

Request for Crosswalk at Bodega Ave & Upham St

Todd Gracyk's initial request to City Manager Peggy Flynn via e-mail on January 13, 2021:

Dear Ms. Flynn,

As a pedestrian I often cross Bodega Ave at Upham St. I typically have to wait for a break in the traffic because motorists don't seem to understand that I have the legal right of way as a pedestrian while crossing at this intersection. Catching a break in the traffic can be a challenge at times.

There are no crosswalks crossing Bodega Avenue for a half mile stretch between Howard St and N Webster St. Would you not agree that this is a very lengthy section for such an urban area to not have a crosswalk?

When you look at a map you can see that Upham St is exactly halfway between Howard St and N Webster St. A crosswalk at Baker St could be an alternative to one at Upham St but it doesn't split the difference quite as well. I also suspect that more pedestrians cross Bodega at Upham St than at Baker St.

I understand that the city has a Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee. Is this an issue which could be placed on an agenda for them to advise on?

Thank you.

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City Manager Peggy Flynn's response by via e-mail on January 13, 2021 (with carbon copy to Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt):

Hi Todd—many thanks for reaching out and sharing your concerns. I am connecting you to Ken Eichstaedt, our Traffic Engineer and staff liaison to our Ped & Bike Advisory Committee. Please know that we are undertaking many projects to reconstruct roadways and build ped and bike connections to provide safe and multi-modal options for our community. Appreciate you taking the time to connect with your City.

In your service,

Peggy

Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt's response on January 13, 2021:

Todd,

I looked at the street view of the area and agree we should review the conditions and improvements. I plan to put it on the PBAC agenda for 2/3.

Regards,

Ken

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Todd Gracyk's follow up e-mail to Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt on March 14, 2021:

Hi Ken,

Did this suggestion ever make it to an agenda item?

Thanks.

Todd

Todd Gracyk's follow up e-mail to Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt on August 6, 2021 (no response received from March 14, 2021 e-mail):

Hi Ken,

I haven't heard back from you on this. I see all the new crosswalk flashing indicators between Keller and Howard but we have NOTHING between Howard and N Webster. Not even a crosswalk, not alone a flashing indicator. Makes no sense.

Todd

Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt's response on August 6, 2021:

Todd,

Thank you again for this email and bringing this important issue up (again). I do want to address this promptly but have had other traffic issues to address. We have four Active Transportation and road projects (including paving) proceeding along with the next phase of Slow Streets; there is no shortage of good work happening in the City for walking and biking.

We are just completing the crosswalk improvements on E. Washington Blvd. (that you identified between Keller and Howard) that was a \$300k project. This project took roughly 2 years for the planning, design and construction. Funding was applied for and received from Caltrans for this work. It took significant front end effort to deliver this project successfully and we have been getting very positive feedback on it. Any crosswalk needs to look ADA compliance, safety for user, utility connections if needed (although solar is a viable option), line of sight review, etc. That is what I want to do for Bodega Ave. at Upham St.

We are wrapping up that work on E. Washington Blvd. so this is a good time to review other locations for cross walk implementation. Feel free to check back to confirm its status and thank you for your patience.

Ken

Todd Gracyk's response on August 7, 2021:

Thanks, Ken.

If poles, driveways and ADA create issues at Upham you could instead consider a crosswalk at Prospect (crossing Bodega). You've got nothing but curb on the west side of the Prospect intersection (on each side of Bodega).

Todd

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Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt's response on August 7, 2021:

Thanks Todd,

I also want to look at other means to provide driving context of entering the City (i.e. slow down) and to provide better conspicuity for the pedestrian. This might be a bulb-out or other means to reconfigure the travel way.

Ken

Todd Gracyk's follow up e-mail to Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt on December 30, 2021 (after over 4 months of NO ACTION):

Hi Ken,

I saw you quoted in today's Petaluma Argus-Courier regarding the city making life better for those pushing strollers down the streets in downtown Petaluma.

How wonderful for those stroller pushers in the downtown area!

Good luck to those pushing strollers in the vicinity of Bodega Ave and Upham St and wanting to cross Bodega Ave.

I last heard from you in August regarding my request to make pedestrian crossing safer in the area of Bodega Ave and Upham St. I guess you've just been too focused on the downtown area since.

I first raised this issue with the city in 1999. I lost the battle then because the city said crosswalks provide a false sense of security. Stupidest thing I ever heard. I didn't see the city removing all pre-existing sidewalks immediately after that response, so I recognized that the bureaucrats were just blowing me off.

I'm not sure if being blown off by a bogus response by city bureaucracy or if being ignored by city bureaucracy is worse.

Todd

Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt's response on December 31, 2021:

Todd,

I have not forgotten you at all! I have assembled the issues we have discussed on Bodega Ave. (speeding, pedestrian crossings, schools, ADA, connectivity, etc.) as part of a larger challenge the City has on other roadways. I have been meeting with residents on D St., I St., North McDowell Blvd., and Mtn. View Ave. I have had phone calls, site meetings and even bike rides to see the challenges each location has.

Speeding and safety are the primary issues I am seeing. Specific to Bodega Ave., D St., I St. and Mtn. View Ave. I am bringing on an expert to help plan and design measures on each location, primarily related to pedestrian safety. I am excited about this work because we have the ability to help transform each of these "Gateways" into the City. These roadways share common themes: speeding, safety, and the road goes from a rural highway setting (less so Mtn. View Ave.) into a neighborhood street in our City. Thus, we are trying to slow traffic down and provide context to the vehicle operator of this changed condition.

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Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt's response on December 31, 2021 (continued):

I have the needed expert to assist with this work on Bodega Ave. and he will be onboard (once the contract is signed). The Holidays slowed down this process but we be seeing this moving forward this next year.

Again, this work is moving forward, and we will have the status of this project and others on our website and our new monthly report coming out in the new year. Thank you for your patience. Have a very good New Year and feel free to check back!

Ken

(I can appreciate your response on "city bureaucracy"; I hear you. The City has excellent staff that work hard to improve our neighborhoods. I do not see any part of the City as being a "bureaucracy" with negative connotations; I see the City staff as being dedicated and doing the best work possible. Changes in our travel corridors need to follow thoughtful planning and design. Your neighborhood is one of many we will improve. Your patience is appreciated!)

Todd Gracyk's follow up e-mail to Senior Traffic Engineer Ken Eichstaedt on August 12, 2022 (after over another 7 months of NO ACTION):

Hi Ken,

Still waiting for pedestrian and bicycle safety measures to be implemented on Bodega Ave between Howard St and North Webster St. Is there a plan?

Thanks,

Todd

Summary: No response was received from Todd Gracyk's August 12, 2022 e-mail. That was over 5 months ago. The last response from a city bureaucrat was December 31, 2021. That was over 13 months ago. The time elapsed since Todd Gracyk's initial e-mail to City Manager Peggy Flynn on January 13, 2021 and today, February 6, 2023, is greater than 24 months.

Prepared by: Todd Gracyk
February 6, 2023