

Re-imagining Washington Boulevard for Bicycle Safety¹

A. Overview:

The 2026 Venice Bikeway Network Survey, conducted by the Parking, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee (PTIC) of the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC), indicated that improving the safety on the on-protected 3/4-mile section of the Marvin Braude Coastal Bike Trail on Washington Boulevard was the number one desired improvement. For that reason, the PTIC has now evaluated how best to up-grade the unprotected Washington bike lanes.

Meanwhile, a group of four USC Masters of Public Administration students, working with CD 11 staff, also evaluated options for improving bicycle access on Washington Boulevard. Their report was prepared as their Capstone Project. It won the group the 2026 John Randolph and Dora Haynes Award for most Outstanding Capstone Project. Employing a separate survey, the report also found that there is a strong desire and need to increase the safety of the Washington Boulevard bike lanes between the beach and the Mildred/Oxford intersection.

The two efforts are complementary in that each takes a different perspective of the problem. The USC study, done under the alias of Cardinal & Gold Consulting (C&GC), looks at the problem more from a policy perspective, while the PTIC effort addresses the design options available to effect a physically-separated bikeway on the section of Washington Boulevard. The discussion that follows reviews the C&GC report, but then focuses on the physical design aspect.

B. Review of the Cardinal & Gold Consulting (C&GC) Report:

The C&GC report is excellent. The full report is incredibly comprehensive, covering almost every possible aspect of the issue. The research done through literature research, the interviewing of relevant actors, and the undertaking a topic-specific survey is impressive. Finally, the amount of information obtained and its presentation as the report is outstanding. The report understandably does not get involved in the engineering and cost details; it is, after all, written by public administration students. However, from that perspective it is very well thought-out and presented through influence tables, alternative assessment tables, and decision matrices. Perhaps the best way to review the study is simply to copy its Executive Summary.

Washington Boulevard is more than a local Venice street. It is the missing piece in a regional coastal mobility system. The 1.4-mile corridor runs from Lincoln Boulevard to Venice Beach and connects inland neighborhoods, businesses, schools, beach visitors, and the Marvin Braude Bike Trail. The Marvin Braude Trail is one of the most popular bike trails in Southern California with over 10,000 bikers per day. Yet at Washington Blvd., riders experience a move from this otherwise protected coastal trail into a street environment shaped by vehicle traffic, inconsistent bike facilities, unclear transitions, and parking conflicts. Beach access in general is a core value of the City of Los Angeles which is also inhibited by the current state of Washington Blvd. As a result, the corridor interrupts Los Angeles's most important north-south coastal bikeway while weakening beach access for residents and visitors alike.

¹ Prepared by: Colin Warn and Richard Stanger
Parking, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee

Cardinal & Gold Consulting (CGC) evaluated this problem for Council District 11 (CD11) as both a safety issue and an implementation challenge. The question was not simply whether Washington Blvd. could be made safer, but how CD11 could advance feasible improvements within a corridor shaped by overlapping jurisdictions, Coastal Commission review, parking sensitivities, limited funding, and competing stakeholder priorities. CGC used a mixed-methods approach that included survey data, stakeholder interviews, site observations, policy research, case studies, and financial analysis. The survey received 424 responses over nine days and captured both local and regional users, including residents within the corridor walkshed and non-residents who use Washington Blvd. for commuting, recreation, errands, business access, and beach trips.

The findings show that current conditions suppress high latent demand for biking. Biking received the lowest perceived safety score of all travel modes, and respondents repeatedly described the corridor as stressful, confusing, and unsafe. Lincoln Boulevard, Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Ocean Avenue, and Pacific Avenue emerged as key conflict points where vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, and beach-access traffic interact. Although Washington Blvd. includes painted bike lanes in portions of the corridor, users do not experience these facilities as adequate protection. Among 335 active cyclists, 74% reported avoiding Washington Boulevard, while some non-cyclists (27%) indicated they would consider biking if conditions improved. Respondents were especially responsive to protected bike lanes and safer intersections, showing that the issue is not lack of interest, but lack of safe, continuous infrastructure.

At the same time, the corridor cannot be redesigned through infrastructure alone. Parking is closely tied to coastal access under the Coastal Act, meaning that changes to curb space, circulation, or parking supply may require additional review and mitigation. The financial picture is also shaped by the policy environment. Washington Boulevard is not being evaluated in isolation; it sits within the City's broader mobility framework, including the LA Mobility Plan and Measure HLA. As a result, improvements may need to meet a higher standard for multimodal design. A project that begins as a bike-lane improvement could therefore expand into a larger capital project involving resurfacing, signal work, curb ramps, sidewalk upgrades, drainage, and intersection redesign. This helps explain why a full redesign could cost approximately \$14–15 million and would require coordination with LADOT, Los Angeles Public Works, Los Angeles County, the California Coastal Commission, local businesses, residents, and neighborhood groups. These constraints make a single, immediate full-build solution unlikely. With only \$1 million investment currently available, the estimated \$14–15 million full redesign leaves a substantial capital gap. However, that gap also creates an opportunity for CD11 to use the initial funding strategically by advancing near-term improvements, building interagency coordination, and positioning Washington Boulevard for a larger phased corridor strategy.

CGC evaluated five alternatives: maintaining current conditions, pursuing limited enhancements, hiring a consulting firm, implementing a full street redesign, and adopting a tiered implementation plan. The recommended path is the tiered implementation plan because it balances near-term feasibility with long-term impact. In the short term, CD11 should pursue visible improvements such as wayfinding signage, lighting, speed-reduction analysis, parking-flow adjustments at the beach lot, and targeted intersection treatments pilots. In the medium term, CD11 should use technical consulting support to develop traffic studies, concept plans, cost estimates to target competitive transportation grants. In the long term, CD11 should move toward a full corridor redesign with a Class IV protected bikeway, curb extensions at key intersections and parking flow modifications.

This phased strategy allows CD11 to show immediate progress while building the funding, public trust, and regulatory pathway needed for larger change. If implemented successfully, Washington Boulevard can shift from a fragmented and avoided corridor into a safer, clearer, and more connected coastal access route that supports residents, businesses, visitors, and the broader Los Angeles mobility network. More importantly, it would move Washington Boulevard away from piecemeal fixes and toward a coordinated vision for a safer, more functional corridor.

While the report ostensibly covers the full 1.4-mile length of Washington between the beach and Lincoln Boulevard, its emphasis is on the 3/4-mile section between Pacific Avenue and Mildred Avenue/Oxford Avenue where the Bike Trail once again becomes fully-protected. This fact could have been made clearer. For example, the estimated \$14-15 million for a full redesign, repeated several times in the report, was for the full 1.4-mile segment. Its critical western half is only 0.75 miles long, roughly half the full distance. Admittedly, \$7.5 million for a major reworking of this section of Washington Boulevard is still beyond the \$1 million CD 11 now available for improvements.

Given that C&GC was given only a cost estimate for the costliest option, it opted for a tiered implementation plan of small improvements, a valid approach. However, there are lower-cost ways to effect physical-separation than through a major redesign of the street. Delving into the costs of other options, however, was not the purpose or focus of the C&GC study effort.

C. The Analysis of the PTIC Team:

The thrust of the PTIC team's effort was to evaluate the best way to introduce a physically-separated bikeway/lanes on the unprotected 3/4-mile "Gap Section" of the Marvin Braude Bike Trail on Washington Boulevard between Pacific Avenue and the Mildred/Oxford intersection.

1. What Bikeway Design Guidelines Say:

Washington Boulevard has a speed limit of 35 mph but vehicles often exceed this posted limit. The design of the roadway also encourages speed with its multiple and wide travel lanes. Yet only a 4" painted white line separates cyclists from cars and trucks.

Washington Boulevard also has an impressive volume of vehicles per day, or average daily traffic. In a 24-hour period on a Monday in September 2025, LADOT counted 20,300 vehicles using Washington Boulevard at its Oxford Avenue intersection. In a 24-hour period on a Wednesday in May 2017, LADOT counted 7,460 vehicles using Washington Boulevard at its Via Dolce intersection. These are LADOT's most recent volume counts. (Besides the 8-year time difference, most of the 12,800 vehicle difference between the Oxford and Via Dolce counts probably results from vehicles turning at the Ocean-Via Marina intersection.)

Why is knowing daily traffic volume so important? The more cars travel at higher speeds, the greater the chance of a bicycle-vehicle collision. These collisions usually mean serious injury to, or the death of, the cyclist². The possibility of a serious injury can be reduced by lowering traffic speeds and physically separating the two modes.

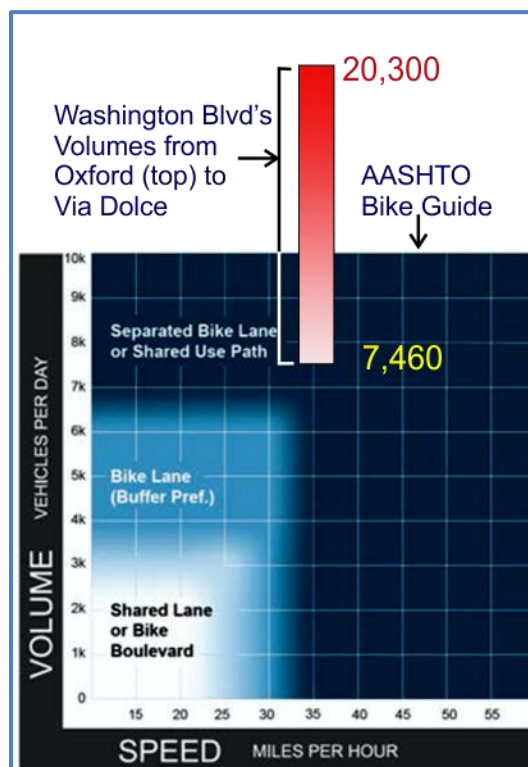
In 2024, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO) prepared a *Bike Guide* for roadway designers implementing bikeway improvements. Figure 1 reproduces its graph recommending when an urban roadway should have a separated, physically-protected bike

² [Journal of Accident Analysis and Prevention](#)

lane.³ According to AASHTO, cyclists on Washington Blvd. should have their own, safe, physically-separated bike lanes at even the 7,460 vehicles/day volume, absolutely at the 20,300 volume.

The City of Los Angeles does not seem to have a comparable chart. However, its roadway designs should conform closely to AASHTO roadway design guidelines.

Figure 1: AASHTO Bike Guide Chart When to Add Physically Separated Bike Lanes



2. Inventory of Parking Spaces along Washington Boulevard:

According to Venice Bikeway Network Survey responses, those opposed to protected bikeways list the perceived loss of traffic lanes and/or parking spaces. Removing parking (or travel lanes) will therefore be problematic, even if protected bike lanes significantly enhance the safety and attractiveness of cycling for visitors to Venice's beaches.

Along the north side of the Gap Section there are 34 metered parking spaces and an estimated 70 unmarked free spaces⁴ for a total of 105 parking spaces. The metered spaces are all west of Beach Avenue because from there westward land uses become more commercial. Those businesses have little parking on-site.

Along the south side of the Gap Section there are 48 metered parking spaces and an estimated 32 unmarked free spaces, a total of 80 parking spaces. The metered spaces are all west of Palawan Way. Between Palawan Way and Via Dolce/Dell the adjacent land use is auto-oriented commercial with on-site parking lots. For this reason perhaps, the use of the 35 metered parking spaces in these two long two blocks is usually low-to-modest.

³ Chart reproduced from a PennDOT educational presentation available on the Internet.

⁴ Estimated parking spaces were calculated as (distance available on street)/(24'/space).

In 2021, the consulting firm of Fehr & Peers published a comprehensive *Parking Utilization and Transportation Management Strategies Report, Venice Coastal Zone* for City Planning. It included continuous parking space counts every two hours for all streets in Venice. These were done for a typical spring weekday and weekend (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) and for a typical summer weekday and weekend. (See Appendix A for example maps.) Along the Gap Section, non-summer weekday and weekend utilization was above 60% on the north side, below 40% on the south side. On summer weekdays, parking utilization along the Gap Section mirrored the spring weekday utilization percentages. However, the summer weekend utilization percentages were above 90% except east of Palawan Way on the south side of Washington Blvd. This strip has a utilization rate of less than 40% even on summer weekends due to its distance from the beach.

In summary, along the Gap Section the number of parking spaces on the south side is less than on the north side (80 vs. 104) and less utilized on weekdays and spring weekends (<40% vs. >60%). On summer weekends parking spaces on both sides of the Gap Section are well used, except for east of Palawan Way on the south side.

3. Inventory of Intersection Conflicts:

Conflict points with bike lanes occur at major intersections and where local streets and driveways meet Washington Blvd.

Major Intersections: There are two major intersections in the Gap Section: Via Marina/Ocean Ave. and Via Dolce/Dell Ave. These are relatively safe intersections. Another problematic intersection in the Gap Section is Palawan Way where large curb radii encourage high-speed turns onto and out of Washington Blvd. Approaching the Pacific Avenue intersection is another on-going concern for cyclists transitioning from the curbside bike lane to the through lane to the beach. Recently this transition was made safer by adding better and green-painted channelization.

Local Street Intersections: Drivers exiting local streets and driveways naturally tend to proceed beyond the painted stop line located before the sidewalk crossing and then across the curbside parking lane to better view on-coming traffic. Should the bike lane be curbside, that same tendency will block the bike lane as the driver waits for an opening in traffic. Drivers turning onto side streets or parking lots may also pay less attention than they should to cyclists in a curbside bike lane. In short, the fewer side street intersections and driveway exits the better for bicycle safety.

4. Bike Lane Design Options:

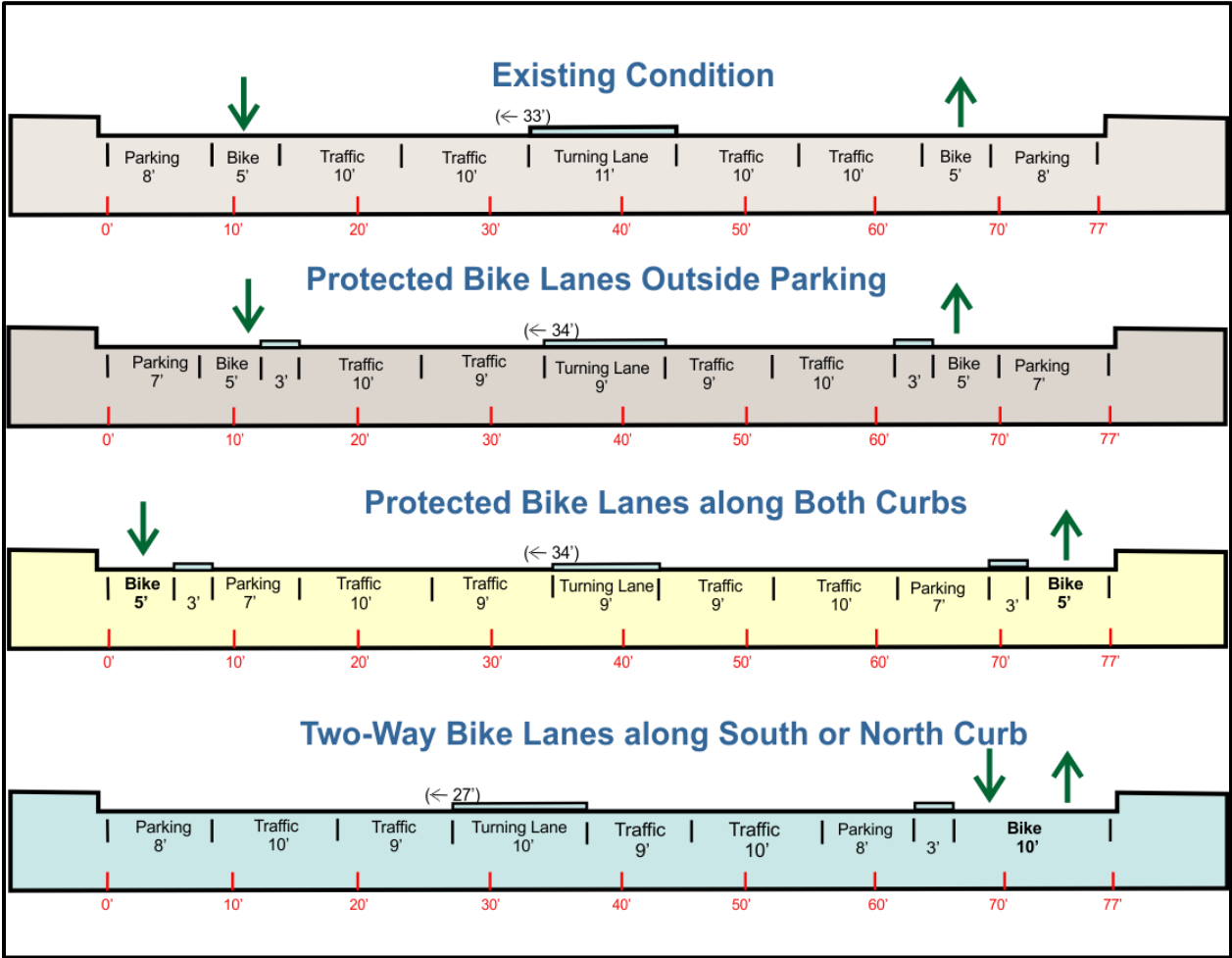
There are three ways to introduce physically-protected bike lanes in the Gap Section. These are shown in Figure 2. The first option adds a 3' barrier strip between the existing one-way bike lane and the adjacent traffic lane. To make room, the center three traffic lanes need to be reduced to a 9-foot width and the existing 8' wide parking lanes to 7'. The latter will exacerbate the existing problems of "door opening" conflicts and parked RV/OV intrusions into the bike lanes. Trying to solve one problem compounds others. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

The second option is to switch the parking lane with the bike lane, in essence using the parking lane and its parked cars as the physical protection. A 3' separation between the parked cars and the bike lane assures against "door opening" conflicts. This design would be mirrored on both side of Washington Blvd. The parking lanes are reduced to 7'.

A third option is to combine both bike lanes. This “double-wide” lane would be on either the south side or the north side of Washington Blvd. It does require the re-stripping of all traffic lane markings in the Gap Section and some concrete work at Palawan Way. However, no traffic lanes nor parking spaces are lost.

One benefit of the double-wide bikeway is that a normal street sweeper can clean the bikeway. This allows bikeway cleaning to be a normal part of the sweeper’s route. A one-way bike lane along the curb requires a narrower sweeper that Los Angeles may not have in the Venice area.

Figure 2: Existing Condition and Alternative Physically-Protected Bike Lane Options



5. Comparison of Alternatives:

Table 1 arrays the pros and cons of the three bikeway options in the Gap Section of Washington Avenue. Where an option has a definite advantage or disadvantage, its cell is shaded green or red, respectively.

The two one-way bike lanes inherently interact with more streets, driveways, parking spaces, and bus stops. Each two-way option affects just one side of the street, lowering most of the potential bike/vehicle conflicts. Of the two, two-way options, the south side option is the better one. First, cyclists using it never have to cross Washington in the most-used Gap Section. The north side has more parking spaces and most of those parking spaces are used by residents on the north side. Putting the combined bikeway there means more pedestrians crossing the wider

bikeway more often. The south side also attracts fewer metered parking space users throughout the year, even on summer weekends.

Table 1: Bike Lane Options and Relevant Factors Being Considered

Bike Lane Position	One-Way Bike Lanes on Each Curb	Two-Way Bike Lanes on South Curb	Two-Way Bike Lane on North Curb	Notes
Bike Trail Crossing of Washington Blvd.	Westbound Lane Crosses	No Crossing	Both Lanes Cross	This refers to the crossing at Mildred Ave.
Major Intersections	2	2	2	Excludes Pacific Ave. and Oxford Ave.
Side Street Intersections	8	2	6	Potential conflict area
Driveway Crossings	10	8	2	Some south side driveways might be closed because of side street access.
Metered Parking Spaces	82	48	34	Use of south side metered spaces is much lower than north side metered spaces.
Unmarked Parking Spaces	102	32	70	RVs parking in these spaces
Bus Stops Affected	9	5	4	

6. Cost Estimates:

As noted in Section B, the C&GC report only used an estimate of \$14-15 million to install a fully built-out Class IV bike lanes over the 1.4-mile length of Washington Boulevard between Pacific Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard. The Gap Section is 3/4-mile and one can assume a \$7-\$8 million estimate for a similar full build-out there. Much of the cost is due to the additional construction work on items such as curb ramps, curb radii redesign, and overall street resurfacing. There should be a way to introduce the protected bike lanes without triggering a complete re-do of Washington Boulevard. Here are three examples of protected bike lanes installed without that level of investment:

Los Angeles, Hollywood Boulevard – 2.1 miles of “quick-build” bike lanes along both sides of Hollywood Boulevard were recently completed for about \$500,000⁵. Figure 3 shows part of that project. Admittedly, this “quick-build” solution is less attractive than the ideal design, it nevertheless increases the safety of bicyclists using Hollywood Boulevard.

Santa Monica, Broadway Avenue Protected Bikeway, 5th St. to 26th St. – 1.6 miles of protected bike lanes in each direction for an approximate cost of \$4.5 million. That included repaving work, concrete barriers, a few other materials like flex posts, rubber bumpers for traffic calming around the corners, four pedestrian rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), and a lot of signs. Santa Monica received \$1.3 million (\$830,000 per mile) from the MTA’s Active Transportation Fund and we believe the strictly bicycle elements of the Broadway Avenue protected Bikeway were not that much higher. Santa Monica was able to provide us with the subcontracted \$450,000 cost to provide just the concrete barriers to protect both the

⁵ [Hollywood Boulevard Bike Lane Cost](#)

westbound and eastbound the bike lanes (\$140,000 per mile per side). We were not able to get a further breakdown. Part of this bikeway is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3: “Quick-Build” Protected Bike Lanes along Hollywood Boulevard



Figure 4: Protected Bike Lanes along Broadway Avenue, Santa Monica



Figure 5: Protected Bike Lanes along Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica

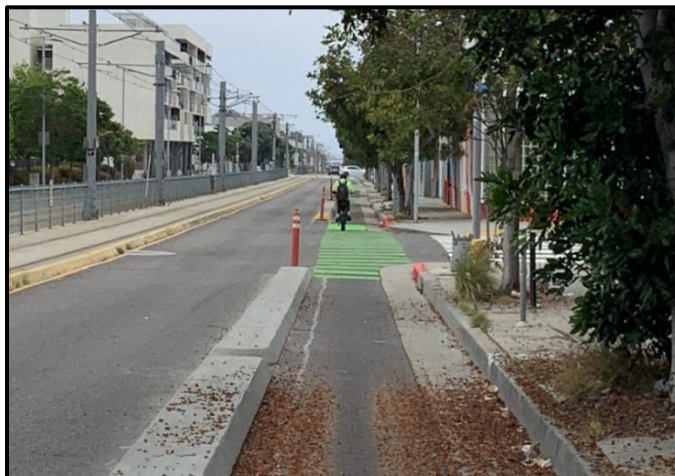


Figure 5 shows part of Santa Monica’s Colorado Avenue protected bike lane project. The Colorado Avenue installation has no adjacent parking lanes, is only on the north side of the

street (westbound) and is still under construction. The photo shows the problem with keeping a 5-foot, one-lane, protected bike lane free of debris.

The Broadway Avenue project's total cost was \$3 million per mile. When applied to the 3/4-mile length of the Gap Section an estimated cost would be roughly \$2 million. The Broadway project, however, included repaving Broadway Avenue and 1.6 miles of concrete barriers on both the north and south side of the street, plus additional items. If Washington Boulevard does not need repaving, and only its south side requires concrete barriers, then an estimate for the 3/4-mile Gap Section could well be under \$1 million.

Washington Boulevard's pavement is rated "good" throughout in the Gap Section, ranging from a 75 to an 84 point rating. This means there may not be a need to repave the entire street in order to introduce a reconfigured bikeway project. The City could also pave just the bikeway area as it has done elsewhere (e.g., Forest Lawn Drive). Without any roadway paving, the project would consist of concrete barriers, relocated lane striping, and some roadwork at Palawan Way where there are existing concrete islands.

7. Washington Avenue Beach Parking Lot Conflict:

Between Pacific Avenue and the northern continuation of the Marvin Braude Bike Trail cyclists must interact with vehicles entering and exiting the beach parking lot at the western end of Washington Boulevard. Unfortunately, the approach to this lot has an inherent flaw: if the lot is full, or if a driver wants to leave without entering, turning around is very difficult and negatively effects cyclists transitioning to and from Washington Boulevard. There needs to be the ability to tell motorists while they are still east of Pacific Avenue that the beach parking lot is full using a digital sign like ones often seen in parking decks.⁶

This seems like an appropriate use of the Venice Coastal Parking Impact Trust Fund. The Venice Land Use Plan states that the purpose of the Fund is the "*improvement and development of public parking facilities that improve public access to the Venice Coastal Zone as specified in the LUP.*" (Policy II.A.2) So what is specified in the VLUP?

Policy II.A.8. Signage and Management of Public Beach Parking states that "To facilitate public parking, adequate signage with directions shall be installed to inform beach goers of the availability of public beach parking facilities and remote lots with shuttle service."

D. Conclusion:

The conclusion of this analysis is that a) the physical separation of the Washington Avenue bike lanes is both required and possible, and b) a combined two-way bikeway is a better solution than two one-way bike lanes for this application, and c) the \$1 million budget may well be enough to pay for a physically-protected two-way bikeway in the 3/4-mile Gap Section.

Bikeway design guidelines by nationally recognized authorities state that the bike lanes on urban roadways like Washington Boulevard should be physically protected.

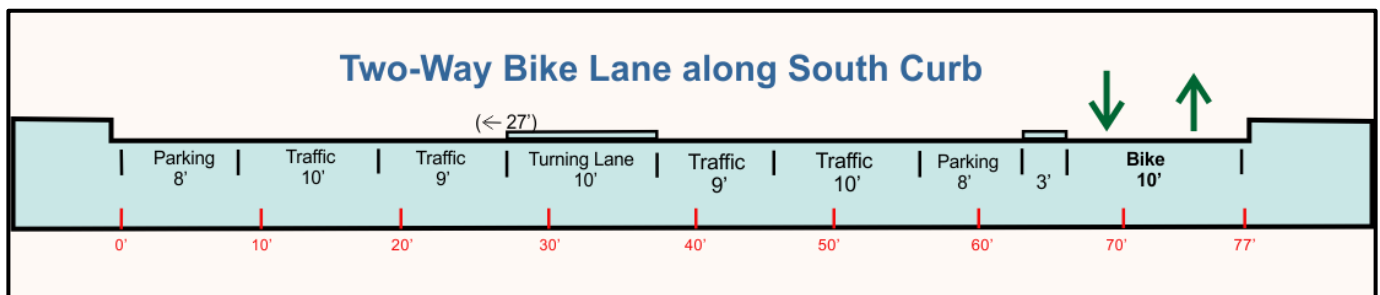
A two-way bikeway facility seems the best way to achieve this in the Gap Section. Two one-way bikeways inherently involve more potential bike-car conflicts at street intersections and more interference with parking spaces. A two-way bikeway along the south side of Washington Boulevard is preferable to a north side alternative. The south side bikeway requires no crossing of Washington Boulevard in the busy 3/4-mile Gap Section that separates the northern Bike

⁶ OpenSpace by Parking Logix is an example of an outdoor system that keeps track of ins and outs without needing to wire each parking space.

Trail with the southern Bike Trail through Marina del Rey. A south side two-way bikeway affects more metered parking spaces but these spaces are less used than the metered spaces on the north side. Far fewer un-metered spaces are affected with the south side bikeway.

Judging by the recent addition of protected bike lanes on L.A.'s Hollywood Boulevard and Santa Monica's Broadway Avenue and Colorado Avenue, a temporary "quick-built" bikeway facility can certainly be installed within a \$1 million budget now. The Broadway Avenue protected bikeway costs \$1.1 million per mile, the Colorado Avenue protected bikeway costs \$900,000 per mile. That means that a similar installation along the Gap Section should cost under \$1 million.

**Figure 8: Recommended Bikeway Design Concept
in the "Gap Section" of Washington Blvd.**



If it is decided to leave the existing situation as is, the speed limit on Washington Boulevard west of Oxford Avenue should be reduced from 35 mph to 25 mph. There really is no real time benefit to be gained going faster over this short stretch of roadway, and much to be gained in pedestrian and cycling safety.

Finally, regardless of the bikeway decision made for Washington Boulevard east of Pacific Avenue, a system that indicates to drivers whether there is available beach parking before they cross Pacific Avenue would be of great value to both the drivers and cyclists.

Appendix A: Parking Space Survey and Utilization

Maps copied from Parking Utilization Study by Fehr & Peers, 2021



