

# Do Not Block the Bike Lane Campaign Success in Gilroy

by Emma Shlaes | Jul 8, 2019 | Advocacy, Connecting Our Communities, Featured



*This guest blog is brought to you by SVBC member and Chair of the Gilroy Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Zachary Hilton. #GilroyBPAC @hoseman16*

It's a warm spring morning, and I take a sip of my locally roasted Gilroy Fifth St Coffee on my front porch. I am looking up and down the street to see who else is joining us on the bike train. My wife Katie, daughter Avery and I fill the air in our tires and hopped on our bikes because it's the final citywide Walk & Roll Wednesday of the year. You can smell the fresh flowers that are starting to bloom in the neighbor's yards and the sun is just starting to warm our backs as we travel up 3<sup>rd</sup> St to our first stop along the train route. We find ourselves in a teachable moment with our group when trashcans block our bike lane.

It happens to be the day before trash day pickup. Most everyone knows that the trashcans/carts belong against the curbside right? Well, we find a few houses along our route where they are being placed in the bike lane for pick up. Some think that it's helping the garbage truck drivers and some just don't have an open curbside. I completely understand every reason why. My goal here is to let the public know who uses the bike lanes, and that we rely on them being clear at all times.

The Gilroy Bicycle Pedestrian Commission received an email from a GUSD School Teacher who uses Church St to commute to work. She experienced the same obstructions in the bike lane, but on a larger scale. Her entire route along Church St was like riding on an obstacle course. Weaving in and out of the traffic lane and bike lane, all while avoiding trashcans. We discussed the topic at our February 2019 meeting. Besides the existing California Vehicle Code that states bike lanes CAN NOT be blocked, we decided as a group with public input that we would create a campaign based on education and encouragement.

First step was to establish a relationship with Recology. We need them as a partner in the campaign for messaging to their customers. The League of American Bicyclists recently recognized the City of Gilroy as a Bicycle Friendly Community. One of the goals set by our Commission is education and outreach to the public. Whether it's commuting, recreation, or Safe Routes to School we have many people that rely on our network of bicycle lanes. We believe that it has been a long time since our residents have been educated about the people who bike and how we can accomplish trash pick up safely and efficiently for everyone. After a few emails with their General Manager, they

agreed to add “Do Not Block Bike Lanes” on their existing flyers to customers. They also agreed to add a flyer to their bill inserts that was mutually created by the Gilroy BPAC and Recology, as long as it was printed on City of Gilroy letterhead. The City of Gilroy has already begun helping by including our flyer artwork in a City Express email campaign, and we have begun social media posts as well.

We will begin doing direct campaign on two streets that were identified from public comment. These streets are Church St and Egleberry from 1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> near the Downtown District. That will include leaving a flyer at the property that places their trashcans in the bike lanes. It has been mentioned that creating a sticker with the artwork would be useful to pass out when we are doing our outreach in the public as well. The sticker artwork is great for all languages spoken, because of the visual graphics included.

While doing research on this campaign I wasn't able to find many campaigns out there that dealt with this issue. If you ever need help in forming a similar campaign, please reach out to us. #GilroyBPAC

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Chair, Gilroy Bicycle Pedestrian Commission

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## Organization

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