

Lincoln Avenue Road Diet Committee, Dept. of Transportation Interim Director Jim Ortbal, and Councilmember Pierluigi Olivero  
Via email, June 11, 2015

Dear Committee Members, Director, and Councilmember,

I am writing to reaffirm my qualified support for the Lincoln Road Diet experiment. Due to a schedule conflict with the community meeting's new date, I will be unable to attend and so would like to express my thoughts in advance in writing.

As I wrote before, I think the Road Diet is beneficial but also that it could be improved. In my letter of 4/29/15 (see <http://www.wgbackfence.net/LincolnAvenueRoadDiet.pdf>) I offered a number of suggestions, and I would like to offer a few more now.

Judging from some posts on the WGBackfence eList, one of the concerns is southbound traffic using Glen Eyrie and other neighborhood streets as a bypass of the signal at Willow/Lincoln. Improving the timing of the signal (as described in the previous letter) would help the matter some, but there are additional traffic calming measures that could be considered – see the red arrows in the diagram below. Note: the traffic count data indicates that there's been only a minimal change in the traffic patterns due to the Road Diet: maybe this is a pre-existing condition. Also it is unclear whether the residents in the area would appreciate these measures or would instead find them more objectionable than the current conditions – check with the community before implementing any of these!



Glen Eyrie is a long continuous route that cuts from Lincoln to Willow, making it a great shortcut for those heading in a southwesterly direction. At least one local resident has taken to calling it the Glen Eyrie Speedway. A possible solution:

- Consider placing a traffic diverter (e.g., a bollard or an island) in the westbound traffic lane of Glen Eyrie roughly 200 ft. west of Lincoln, configured to force westbound vehicular traffic to turn right into the Arteagas parking lot, and forcing those exiting the parking lot from the south to turn left towards Lincoln. (Allow space between diverter and curb to allow through westbound bicycles.) Have the diverter only block the westbound lane: eastbound Glen Eyrie traffic would still be able to access both the Arteagas lot and Lincoln Avenue.
- Residents on Glen Eyrie coming from Lincoln would have to go to Lester, turn right on Carolyn, and then on to Glen Eyrie. This would be a minor inconvenience for most residents, but would increase the travel distance by several blocks for those closest to Lincoln.
- To prevent cut-through traffic on Lester, make it a must-turn-right at Carolyn. Lester will have the additional traffic of those going to Glen Eyrie, which will be partially offset by the elimination of the cut-through traffic trying to bypass the Willow intersection. (A traffic analysis might show if this is a net increase or net improvement on the traffic there.)
- Garfield should also have a must-turn-right at Carolyn to prevent cut-throughs.
- There could also be a must-turn-right on El Abra at Crescent, as shown in the diagram, in case drivers are ignoring the no-right-turn restriction from Lincoln. The diversion would be a slight inconvenience for those on the western block of El Abra, as they'd have to either go around on Crescent or else enter from Willow.

Also: Glen Eyrie is a very long diagonal street without any stop signs or other obstructions, and it presently is both shorter and faster than Willow since Willow has both the traffic signal and the stop-sign at Cherry. Adding a 4-way stop sign at Glen Eyrie/Cherry (or a traffic circle?) would help make it less preferable relative to Willow. (A further “traffic calming” measure to consider: a bike/ped bridge over the Los Gatos Creek, which would help slow Glen Eyrie by adding some bicycle and pedestrian cross-traffic. However, while some in the community support such a bike/ped bike bridge, I do recognize that others adamantly don't, and that this topic may be even more controversial than the Lincoln Road Diet!)

Traffic calming measures such as the diverters have been implemented in other areas in San José, such as in Naglee Park and behind the Willow Glen High School. However, before implementing any of the above traffic-calming measures here, they should be discussed with the community in an open and transparent process in case folks think the proposed cure might be worse than the symptoms. Also, the problem may not be as big as some have suggested, and so it might not be worth the effort or expense. (Also, of course, eliminating the cut-through traffic from Glen Eyrie will only serve to keep it on Willow, which would increase the traffic in front of our house. Oh well, Willow is supposed to be a minor arterial and so some traffic is to be expected. At least you can't accuse me of being a NIMFY – “not in my front yard”.)

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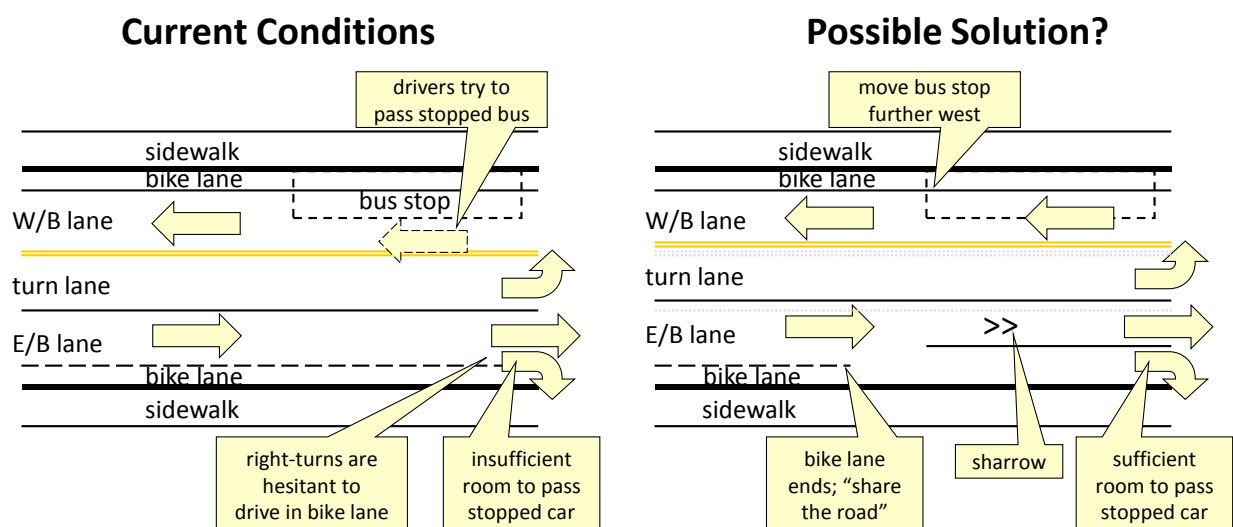
Another issue is the delay on eastbound Willow approaching Lincoln. Traffic has been backing up as far as Glenn Avenue or even Cherry on some evenings. This has been happening, often on Fridays,

both before the Road Diet and afterwards. It is caused by the increased pedestrian traffic: folks cross Lincoln at the Willow Street intersection when the light turns green, which impedes eastbound traffic from turning right on Lincoln. These delayed turning cars block the through lane, and traffic backs up. Two suggestions, to be considered as either stand-alone or both used together:

- Reconfigure the BevMo/Aqui/Theater parking lot – the purple arrows in the diagram above. I discussed this in the previous letter to address the desire of patrons to head west on Willow. But the parking lot also affects traffic on Willow: on busy evenings, I’ve noted that half the traffic is coming out of the parking lot, making a zipper-merge with the Willow Street traffic. If an egress is provided directly to Lincoln, then at least that portion of the traffic wanting to go south could avoid Willow St. and the intersection. Drawback: an increase in the exiting vehicular traffic needing to cross a busy sidewalk in an area with limited visibility: might need pavement enhancements on the sidewalk to alert the pedestrians. If the egress to Lincoln can also accommodate left-turns, then it could also help the drivers wanting to go west on Willow (a left at the light) as well as those going north on Lincoln or east on Willow.

If the Lincoln egress could handle all the traffic exiting the parking lot, then the driveway from Willow could be made entrance-only, which in turn would free space to create a pedestrian access from Willow, which would enhance the walkability of the area.

- Reconfigure Willow Street – the blue arrows in the diagram above. If the painted yellow divider line on Willow were to be shifted northward by a foot or so (see below), there’d be room for right-turners to be separate from the through traffic. Perhaps eliminating the eastbound bike-lane, placing a “sharrow” in the through lane, and posting a sign about sharing the roadway might help by making it obvious to drivers that right-turners are supposed to be close to the curb. (Cyclists already need to be cautious at the intersection because of right-turners coming up behind them, or (worse still) hooking across from the center lane. Signage and a sharrow might actually be preferable...)



Also, there's a westbound bus-stop on the north side, and drivers sometimes try to pass a stopped bus by crossing the yellow line: maybe the stop should be shifted westward to where there are fewer traffic lanes and there'd be more room to pass. (This would involve making a new concrete pad in the pavement.)

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As I've said before, I hope that the Road Diet experiment is shown to be successful, and that the bike-lanes will be preserved and extended both north- and southward.

I feel that downtown Willow Glen has become even more enjoyable now that the Road Diet has been implemented: I sense that there is more street-life, with more families strolling along the sidewalks and visiting the shops. As a bicyclist, I find it far easier to travel down Lincoln on my various errands; and, as a motorist, I find it far calmer to drive, without having to jump lanes left and right to avoid parking cars or turning vehicles. It's even easier to park on the Avenue, as one can enter or exit their car without fear of being sideswiped by a passing car.

The Road Diet experiment has been a learning experience, and it has taken time for some motorists to learn that they're supposed to pull into the center lane to turn. (Some arrows on the pavement might help...). Fixing the timing of the signals (as I described in my previous email) would help temper impatient drivers, and extending the bike-lane transition south of Minnesota would improve bicyclist safety: do these and I think you'll have a winner.

Thanks for trying the experiment! Please make the Road Diet permanent!

~Larry Ames (on Willow Street)

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