

PART 2 – OTHER THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

There is a great route that is filled with great beauty. A very popular route that many cyclists take on the weekends. When I say many, I'm saying thousands of cyclists riding this on every sunny Saturday and Sunday. This beautiful route runs on Pacific Coast Highway (changes names a few times, but is the same road) and is next to the Pacific Ocean bordered on the north by Camp Pendleton/Oceanside and Torrey Pines on the south. Based on the many times I have done this ride, almost every obstacle and danger point exist so it's a great example of things to watch out for.

This is a quick story of a local route. All photos are from GOOGLE MAPS.

In PHOTO #1, there are several potential danger points. Since parking is usually very limited, especially on the weekends, cars will race each other to be the first ones to a limited number of parking spots, often cutting off and sometimes colliding with cyclists. When you approach prime parking areas, you need to be aware of not only cars cutting you off, but also cars quickly backing out of the parking spots. This is where drivers will always say "But I didn't see him." Also, if you look up the road you will see some traffic poles to avoid along with cars parked parallel to the road, and right next to the bike lane as PHOTO #2 shows.



In PHOTO #2, anticipate (a) cars cutting you off by pulling into an open parking spot, (b) cars cutting you off by pulling out of a parking spot, (c) car doors opening right in front of you, (d) sand, gravel, rocks, etc. in your lane as well, more on this later.



In PHOTO #3a, anticipate joggers, walkers, other cyclists going the wrong way as well as cars driving in the bike lane. This photo also shows some sand and gravel in the bike lane.

Also, be aware of road transitions (PHOTO 3b). In this example, the area between the road and the bridge is usually filled with an expandable joint filled with a piece of rubber. Due to the area this bridge is in (highly corrosive sea salt) along with a lack of city, county, state maintenance, the rubber strips are torn up or missing altogether. In worst cases, the transition between the road and bridge will have an inch or two height difference. Just enough to take out or flat a front wheel of an unsuspecting cyclist or a cyclist. The lesson here is to pay attention and watch the road conditions instead of watching the beautiful scenery.



In PHOTO #4, again, notice that the vehicle is driving in the bike lane. Practicing your listening skills will allow you to notice that a vehicle is approaching. Take a quick look back and see where this vehicle is and move to the appropriate section in the bike lane to avoid being hit by the vehicles mirror or worse, front bumper.

Also, look ahead for large trees that are close to the edge of the street, sidewalk or bike lane. Often is the case that their roots will lift the pavement in front of you making for an uneven and dangerous situation.



In the upper right hand of PHOTO #5 is the symbol for a shared lane, where it is legal to ride your bicycle in this lane of traffic. But, be sensitive to taking the whole lane when you don't need to since there are many drivers that think bicyclists do not even belong on the road. Pick a happy-medium, far enough to the left where a car door opening in front of you won't take you out, but far enough to the right where you will minimally affect the flow of automobile traffic. In this photo, the far-right lane is not actually a dedicated bicycle lane, but a shared lane that cars can park in as well. Be attentive and look ahead.



Be Considerate - PHOTO 6 shows 2 cyclists being considerate and one that isn't. Don't be '[that guy](#)' that stops at a red light while taking up the traffic lane, especially when there is a bike lane with adequate room. In this case, it is best to stay just to the right of the dashed line which would allow cars behind to turn right instead of waiting for the light to turn green.



PHOTO 6

The next (series of) photos shows the unexpected, **so expect the unexpected**. PHOTO 7a shows what seems to be an isolated case of a couple of cones and a sign in the bike lane. Luckily, in this case, there is a buffer zone to separate cars from bicycles. In this case, the cyclist must ride in the buffer zone to avoid the cones. Again, be attentive and plan ahead... NOW, just around the corner ...



PHOTO 7a

This series of 3 photos 7b, 7c, 7d show what is just around the corner. Having just passed the first set of knocked over cones (PHOTO 7a), approaching the of the hill reveals yet another set of cones (PHOTO 7b). Just past these cones lie 20 plastic poles (PHOTO 7c), metal barricade signs and a complete redirection of traffic (PHOTO 7d). SURPRISE! At this point, (PHOTO 7d) you can choose to stop and let all of the cars go by before you continue up and over the hill or hammer as hard as you can to try and stay in front of the upcoming traffic. Waiting is usually the safer option, especially in this case where the one-lane road and cones went on for about a mile.



PHOTO 7b



PHOTO 7c



PHOTO 7d

PHOTOs 8a-8g show one small stretch of road with multiple hazards. From pedestrians walking across the street (PHOTO 8a), then walking in the bike lane (PHOTO 8b) to cars waiting for cars to back out of a parking spot to cars backing out of their parking spots and into the bike lane (PHOTO 8c), to cars actually parked in the bike lane waiting for a parking spot (PHOTOs 8c, 8d, 8e) and even cars (black 4-door sedan in PHOTOs 8f, 8g) pulling out into the bike lane without looking.



PHOTO 8a



PHOTO 8b

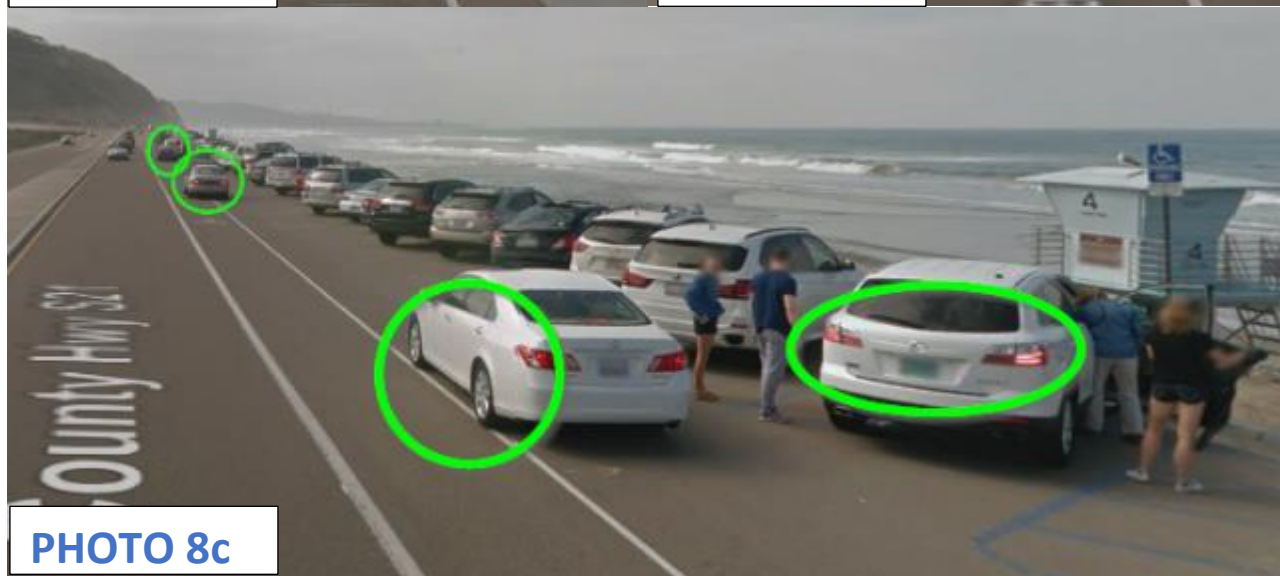


PHOTO 8c



PHOTO 8d



PHOTO 8e

Black 4-door sedan – first car of these 3, got tired of waiting so leaving in a hurry.



No parking spots so they got tired of waiting and pulled out into bike lane without looking.



PHOTOs 9a, 9b show cracks in the road large enough to swallow (and stop) a front wheel. Look up and be aware of large cracks in the road. As always, ride at the right side of the lane, but ONLY as far to the right as it is safe.



PHOTO 9b shows a crack in the road large enough to grab a front wheel and stop it from moving.



PHOTOs 10a, 10b show another typical bike lane problem, trees and bushes growing into the bike lane forcing cyclists to swing out into lanes of traffic (PHOTO 10b) to avoid running into bushes.



PHOTO 10a



PHOTO 10b

PHOTO 11a shows some of the ridiculous things we see as cyclists. Here is an example of a 12-foot-long bike lane that ends right into a curb. The safest route through this would actually be to stop at the end of the bike lane and hop onto the sidewalk.



PHOTO 11a

PHOTO 11b shows another ridiculous attempt by a city to put in a bike lane. In this example, the bike lane turns into an actual right turn only lane for cars! In this case, I would pop onto the sidewalk at the corner and not even deal with this ridiculously short bike lane.



PHOTO 11b

Continued part 13b-2

