

**CITY COUNCIL TESTIMONY:
PREVENTING ANOTHER RAID ON THE BIKE FUND
(BECAUSE OF THE UNNECESSARILY HIGH COST OF BERKELEY'S
TRAFFIC CIRCLES)
4 NOVEMBER 2003**

Statement by Hank Resnik, co-chair, Bicycle-Friendly Berkeley Coalition

- BFBC is extremely disappointed that at its Oct. 14 meeting the City Council voted to transfer \$140,000 from the bike fund for traffic circles that are not on bike routes.
- It was a broken promise and a betrayal of the City's commitment to promoting safe routes for bicycling.
- The bike fund is the only item in the City budget that had money transferred from it for another purpose.
- We've been told this was a one-time-only transfer. We are profoundly skeptical about that.
- The City is currently planning to install fully landscaped traffic circles that cost \$25,000 each. The \$140,000 from the bike fund will pay for about 5 ½ of those circles. Yet already there are plans for nearly 50 circles – and a growing demand for more traffic circles from neighbors concerned about cars speeding and short-cutting through their residential streets.
- At \$25,000 each, 50 circles would cost \$1.2 million. The City doesn't have that money – and may not have it for years to come. We have no confidence there will not be more attempts to raid the \$170,000/year bike fund to pay for traffic circles that are not on bike routes.
- Why do the currently planned circles cost \$25,000? Because some neighbors don't like the less expensive circles – for example, the prototype circle at Page and Santa Fe in West Berkeley. They want the same circles the Elmwood has – extremely expensive, lavish circles.
- BFBC has surveyed the cost of traffic circles in more than 12 other cities. Seattle, one of the leaders in developing traffic circles, spent an average of \$8-10,000 on each of its circles in 2002.
- Why can't Berkeley find a more cost-effective circle that will be acceptable to neighbors?
- One reason is that no one is asking the Council or staff to look for a better and more cost-effective design that will still be acceptable to neighbors. No one is demanding that. The "squeaky wheels" are demanding unnecessarily expensive traffic circles. Never mind what's already been budgeted or in the City's plans for years. Plans get changed.
- BFBC is now launching a new traffic circle campaign of its own. We believe it's unconscionable in these fiscally hard times not to look for a better and more cost-effective type of traffic circle.

- You, as our representatives and the trustees of our tax dollars, owe it to everyone in Berkeley to insist on a cost-effective traffic circle design. And you owe it to the safety of bicyclists to insist that the bike plan be implemented in a fair and equitable manner.
- The Office of Transportation has indicated to us that they are willing to consider a different type of traffic circle design. But they won't do it unless the people to whom they are accountable insist on it.