

CITY OF MERCED
Development Services

TO: Bicycle Advisory Commission
FROM: Michael Hren, Principal Planner
DATE: December 10, 2019
SUBJECT: Bicycle Safety Awareness and Education

BACKGROUND

Commissioner Hothem has requested that the issue of high-profile bicycle accidents and their rise in incidence be brought before the Commission to discuss. He has provided a letter to the editor drafted by the Merced Bicycle Coalition for context; it is provided at Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

The existing charter includes “Assist in the development and dissemination of bicycle safety awareness and education materials to the community,” in the jurisdiction of the Commission. Chairperson Hothem has suggested that the Commission consider creation and dissemination of outreach materials regarding bicycle safety and education in light of the increase in notable collisions.

ACTION

None required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter to the Merced Sun Star Editor from the Merced Bicycle Coalition

(11/2019 Merced Bicycle Coalition letter to the *Merced Sun-Star* editor.)

The Merced Bicycle Coalition offers deepest sympathies for riders involved in three recent tragedies: a child who was seriously injured while bicycling in a crosswalk; a group of bicyclists who narrowly avoided a fatal head-on collision but sustained multiple injuries when they were forced off the road by a driver who unsafely passed another car; and a man who was killed while riding his bike legally and appropriately through an intersection. As an organization that works to make bicycling a safe and normal means of transportation, the Coalition offers these thoughts.

We applaud parents and schools that require (as the law stipulates) children to wear helmets when bicycling, and hope that this protection is not put to the test. We are pleased to see children bicycling in a safe manner, and to recognize that riders of all ages usually do so as well.

We must remember that the worst a bicycle can cause motorists is momentary inconvenience. But for bicyclists, the worst a car can cause is death. Bicycles belong on our streets and follow the same rules of the road that cars, trucks, motorcycles, and buses do.

In sharing the road, motorists must watch out for bicyclists and observe their common rights. Bicyclists must do their part by riding with traffic on the right side of the road, and by obeying all traffic signs and conventions. This common responsibility for transportation and the laws that facilitate it makes us all safer.

The City of Merced's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan will, if fully implemented, make our streets safer and more accessible for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. We encourage the public to support the City in prioritizing this plan.