

# EAST BAY BICYCLE COALITION

*Working for safe, convenient and enjoyable bicycling for all people in the East Bay*

May 29, 2013

Cristina Ferraz  
Caltrans Project Manager  
Niles Canyon Safety Improvement Project

Re: EBBC request for bike safety improvements in Niles Canyon

Dear Cristina and the Caltrans Team of Engineers:

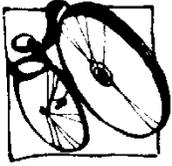
After the last stakeholder meeting on the Niles Canyon Safety Improvement Project, the East Bay Bicycle Coalition solicited more input from our members as well as the Fremont Freewheelers and the Valley Spokesman bike clubs on what short-term bike safety improvements are needed in Niles Canyon. We also conducted an advocacy ride on April 7 to survey and discuss on site many potential improvements. We received a lot of good ideas and are sharing them and requesting that Caltrans include these safety improvements as part of your work.

1. **Flashing Beacons on Bridges:** We request the addition of flashing beacons at the narrow bridge entrances, along with detectors and possibly countdown signals to alert motorists to the presence of a bicyclist on the bridge. There is an example of this in the Marin headlands as you head back into Sausalito through the Barry-Baker Tunnel. The company Eco Counter has some good off-the-shelf and customizable solutions. [www.eco-compteur.com/Eco-Signal.html?wpid=45024](http://www.eco-compteur.com/Eco-Signal.html?wpid=45024)



2. **Greenback sharrows on Bridges:** we are requesting the addition of greenback sharrows on the bridges, to highlight the presence of bicyclists and encourage motorists to slow down. Greenback sharrows are a stronger indication to drivers that bicyclists may be present on a roadway and have been successfully implemented in San Francisco.





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- Improved shoulders:** Caltrans will be adding shoulders in spots in order to provide pullouts for motorists and to improve their safety. These new shoulders will improve bike safety as well. Our advocacy ride on April 7 surveyed many of the sections of the canyon that need another 2-3 ft of shoulder width. Could we sit down and look over sections that Caltrans is proposing for new shoulders and discuss any remaining gaps in shoulders for better bicycle travel?
- New Path to Right of Railroad Column:** as shown at right, the roadway under the railroad trestle is extremely dangerous and needs attention right away. We propose a new pathway around the outside (creekside) of the railroad column, so that bikes do not have to share the road while riding underneath the railroad with cars swerving to keep to the roadway.
- Improved left turn onto Palomares Road:** the left turn from Niles Canyon Road eastbound, onto northbound Palomares Road is difficult and can be dangerous. Niles Canyon Road curves right and the nearby railroad abutment hinders visibility. There is also debris that collects at this intersection and needs to be regularly swept. We would like to invite you to join a 'first Saturday' ride into the Canyon with the Fremont Freewheelers to take a closer look at this trouble spot.
- Debris sweeping:** there are a few spots in the canyon that gather rocks and gravel and are not regularly cleaned. Caltrans needs to provide a more regular street sweeping. There is a particularly debris-filled shoulder along the western portion of the canyon where there is a retaining wall.
- Better storm grates:** the water storm grates thru the undercrossing at the Sunol turnoff need to be raised or replaced. They currently function as large potholes and are a hazard.



Thanks for your consideration of these requested improvements.

Cordially yours,

Advocacy Director  
East Bay Bicycle Coalition