



NEWS EVENT
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DANGEROUS INTERSECTION GETS SAFETY FIX

Bicyclists and Pedestrians Join City Officials to Celebrate SF's First Bicycle Traffic Light

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA) — A notoriously dangerous San Francisco intersection underwent a big safety fix this week, the city's first on-the-ground bicycle-safety enhancement in two years. The SF Municipal Transportation Agency installed a traffic light specifically for bicyclists and pedestrians at the Fell and Masonic intersection, along the Golden Gate Park Panhandle, an intersection that had posed mounting safety hazards to bicyclists and pedestrians.

"We have spent years advocating for a safer Fell and Masonic intersection, and we are relieved that this safety improvement is finally in place," says Leah Shahum, Executive Director of the 9,500-member San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. "It is critical that the City provides for safe transportation options, and this fix is really a matter of public safety."

This special traffic light separates the crossing into two phases — one for pedestrians and bicyclists and a separate phase for motor vehicles, in order to ensure that bicyclists/pedestrians and left-turning cars do not cross paths. Previously bicyclists, pedestrians, and motor vehicles would proceed through the busy intersection at the same time.

Elizabeth Gjelten, a 56-year-old writer who bikes as her main mode of transportation, was injured while bicycling through the intersection just three weeks ago. She swerved to avoid being hit by a car driver who turned in front of her. "It is so important that the City protects all users of our streets," says Gjelten, who broke one rib in this crash. "Bicycling is a wonderful way to get around town, but safety is the biggest hindrance for most people. I hope that San Francisco will continue to address other problem areas like the Fell and Masonic intersection, so that more people will feel comfortable enough to get out of their cars and move on their own power."

On Tuesday, September 23rd at 11:30a.m., members of the SFBC, Walk San Francisco and the Fix Masonic Coalition will join City officials to unveil and celebrate the new traffic signal at the Fell and Masonic intersection. For several years, members of each of these groups have led volunteer crossing guard programs to help bicyclists and pedestrians cross the intersection safely and to draw attention to the public safety threat at the intersection.

The intersection improvement is particularly noteworthy since the City has been barred from making any physical bicycle changes since June 2006, when a court injunction required that an Environmental Impact Report of the City's Bike Plan be completed. In May, the Superior Court

lifted this injunction, at the request of the City, citing the public safety threat the intersection posed.

Other cities in the state have been successfully using bike-traffic lights for years. Davis, CA installed a bicycle traffic signal at the intersection of Sycamore and Russell. According to the City of Davis, for the two-year period before the installation there were about 16 reported bicycle and motor vehicle collisions and for the two-year period following the installation, there were only two collisions, neither of which involved bicycles.

For more information on the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's years of advocacy on this issue, including photos of our Volunteer Crossing Guard program, visit <http://www.sfbike.org/fellmasonic>

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