



Walk Bike Berkeley

Statement on the bicycle collision at 9th and Channing that severely injured Jackie Erbe

On Tuesday, March 16, around 2pm, Jackie Erbe, a Walk Bike Berkeley coordinating committee member and Public Works Commissioner, was severely injured when a motorist rear-ended her as she biked on 9th Street just south of Channing. Among her injuries are a broken femur and fractured vertebrae. Her 8-year-old child was biking with her, witnessed the collision, but was not harmed physically. Having completed two successful surgeries, Jackie faces a long rehabilitation period, but thankfully, a likely near-full recovery.

Ironically, just hours before the collision, Jackie and other Walk Bike Berkeley coordinating committee members met with City of Berkeley transportation staff to discuss Berkeley's Healthy Streets program. For months, as part of these discussions, she has advocated for traffic calming at two especially dangerous intersections: 9th at Virginia and 9th at Channing.

If the City had delivered a robust Healthy Streets program in 2020, Jackie might not be in the hospital. After all, this stretch of 9th is part of the City's "program." If the City had invested in adequate traffic calming along bicycle boulevards over the last 20 years, Jackie might not be in the hospital. But, the City has made only a half-hearted commitment to making our streets safe for the most vulnerable users, favoring instead the smooth flow of car travel and cheap, convenient car storage.

The City says it cares, issuing bold statements about Vision Zero, but when it comes time to make real, bold change, there are never enough resources and there is never enough courage and leadership. We need to hear more than thoughts and prayers from our leadership and Berkeley residents over this tragic "accident" - because these aren't accidents, but rather the results of the system we've chosen, one that prioritizes driving over all others and fails to act boldly when that is what is needed.

Our hearts are particularly heavy with the news of this horrific collision. But our commitment to safe streets has never been stronger. This collision was a design and engineering failure - not just the product of dangerous driving. Ninth at Channing is the intersection of two bicycle boulevards. We call on the City to finish its 20+ year-old, but still incomplete, bicycle boulevard network. The City should start by adding long overdue traffic calming features along the entire length of 9th Street, a street designated as a "bicycle-priority street" but designed with a width that encourages motorists to drive at highway speeds.

Are we finally going to see the required sense of urgency from Public Works leadership, and the City Engineer in particular, to actually make walking and biking safe in Berkeley? Or are we expected to just hold our collective breath until the next tragic collision? We have piles of plans, but now we need action. No more excuses. Get it done.

[Walk Bike Berkeley](#), an all-volunteer group founded by Berkeley residents, advocates to make walking and biking in Berkeley safe, low-stress, and fun for people of all ages and abilities. We want a healthy, just, and sustainable transportation system in Berkeley.