

Why Adding Bike Facilities On El Camino Real Would Needlessly Jeopardize Cyclist, Driver And Pedestrian Safety.

Menlo Park has a good bike network, our city is generally a safe and convenient place to ride, and there are excellent ideas on how to improve the cycling experience and encourage greater bike usage in both the Specific Plan and the 2005 Comprehensive Bike Development Plan. Menlo Park also has a resident-based advisory bike commission that is dedicated making our neighborhoods and downtown even safer and more convenient places to ride. However, I strongly oppose the current idea of adding bike facilities to El Camino Real based on safety concerns for cyclists, drivers and pedestrians.

In a nutshell, El Camino Real cannot be made sufficiently safe for most cyclists; bike facilities would create the illusion of safety and encourage people to ride beyond their capabilities, and safer options either exist or can easily be added without large city expenditures.

A suburban highway lined with densely packed businesses is an environment that cannot be made safe for biking.

- There are too many places where cyclists and drivers can cross paths and “cut-off” each other. On El Camino there are more than 60 such spots, and since cars can travel over 30 miles per hour mid-block unexpected turns can be especially dangerous.
- The mixing of pedestrians, drivers and cyclists at major intersections, e.g. Santa Cruz Avenue, makes all more vulnerable to accidents.
- There are simply too many distractions for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists everywhere along El Camino Real.

The illusion of safety created by marked bike lanes and separate paths easily leads to misjudgments and bad decisions by both cyclists and drivers.

- Most vehicle-bike accidents do not occur on unbroken stretches of streets
- Cyclists and drivers can easily assume they are visible at crossing points.
- Drivers and cyclists can easily assume the others will make good judgments and behave defensively.

Safer riding options either already exist or new bike lanes and routes can be easily added.

- These are primarily in residential neighborhoods bordering downtown and El Camino Real.

**Why Adding Bike Facilities On El Camino Real
Would Needlessly Jeopardize Cyclist, Driver And Pedestrian Safety.**

- There are fewer busy intersections and public vehicle access points.
- There is much less vehicle and pedestrian traffic.
- There are fewer stoplights that can delay riders.

Seasoned cyclists can already ride on El Camino Real since they know how to assess risk and minimize it by riding alertly and defensively. However, I do not recommend riding on El Camino Real nor do it myself, as I am unwilling to assume more risk in order to potentially save a few minutes.