

**Newport Beach Bicycle Safety Committee Meeting  
May 7, 2012**

**Mission Statement:** Promote bicycle safety and responsible cycling within the City through public outreach, bicycle facility improvements, and review of City policies and practices related to bicycles.

*note: These minutes were taken by [Pedal](#) Founder, Brenda Miller, and are not the official City record of the meeting. Brenda can be reached at <mailto:brenda@myfeetfirst.org>*

- 1. Welcome/Call the meeting to order (Mayor Gardner)**
- 2. Roll Call and Self-Introductions**

Mayor/Chair Nancy Gardner, Committee members Michael Alti, Lou Cohen, Robert Kahn (arrived about 5 minutes late), Denis LaBonge, Sean Matsler, Frank Peters, Tony Petros.

City staff present were: City attorney Michael Torres (present for item 4a only), City Engineer Brad Sommers, City Police Chief Jay Johnson and City Police Lt. Jeff Lu.

- 3. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes were approved without changes.

- 4. Current Business**

- a. Brown Act and Offsite Committee Activities**

City attorney Michael Torres was present to advise on the Brown Act as it pertains to Committee members' participation in the bicycle tour of Long Beach. Mr. Torres advised that, if there is a quorum present during the tour, then the tour must be publicly noticed and members of the public must be allowed to attend. If there is less than a quorum, then no public notice is required, he said.

Committee member, Frank Peters, said that only 2 members of the Committee would be able to attend the upcoming May 12 tour.

Committee member, Tony Petros, asked how the Brown Act applies to email shared among the Committee members. Attorney Torres said that such communications would fall within the jurisdiction of the Brown Act if opinions and deliberations are shared on a topic, which could result in a violation of the Brown Act.

For the Bicycle Safety Committee, Attorney Torres said that (4) is the magic number required for a quorum. He suggested that all communications go through City Engineer, Brad Sommers, who will then forward to the Committee as a whole.

Committee Member, Frank Peters, suggested that, perhaps, the Committee could follow the path of the Newport Beach Planning Commission, which allows for any member to request during a meeting that an item be added to a future meeting agenda. Importantly, he said, such a request does not require a formal motion or a second of that motion. He asked Mayor Gardner if the Committee could follow that procedure so as speed up the rate of entertainment of new ideas related to bicycle safety so that improvements could be considered more rapidly.

In response to Frank's request, Mayor Gardner said that a similar process already exists with the Bicycle Safety Committee and that, staff time availability notwithstanding, such requests for future agenda item discussions do result in a formal, scheduled discussion of the topic. Today's discussion of sharrows, the Mayor said, are an example.

**b. Current/Planned Project Update** – Discussion of current/proposed city projects related to bicycle facility improvements. City Engineer Brad Sommers updated the Committee on the following:

4 grant applications were submitted to OCTA for different locations throughout the City.

In re: SR-73 @ Newport Coast Dr., Brad met with Caltrans officials on site. A pack of 40-50 riders were unexpectedly present to navigate the intersection, which provided an opportunity for officials to watch how bicyclists negotiate the interchange. Typically, the pattern of bicyclists' behavior made use of the gore point as a time and space buffer. Bicyclists would adjust their speed approaching the weaving area, depending upon whether a car was approaching from SR-73. Once an approaching vehicle passed through the gore point, bicyclists preferred to cross the off-ramp at a relatively sharp angle (close to 90 degrees).

Engineer Sommers said that to analyze the approaching speed of oncoming cars, officials used radar guns, measuring the average velocity of approaching cars to be 62 mph.

Because of the high velocity of oncoming vehicles leaving SR-73 and merging with Newport Coast Drive, Engineer Sommers is concerned that implementing a mandatory right-angle crossing would place bicyclists at risk of a broadside collision with approaching vehicles. The risk is especially high for bicyclists b/c they would have a very short time to engage their pedals from a required stop and then clear the offramp without error. If there is a small error, such as a

broken chain or failure to properly engage the pedals, the bicyclist would be placed at risk of collision.

Brad proposed moving the signage to a position earlier in the off-ramp to allow motorists to read them in anticipation of bicyclists being present.

Brad also acknowledged that improving the pavement surface is necessary at the gore point.

Frank Peters supported Brad's idea, as did Committee Member Kahn.

Lt. Lu expressed concern about the placement of signs potentially obscuring the presence of cyclists from view of motorists. Brad replied that the height of placement would prevent such an obstruction of view. Elaborating further, Brad said the proposed signage is the yellow-diamond bike sign, with an arrow pointing to the class 2 weaving area following the gore point.

Committee member, Denis LaBonge, said he'd like to see implementation of some type of flashing signal or other appropriate tool to alert motorists to the presence of cyclists at the off-ramp.

### **c. Focus Areas – Review of List.**

Brad Sommers displayed a list of more than a dozen sites listed by the Bicycle Task Force.

Committee Member, Robert Kahn, stated that we should prioritize high-accident areas within the list. Brad replied that will be a key criterion.

Committee Member, Tony Petros, asked for accident statistics for each location on the list so that priorities can be done objectively.

Committee Member, Sean Matsler, asked how the priorities would be established? Mayor Gardner replied that accident data would certainly be a primary consideration.

Brad said that pavement projects that present opportunities for re-striping will be implemented whenever possible, so those projects will jump to the top of the list to take advantage of the allocation of resources more efficiently.

Peters: asked about Sharrows on Westcliff Drive. . . (Notetaker missed the substance of Frank's question).

Brad briefly mentioned projects that are presently at the top of the list:

- Jamboree, Ford Rd.-Eastbluff, Spyglass Hill, San Joaquin Hills Road
- Coast Hwy @ Newport blvd.

- Newport blvd - Via Lido to 30th street
- Coast Hwy at Jamboree

#### **d. Sharrows Discussion (Coast Hwy through Corona Del Mar)**

Engineer Brad Sommers presented a mock-layout of Coast Hwy's potential sharrows installation.

Committee Member, Sean Matsler, asked how the process would work.

Committee Member, Frank Peters, expressed that, if we put all our eggs in one basket with sharrows on Corona del Mar on Coast Hwy, then perhaps we should entertain other locations, too.

Mayor Gardner mentioned that Committee Members Matsler and Petros visited with local residents' associations. Those groups were supportive of sharrows b/c of their potential to slow traffic on Coast Hwy.

Mayor Gardner also took the time to review last fall's split bike committee with respect to implementing sharrows.

Committee Member Tony Petros said that he is a fan of sharrows, but recalled his reluctance to endorse them last Fall. He said that he'll be participating in an upcoming international tri-athlon, whose route has sharrows on a 4-lane roadway through the City of San Diego. He cited other locations in San Diego that have added sharrows and toured those locations the past weekend.

Petros also mentioned that the City of Los Angeles has installed > 20 miles of sharrows. As preparation for today's meeting, he called Tom Landry, City of San Diego Bicycle Coordinator, and that City's former Bicycle Coordinator, about San Diego's sharrows. According to Petros, San Diego has experienced no increase in collision incidents since implementation of sharrows.

Petros added that both Bicycle Coordinators cautioned that media publication of the sharrows is essential to educating the public. Petros said that San Diego won't implement sharrows on roads that are not formally designated as bike routes. He cited cities like Portland, Knoxville, and Philadelphia, as having positive experiences with sharrows. As a result, he said, he no longer has the reservations he once expressed about the shared lane markings.

Petros said that when he visited sharrow sites in San Diego, there were a lot of motor vehicle queues on Coast Hwy in San Diego, but he has no idea what the ADT's were (ADT = average daily trip, a tool used to measure traffic volume).

Petros also noted that streets with sharrows were also marked with lots of yellow-diamond bike awareness signs.

Committee Member, Robert Kahn, asked for ADT volume for Coast Hwy, but no answer was forthcoming.

Committee member, Michael Alti said that according to his research, sharrows were safer in all cities who've used them b/c bicyclists are positioned away from parked cars. Michael cited Calif. Vehicle Code 21200 as being supportive of bicyclists' rights to use the roadway and the use of sharrows encourages proper bicycling position, he added.

Mayor Gardner interjected that, traditionally, "might makes right," for roadway behavior. Michael Alti said that sharrows would promote a better business environment and people-oriented village environment so visitors will linger in town, rather than driving to adjacent towns who are more welcoming of bicyclists.

Committee Member, Denis LaBonge, advocated for a more gradual adoption elsewhere in Newport as possibly being a better course of action, since sharrows would have a greater chance of success where there is less pressure from vehicular traffic. He advocated for having a coordinated media campaign would be best.

Tony Petros suggested that the Bicycle Safety Committee should develop a set of criteria for sharrows implementation. He advocated that we now know enough about proper sharrow implementation to make a recommendation today.

#### Comments from the public:

Orange County Bicycle Coalition Executive Director, Pete Van Nuys, advised that PCH is already a designated bike route, so the sharrows would be a welcome fit for people already using the roadway in significant numbers.

Pedal founder, Brenda Miller, said that since Calif. Vehicle Code section 21200 delineates the bicyclists' rights/responsibilities upon the roadway, sharrows aren't going to change the Code. She also said that bicycles are already included in the definition of "traffic" under the 2012 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and that bicycle transportation is likely the most efficient mode for travel for short distances within a City. Furthermore, she said, failure to integrate bicycle modes of travel in the business districts of Newport would be a mistake b/c the consequences to local businesses would be lost sales opportunities, since bicyclists would not have the opportunity to patronize local establishments.

David Huntsman said that it was difficult to locate online Average Daily Trip volumes for Coast Hwy, but that it's more likely that traffic backs up for cars attempting to parallel park, rather than for bicycles.

Mayor Gardner said that if the issue passes the Committee today, then a letter of recommendation to the council will be drafted.

Committee Member Cohen advised that we must have a coordinated media blast as an essential component to the implementation of sharrows.

The Committee then commenced a vote, which was tallied as 6-1 in favor of sharrows on PCH through Corona del Mar, with Committee member La Bonge as the only one to vote against the recommendation for sharrows.

**e. Police Department Update**

Lt. Lu addressed the request for feedback from last month's meeting, as follows:

The City is planning 2 bicycle education/interdictions, but the focus is to educate bicyclists, not cite them, unless absolutely necessary.

Lt. Lu researched Committee member Frank Peters' concern in re: aggressive passing problem on Bayside Drive. Lt. Lu culled data from the City's radar trailers on the street. The trailers were present for about 20 days, counting 30,000 cars during that time period with the following results: 1.2% of the total vehicles traveled > 40 mph (limit is 25 mph in one direction and 30 mph in the other). Lt. Lu also deployed motor officers to Bayside Drive.

Next month he'll be conducting a comprehensive collision mapping examination for the entire City, including primary causes of collisions.

Lt. Lu reported that for the month of April, there was a slight trend for a reduction in the numbers of bike collisions (5 total collisions of cars vs. bike). Those collision details are as follows:

1-bike vs. parked car (missed the location).

1-(during night time) At Coast Hwy and Larkspur in CdM, a parked limosine opened its door into a bicycle operating without a headlight. The bicyclist sustained injuries, including broken ribs.

1-While crossing Superior, an unhelmeted bicyclist was hit by an at-fault motor vehicle.

1-on Balboa Peninsula a bicyclist ran a stop sign and was hit by a vehicle. That bicyclist admitted running the stop sign and said he didn't see the car that hit him.

1-at PCH @ Larkspur-a collision between a car and bike who didn't yield, with the bicyclist sustaining non-significant injuries.

Lt. Lu said that, for the last 3 months of 2012 in Newport, the data showed the lowest cumulative bicycle-car collision totals (12) when compared to the last 4 years for the same 3 months.

Committee Member, Tony Petros, asked which law enforcement agency has jurisdiction on PCH between City Police or Calif. Hwy Patrol? Lt. Lu said the City of Newport handles the calls.

Brenda Miller requested for next month's overview of the City's collision mapping analysis that Lt. Lu please provide an overview of police methodology in the field and how that effects SWITRS data.

OC Bicycle Coalition Exec. Director, Pete van Nuys asked how does the officer determine the Primary Collision Factor for an unlighted cyclist who gets doored? Lt. Lu said that the officer in the field documents contributing factors to the collision in his/her report.

## **5. Public comments on items not on the agenda.**

**OC Bicycle Coalition Exec. Director, Pete Van Nuys:** mentioned that a letter was received from the survivors of a lethal bike accident in 2009. Survivors were upset that a mere sign was installed that said, "Watch Downhill Speed," and that the sign seems to blame the victim, despite the fact that no violation of law existed in the lethal collision. Pete cautioned that we need to do a better job of warning the motorists to expect bicycles in the roadway. He displayed several small samples of roadways symbols using MUTCD "watch for bikes" language.

**Dan Purcell** commented that the committee is biased in favor of the lycra-clad racers. We need some delineated bike lanes to make the non-racer types comfortable so the rear-ending incident that happened on Bayside Drive won't occur.

## **6. Items announced for future agendas (non-discussion item)**

- a. Bike Racks
- b. Bicycle Incident Discussion--part of the safety discussion.

Committee Member Frank Peters requested that the problem of bikes on sidewalks should be on the agenda soon.

Committee Member Michael Alti said that we should discuss having an official Newport Beach bike map.

Frank Peters announced that there is room for one more person on the May 12 bicycle tour of Long Beach.



**7. Set the Next Meeting: June 4, 2012 at 4:30 p.m. – Friends Room,  
Central Library**

**8. Adjourn**