



Comments on State Route 131 Capital Preventive Maintenance Project Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration

In its upcoming preventative maintenance project on Tiburon Boulevard/SR-131, Caltrans is demonstrating its commitment to a Complete Streets approach. Rather than simply repaving the corridor as currently configured, as has long been the practice under State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) efforts, this project is planned to provide a Class IV bikeway for two miles of the project corridor. Such a project, drawn from the high-priority bikeway identified in the 2018 Caltrans Bay Area Bike Plan, will be (to our knowledge) the longest of its kind developed by Caltrans. Additionally, the proposed Class I facility between E. Strawberry Drive and Greenwood Cove Road will greatly improve connectivity for people of all ages and abilities. For these project elements we express our gratitude and appreciation for a forward-looking approach.

While we strongly support the project as a whole, we have a number of minor recommendations for the project, primarily with respect to bikeway continuity and pedestrian safety. Figure references below refer to the September 2023 Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, [linked here](#).

B1 - Westbound Bikeway Gap

Figure 2-1, Map 13 depicts what appears to be a gap in the westbound bikeway between the intersections of Jefferson Drive and Reed Ranch Road, directly across from the entrance to Blackie's Pasture. While such a gap is likely proposed due to a short narrowing of the roadway, we strongly urge that a design be developed that would not force westbound bicyclists to merge with high speed automotive traffic, given that prevailing speeds are often upwards of 45 mph.

B2 - Eastern Terminus of Westbound Bikeway

Figure 2-1, Map 15 depicts the westbound bikeway having an eastern terminus at Jefferson Drive. This is a safety issue particularly for westbound riders coming from the northern terminus of the Old Rail Trail. While eastbound riders using the new Tiburon Boulevard bikeway may exit at the entrance to Blackie's Pasture, westbound riders coming from the Old Rail Trail hoping to use the Tiburon Boulevard bikeway will not be able to turn left at the Blackie's Pasture entrance (which is unsignalized) and will instead be forced to use the intersection at Trestle Glen, and then continue west for 300' before the Class IV bikeway begins. We recommend that the westbound bikeway be extended to Trestle Glen Boulevard.

B3 - Consider Bidirectional Bikeway

As Tiburon Boulevard currently lacks bike facilities, westbound riders traveling from Tiburon to Mill Valley or Strawberry turn left at Blackie's Pasture and use Greenwood Beach Road/Greenwood Cove Road. Despite the proposed westbound Class IV bikeway, we believe that, as currently planned, the majority of bicyclists will continue to use Greenwood Cove/Greenwood Beach Road, particularly if the above recommendations B1 and B2 are not addressed. In addition to the safety issues outlined above, using the westbound Tiburon Boulevard bikeway will require 1000' of out-of-direction travel to use the signal at Trestle Glen Boulevard. Lastly, for any westbound riders traveling to Strawberry, using the westbound Tiburon Boulevard bikeway will require crossing the road twice, once at Trestle Glen Boulevard and again at Blackfield Drive/Greenwood Cove Drive or Bay Vista Drive/E Strawberry Drive. An alternative that would keep westbound bicyclists on Tiburon Boulevard would be to make the Class IV bikeway bidirectional between Blackie's Pasture and Greenwood Cove Road. This would eliminate the out-of-direction travel and provide a more seamless travel experience for riders.

B4 - Class IV Vertical Separation Elements

The IS/MND does not go into detail about the vertical elements planned to separate the Class IV bikeway from automotive traffic, but we *strongly* recommend that the most substantial barrier is used that the project budget will permit. The speed limit on Tiburon Boulevard is 45 mph, with drivers frequently exceeding that. Flexible plastic delineators alone will do nothing to stop a car that departs the lane because of driver distraction, drowsiness, or inebriation, which could result in catastrophic injury or death for any riders using the planned bike lanes who happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. For this reason we urge Caltrans to actually protect the bikeway with barriers, or at least with delineators that will redirect a wayward vehicle, such as plastic "armadillos," like those made by [Zicla](#) or [QuickKurb continuous curbing](#).

A1 - Narrow Travel Lanes in Downtown

Bicyclists traveling between Downtown Tiburon and the Old Rail Trail must use the Class II bike lanes on Tiburon Boulevard. The bike lane is minimum width (4' outside of the gutter) and runs next to parallel parking, a configuration known to be dangerous. At the same time, the travel lanes are 12' in width, encouraging higher travel speeds. Caltrans' forthcoming Design Information Bulletin 94 (DIB-94) suggests that lane widths in a Rural Main Street type area with a speed limit of 30 mph may be as low as 10.5'. Such a minor reconfiguration of lane width could provide 18" of buffer to the bike lane, increasing space between bicyclists and passing cars, and allowing more room to ride out of the "door zone."

A2 - Lower Speed Limit in Downton

The speed limit between the Mar West St is 30 mph. Drivers traveling at 30 mph are far less likely to yield, as legally required, to a pedestrian at an unsignalized crosswalk. Given that there is only one signal on this half-mile stretch of road, facilitating safe pedestrian crossings is important. Particularly if lanes are narrowed as suggested in A1, it is likely that prevailing speeds would permit a 25 mph speed limit.

P1 - Transit/Pedestrian Access

Several intersections on the corridor feature two-way stop controlled intersections with no marked crosswalk or pedestrian refuges, despite being the location of bus stops. One wonders how pedestrians are supposed to reach the far bus stop from the side street. These intersections are:

- Gilmartin Drive
- Jefferson Drive
- Cecilia Way

In the case of Gilmartin Drive, there is not even a sidewalk to reach the closest signalized intersection, which itself would require walking a distance of 1,800' (six football fields) to cross to the far stop. While a marked crosswalk alone might not ensure pedestrian safety at these crossings, due to the fact that they are all T-junctions, a pedestrian refuge might be installed on the south/east leg of the intersections without removing a left turn lane.

The project proposes a new marked crosswalk at Reed Ranch Road, but does not propose a pedestrian refuge there. Without this, pedestrians will be forced to cross four lanes of high-speed traffic at once, which few will choose.

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We again reiterate our appreciation to Caltrans for the agency's willingness to incorporate novel project elements into SHOPP project. The Class IV bike lanes and new Class I path, if implemented properly, will substantially improve access for users of Tiburon Boulevard traveling outside of a car. We believe that the incorporation of our additional recommendations would result in a truly transformative project for those living, working, and recreating on the Tiburon Boulevard/SR-131 corridor. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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