

**From:** CNA San Mateo <[cnasanmateo@gmail.com](mailto:cnasanmateo@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2020 3:25 PM

**To:** Drew Corbett <[dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Patrice Olds <[polds@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:polds@cityofsanmateo.org)>; City Council (San Mateo) <[CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Benjamin Portusach <>; James Wang <>; Maurine Killough <>

**Subject:** Citywide Traffic Management Update - Agenda Item #19

Dear Councilmembers – We’re writing regarding tonight’s agenda item #19 – citywide traffic management update.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> and Grant/4<sup>th</sup> Ave**

During the study session back in August of this year, the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> and Grant in Central was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> worst in the city by number of collisions. Well since then we’ve been averaging about a collision a week, including another injury accident just today at 3pm at 4<sup>th</sup> and Fremont. One accident saw an SUV completely spun around and pinned against a utility pole, all airbags deployed, while another saw one of the vehicles hit a home and continue nearly half a block before jumping a pedestrian walkway and hitting a tree (see pictures below). In another instance Everybody’s Market was hit by a car – that could have been a serious problem had customers been around at the time. The driver of the red SUV was taken by ambulance to the hospital – it’s unclear what their status is, but what is clear is that the intersection is extremely dangerous and we’re simply lucky no one has been killed yet. Action needs to be taken.

We’re heartened by the efforts by PW to pilot some form of device and no turn signs at the intersection in a fairly rapid fashion, but concerns remain that anything short of either blocking cross traffic or implementing a traffic light will be insufficient. We want to thank Brad Underwood and PW for moving quickly on this issue.

Of bigger concern is SMPD’s response, and the view of speed on 4<sup>th</sup> as a non-factor, either in collisions or enforcement activity. PW has done speed surveys where strips are placed on the 700 block of 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Likewise, SMPD recently put their speed trailer in the same location. By their own admission (and by eyewitness account), the mere presence of the trailer noticeably slows traffic. While this is helpful, by definition then it’s data cannot be used as a measure of speed. Furthermore, the 700 block is not the fastest part of 4<sup>th</sup> by a long shot – it’s the 900 block. Without an accurate measure of speed, SMPD and PW will continue to perceive 4<sup>th</sup> Ave as being much safer than it truly is. Use the wrong data – draw the wrong conclusions. SMPD claims that during enforcement “most citations and observations were not related to speed” is also questionable because they are not there on weekends, late nights, or early mornings when the street really becomes a drag strip for muscle cars, Harleys, and modified cars of all types racing to the 101. Just one example – recently SMPD pulled over one of two Harleys – one of which was doing a full on wheelie down 4<sup>th</sup>. This, sadly, is not unusual here. What’s unusual is that they get caught.

Regarding “speed not being a factor” in collisions – we dispute that as well. The two examples cited above where the red SUV was wrapped around a pole w all airbags deployed, and another car hit a home and travelled half a block before hitting a tree and stopping – those things do not happen at 25-30 mph. They happen at much higher speeds. When a little boy was hit and seriously injured by a car at 5<sup>th</sup> and Claremont, the police report said the driver had stopped, and that the sun was in his eyes, etc. – basically clearing the driver of wrongdoing. Surveillance video unearthed and shown during the study session clearly showed the vehicle running the stop sign. The upshot – drivers lie about what happened when they are in an accident and potentially liable. This shouldn’t come as a surprise to anyone. SMPD is again relying of likely inaccurate driver accounts of these accidents, when the basic physics behind what happens to these vehicles tell a very different story.

Finally – not all collisions are reported to SMPD! There was one last week Thursday 11/14 that went unreported. One must extrapolate that for every reported accident there are a certain not insignificant number of unreported collisions. Any one of these but for luck could be the next traffic casualty, so they should be factored in.

The net of this is we really need a speed survey done on the 900 block of 4<sup>th</sup>. This survey will tell a very different story about the speeds, and should then result in appropriate action being taken based upon more accurate data. I think it will

reveal that both more enforcement – esp nights, mornings, and WEEKENDS, is necessary, as is substantial measures at 4<sup>th</sup> and Grant, i.e., a traffic light or barriers.

### **5<sup>th</sup> and Claremont/5<sup>th</sup> Ave**

Regarding 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we still do not have commitment from the city that they will make the intersection where a young boy was hit by a car safer for peds/bikes. The Planning Commission, based upon this accident, recommended this intersection be updated for safety, but the council did not take it up during the approval process, so it remains very dangerous, and is a key missing piece to making 5<sup>th</sup> Ave a safe bike/ped corridor to and from downtown. Furthermore, there is no plan in place to protect 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue from massive cut through traffic that will undoubtedly occur as a result of the new parking garage with nearly 650 spaces. We would like to hear a commitment from the city to improving the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> and Claremont with curb extensions and high visibility crosswalks, and to additional traffic calming east of Delaware to route traffic down Claremont, or Delaware to arterials. We also oppose adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> lane to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue as this is a direct violation of Vision Zero/Sustainable Streeting. We should be shrinking our roads and getting people out of cars, not facilitating them.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Michael Weinbauer  
Laurie Watanuki  
Maurine Killough  
Benjamin Portusach  
James Wang



Today (11/16) - 4th and Fremont - Injuries



11/5 4th and Grant



10/31 4th and Eldorado



10/20 4th and Grant - Injuries

**From:** Kristie Eglsaer <>

**Sent:** Saturday, November 14, 2020 1:06 PM

**To:** Clerk <[clerk@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:clerk@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Joe Goethals <[jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Eric Rodriguez <[erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Diane Papan <[dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Amourence Lee <[alee@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:alee@cityofsanmateo.org)>; City Council (San Mateo) <[CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission <[SandlCommission@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:SandlCommission@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Brad Underwood <[bunderwood@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:bunderwood@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Bethany Lopez <[blopez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:blopez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Matthew Zucca <[mzucca@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:mzucca@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Azalea Mitch <[amitch@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:amitch@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Sue-Ellen Atkinson <[seatkinson@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:seatkinson@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Public Comment regarding Item #19 Citywide Traffic Management for Monday, 11/16 7pm City Council Meeting

Dear City Clerk, City Councilmembers, Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission, and Public Works team,

I am writing to provide public comments for the upcoming City Council meeting on November 16 at 7pm regarding Item #19 Citywide Traffic Management. I may not be able to participate live due to childcare issues.

When I reached out to the City Council in September, it was right after seeing several fire trucks and ambulances while crossing ECR after a collision involving a pedestrian. Historically El Camino Real has been a "hot spot" for collisions. Let's design streets and take action to prevent collisions with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle safety.

I recommend the City take these actions:

1. Identify more quick-build solutions that can happen now and within budget, including sending a request to Caltrans to switch pedestrian signals to be automatic along El Camino Real between 2nd-9th Avenues.
2. Draft a specific plan for ECR, as other cities have done, to begin addressing long-term goals in the 2015 Sustainable Streets Plan and the 2020 San Mateo Bicycle Master Plan.
3. Create an entity that is solely dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian issues (aka BPAC).
4. Have at least one staff person who is solely dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian issues.

It seems the scope of the Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission is vast and getting BPAC issues addressed in a timely manner would be difficult with all the other competing tasks. The same goes for the staff in Public Works. Many cities have dedicated ped/bike staff. Palo Alto for example has both a dedicated BPAC staff person and a Safe Routes to School staff person. I know hiring a staff person may be a longer term suggestion, but it will be important to achieving longer-term goals.

For a more immediate action, I turn to the proposal I have communicated to you before about asking Caltrans to switch the pedestrian phase to be automatic along ECR from 2nd to 9th Avenues.

Since I last communicated with many of the City Council, Public Works provided input echoing pushback I heard from Caltrans in the Spring that this would cause delays and congestion and that it could be less safe for pedestrians because of potential red light violations. PW also noted that Caltrans is looking to experiment with touchless pedestrian activation via lidar, microwave or video, but they acknowledged that this is expensive technology and a long way off. I think the conclusion that PW came to was to defer to Caltrans.

After having received pushback this Spring, I heard an address by Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin at the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition's annual summit this Summer that gave me hope:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=B5h0sfwmcLo>.

In that address he said it takes time for everyone in the organization to embrace his new priorities, with safety being number one, and modality number two: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/documents/director-5-topic-fact-sheet-a11y.pdf>.

But he added that the District Directors understand this and they are working to have these priorities permeate the organization and help everyone understand why we need to do this. That is why I want the City Council to send a letter to Caltrans despite the previous pushback, because there is a shift toward safety and modality at Caltrans. A letter from City Council will be most effective at letting them know we support these priorities too and want to see quick build solutions to create safety and modality in our community.

Taking this action of switching the pedestrian recall to automatic along ECR would be a quick build solution similar to action the City took this Spring in response to the pandemic. This action is a positive step to take during the pandemic in several ways:

1. Help prevent community transmission of COVID-19
2. Encourage people to walk and bike to the downtown area businesses
3. Alleviate parking concerns, since parking has been reduced in many areas
4. Serve as a way to slow down vehicle traffic, with reckless driving and speeds increasing during this time according to NHTSA

Bikes are sold out around the Bay Area. People want to walk and bike now. We need to make it easy for them to do so. And our downtown businesses need us to do so. Furthermore, there are some who do not have the luxury of being able to drive a car. We must design streets for all our citizens, including those who either cannot afford to, are not able to, or otherwise choose not to drive, and this includes many of our essential workers who work in businesses downtown.

I disagree that the City should wait and see until after Caltrans reviews the microwave or lidar touchless devices and I disagree that those devices are the right solution for this corridor. It is expensive and complicated. It is not ped/bike friendly. It is a vehicle-oriented design intended to expedite vehicle traffic. It does not embrace the goal of a road diet for this corridor as expressed in the 2015 Sustainable Streets Plan. Further, it does not help bicycles who are not able to trigger the traffic signal or the crosswalk signal.

Conversely, switching the crosswalk signals to be automatic can be done right away. Not having the support of Public Works makes this a difficult sell, I know, but I am hoping they will reconsider since this aligns with long term plans. Further, this does not require any time, energy or funds from the City, just a communication of support for a temporary quick build action that aligns with long term plans for a road diet for this corridor that the City has already established (2015 Sustainable Streets Plan (p. 50), 2020 San Mateo Bicycle Master Plan (p. 44), Vision Zero, Grand Boulevard Initiative).

The future step would be to have the City begin working on its own specific plan for El Camino Real, as other cities are doing, see below. But that is a long range task. Organizational support in the form of a BPAC and a ped/bike staff person will be key in achieving this and other long term goals.

I ask that you please send a letter to Caltrans to take the quick build step of switching the pedestrian crosswalk signals. I am looking to the Council to be leaders, like Director Omishakin, in saying that we have a vision of safety and a multi-modal future. San Mateo was already a leader this Spring in switching 28 intersections in addition to the 24 that already exist, instituting safe (slow) streets, and eliminating parking to accommodate outdoor dining. I look forward to more quick build solutions in our community. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kristie Eglsaer

Here is a list of the specific ECR plans in other cities on the Peninsula.

Town of Colma

<https://colmaelcamino.org>

Burlingame

<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-projects/d4-san-mateo-82-el-camino-real-project>

Redwood City

<https://www.redwoodcity.org/departments/community-development-department/planning-housing/planning-services/general-plan-precise-plans/el-camino-real-corridor-plan>

Menlo Park

<https://www.menlopark.org/149/El-Camino-Real-and-Downtown-Specific-Pla>

Mountain View

<https://www.mountainview.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=29701>

Sunnyvale

<http://plansunnyvaleecr.m-group.us>

Santa Clara

<https://www.santaclaraca.gov/our-city/departments-a-f/community-development/planning-division/specific-plans/el-camino-real>

**From:** Michele Fernandes < >  
**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2020 10:52 AM  
**To:** City Council (San Mateo) <[CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Laurie Watanuki <[cnasanmateo@gmail.com](mailto:cnasanmateo@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Regarding Citywide Traffic Safety Review - Agenda #19

Dear City Council Members,

In relation to the traffic issues and recent spate of accidents brought to your attention on 4th and Grant., I am writing to request that you take action for the issues being reported on 4th Avenue. I live on 4th (btw El Dorado and S Fremont) and every day we have people speeding to jump the lights, cutting through 5th to enter 4th on Grant and ignoring the current traffic controls in place. I have read the stream of emails raised by the local residents and see that there have been some studies being conducted and lots of 'kicking the can' down the road, but very little, if any, action.

We need consistent and actionable enforcement of speed, and ideally noise pollution, for the traffic on 4th and definitely a light on 4th and Grant. The latest was a poor family's house being damaged by the latest crash and next time it could be pedestrians innocently walking on the sidewalk - all VERY avoidable outcomes.

I have seen the council act expeditiously on the items the residents do not want - for example the recent placement of the antennas' and extremely glacial on matters that the residents do want - traffic calming and enforcement.

Time for you to act I would say.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to action (I hope).  
Michele