13 Apr 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: Jim Light, District 1
Jim Hannon, South Bay Bicycle Coalition+

SUBJECT: Improvements to Bicycle Path in Pier Parking Lot Area

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Harbor Commission rejected the proposal to force bicyclists to walk through the pier parking structure 24x7x365 through signage, placement of multiple obstacles, and enforcement. The Harbor Commission made specific recommendations, which we support. However, due to technical difficulties Jim Hannon was unable to present recommendations to the Harbor Commission. Based on a joint walk-through, we have come up with a more complete list of recommendations that would significantly improve safety for Council consideration. We will summarize those recommendations here and add details and rationale in the body of the recommendation. We appreciate the Council's consideration of these additional requests.

1. **Bicyclist recommendations**

A) "Walk lights" activated only during weekends, holidays, and special pier events.
B) Continuing the Harbor Drive bike track's green paint on the bike path through the pier area to clearly define the intended path
C) White pedestrian crossings painted to match pedestrian crossings above the International Boardwalk for clarity and consistency
D) Bike symbol and directional markings painted on either side of each pedestrian crossing to clearly warn pedestrians to cross and not enter the bike path
E) Install yellow and black foam at bike path entrance to north side of pier parking structure due to low head clearance for tall riders

F) Dismount chicane obstacles at the south restroom of the pier parking structure and where the concrete apron starts at the beach bike path.

G) Better anti-slip coating at the 90 degree turn within the parking structure

H) Bicyclist related warnings painted on the bike path for visibility, deconflict signs

2. Pedestrian recommendations

A) Clear warning signs on both sides of a pedestrian crossing that they are about to cross an active bike path

B) Interior to the pier parking structure, painted white pedestrian striping to clearly indicate intended pedestrian path out of the parking structure

C) Clear wayfinding signage to indicate path to elevators from handicapped parking

D) Chicanes to discourage bikes from exiting bike path straight onto pier walkways at two locations: the western pedestrian exit from the parking structure at the 90 degree bend of the bike path; and the pedestrian exit from the parking area to the southern restroom in the parking structure. "Pedestrian Only" signage at both locations.

3. Automobile recommendations

A) Stop signs and pedestrian/bike crossing warnings where vehicular traffic crosses the bike and pedestrian paths interior to the parking structure

4. Alternate bike route around pier area

A) Provide an alternate southbound bike path following Pacific Avenue and allowing for either riding on Catalina Avenue OR use of the historic bike path on the inside of the sidewalk.

B) Also formalize bike routes in both directions of George Freeth Way

5. DETAILED ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE

1. Assessment of Staff Report

The staff report recommends bicyclists be required to walk their bikes from the pier entrance apron through the parking structure 24x7x365. That is over 1000 ft, about 1/5th of a mile. They would do this through signage, 5 sets of chicane barriers,

and strict police enforcement. We agree with the Harbor Commission that this is heavy handed and unnecessarily onerous and **would only result in forcing bicyclists onto the pier walkways and/or riding through the parking areas of the parking structure – either of which is more dangerous than the current situation**.

Even the 2016 Staff Report on this same subject came to the exact same conclusion:

> *"…when there is little or no pedestrian conflict, requiring cyclists to dismount will result in little benefit and would have little compliance. Field observation confirmed the lack of compliance of cyclists when there was little perceived pedestrian conflict. A more effective approach would be to utilize a combination of clearly understandable dismount signage combined with flashing beacons that indicate when the requirement is in effect."*

That 2016 staff report summarizes the enhancement:

> "*Installation of "WALK BIKES BEYOND THIS POINT" with flashing beacons that are actuated by heavy pedestrian volumes at key conflict points."*

Unfortunately, when installed the blinking lights were hardwired to be on constantly with no actuation or timing mechanism. **As predicted by the 2016 Staff Report, bicyclists ignore these lights because they are never off even when pedestrian traffic is sparse or non-existent.**

We strongly agree with the Harbor Commission that the draconian solution recommended in the staff report would only encourage cyclists to ride straight through the parking garage and/or onto pier pedestrian walkways. Either of these routes are more hazardous than doing nothing.

Rather than create a worse situation that would only serve to incentivize bicyclists to ride on pier walkways or through the parking structure, we believe the following recommendations would be more effective and result in a safer bike path.

2. **Bike path related analysis, recommendations and rationale**

a) Analysis: The current bike path through the pier area is inconsistent. Some pedestrian crossings are clearly marked with white crossing stripes and others are not.

At some points the intended bike and pedestrian paths are unclear. The best example is the bike path and parallel pedestrian path stretching from the north entrance of the parking structure to the 90 degree turn of the bike path within the parking structure. Here with some markings fading, it is unclear whether the bike path is meant to go straight onto the pedestrian sidewalk outside the parking structure or to only turn 90 degrees to the southern exit of the parking structure. Signs are all over the place at heights that are inconsistent and with contradictory messages. Since the focus of bicyclists is from straight ahead to down at their wheels, signs above this level will largely be missed. Some signs say “walk bike when flashing” and others just say walk bikes. Conflicting signs are hard to reconcile in real time. And there are just too many signs. In the last month or so hideous yellow and black signs have been painted on the entrances to both

sides of the pier parking structure. In one the text is clearly not even level.

To add to the ambience, on both sides of the pier parking lot entrance, visitors are greeted with this flashing message, rather than any welcome to our great pier:

The whole experience comes across as very anti-bicyclist, draconian, and overly zealous. Why'd we install a $5 million, award winning bike track on Harbor Drive just to end up discouraging bicyclists at its southern end? To that end, the entire bike track is painted green as are some new bike paths in North Redondo. The bike path that meanders through the parking structure is not painted which leads to confusion in bicyclists and pedestrians. Finally, there is an unsafe condition at the north entrance of the bike path

into the parking structure. The concrete structure is low here and tall bicyclists can and have bumped their heads on this structure.

b) Recommendations and rationale:

A) Reconfigure the yellow walk bike lights to flash during anticipated higher pedestrian volume. We concur with the times recommended by the Harbor Commission. This would encourage cyclists to comply as it is reasonable and justifiable.

B) Continue the green paint scheme of the bike track through the entire pier area. This would clearly indicate to bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists the intended route of the bike path through the whole area.

C) Paint white crossing stripes at all places where pedestrians cross the bike path from the end to bike track to the south end of the pier parking structure by the southern restroom.

Consistency is essential for cyclists to clearly understand the points of potential conflict with pedestrians. It also provides clarity to pedestrians as to where they should safely cross.

D) Paint white bicycle and directional signals on both sides of each pedestrian crossing.

This is another clear indicator to pedestrians that the green lanes are bicycle lanes and they should not walk on the bike lanes.

E) Install yellow and black foam on the low structure at the north entrance of the bike path into the parking structure. Indicate “low clearance” on either side to warn tall cyclists approaching this entrance/exit. This is to prevent injury to tall cyclists.

F) Place chicane barriers to encourage dismount at two places: where the bike path meets the southern bathroom in the parking structure; and, where the concrete apron of pier meets the asphalt bike path to the south. This is the area of the most conflict with pedestrians as pedestrian traffic can be heavy and flows in all directions. This is the only area where cyclists should be required dismount during busy pedestrian periods. The chicanes should be designed to allow cyclists to cautiously ride through when dismount is not required but still provide a clear indicator of the boundaries of this temporary dismount area when activated. During times when no dismount is required these would slow cyclists at either end.

G) Install better anti-slip surface at the 90 degree turn in the bike path. The current coating though textured is still very slick when wet from condensation or ocean spray. This is an unnecessary and easily fixable fall hazard.

H) Put all signs intended for bicyclists low or on the bike path itself. Cyclists in a complex environment tend to glance from straight ahead down to their front wheels. Signs above this range of view will be frequently missed by otherwise conscientious cyclists. Of course, any signage confusing or conflicting signs should be resolved. Remove the hideous yellow “walk bike” signs that were recently painted on the entrances to the parking structures. Let’s welcome cyclists not make them feel unwanted.

3. **Pedestrian related analysis, recommendations and rationale**

a) Analysis: For new visitors to the pier, it is difficult to interpret where we want them to cross the bike path interior to the parking garage. The pedestrian crossings on top of the International Boardwalk sections are clearly striped, but this is not carried through the parking structure section. Also there are few clear warnings that a pedestrian is about to cross a bike path. Here we see a well marked crosswalk, but no warnings to look for bikes.

It is also unclear where we intend visitors to exit the parking structure. This is especially true for handicapped visitors who park on the western edge of the parking lot but who have no clue where the elevator is. Interior to the parking structure, the chains and pilings make it very clear that pedestrians should not enter the bike path. This is one well designed area that precludes conflicts. However, there are many areas where bicyclists can and do go off the intended path and use pedestrian conveyances.

b) Recommendations and rationale:

A) Wherever there are pedestrian crossings on the bike path, there should be warning signs for pedestrians on both sides of the crossing. Painted on the ground on both sides of the bike path crossing:

And warning signs at waist or above level clearly indicating bike traffic:

New visitors are often overwhelmed and excited to get to the amenities or back to their vehicle. These warnings makes it very clear that pedestrians should expect bike traffic and to exercise caution.

B) Paint pedestrian crossing stripes all the way to the west exit of the parking structure next to the 90 degree bend in bike path. This makes it clear to both pedestrians and bicyclists that this is the intended pedestrian exit to that part of the parking garage. It would help discourage bicyclists from using this exit to get onto the pier area pedestrian walkways.

C) Add clear wayfinding signage for visitors exiting their vehicles in the parking garage especially for handicapped visitors looking for the elevator. This prevents confused pedestrians from using the bike path thinking it is a way to the elevators.

D) Place chicane barriers at two locations: the pedestrian exit on the west side near the 90 degree turn on the bike path, and where the parking garage leads to the southern restroom in the parking structure. The picture below shows the area some bicyclists use to cut through the parking area rather than use the bike path. A chicane here would discourage this short cut.

Augment these physical barriers with “pedestrian only” signs.

This is a strong indicator and deterrent to cyclists who might otherwise be tempted to ride their bikes through the parking area or exit straight out the western pedestrian exit onto pier walkways.

4. Automobile related analysis, recommendations and rationale

a) Analysis: There are two locations in the parking structure where vehicles cross the bike and pedestrian paths internal to the parking structure. The incoming traffic lane has no stop signs at the crossing. The outgoing traffic lane has one stop sign on one side that is easily missed.

There are no signs that warn drivers they are crossing bike and pedestrian paths. New visitors are often overwhelmed by the new environment of a complex parking structure. This creates a clear risk of an overwhelmed driver hitting a pedestrian or cyclist.

b) Recommendations and rationale:

A) Put stop signs on the left and right sides of both crossings and paint the appropriate stop stripe on the floor. Also add warning signs indicating the driver will be crossing a bike and a pedestrian path at both sides of both crossings.

This provides added awareness for drivers and safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

5) Alternate bike route related analysis, recommendations and rationale

a) Analysis: During days of heavy pier attendance, many bicyclists may want to avoid the whole pier area. Right now it is unclear if there is a safe and convenient alternative routing.

b) Recommendations and rationale:

A) Establish and mark an alternate route for southbound bike traffic that turns west on Pacific Avenue with a sparrow marked lane and allows southbound exit onto Catalina Avenue or onto the protected, historic bike path on the inward side of the sidewalk

along Catalina. This should also require more bike friendly curbing at the Pacific entrance and Torrance Blvd exit of the bike path. For those traveling south on the bike track who want to avoid the congestion, confusion, and requirement to dismount at the pier, Pacific Ave, Catalina and the historic bike path provide an easy alternative.

B) Formalize the already well-established use of George Freeth Way for two bike traffic to and from the pier area. A simple sparrow could be used for the uphill direction, and a painted path on the east side would provide a safe route for the downhill cyclists going against traffic. Similarly, mark a bike path through the small road in front o the Elks Club for southbound bicyclists to get to the Esplanade. This would reduce safety risks associated with the two way bike traffic on George Freeth Way by making the traffic legal and obvious to both cyclists and motorists on George Freeth Way. The short bike path in front of the Elks would avoid the congested Pearl/Catalina/Esplande intersection.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The current staff report and recommendations would only force cyclists into parking lot traffic or onto pier pedestrian walkways – either of which is more hazardous than the situation today. Furthermore, the staff recommended solution only serves to make cyclists using the long established, famous, 22 mile beachfront bike path feel unwelcome in the pier and in Redondo. Forced dismount and walking should only be required when there is heavy pedestrian traffic in multiple directions and only in the pier entrance area west of the Torrance Blvd terminus.

However, the safety concerns are valid. The recommendations contained in this submission provide effective solutions that will reduce safety risk and minimize unintended consequences of the staff's heavy handed, one-size fits all times solution.

We thank the Council for considering these recommendations.

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Jim Hannon, South Bay Bicycle Coalition+

Jim Light, District 1