

Answers to WBC 2026 Walking and Biking Survey by Commissioner Seema Sharma Lindskog

Cupertino has made progress on safe walking and biking in the past ten years, though we fall short on our Vision Zero goals. What do you consider the most important bike or ped project the city should work on to improve safety for our residents? Why? Please be specific as to the location and improvements you would encourage.	We've made tremendous progress as a city over the past years in promoting safe walking and biking. Cupertino is now one of the most walking and biking friendly cities in Silicon Valley, but there is still a lot of work to be done. The lack of a fully connected network of safe walking and biking routes throughout Cupertino continues to be the single biggest factor holding us back from more rapid adoption of walking and biking as efficient modes of transportation. The vast majority of walkers, roller, and cyclists in Cupertino are our children walking and biking to and from school. The Safe Routes to School does a great job encouraging kids to walk and bike. The numbers are creeping up, but at around 15% of kids walking and biking to school, we're still far below Palo Alto where over 58% of kids walk or bike to school. This has major implication for car traffic as well. Increasing the number of children who walk or bike to school would remove hundreds of cars from our local streets, giving real relief and quality of life improvements to residents in neighborhoods near schools. So the most important project for me is to continue to fill these gaps and build a fully connected walking and biking network north to south and east to west - more connected sidewalks, especially on the west side of town, more safe intersections, especially the top 20 most unsafe intersections identified in the Vision Zero Plan where most of the serious accidents have happened, more off-street trails like the Tamien Innu and Saratoga Creek, and more protected bike lanes on major thoroughfares that our kids use every single day like Foothill Blvd, Wolf/Miller, Bollinger Rd, Stelling Ave, and Blaney Ave. Public statements and actions: <i>Seema has been the foremost advocate for safer biking and walking, especially for our children, in Cupertino for many years. She spearheaded the advocacy efforts for the Regnart Creek Trail, which would not have been built without her efforts. She's been a longtime Safe Routes to School Working Group parent, not just in name but actively running projects such as the Cupertino Bike Fest, Bike Bus events, and Don't drive for Donuts at the local high schools. Since becoming a Planning Commissioner, she has led votes to improve walking and biking access in major planning projects as well as encouraging improvements in the scoring criteria for the Active Transportation Plan.</i>
With the study on Bollinger Road to address the multiple resident deaths and myriad of safety issues on that street cancelled (despite posing no cost to the city), how would you respond to residents that are concerned about safety while using that street?	Bollinger Rd is one of the most dangerous streets in our city, with multiple serious injuries and fatalities in the past few years. It's also a street used every day by students, especially those who attend Hyde Middle School and Lynbrook High School. Walking residents have to go long distances before they can cross the street because of infrequent crossings and risk unsafe intersections. Biking residents ride unprotected next to high speed traffic, risking serious injury. More than that, the constant high speed traffic has seriously degraded the quality of life of adjacent residents. Residents struggle to exit their driveways, have to vigilantly keep their children and pets locked away, and endure significant air and noise pollution. Cancelling the Bollinger Safety Study and refusing the \$336,000 grant was a very bad decision. Not only did the city refuse the opportunity to study the problems and identify potential solutions, refusing the grant makes it less likely that the city will receive future grants. It also indefinitely prolongs the dangerous conditions on this important street. Completing the Bollinger Rd Safety Study is an importan priority. Residents deserve that it be completed as soon as possible. Public statements and actions: <i>Seema Sharma Lindskog has made public statements supporting the Bollinger Road Safety Study.</i>
The city's 2024 Vision Zero Plan commits the city to have zero residents killed or seriously injured (KSI) on our roads by 2040. However, the criteria used to rank projects in the new 2026 Active Transportation Plan (ATP) makes projects on streets with the highest KSIs to be ranked low enough to likely to never be built. Without these projects, Vision Zero goals cannot be met. How would you resolve this dilemma?	Eliminating serious injuries and fatalities requires a commitment to making the infrastructure and policy decisions that allow the city to meet this metric. This can sometimes mean narrowing a street, adding buffers and protective concrete separators to a bike lane, programming lights at intersections to provide leading indicators to pedestrians and cyclists, adding more rapid flashing beacon crosswalks, and other measures which change the way car drivers interact with our streets. While change can often feel "different", it's important to consider the benefits - a child died on McClellan Rd died, a child died on Foothill Blvd and another was seriously injured for life, every day children all over the city have near-misses with cars as they walk and bike to school, pedestrians have suffered serious injuries or died at some major Cupertino intersections. What is the life of one of our children worth to us as a community? The ATP scoring criteria needs to be rethought with a much greater emphasis on safety, especially in locations where there have already been serious injuries or fatalities, so that these projects score higher and get priority. Public statements and actions: <i>Seema Sharma Lindskog has made public statements supporting revising the criteria to rank projects in the ATP.</i>
The new Active Transportation Plan (ATP) has many highly ranked projects which include "Bike Boulevards", which means adding only signage and sharrows to streets. Sharrows and signage have been shown to have no effect on safety, and in large studies to actually decrease safety and increase accidents. In 2024, CalTrans stated sharrows should be "a last resort", and "are not a dedicated bike facility". How would you remedy this issue in the ATP, or do you think Cupertino should continue to plan for more sharrows on our streets?	Sharrows are simply paint on the ground and offer no protection. While they may be used in small residential streets as a reminder to drivers to share the road with cyclists, they should not be used on any other streets as they actually increase accidents and make cyclists less safe. There are a lot of other options for making a street safer for cyclists in a range of costs such as buffered bike lanes which are also simply paint on the ground but create some separation between cyclists and cars. In the ATP, I would restrict the use of sharrows as visual guide to drivers to share the road on small residential streets only and use other safety measures on all other streets. Public statements and actions: <i>Seema Sharma Lindskog has made public statements supporting eliminating the use of sharrows on our Cupertino streets.</i>
Do you think the Bike Ped Commission's duties should be folded into the Planning Commission's mission, or become a subentity of the Planning Commission (like a committee), or a remain independent? Do you think that the Planning Commission should be a second reviewer on all Bike/Ped projects? Why or why not?	The Bike Ped Commission serves an important function as it is the only Commission focused on street safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Commissioners have experience walking and biking in the city so they have first hand knowledge of the issues faced by residents. They are the only commission tasked with giving guidance to the City Council on transportation issues, how cars, pedestrians, and cyclists co-exist together safely, and the safety of students walking and biking to school. This is an important, large, and specialized role and should remain independent. The Planning Commission's focus is on implementing the General Plan and advising the City Council on land use, zoning, and permitting issues. It's a vast and very specialized remit of a different kind. Each Commission - Parks & Rec, Audit, and others - has it's own specific area of specialization and was created as an independent advisory body to the City Council. It is no more appropriate to fold the Bike Ped Commission under the Planning Commission than to fold under it the Parks & Rec Commission or any other. It is inefficient and potentially harmful to have the Planning Commission be a second reviewer on all Bike and Ped projects because they don't have the specialized experience and knowledge to properly support the work of both Commissions. Public statements and actions: <i>Though a Planning Commissioner who would benefit from the increased power, Seema Sharma Lindskog has made public statements against disbanding the Bicycle Pedestrian Commission, or making it subservient to the Planning Commission.</i>
The data on the newly installed separated buffered bike lanes on DeAnza Boulevard shows that they reduced accidents by half compared to prior years, and decreased travel time for cars. This is one example of how separated lanes improve safety for all residents and do not reduce car throughput. Other studies and data show they do not harm emergency response time. How have you supported separated bike lane projects in Cupertino, and how will you in the future to gain these benefits for residents?	Separated bike lanes make roads safer for both drivers and cyclists by separating the two modes of transportation and reducing potential for collisions. Car drivers don't have to be on the alert for cyclist A buffered separated bike lane offers greater protection by creating a 2ft space between the bike lane and the car lane, while a protected bike lane adds physical separation like bollards or concrete blocks between the bike lane and the car lane, giving the highest level of protection for both drivers and cyclists. I have advocated in support of and successfully gotten implemented separated bike lanes in multiple locations around the city including Stevens Creek Boulevard, De Anza Boulevard, McClellan Rd, Lawson Middle School, and Cupertino High School. All these locations see daily use twice a day by students cycling to and from school and have seen regular incidences of children biking being in near-misses or serious collisions with cars. Public statements and actions: <i>These actions were verified.</i>
Eighty percent of the cost of bike/ped projects in Cupertino have been paid by county, state, and local grants, though often anti-active transportation advocates cite "cost" as the reason not to improve our streets. How would you change this narrative?	Walk bike infrastructure projects are some of the most cost-effective city projects with around 84% of the cost of the project being covered by grants. One way to change the narrative is for the city to list the estimated "true" cost borne by the city as the primary cost and show the total cost including the portion that will be covered by grants as a secondary number. The bigger issue however is that the dollar cost is cited as a proxy for the cost in change of habits, which is often the biggest unspoken hurdle. Change is hard and there is often a lot of resistance to changes such as safer intersections or narrower streets because they often require cars to slow down and pay more attention. There needs to be continuing education that there are multiple benefits to the community from implementing safer street infrastructure - homeowners feel safer on streets will slower traffic, more students biking and walking to school reduces traffic jams at school pickup and dropoff time which is a big problem in Cupertino, the city sees fewer serious injuries and fatalities, seniors are more likely to go for walks if there's connected safe sidewalks and intersection, and residents are more likely to walk about around their neighborhood creating a more tight-knit community.
How have you personally advocated for improved walking or biking in Cupertino or the surrounding areas? Examples could include specific Safe Routes to School work (not just attending meetings), supporting new infrastructure through signing a petition, or advocating for improvements by speaking as a resident at a City Council or at a Bicycle Pedestrian Commission meeting.	I have been a supporter of Walk Bike Cupertino for a decade, and the Chair of Walk Bike Cupertino for the past five years. I successfully advocated for the city to open the Regnart Creek trail which has now become the most used trail in Cupertino. I spearheaded the creation of the Lawson Bikeway, the first two-way bikeway in the city. I advocated for the future protected bike lane at Cupertino High School. I also advocated for safe walking and biking improvements at all of the city schools as part of the Safe Routes to School program including pedestrian crossing bulbouts, new crosswalks, blinking light crossings, and more. I have been a Safe Routes to School parent for 12 years - at Eaton Elementary, Lawson Middle School, and Cupertino High. I worked with the city Safe Routes to School coordinators to create multiple programs to encourage children to walk and bike to safely school such as Middle School bike skills workshops, Walk & Roll to School Days, First Day Bike Bus, Bike for Boba, Dr Bike free bike repair events, and much more. I help coordinate the City Bike Fest every year. I successfully advocated for the City Council to adopt a Work Program item for an Urban Forest Plan to increase the city's tree canopy, especially on the east side. I advocated for the protected bike lanes of Stevens Creek Boulevard and the buffered bike lanes on De Anza Blvd. I also spearheaded a partnership with the Santa Clara County Department of Health to give hundreds of free bike helmets each year to children in need. Personal statements and actions: <i>These actions were verified.</i>
The City's 2024 Vision Zero Plan states the city should "Prioritize multimodal safety and quality of service over...on-street parking." All improvement projects are different, but can you give an example of a past or future project with the removal of on-street parking which you support?	Parking is necessary and important and we must preserve it where needed. Many residents in the city, even those who walk and bike, also drive when needed. That being said, there is a lot of parking space available in the city, much of which is infrequently used. When evaluating a walk bike project, it is important to balance the needs of all residents to find a working compromise that meets everyone's needs. An example is the Lawson Bikeway which resulted in some parking spaces being removed along Vista Drive. The school agreed to let the community use the school parking lot at the south end of campus which provides far more parking spaces than the ones that were lost on the street, a net positive for residents needing to park near the school to use its facilities. The benefit to students is significant as Lawson was seeing frequent near-misses or collisions between children and cars. Another example is providing a connecting opening from the Regnart Creek Trail to the Cupertino Library and Community Center. It requires losing 2 parking spaces, but the advantages in convenience and safety for residents are significant. Personal statements and actions: <i>Seema Sharma Lindskog advocated successfully for both the Regnart Creek Trail and the Lawson protected bike lane.</i>