April 10, 2020

Dear Mayor, Members of the City Council, and City Manager:

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) is a member-supported non-profit with the mission to create a health community, environment, and economy through bicycling for people who live, work, or play in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The current public health crisis takes first priority and governments should be focusing on immediate health needs. SVBC is committed to helping get us all through this crisis safely and has repeatedly sent messages to our members amplifying public health directives. Please view us as an ally in fighting COVID-19.

At the same time, this situation has created an unprecedented environment on our streets. SVBC respectfully requests consideration of immediate actions that cities can take to create a safer environment for all people, while still enabling healthy exercise and essential transportation for people to get around.

1. **Publicize a reduced speed advisory to 15 mph for residential streets to keep everyone walking and biking safe.** More people are walking and biking in their neighborhoods to get exercise and travel to essential services nearby. Concurrently, with less car traffic, people are speeding down roads, endangering those walking and biking. A reduced speed advisory publicized by the city and local police will help raise awareness and lead to fewer crashes and injuries among people and less burden on the healthcare system.
   a. An additional step would be to **adjust signal timing to slow vehicle speeds** and ensure safety (particularly on long corridors like El Camino Real, Alameda de las Pulgas, etc.).

2. **More space for the increased number of people walking and biking** Our biking and walking networks are insufficient to meet the needs of people getting exercise outdoors and traveling while maintaining six feet of social distance. We recommend identifying streets where bikeways and sidewalks could be expanded, creating quick build or pilot bikeways and sidewalks on streets that have excess vehicle lanes. Cities’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees are the perfect resource to identify appropriate corridors. SVBC understands that, given current health needs, not all cities are in a position to consider this but some are. We are happy to work with staff and our members to help identify candidate streets and facilitate resources to accomplish the work. (Oakland announced April 10 that they would be closing 74 miles/10% of streets to cars).\(^1\)

3. **Switch the pedestrian phase of traffic signals to be automatic and ensure that bicycles are captured at traffic signals.** Adjusting pedestrian signals so pushing a button is no longer needed to cross the street limits the amount of surfaces a person must touch, helping curb the spread of COVID-19.

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Additional guidance and best practices can be found here: https://nacto.org/rapid-response-tools-for-cities/

Finally, SVBC recognizes the required changes to public outreach and engagement that are happening right now. We applaud governments for acting swiftly to shift to online public meetings. SVBC is also able to help with public engagement in an online forum. Please know that we are a partner in helping to get the word out about the projects that are still moving forward.

If you have any questions or want help implementing these ideas, please contact Emma@bikesiliconvalley.org.

Sincerely,

Shiloh Ballard
President and Executive Director