

New bike-specific (and frankly offensive) stop-sign addition in Los Altos

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Did a sort of "wandering around" ride Sunday, heading south through the foothills, up Moody (why?), up Page Mill (again, why?), north on Skyline in the cold (where did that come from?), West OLH loop then back home. On the way I spotted the latest assault on cyclists by, I think, Los Altos Hills. I get a bit confused about where one city ends and another begins sometimes.

Apparently, in Los Altos, it's only bikes that have issues at stop signs, so they've added a second red box below the regular "Stop" sign that says "BIKES MUST STOP AT ALL STOP SIGNS." OK... so after unintentionally recording video of a car just blowing through one (making a right-hand turn, the first subject in the video above), I pulled over to record the next 4 cars through that intersection and the next.

Not one came to a full stop. Every single car had its wheels moving at all times. One or two came close to a stop, pretty much the same way a cyclist typically does. But nobody put the brakes on, brought the car to a complete stop, then started again. Which is, I think, technically what the law requires. Note that it is possible to do this on a bicycle without putting your foot down.

If the idea is to have safer streets, effort to reduce distracted driving (specifically cell phone use) would likely yield far greater results, if "results" are to be measured by fewer lives lost or injured. More likely the impetus for this comes from motorists annoyed about the growing congestion in the area and anything that's in front of them, slowing them down, is the enemy. Or maybe it's even jealousy; motorists stuck in traffic while cyclists zip past to their side.

Whatever it is, it's misguided and wrong.