and should remain 16' wide.

† During peak activity hours, bike access and speed will be regulated by the high number of pedestrians. Outside peak activity hours, bikes and other wheeled devices can be welcomed on Castro Street.

‡ It is recommended that the City of Mountain View consider signage to encourage people to ride respectfully and investigate turning a parallel road into a more robust commuter option for bikes and scooters.

No it won't, and no they won't.
Signage won't do it. Only force will do it.

Extracts from draft plan shown to City Council ad hoc committee 8/21/22. Thank goodness it's only a draft.



Sign at so-called Transit Center, a few yards from Castro Street. City Council and advisory body members are encouraged to observe how much respect these rules get, and to ponder whether similar rules for the Castro Street Bicycle and ... oops! I mean Castro Street Pedestrian Mall will be treated the same way.

From: isaac [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 3:12 PM
To: Whyte, Brandon <Brandon.Whyte@mountainview.gov>
Subject: Official Public Comment for September 28, 2022, B/PAC Meeting.

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Item 3:

Dana St between Moorpark and Calderon

I live in this section of the city. The number of ped/bike/vehicle conflict points is too high, and it is only a matter of time before a kid is killed or seriously injured.

Kids are walking/biking to school. Commuters on bicycles are trying to get on the Steven's Creek Trail, and motorists are trying to get on the 237/85 or drop kids off at school.

Kids can be wobbly on their bikes going uphill, so the Dana St bridge lanes should be wider. Travel lanes should be narrowed to 10ft; and if flex posts were installed I would dance for joy.

A road diet and/or protected bike lanes ought to be considered for the section between the bridge and Moorpark.

Consider a midblock crossing between the bridge and Calderon. People are constantly crossing midblock despite the signs. If people want to cross midblock the city should make it safe, not illegal.

The trail entrances need work. They are too narrow for the amount of use they get, and they do not connect well or naturally with the on-street bike lanes.

Finally, there are some desire paths on the southern trail entrance where people hop the fence and walk down the slope every day to get to school or to the trail. Some stairs might be appreciated.

Item 6.2

I fear adding annoying switchbacks to the path will incentivize more people to use the bike lanes on Shoreline, which are unsafe. For example daughter prefers to cross at Castro/Moffet rather than use the bridge on Steven's Creek Trail, which is much safer.

If there exists a feasible alternative I would like that explored.

Also, would it be too much to ask for a connection to Evelyn?

Thanks,
Isaac Stone

From: Eric Armstrong <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 10:01 PM
To: Whyte, Brandon <Brandon.Whyte@mountainview.gov>
Subject: Official public comment in reference to Item 6.3, 9/28/2022 BPac mtg

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Really great thoughts, observations, and discussions. I had a few notes to add:

1. Lada Adamic had a good point: **Street food!**
I'm thinking the kind of small, rolling food stands that populate Manhattan. What a draw! And with "food court" style seating, so much better!
2. Lada had another good point: **Separating bikes and "peds"**.
I'd like to make the point a bit more strongly.
It's time we *stop conflating* bikes & walkers. They need *separate* paths. (We're a good 30 years behind the Netherlands on this, I understand. So if we smush the two together because we *must*, because we *lack the space*, then let's do it -- because we *have* to. But let's do it with an *apology*, not because we think it's the right thing to do.
:_)
3. **Bikes in the ped mall.**
Two reactions. One personal. One high level.

Personal:

If I wanted to *get* somewhere, I wouldn't be *on* Castro.
If there are people there. I'd avoid it. If I'm there, it's because I'm looking for someone, or for a business, or I'm "browsing". So I'm not going at speed anyway. But I'm also not walking my bike 3 blocks to have a look.

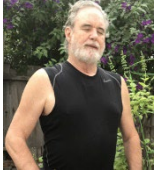
Right now, the lack of a defined path makes bikes much more of a problem. But with a wide path and light traffic, it should be okay. (If there were a ton pf people, I'd walk my bike out of necessity. But I'm not going to walk it 3 blocks looking for a place to eat.)

High Level:

As noted, we are *30 years behind* countries like the Netherlands on this subject. We're catching up fast, but we're coming from very far back! The good news is: *They probably have an answer*.
So my question is: What would they do? (Whatever it is, let's do that!)

eric

Breathe. *Activate*. Meditate. *Connect*.



Eric Armstrong

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