



January 29, 2016

Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor, Fifth District  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
FifthDistrict@lacbos.org

Re: Bouquet Canyon Road Safety Investigation

Dear Supervisor Antonovich

We write in the aftermath of the tragic death of 19-year-old Elena Kramer on January 4, 2016, while driving on Bouquet Canyon Road.

Bouquet Canyon Road is a popular route for riding bicycles in Los Angeles County and has been designated as a proposed Class III bikeway in the County's 2012 Bicycle Master Plan. However, its present condition poses a danger not only to occupants of motor vehicles but also to cyclists.

On July 11, 2009, Stevenson Ranch resident Joseph Novotny, 43, was killed while riding a bicycle on Bouquet Canyon Road. A car traveling northbound crossed into opposing traffic and struck Novotny and two other cyclists as they and others in their cycling group were riding southbound, single file near the fog line (there is no paved shoulder), about 3 miles south of Spunky Canyon Road. The two other cyclists were badly injured. In addition to this incident, many other bike riders have experienced close calls on Bouquet Canyon, often due to speeding motor vehicles.

No doubt the investigation currently underway will inform the Board of Supervisors that there has been an unceasing string of deaths on this important transportation corridor between the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys, including no less than 7 deaths of motor vehicle drivers and/or their passengers between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2015 alone.<sup>1</sup> Many of these deaths involve the loss of control of motor vehicles—implicating the road design, the speed limit, and lack of adequate law enforcement.

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<sup>1</sup> Motorcycle driver Giovanni Skilan, 80, September 19, 2015; Nicholas Rodriguez, 22, and Christopher James Rodriguez, 16, August 22, 2015; Lloyd Jay Farber, 66, and Raymond Perriea Silva, 69, April 18, 2015; Kyle Brooks, 19, March 1, 2012; and Samuel Choi, 37, January 1, 2012.

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Bouquet Canyon Road is a popular route for cyclists who often ride it as part of a loop including San Francisquito Canyon Road and either Spunky Canyon Road or Lake Elizabeth Road.

However, Bouquet Canyon Road is narrow and winding, and the speed limit over most of its length is 55 miles per hour. Motor vehicle drivers all-too-frequently exceed the speed limit, either because the road alignment is a tempting challenge for sport or because they become frustrated by slower drivers who are more timid or more prudent than they. It's not just automobile drivers; motorcyclists use the road as a race track, endangering themselves and occupants of all other vehicles—cars, trucks and bikes alike. And this despite the fact that several school bus stops are located along narrow curved sections of the road.

While Bouquet Canyon Road's designation as a proposed Class III bikeway is grounded on the assumption that the "vast majority" of such roads have shoulders that provide "the same physical separation as bike lanes do" (see Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan, at p. 101), most of Bouquet Canyon Road between the Santa Clarita city limit at the south and Lake Elizabeth Road at the north has no paved shoulder or only inches of pavement right of the fog line.

Additionally, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies have informed members of the public that coverage is stretched so thin between the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys that they can only traverse the canyon roads such as Bouquet and San Francisquito Canyon Roads twice each day.

SCVBC urges Los Angeles County to implement the following safety measures on Bouquet Canyon Road:

1. Install signage cautioning operators of motor vehicles that bicycles are present. These signs should also inform motorists that bicycles may use the full lane, since by law they may do so where, as on Bouquet Canyon Road, the lane widths are substandard. The "Share the Road"-style of sign has been discredited. <http://usa.streetsblog.org/2015/09/02/share-the-road-signs-dont-work/>
2. Extend the pavement far enough beyond the fog line on both northbound and southbound lanes along the entire length of Bouquet Canyon Road so that persons riding bicycles can move to the right, while still in motion, to allow cars to pass. SCVBC does not recommend a standard 4-foot-minimum "rideable" paved shoulder along Bouquet Canyon Road as that amount of added width could have the perverse effect of encouraging motorists to speed. <http://www.citylab.com/design/2014/10/why-12-foot-traffic-lanes-are-disastrous-for-safety-and-must-be-replaced-now/381117/>

Additionally, SCVBC supports the proposals made by Elena Kramer's mother, Cassandra Parks, that:

1. The speed limit on Bouquet Canyon Road be reduced from 55 to 45 miles per hour;
2. Speeding fines along Bouquet Canyon Road be tripled;

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3. Sheriff's patrols be increased along on Bouquet Canyon Road (as well as other corridors such as San Francisquito Canyon Road, Lake Hughes Road, Lake Elizabeth Road and Spunky Canyon Road); and
4. Finally, if guard rails are installed along portions of Bouquet Canyon Road, as Ms. Parks proposes, the rails should not be installed in such a way as to eliminate a paved shoulder that can be ridden on a bicycle.

Far too many deaths and injuries are occurring on Bouquet Canyon Road. It is time that Los Angeles County takes immediate action to stop the carnage and to use this opportunity to conform Bouquet Canyon Road to the County's current plan to designate it as a Class III bikeway as set forth in the Bicycle Master Plan.

Very truly yours,

*Catherine L. Rivard*

Catherine L. Rivard  
Steering Committee Member  
Santa Clarita Valley Bicycle Coalition

The Santa Clarita Valley Bicycle Coalition is the Santa Clarita Valley's advocacy group supporting safe and enjoyable bicycling for transportation and recreation, and is a local chapter of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.

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