

**Subject:** Agenda Item 5.4: Gilman Drive Class IV Cycletrack comments

**From:** Karl Rudnick <rudnick.cooper@gmail.com>

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**To:** gjackson@outlook.com

Dear La Jolla Community Planning Association

I write as an experienced cyclist, a certified League of American Bicyclists Cycling Instructor, a Board Member of the San Diego County Bike Coalition, a founding member of BikeWalkSolana (bike/ped advocacy advisory group for City of Solana Beach), and a North County Cycle Club ride leader.

I am quite familiar with the stretch of Gilman Dr from La Jolla Village Dr down to the connection to the Rose Canyon bike path. I have used it for 3+ decades, for transportation to downtown from North County, recreation, fitness, and leading club rides. The southbound, downhill stretch has always been especially nice as gravity allows cyclists to either relax with little effort or ride at speeds exceeding 20 mph.

I applaud the efforts to make this area more attractive and safe for cyclists. However, a Class IV facility, especially on the southbound side, without proper treatments at all conflict points (there are 7 of them), can actually decrease safety, although less experienced cyclists may claim to "feel safe" with barriers on their left side for much of this stretch. Currently, many planning organizations and consultants feel that a "protected bike lane" is an inexpensive way to get more people out on bikes because it is a safer facility. I'm fully on board with the objective, but want to caution that both location and design for Class IV facilities are entirely dependent upon context. I believe that Gilman is not only the incorrect location for such a facility, but a cycletrack as shown in your design docs would actually decrease safety. What is the current safety record on Gilman Dr, for both the northbound and southbound directions? That data should always be required when proposing a project in the name of enhanced safety.

Cycletracks used in urban contexts have been shown to be successful and I include photos from downtown San Diego on J St and downtown Minneapolis on 28th St below. Both of these locations are an urban context on flat, rectangular grids, with specialized treatment, signage and even phased special bike signals at conflict points where a right hook, a left cross, or a driveout entering the roadway may cause a serious cyclist injury. Class IV cycletracks work nicely in these contexts when accompanied by these extras. Gilman Dr, especially southbound is a totally different story.

A similar example in San Diego County occurred recently on Leucadia Blvd. There, in 2017, travel lanes were narrowed to make room for a wide buffered bike lane, with green stop-dash paint at all right turn conflict points, as well as dashed bike lane stripes ~200 ft prior to all such conflicts. It was an excellent facility until it was decided to add flexible delineators in the bike lane buffer zone to transform it to a Class IV facility. Complaints from experienced cyclists were ignored by the City of Encinitas and just last weekend a cyclist was killed by a right turning truck at an intersection on the downhill side of Leucadia Blvd where the cyclist was in the cycletrack and both the motorist and the cyclist probably failed to recognize the impending danger before it was too late. We do not want to see the same thing happen on Gilman Dr.

For true safety, please consider a Class I facility or some other design to safely accommodate the larger group of cyclists you are trying to attract while maintaining the current safety (or improving it with wider buffered bike lanes), especially southbound downhill. Recently, in Solana Beach an option for a cycletrack on the east-west arterial Lomas Santa Fe was thrown out in favor of a Class I path on the northside of Lomas Santa Fe the entire westbound length from the eastern City boundary to Hwy 101, with improved signaling at I-5. Such a facility on Gilman might also be considered, recognizing obvious additional expense.

Another example where a Class IV cycletrack was recently built in an incorrect context is the cycletrack on Hwy 101 along South Cardiff Beach between Solana Beach and Chesterfield. Although travel lanes were nicely narrowed as proposed for Gilman, the wider bike lanes were turned into Class IVs made even more dangerous by low wheel stop barriers between the flexible posts. The impeccable safety record (refer to SWITRS) of the past 7 yrs (ZERO reported injuries northbound from Solana Beach to the restaurants) was obliterated in the first couple months with over 20 reported crashes, several requiring ambulance pickup, and 2 serious injuries northbound at the bottom of the downhill out of Solana Beach, both with cognitive injuries, ambulance pickup, and pending lawsuits. Although the City of Encinitas was warned by experienced cyclists, they went ahead with the project with the only concession to the thousands of cyclists who regularly use the stretch for transportation and recreation being the addition of sharrows and Bikes May Use Full Lane signs on the adjacent roadway. Any cycletrack, in my opinion, should clearly indicate its optional use with sharrows and BMUFL signage for the adjacent travel lane.

So please consider an alternative design where you can demonstrate that safety will be improved for ALL road users, which include the thousands of cyclists who currently use this stretch of Gilman Dr. I look forward to changes in the current design and would support changes that demonstrate increased safety and utility for all. Let's get many more people out of their cars and on bikes!

Sincerely,  
Karl Rudnick, PhD

J Street downtown San Diego, with bike signals with separate phase



Class IV cycletrack, Midtown 28th St E, Minneapolis. 7' buffer, sparse delineator spacing for super wide bike lane experience with easy exit and entrance, 6.5' bike lane, wider gaps and green paint at midblock conflict points. Commuters and all bike riders can easily travel ~15 mph when not stopped at signals through Midtown

