



Bikes Allowed Use of Full Lane, Change Lanes to Pass Signs

Background

With the increased numbers of bicycles and cars competing for space on San Francisco streets, two common bike/motor vehicle conflicts exist which significantly contribute to injury crashes. One scenario is when the bicyclist operates a bicycle in an unsafe manner, riding too closely to the edge of the roadway or near parked or stopped cars where exiting drivers and passengers may open car doors in the path of the passing bicyclist (“dooring”). The other scenario is when the motorist is passing a bicyclist in an unsafe manner, driving too close where they may inadvertently cutoff or otherwise endanger the bicyclist. In either case, we have an uncomfortable situation requiring quick reflexes by both road users. The San Francisco Bicycle Program’s sign project described here addresses both sides of this problem to reduce unsafe behaviors by both bicyclists and motorists, to reduce serious traffic injuries, and specifically, to encourage both bicyclists and motorists to take the safest path where the roadways narrow.

Rationale

The Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT) is installing signage explaining California Vehicle Code 21202, (CVC 21202), which permits bicyclists to “take the lane” when necessary to avoid unsafe conditions. For example, on Class III bike routes, bikes and cars share the same – often narrow – roadway. The design is a 30 x 30 inch yellow diamond sign with a **bike symbol** and text “**Allowed Use of Full Lane CVC 21202**” and a 24 x 12 inch yellow placard with text “**Change Lanes to Pass.**” (Until designated, we will refer to these signs as **BAUFL** and **CLTP.**) The signs are used on Class III bikeways because a 12’ wide lane is considered too narrow for motorists and cyclists to travel safely side by side. Bicyclists are expected to ride at least three feet from the edge of the roadway or parked cars. Motorists are also expected to pass bicycles with a minimum of three feet of clearance. By taking the full lane, cyclists will be more visible, discourage unsafe passing maneuvers by motorists, and have more road width to maneuver appropriately around obstacles, debris, and potholes.

These signs are being placed in critical areas along the Bicycle Route Network on Class III bikeways which serve as important connectors between bike paths and bike lanes. To determine the best placement of these signs and avoid unnecessary sign clutter, we collected the following data: traffic volume, collision history, speed limits, street grades, number of lanes, curb lane

width, presence of parking, presence of bus routes, presence of MUNI bus lane and/or tracks, and other factors.

Guidelines for Installation of BAUFL Signs and CLTP Placards

On a Class III Bikeway where the curb lane is less than or equal to 20 feet, with parking.

Where there has been two or more bicycle-related collisions in past five years or a midblock 'dooring' collision.

Where no projects are planned within next two years.

CLTP placard is not installed alone or on two-lane two-way roadways.

POSSIBLE ISSUES

Why aren't there any on Market Street? DPT did not install these signs on streets that are the focus of major planning efforts. Market Street is being addressed in a San Francisco County Transportation Authority study. These sign locations were selected on the basis of priority and economy for sites with the most potential benefit. While Market Street has a high volume of bicyclists, the traffic speeds are relatively low.

Where are they being installed?

2nd St.
5th St.
7th Ave.
10th St.
14th St.
17th St.
Cesar Chavez
Battery
Bayshore
Broadway
Circular
Clay
Columbus
Evans
Francisco
Great Highway
Lake Merced
Larkin
Marina
Masonic
McAllister
Northpoint
Page
Point Lobos

Post
Sanchez
Sansome
Sloat
Stockton
Sutter
Webster