



The Woodside Responsible Cycling Challenge

Become a responsible cycling advocate. Convert two friends to be responsible cycling advocates. Keep going until every cyclist is a convert!

Why the Challenge?

The Woodside Bicycle Committee launched the Safe Cycling Challenge in response to requests from local cycling organizations on how to make their member cyclists safer, responsible and more welcomed on Woodside roads.

Numerous cyclists enjoy the bucolic roads in the Town of Woodside. Unfortunately some residents of Woodside are at a boiling point with anti-bike sentiment. This noisy minority shows up at Town meetings, signs petitions, and takes photos of poorly behaving cyclists and in general does a great PR job of vilifying cyclists. The angry rhetoric polarizes the participants and spawns ever escalating acts of road rage. This rage creates very real safety risks for all users of public roads in Woodside. The goal of the Safe Cycling Challenge is to defuse the rage by initiating a grass roots effort to improve cyclists' behavior. Drive down the rage and you improve the safety of the Woodside cycling, driving, equestrian, and pedestrian experience. And encourage all people to take responsibility for there actions.

Who makes up the “noisy minority”?

About 5000 residents live in Woodside. The vast majority of them are not actively anti-bike. A vocal handful is virulently anti-bike. The virulently anti-bike group acts as a catalyst and galvanizes an additional few hundred people who have been frightened or endangered by badly behaved cyclists. This larger group tends to fall into two categories:

1. Equestrian trail riders who have been frightened and endangered by poorly behaved mountain bikers illegally using the horse trails. Their fear and anger tends extends to all cyclists, road and mountain alike.
2. Users of public roads in Woodside who have been frightened and endangered by poorly behaved cyclists. This group includes motorists, pedestrians, equestrians, dog walkers, cyclists, etc. Often the cyclists are participating in one of the many high-speed pack rides that route through town. Alternatively, the cyclists are riding two or three abreast on one of Woodside's windy roads acting like the roads are closed to anybody but them.

Does the “noisy minority” have a valid case?

Yes and no. Yes in that mountain bikes are not allowed on Woodside's horse trails and they can pose a genuine risk to equestrians. Yes in that poorly behaving cyclists riding up Old La Honda Road, Kings Mountain Road, and on other winding narrow rural roads ride two or three abreast and make little effort to help cars get by them. Yes in that some of the high-speed pack riders slow down for nothing and can be harsh and abusive to a perceived obstacle, be it on two, four wheels or feet, as well as the other cyclist they are riding with who are sensitive to open road regulations in Woodside and other towns.

No in that not every mountain bike rider illegally on the horse trails is a 30 mph tattooed downhill zombie. No in that most cyclists riding on Woodside's narrow windy roads are responsible, stay to the right of the roadway as close as applicable and wave cars on. No in that not every rider in every pack ride is looking to paint a road kill symbol on his or her top tube

So yes, each complaint is based on the actions of at least one poorly behaving cyclist. And no, this behavior does not describe the vast majority of cyclists riding through Woodside.

Before you dismiss this noisy minority try on their clothes. Drive your car all the way up and back down Old La Honda Road starting at about 9:00 AM on a summer Saturday. The next Saturday take your dog or baby for a walk on Tripp Road. Begin at Kings Mountain Road; stay on the left side of the road - facing traffic like a good pedestrian - and start walking around 9:40 AM. One of the bigger and higher-speed packs should appear soon. This will give you a baseline appreciation of just how scary dangerous a badly behaved and irresponsible cyclist can be.

What about poorly behaved motorists?

Poorly behaved motorists are plentiful, more deadly, and pose a far greater risk to life and limb than cyclists. Two differences. First, no noisy minority in Woodside is vilifying motorists. Second, our suggested solution for poorly behaved motorists is a Rules of the Road handout. The handout is under construction.

What do Safe Cycling Advocates do?

Safe Cycling Advocates are:

1. Courteous, say "Hello", wave cars on when safe, hold them back when it's unsafe and show common courtesy to everybody – motorists, equestrians, pedestrians, cyclists, etc – they meet on the road. Follow the rules of the road.
2. Vocal advocates for safe cycling. Explain the urgency and ask riders to do the above at the start of a ride, in Club meetings, at pizza fests after rides, etc.
3. Take proactive ownership for the entire group they ride with. One example; 41 riders are spinning down Canada Road at 27 MPH. 40 of them are in orderly pairs and using the wide shoulder bike lane. The 41st rider is in the middle of the motorized traffic lane. A car, doing the street legal 35 MPH, comes up behind the pack but can't pass because the one rider is blocking the lane. The rider makes no effort to get as far right as practicable. Speak up and ask the rider to let the car pass. Afterwards ride up alongside the rider and explain the delicate nature of bike/car interactions in Woodside and ask them to be more courteous. Encourage them to ride in a smaller group or alone until they have the skills to ride in a larger group in tight formation, if they say that they do not trust the group, then ask them, why are you riding with this group?

You are cycling's ambassadors!

The vast majority of Woodside residents do not hate bikes. Treat them as if they do and you create a self-fulfilling prophecy! Again, most Woodside residents don't hate bikes. Many of them have had at least one encounter with a badly behaved cyclist. The encounter you are having with them molds their image of cyclists. You are cycling's ambassador! So follow the Safe Cycling Advocate behaviors and make a good impression.

Your actions won't win over the very few truly anti-bike people but will, over time, drastically reduce the number of Woodside residents who support them, and foster a continuing bond of community and peace here in Woodside, other towns and cities all over California, other states, this continent, the world.

ZG Velo Club Woodside