



Promoting the bicycle for transportation and recreation

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Eris Weaver

**OFFICE:**

750 Mendocino Ave, Ste 6  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**MAIL:**

P.O. Box 3088  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

**PHONE:**

707-545-0153

**EMAIL:**

[info@BikeSonoma.org](mailto:info@BikeSonoma.org)

**WEB:**

[www.bikesonoma.org](http://www.bikesonoma.org)

January 19, 2023

Caltrans District 4

Attn: Arnica MacCarthy, Senior Environmental Planner

P.O. Box 23660, MS-8B

Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Dear Ms. MacCarthy:

Thanks for meeting with me yesterday regarding the Highway 1 Rumble Strip project. I still couldn't find the report on the Caltrans website so I dug out the *Press Democrat* public notices section to get the direct URL and download the report. I have a few questions.

Regarding the purpose of the project (p. 1.1):

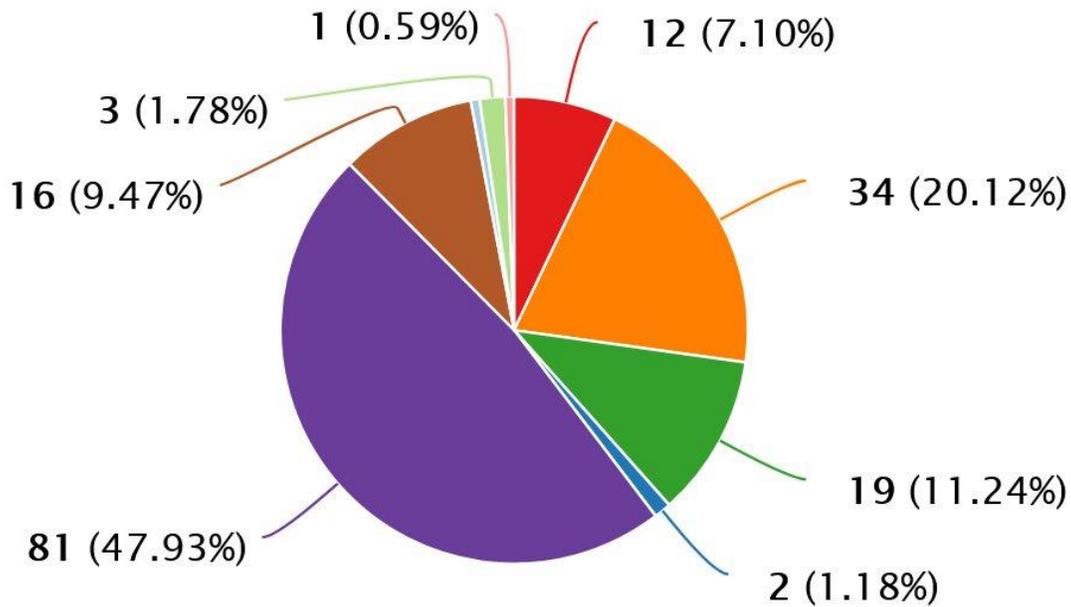
*The purpose of the Project is to reduce the number and severity of head-on, cross-centerline, and run-off-road collisions in order to provide safe traffic operations on SR 1 and also to provide refuge areas for bicyclists to use when being passed by motorists on this stretch of the highway.*

*The current Two-and-Three-Lane Safety Monitoring Program has identified several head-on collisions, sideswipe collisions, and fatal collisions on SR 1 in Sonoma County. The 2012 California Roadway Departure Safety Implementation Plan (CA-RDSIP) (FHWA 2012) also identified SR 1 in Sonoma County as having fatalities from run-off-road accidents that meet the threshold for countermeasures. CA-RDSIP promotes the implementation of centerline rumble strips on two-lane undivided rural highways with a pavement width of at least 20 feet when thresholds have been met.*

How many collisions? Where? I don't know anything about the Two-and-Three-Lane Safety Monitoring Program (and couldn't find it online) but I did search the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). There were 169 crashes on Highway 1 in Sonoma County in 2017-2021 (see chart below). Forty-eight percent were caused by improper turning and 20 percent by excessive speed. It is not clear to me how the installation of rumble strips would decrease these sorts of crashes.

# Number of Crashes by PCF Violation

169 Crashes



## ***PCF Violation***

- 01 - Driving or Bicycling Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drug
- 03 - Unsafe Speed
- 05 - Wrong Side of Road
- 06 - Improper Passing
- 08 - Improper Turning
- 09 - Automobile Right of Way
- 12 - Traffic Signals and Signs
- 18 - Other Than Driver (or Pedestrian)
- 22 - Other Improper Driving

During our conversation you mentioned a similar project in Marin County, and the report states (p. 2.3):

*To ensure the Project supports safe mobility for all users, a previous Caltrans centerline rumble strip project was analyzed. Centerline rumble strips were installed on SR 1 in Marin County, and collision data from before and after Project completion was analyzed. In conclusion, after the installation of centerline rumble strips, the percentage of bicycle-related collisions, head-on, and fatal collisions, have all decreased. Therefore, centerline rumble strip has been proven to increase the overall, multi-modal safety for all users.*

Again, what is the source of the data? I'd like to see the actual numbers. Did that project also widen the shoulder?

I already mentioned the inadequacy of the project's public outreach (one public notice in the section of the newspaper that nobody reads). In that notice, as well as on p. 4.1 of the report, are listed three libraries where a hard copy of the report resides: Guerneville, Rohnert Park/Cotati, and Sonoma. Guerneville makes sense as it is the closest to at least some sections of the coast; Rohnert Park is a little odd but Sonoma? Did anyone look at a map of the county? The town of Sonoma is the farthest away from the coast. Did you mean the Central Branch of the Sonoma County Library, which is in Santa Rosa?

I am going to engage in further research and will likely have additional comments, but at this point I have not been convinced that adding rumble strips to this stretch of highway is going to result in the greatest increase in safety for cyclists. (If you have better data on this please point me to it.) For an expenditure of \$23 million I'd rather see the shoulders widened and a dedicated bikeway installed along the entire corridor, reduced speed limits, and the installation of the "Bikes May Take Entire Lane" signs we discussed.

Finally, please do not repeat the line about "Caltrans is dedicated to complete streets/accessibility & safety for all users" immediately followed by a list of the reasons that whatever infrastructure change bike & pedestrian advocates are asking for "isn't feasible." I hear a version of this from every level of government and while it is likely intended to be reassuring, it is actually somewhat insulting. I will believe it when I see projects that put pedestrians and cyclists FIRST rather than treating us as an "add on" to roads that are designed primarily for autos.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eris Weaver, Executive Director