Factsheet: Protected Bike Lanes

A protected bike lane uses barriers such as planters, curbs, parked cars, or posts to physically separate cars and people biking. Protected bike lanes add the most protection and comfort for a wide range of users. People driving and biking prefer protected bike lanes because they added the sense of predictability of people biking and an increased sense of safety. Protected bike lanes are also referred to as a 'Cycle Track,' 'Separated Bikeway,' or 'Class IV Bikeway.'

Protected Bikeway Act of 2014: The State of California recently created an official category of protected bike lanes and flexible guidance on how to implement them in the community. Previously, the lack of official guidelines from the state created obstacles for cities that wanted to add protected bike lanes and did not have consistent standards or other design resources. For detailed information, please see Caltrans "Class IV Bikeway Guidance" (www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/design/SeparatedBikeway_FinalDraft_DIB89_112315.pdf).

Various Types of Barriers Used for Protected Bike Lanes: The design guidelines recommend a variety of effective barrier types used for protected bike lanes, allowing for flexibility in design, depending on existing road conditions. (Photos sourced from FHWA Protected Bike Lane Design Guide.)

Flexible or ridged bollards

Raised median or concrete barrier

Planters

Parked cars

Protected bike lanes in the US have increased rapidly.

- Since 2010, San Francisco has installed about 13 miles of protected bike lanes and plan on having 15 more miles completed by the end of 2017. (San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, 2016. “A New Generation of Bikeways.”)
- New York City has installed over 30 miles of protected bike lanes between 2007 and 2014. (New York City Department of Transportation, 2014. “Protected Bike Lanes in NYC.”)

Source: People for Bikes, 2017. "The Green Lane Project is Complete."

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May 2017
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Research from other cities shows that adding protected bike lanes leads to decreased collisions, increased safety, increased people biking, increased health and environmental benefits, and increased business/investment.

Safety:
- Within a year, Telegraph Avenue in Oakland saw a 40% decrease in all collisions after installing parking protected bike lanes. (Oakland Department of Transportation, 2017. “Telegraph Avenue Progress Report.”)
- New York City had a total decrease in collisions by 20% from 12 protected bike lane projects. (New York City Department of Transportation, 2014. “Protected Bike Lanes in NYC.”)

More People Biking:
- Valencia Street in San Francisco saw a 140% increase in people biking after adding bicycle facilities. (National Complete Streets Coalition, 2012. “Complete Streets in California.”)
- Telegraph Avenue saw a 78% increase in people biking. (Oakland Department of Transportation, 2017. “Telegraph Avenue Progress Report.”)
- Columbus Avenue in NYC saw the number of people biking increase by 51%. (New York City Department of Transportation, 2014. “Protected Bike Lanes in NYC.”)
- These projects saw the number of people biking increase while collisions and travel times decreased or remained consistent.

Good for Business:
- Many stores report seeing a rise in business due in part to the increased number of people biking and walking.
- Valencia Street reported a 60% increase in sales after installing bike lanes. (National Complete Streets Coalition, 2012. “Complete Streets in California.”)
- Telegraph Avenue saw a 9% increase in sales after reconfiguring the street with parking protected bike lanes. (Oakland Department of Transportation, 2017. “Telegraph Avenue Progress Report.”)

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