



July 6, 2023

Subject: City of Concord Traffic Safety

Honorable Councilmembers,

On behalf of Bike East Bay and Bike Concord, I am writing to express our concerns about ongoing traffic safety issues in Concord. We want to bring your attention to two recent incidents, one involving a bicyclist critically injured by a hit-run driver on Willow Pass Road at Diamond Boulevard on May 31<sup>st</sup>, and the other involving a young child who was struck and seriously injured by a driver at Cowell Road near Treat Boulevard on June 13<sup>th</sup>. We are very sorry to report that the bicyclist in the Willow Pass incident has since succumbed to their injuries. This follows the death of Jose Castillo, a student at Mount Diablo High School, who was killed by a driver in 2022 while biking at the intersection of Clayton Street and Galindo Road.

While we encourage all road users to operate responsibly, infrastructure design that reduces car speeds and mitigates conflicts is the primary means for improving street safety and eliminating severe and fatal incidents. Concord's widest roadways are also its corridors where most severe crashes occur, due largely to the incidence of higher speeds. Per Concord's Local Road Safety Plan adopted in 2022, pedestrians and bike riders make up nearly half of all severe or fatal crash victims in the city, and the total number of incidents has been increasing steadily since 2015.

So far the city is moving forward on [Phase 1 of the Treat paving project](#) for the segment with no bikeway or other traffic calming included, from the city limit west of Winton to San Miguel Rd to the east, just before the Canal Trail crossing. While the June 13 crash did not occur on this segment, it should be stressed that maintaining 6 lanes of vehicle traffic on this corridor is antithetical to street safety priorities, and it is only a matter of time before something just as bad or worse happens here.

As for the Phase 2 of the Treat paving project, the [existing proposal](#) to add only painted/unprotected bike lanes with car/bike mixing zones at intersections and no protected bike left turn accommodations is not nearly enough. This phase of the project needs to be expedited, and receive design improvements to prioritize bike/walk safety ahead of car speeds and throughput by adding physical protection to the bikeway as well as [physically protected intersections](#) at signalized locations like Cowell Rd to shorten crossing distances, enable safe and low-stress bike left turns, and slow car turning speeds. Unsignalized intersections like Turtle Creek Rd need their extra turn lanes to be closed or converted to bike-only in order to force slower and safer car speeds at conflict points.



Meanwhile on Willow Pass Road we were very happy to hear about the \$830K in regional One Bay Area Grant funding and \$2.8M in state Active Transportation Program funding awarded for a protected bikeway installation between Parkside Drive and Landana Drive. But the rest of the Willow Pass corridor to the west remains very hazardous, including the segment from Hwy 242 to the Pleasant Hill border where the crash occurred and where there are no other east-west bike or walk route options.

We understand that changes to street designs as well as people's expectations for travel patterns can be difficult, but the speed at which Concord can transform its transportation infrastructure away from 1960s-era geometries and priorities will determine how many more tragedies we can avoid. Concord is making progress on other protected bikeway corridor approvals like on Pine Hollow Road, and we appreciate the work that staff and council members are doing on that front. This same strategy needs to be employed with every new project and design opportunity citywide, both as part of large capital improvement projects as well as quick-build interim solutions.

Thank you for receiving this correspondence, and please let us know how we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert Prinz  
Advocacy Director  
Bike East Bay