

September 22, 2023

Honorable Nancy L. Fineman  
Judge of the Superior Court  
c/o Bianca Fasuescu  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Response of the Town of Atherton to the Civil Grand Jury Report “Bike Safety in San Mateo County: Making Bicycling Safer in the County”

Dear Judge Fineman,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Civil Grand Jury report entitled “Bike Safety in San Mateo County: Making Bicycling Safer in the County.” The Town of Atherton’s response to both the findings and recommendations are listed below.

**Responses to Civil Grand Jury Findings:**

**F1. Bicycle policy and the approach to ensuring/improving bicycle safety is not consistent across San Mateo County due, at least in part, to:**

- a. Topography**
- b. Urban vs. suburban environments**
- c. Types of bicyclists (commuter, recreational)**
- d. Varying levels of enforcement of bicycle laws**
- e. Differing knowledge of bicycle laws and safe practices.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F2. Bicycle ridership as an alternative means of transportation (e.g., commuting to work, school, or transit hubs, running errands) is not increasing due, at least in part, to perceived safety issues.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F3. Bicycle accidents and incidents (such as near misses) are underreported, if reported at all.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F4. Only bicycle accidents or incidents that trigger a 911 call are consistently logged in the State (SWITRS) database and law enforcement agencies do not log bicycle accident data consistently.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F5. The amount of enforcement of laws, as they pertain to bicyclists and how motorists and bicyclists interact, is inconsistent due to other priorities (e.g., criminal enforcement and general automobile traffic) and the requirement that a citation can generally only be written if the violation is witnessed by an officer.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F6. There is no official metric in San Mateo County and its cities to evaluate how safe it is to ride a bicycle.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F7. Bicycle safety education, for the bicyclist, pedestrians, and motorists, is not consistently offered across San Mateo County.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F8. Communication between various entities with responsibility for bicycle safety, including Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees (BPACs), Law Enforcement, City Transportation Planning, and Public Works departments, is not formalized, resulting in inefficiencies, and missed opportunities (e.g., funding for improvements, shared bike safety education, or improving signage).**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

**F9. City Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans or Active Transportation Plans, have not been adopted/created by all SMC cities.**

Response:

The Town of Atherton agrees with this finding.

## **Responses to the Civil Grand Jury Recommendations:**

**R1. By December 2023, all law enforcement agencies and the County Sheriff should submit bicycle related data to SWITRS monthly, and regularly post and update their websites with all reported bicycle accident data.**

The Atherton Police Department currently does submit bicycle-related data to SWITRS monthly and does regularly post and update our website with all bicycle collision data.

**R2. By December 2023, all law enforcement agencies should begin sending warning letters to motorists for violations of the 3 ft. law.**

When a complaint is received, the Atherton Police Department will begin sending out warning letters to motorists for violations of the 3 ft. law.

**R3. By June 3, 2024, all law enforcement agencies should provide a means for citizens to report bicycle-related incidents that are not currently reported to law enforcement, similar to the SMC Sheriff's Department Online Crime Reporting portal.**

The Atherton Police Department does not have an online crime reporting portal. To ensure quality customer service and quick response, residents and citizens are encouraged to call 911 or our Dispatch Center business line to report a crime or incident.

**R4. By June 3, 2024, each city, town, and unincorporated SMC should offer a bike safety education program for riders and motorists about the laws and safety facts related to bicycles on the road.**

On September 30, 2023, the Atherton Police Department will host a Bicycle Safety Rodeo for children and adults to provide bicycle safety education information to riders and motorists. This will become an annual Town event.

**R5. By June 3, 2024, each city, town, and unincorporated SMC should update or generate a new Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (or Active Transportation Plan) if their current plan is older than five years; consistent with the 2021 C/CAG San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.**

The Town of Atherton will begin the process to update the current Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and have it completed by June 3, 2024.

**R6. By June 3, 2024, each city, town, and the county should apply (or reapply) online to generate the Bicycle Friendly Community Report Card.**

The Town of Atherton will apply online to generate a Bicycle Friendly Community Report Card prior to June 3, 2024.

**R7. By February 1, 2024, the County should meet with cities within the County that are willing to participate, to consider establishing a regional effort that integrates the cities' bicycle plans and to discuss how the cities and County could work together to apply for grant opportunities as a region.**

The Town of Atherton is very willing to meet with County officials in consideration of establishing a regional effort that integrates the cities' bicycle plans and to discuss how the cities and County could work together to apply for grant opportunities as a region.

This response to the Grand Jury was considered by the City Council at a public meeting on September 20, 2023. Should you have any questions concerning this response, please contact City Manager George Rodericks at (650) 752-0504.

Respectfully,

William Widmer  
Mayor

Attachments