

Feedback on Bike Ride on State Route 9 to Investigate Centerline Rumble Strips

General comments

1. Generally it was a pleasant experience as traffic was light and potential motor vehicle/bicycle conflicts were probably considerably less than on a busy weekend or holiday.
2. Nobody mentioned any close calls on this ride, although passing too closely was experienced on previous rides on this section on Highway 9.
3. Passing cars generally left sufficient space between cyclists and vehicles.
4. Most motorists were observed to cross the centerline to pass.
5. Although the centerline treatment with the rumble strip between the existing lines does not narrow the existing usable lane width, concern remains about sections with no shoulders and poor sightlines.
6. Question: Will drivers become more willing over time to straddle the centerline when necessary to pass safely, (although that this in some ways is antithetical to the purpose of the rumblestrip)?

Critical locations

1. Cars traveling downhill crossed into the shoulder in the area where the recent road work had been done to shore up the rock wall and create a larger shoulder.
2. The lack of shoulders and tight turns seemed most problematic at the bottom of the hill closest to Saratoga where cars seemed to hug the shoulder more, leaving less room to feel safe sharing the road as a cyclist.
3. Two of the key areas were on corners while both ascending and descending near the small park (Saratoga Springs?).
4. There are several places where there is no shoulder, and sightlines are not good, particularly in the first mile or two out of Saratoga in the uphill direction. Downhill it is problematical in the flatter section near Saratoga Village, where there is more traffic, and drivers are often more impatient.

Suggestions for improvement:

1. Caltrans' analysis has identified 70-plus sites that "should" be fixed at some point. Given funding constraints, three or four high priority spots should be identified for shoulder improvements.
2. Additional signs or a mirror might help ensure that cars don't take advantage of that extra shoulder to the detriment of the cyclists on the downhill (at location #1 above).
3. "Share the Road" signs should be placed in advance of locations where road users are required to share the same space. Review the "Share the Road" signage with this in mind. Locations where the shoulder narrows in or after a curve would be especially critical in this regard.
4. In locations where there are constraints to widening on both sides, consider the possibility of widening one side and shifting the centerline to split the additional width between both directions.

5. "Share the Road" signs are good, but "Bicycles Allowed Use of Full Lane" signs are better. They would be particularly useful in the downhill direction, when a cyclist really needs to be in the center of the lane to be safe.

Further steps:

1. Agreement should be reached on four or five key spots or areas where work needs to be done and then potential funding needs to be identified. It seems that the area around Saratoga Springs/Sanborn Road is such a key area.
2. Additional signage at critical locations should be discussed.
3. Get feedback from the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition website survey (<http://bikesiliconvalley.org/clrs/survey>) (Paul Goldstein). Initial assessment: Of the 45 responses 26 feeling less safe, 9 feeling safer, and 10 feeling no different.
4. Do a similar ride on other rural state highways with rumble strips. For example, State Route 84: Alix Bockelman shared her recent experience riding Route 84, where cars traveled very fast given there is not much of a grade and mostly stayed on their side of the centerline strips (which is good for avoiding head-on collisions between cars), however, as a cyclist, there were many places along the 4-mile stretch (from Sunol to Palomares) that had no shoulder and were very uncomfortable to ride.