

Frequently Asked Questions – Humboldt Street Bike Boulevard Pilot Project

Can you lower the speed limit?

25 MPH is the minimum speed limit that can be established for this type of residential street per the California Vehicle Code.

How do other bike boulevard friendly cities educate the residents about change like traffic circles, share the road?

We contacted other communities that have bike boulevards such as Berkeley, CA and Portland, OR to assist us in developing our education and enforcement program. Please visit their sites at the following links:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=46371>

<http://www.cityofberkeley.info/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=6650>

What is a bike box?

A space at an intersection dedicated for bicyclists which brings them to front of the line at traffic signals. The first (advanced) stop line is for motor vehicles. The second stop line, closer to the intersection, is for bicyclists. When the traffic light is red, bicyclists can pass waiting motor vehicles on the right and queue in front of them. An example of a bike box can be found at the following link:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/Transportation/index.cfm?c=46717&a=185112>

Fire emergency access?

Public Works and the Fire Department have cooperatively worked throughout the development of the pilot project. The Fire Department tested the circles prior to them being installed to ensure that the fire apparatus could maneuver through the intersections on Humboldt Street.

Why are there different types of traffic circles: Spencer Avenue and Stewart Street, Spring Street?

Generally, traffic circles are designed in a similar manner. The differences in the design may be attributed to the specific characteristics of each location. The circle at Spencer Avenue and Stewart Street was installed to reduce speeds and enhance the operation at this irregular intersection. The Spring Street circles were the first traffic circles installed in Santa Rosa in the mid 1970's. This design retained the stop controls on the east west streets. Since the 1970's, the design standards for traffic circles have changed creating differences in the circles that have been installed throughout the city.

Why are bikes not being detected at Pacific Avenue and Humboldt Street?

The traffic signals at Pacific Avenue and Humboldt Street does not include bike sensitive loops. We are exploring ways to increase sensitivity at that location.

What is the pilot project cost estimate?

The current cost estimate for the pilot project is \$36,500.

Why is a traffic circle safer for cars and bikes than four way stop controlled intersection?

Circles prevent drivers from speeding through intersections by impeding straight-through movement, forcing drivers to slow down to yield. The circles offer an opportunity for landscaping and visually break up a long, straight stretch of roadway.

Neighborhood traffic calming techniques normally do not include all-way or 4-way stop signs because of the following:

Stop Signs Don't Slow Speeds -- Numerous studies nation-wide have shown that speeds within a block of the stop sign are largely unaffected by the stop. Naturally, motorists have to slow down when approaching a stop sign. But, they often speed up quickly after the stop to make up for lost time. Overall speeding is not reduced by the stop sign.

Stops Increase Noise and Pollution -- Stopping and starting cause increased tire and engine noise. Residents living near the stop will experience an increase in traffic noise. Stopping and idling at unwarranted stop signs also increase automobile exhaust and fuel consumption unnecessarily.

Collisions – There are fewer potential vehicle to vehicle conflict points and fewer potential vehicle to pedestrian conflict points at a traffic circle than there are at a four way stop controlled intersection.

What evidence is there that the bike boulevard has increased city wide bike use?

City staff counted bikes on Humboldt Street both before and after the pilot project was installed. Generally, there was an increase in the number of bikes.

What is the cost estimate for the permanent improvements?

A preliminary cost estimate for the permanent improvements is \$250,000.

What is the cost estimate for the temporary partial diversion?

\$1,000 - \$5,000 depending on roadway striping and traffic control.

Will left turn prohibition at College Avenue and Humboldt Street be implemented as part of the pilot project?

This component of the project is scheduled to go to the City Council on December 15, 2009 requesting local authority as required by the California Vehicle Code (CVC) to prohibit left turns from College Avenue onto Humboldt Street.

What are the impacts if partial diversion is tested on Humboldt Street?

Staff will be collecting data in the neighborhood prior to the testing of partial diversion which will enable us to identify any potential impacts.

How does the traffic circle work?

To properly navigate a typical traffic circle, you must remember to yield to cars already in the circle's lanes. Look to your left in the circle and wait for a car to exit onto your road or a clear pause between cars.

When a driver approaches the traffic circle, he or she is supposed to yield to all traffic that is already in the circle. This means the driver must look left before entering and wait for a break in traffic. Upon reaching the street where he or she wishes to exit, a driver should signal. Without slowing down, simply drive out of the circle. Please visit the following link:

http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/doclib/Documents/Humboldt_Bike_Blvd_Brochure.pdf

Why has the traffic reduced on Humboldt Street?

The City conducts ongoing traffic counts on various streets citywide. Generally citywide, within the last few years there has been downward trend in vehicle counts. This could be attributed to the current economic conditions and an increase in alternative transportation.

Where is the traffic going instead of using Humboldt Street? What effect does the project have on parallel streets?

We are gathering data on neighboring streets which will provide us with information on possible changes in traffic volumes on those streets.

Can you move the project to a different street?

No, Humboldt Street is included in the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and General Plan as a bike boulevard and has been identified as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board priority.

Is there any trip vehicle data for 2009 before the project went in?

The 24 hour vehicle count data gathered in 2007 is the most current before data available.

How does the pilot project impact property values?

There has been some investigation into this question. In a case study conducted by the Institute for Transportation Research, the study observed that one of the economic benefits that may result from bicycle facilities, include:

- Enhancement of nearby property values
Other information is available at the following link:
<http://www.vtppi.org/calming.pdf>
- Traffic Calming - Benefits, Costs and Equity Impacts

Why did you remove the crosswalks in the intersections where the temporary traffic circles were installed?

Temporary crosswalks will be re-installed at the intersections where they were removed. These temporary crosswalks back from the intersection will channelize pedestrians across the street out of the travel path of motorists which was why the original crosswalks were removed.

You can view an example of a temporary crosswalk at the following link:

<http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/SiteCollectionImages/PartialDiverterExample.jpg>

Why did you remove the yellow center line?

Removing the double yellow centerline is another traffic calming technique which allows the motorist to pass a cyclist. Also, removing the centerline gives the appearance that the road is a neighborhood street, reminding motorists to drive slower.