



February 9, 2016

Dee Williams-Ridley
City Manager
City of Berkeley
2120 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Collision on Fulton Street at Bancroft February 2, 2016

Dear Ms. Williams-Ridley:

I am reaching out to you to follow up on the collision on Fulton Street on February 2nd involving Megan Schwarzman. As you may know, at the intersection of Fulton Street and Bancroft Way, Megan was struck by a driver and dragged beneath his car while bicycling home from work. We understand that the driver may have been impaired. Megan could not have been more safe or visible with fluorescent green safety gear, a helmet and lights on her bike. I am thankful that Meg is going to survive, but her road to full recovery may be long. Our hearts go out to Megan and her family at this very difficult time.

I ask you to take immediate steps to make Berkeley's streets safer for everyone in response to this heart-wrenching collision. A bike lane on Fulton Street may have made a significant difference in this case. Bike East Bay staff and members have repeatedly called for the City of Berkeley to stripe bike lanes on busy streets as part of their repaving, including at this dangerous location, following the City's own plans which both call for bike lanes and also state that bike lanes should be installed when streets are repaved. On streets such as Hearst Avenue, Gilman Street and Oxford Street leading up to the location of Megan's collision, Bike East Bay had to push reluctant staff to include bike lanes as part of repaving projects. Due to the City's inaction on the Fulton Street repaving last year, Megan's life almost ended this past week, and certainly it will never be the same.

On behalf of our 4,000 members in the East Bay, many of them in Berkeley, we ask that the City of Berkeley take the following immediate action:

1. Complete the long delayed bike lane on the two blocks of Fulton Street between Bancroft Way and Channing Way by Bike to Work Day, May 12, 2016. This will certainly make an immediate improvement for bicycling on Fulton Street. There have been 10 reported bicycle-car collisions at the intersection of Bancroft and Fulton alone from 2001

to 2014. People bicycling around the Cal campus need more protection from moving traffic.

2. Reinforce the City's policy that projects on the Bicycle Master Plan be reviewed as part of repaving plans, and as part of the City's complete streets policy. These policies not only move the City of Berkeley in concrete ways toward identified goals for mode share, emissions reduction and more, they also help the City use scarce resources efficiently by rebuilding a street only once, not twice.
3. Please designate a staff member in the Department of Public Works with decision-making authority over your repaving schedule to meet with the City's bicycle program staff and a Bike East Bay representative on a regular basis, at least quarterly. The purpose of this meeting would be to comply with complete street coordination meetings, requiring that improvements for walking, bicycling, and all roadway users be incorporated into all repaving projects.

Last year when this stretch of Fulton Street was to be repaved, we asked City of Berkeley staff to stripe bike lanes as part of the repaving of the street, bike lanes called for both in Berkeley's 2000 Bicycle Plan and the 2010 Downtown Plan. New bike lanes on Fulton Street would connect existing bike lanes on Oxford Street with bike lanes on Channing Way, at least in the southbound direction. Staff considered our request, but declined to include bike lanes because, they stated, it would cause a delay through having to study potential traffic congestion and/or parking removal as part of the project. We have record of these communications, please let us know if you need a copy. If there were coordination between planning and repaving staff it would come as no surprise that bike lanes needed to be included in this repaving project. There is also a significant cost savings to the City in combining bicycle lane projects with repaving.

A new development that allows staff to now remove a travel lane on Fulton Street and stripe a bike lane is included in the CEQA Transportation Guidelines put out last month by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. The new CEQA guidelines no longer require an Environmental Impact Report or any kind of environmental evaluation for doing a road diet to stripe a bike lane. Such projects are now exempt. This shifts the discussion of potential traffic lane removal from a legal arena to a local political arena, and as far as Bike East Bay is concerned, Berkeley City Council has decided the political issue by approving the Bicycle Plan unanimously in 2000 and reaffirming it again in 2005, both times with bike lanes on Fulton Street in the Plan.

Bike East Bay is looking forward to Berkeley's first protected bike lanes on Hearst Avenue next year, and will be working closely with the City to build more protected bike lanes on popular bicycling streets such as Milvia Street, Telegraph Avenue and others. We are thankful that staff working on the Hearst Avenue project have agreed with Bike East Bay that the project deserves protected bike lanes. Their hard work on that project needs to be replicated on every project, until Berkeley builds out a network of safe, attractive bikeways for everyone to use and enjoy. We are also thankful that staff are studying the potential for a bike lane on Bancroft Way, right at the location of Megan's collision, as part of the repaving of that street. We think that if Megan

had been riding on a protected bikeway at this location last week she would be home with her baby right now, not in a trauma unit.

I very much appreciate the dedication and cooperation of your bicycle program and planning staff. Our collaborative relationship with transportation planning staff would be enhanced by the meetings we request above giving us access to staff with decision-making authority within repaving, as we recognize that this is something that is outside of the authority of the bicycle program and planning staff .

Thank you for your attention to this important request and thank you for agreeing that the safety of Berkeley residents is paramount.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Renee", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Renee Rivera
Executive Director
Bike East Bay

cc: Zach Cowen, City Attorney
Andrew Clough, Public Works Director
Farid Javandel, Transportation Division
City Councilmember Jesse Arrequin