

From: Rick Hyman

Subject: Public Comment on Item 10 (METRO Rapid Corridors), RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda 10/5/2026

August 15, 2026

To whom it may concern:

The proposed continuation and expansion of the combined bike and bus lanes on Front Street need to be monitored and adjusted or removed if there are adverse impacts.

The advantage to cyclists is that they have a wide dedicated lane to share with only buses. If there are no buses traveling in the lane or if they are going at least the speed of cyclists, then there are no conflicts with cyclists.

If a bus needs to stop at a bus stop or to avoid traffic or obstacles in its path, the driver will need to signal in a manner that a bicyclist behind it will know. The rider can then either stop or veer to the left around the bus. Although a dash stripe is planned within the bus stop area to accommodate both the stopped bus and a passing cyclist, that space is tight for the cyclist who instead might need to veer into the traffic lane to safely pass the bus.

The advantage of the combined lane to buses is that they should be able to move at a constant speed uninterrupted by other traffic. But, if they come upon a slower cyclist, they will either have to also slow down or pass the cyclist. Given the 3-foot clearance law, that means the bus will at least partially enter the travel lane.

The proposed pavement markings may cause confusion. Everyone will have to be educated as to what red means. The discontinuity of the red areas may add to the confusion.

The bike lane marking both within the red zone and between the red zones is to the extreme left of the lane, except by the River Street/ South River Street intersection. I assume that is because on-street parking remains, which is unclear from the plans provided. Otherwise, normally in such a wide lane a cyclist will ride in the middle of it. Incorporating some bike lane markings is admirable to make everyone aware that cyclists are present and are due respect. But in reality, cyclists need to judge their situation and ride where they determine to be safest and most convenient. Again, everyone needs to understand that this means not always adhering to the pathway marked by the bike lane stencils.

A little history: Discussions about traffic improvements along Front Street have been ongoing for years. Front Street had functional standard bike lanes. These were generally along the curb but had to weave around discontinuous on-street parking bays, creating both an inconvenience and safety concern. At least between Soquel Avenue and Laurel Street cyclists were promised that on-street parking would be removed in conjunction with the new development occurring on the street and the bike lanes would be straightened. There was also a desire to add some buffering if possible. Those promises have now been scrapped in favor of the dedicated bus lanes.

Therefore, once these bus lanes are fully in effect from Laurel to Ocean Streets, they should be monitored to determine both if their objectives are met and if they are safe. If they do not result in improved bus travel times or do result in more crashes and near misses, then they would need modification or removal. Dedicated bicycle-only bike lanes would be preferred by cyclists and likely safer for other roadway users as well. Mixing bikes and buses in the same dedicated lane should be considered experimental and, thus, subject to change.

Rick Hyman