



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Agenda Item 3a

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Memorandum

TO: Legislation Committee

DATE: February 7, 2014

FR: Executive Director

W. I. 1131

RE: AB 1193 (Ting): Bikeways: Minimum Safety Design Criteria

Background

Under current state law, bicycle facilities are split into three categories. Class I denotes “bike paths” which provide complete separation from motorized vehicles and Class III at the other end of the spectrum, denotes “bike routes” that provide signage or permanent markings, but that are shared with pedestrians and motorists. AB 1193 (Ting) establishes a new classification — “Class IV bikeways” — also known as protected bikeways, cycle tracks, or separated bikeways — and requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to develop safety design standards for such facilities. Class IV bikeways provide right-of-way designated *exclusively* for bicycle travel within a roadway in a manner that protects bicycles from other vehicle traffic with devices, including, but not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers or parked cars.

Recommendation: Support

Discussion

Caltrans develops a Highway Design Manual which sets design standards for the state highway system and safety design criteria for bicycle facilities on all roads even if the thoroughfare is constructed and maintained entirely by a local agency. There is an exception process that some California cities, including San Francisco and Long Beach, have used, but it is difficult to navigate and challenging for cities with limited resources, especially with respect to setting safety standards. The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has developed an Urban Bikeway Design Guide that some cities are already relying upon, but since cities must comply with Caltrans standards, they cannot rely upon this guide alone. By creating a new Class IV classification and requiring Caltrans to adopt safety design standards for such facilities, the bill would give local jurisdictions much more flexibility to deploy bicycle facilities that have been shown to dramatically increase bicycling and improve safety in other cities.

It is worth noting that in the recent [assessment](#) of Caltrans conducted by the University of Wisconsin’s State Smart Transportation Initiative and commissioned by the California State Transportation Agency, one of the recommendations for modernizing Caltrans was that the department should (1) update the design and traffic control manuals to implement its new strategic plan; (2) relinquish oversight of bike facilities on locally owned streets; and (3) give designers the option of using the NACTO urban design standards in metro areas. While this bill doesn’t achieve all of those goals, it is an important first step that we believe warrants our support.

Known Positions

Support

California Bicycle Coalition (sponsor)

Cities of Long Beach, Los Angeles, and San Jose

Oppose

None on file



Steve Heminger

RL: SH

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