



December 15, 2015
To: City Council
Re: Priorities

Street safety needs to be a City Council priority!

Reported crash injuries across all modes of travel in Beverly Hills reached 416 in calendar year 2014 – representing a near-peak of overall crash injuries compared to the past seven years. The number of those injured is fully 6% higher than a 7-year average (since 2008 when BHPD began making the data accessible).

Bicycle rider safety is a particular problem.

Though the *proportion* of auto-occupant injuries in CY 2014 was incrementally lower than the 7-year average for all of those injured in a crash (up 5% for auto-occupants versus 6% for all), the corresponding increase in the proportion of injuries sustained in 2014 while riding a bicycle was much higher – up 30% over the 7-year average.

And the *rate* of rider injury is much, much higher still. Those injured while riding a bicycle comprised 12% of all injuries reported to police in 2014 yet bike riders are a far smaller proportion (less than 1%) of all road traffic (in any year). Riders are not only disproportionately more likely to be injured on Beverly Hills streets, we are at least 12x more likely to be injured than are auto-occupants, according to BHPD figures.

The trend is negative.

The *increase in rider injuries as a share of all injuries* has only increased over since 2008. Back then, 10% of reported injuries were sustained by someone riding a bicycle. Seven years later in 2014, the proportion of rider injuries to all of those injured had increased by one-fifth to 12%.

Likewise, the absolute number of injured bicycle riders in 2014 was 48 - up 55% from the 2008 baseline.¹

Enforcement is on the decline.

All signed traffic citations were 54% lower in 2014 than in 2008, reflecting a precipitous drop in enforcement of our city's traffic laws. Indeed enforcement of speed violations – the factor most often cited in traffic fatalities by national traffic safety officials – declined by 57% from 2008. And enforcement of the violation most hazardous to any road user – running a red signal – dropped by a staggering 85% from 2008 to 2014.

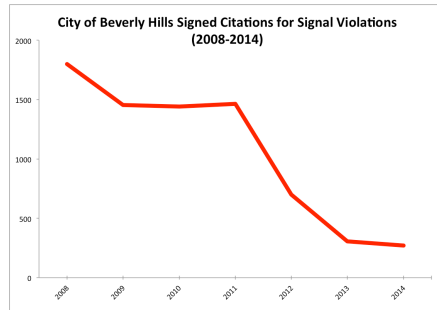
¹ If more people are riding that could suggest an increase the proportion of all travelers using a bicycle – and hence the proportion of injuries – but we know the number of motorists is on the increase too.

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It's not that people were obeying the law; in 2014 our automated red light cameras caught 28% more light-runners than in 2008. In fact, the decline in signal violation enforcement outpaced every other citation category. The curve looks like this:



We credit that decline to City Manager Jeff Kolin, who was hired in early 2009 and clearly let the city's enforcement capacity decline (along with the shrinking number of BHPD traffic officers). For 2009, after his first full year in the job, citations for excessive speed were down 18% over the year before he took the job, and signal violations decreased by 19%.

Why the de-emphasis on traffic safety? Dangerous streets is the number one reason cited by potential cyclists for not riding. Don't we want to get these folks out of their cars and into the saddle? That's what our plans say.

For example, our Sustainable City Plan's policy goals include encouraging multimodal mobility and specify this objective:

“Reduce traffic congestion while improving the pedestrian experience on roadways and encourage alternative forms of travel, especially to parks.”

Our General Plan's Circulation Element describes safe multimodal mobility as key to sound development policies:

“Achieving a balanced transportation and land use pattern requires cohesive transportation and land use planning. Functional traffic patterns can only be achieved in connection with well planned development where alternatives to the driving are realistic options (taking public transportation, bicycling, and walking).”

The Circulation Element identifies this policy objective:

“Require new development projects on existing and potential bicycle routes to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access to and through the project, through designated pathways. (Cir 8.8)”

These policy statements point the way toward a 21st century multimodal mobility future, but none of our city's policies do. And that's reflected in the increase in harm as illustrated by crash injury increases year-over-year.

Better Bike

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