



Conference Call on Rumble Strips

6/3/2010

Participants

The League of American Bicyclists – Walter Finch, Darren Flusche, Jeff Peel

The Alliance for Biking & Walking – Jeff Miller, Chanda Causer

The Adventure Cycling Association – Ginny Sullivan

Ginny:

Federal money (ARRA stimulus) is being used for many recent and current rumble projects. In recent months, the national organizations – Adventure Cycling, the League, and the Alliance – have heard numerous complaints about new rumble strips from local groups. The national organizations got together to work on the issue collectively. They collected data from local advocates on current state policies –

<http://www.adventurecycling.org/routes/nbrn/resourcespage/StateRumblePoliciesIssues.pdf>

Big issue is rumbles now appearing on secondary roads with narrow/no shoulders. Working with American Society of Highway Engineers (ASHE,) AASHTO, and USA Cycling, whose races have been cancelled due to rumble strips.

Walter:

The League's Walter Finch, the Alliance's Jeff Miller, Adventure Cycling's Jim Sayer, and Caron Whitaker from America Bikes, met with Joe Toole, FHWA's lead administrator for safety, and David Nicol, the head of the Office of Safety Design. FHWA's position is that rumbles are a useful safety measure. Do not expect rumble strips to go away. The goal is to avoid indiscriminant installation and for installation to follow bicycle-tolerable practices.

Nicol said he'd work on memo with best practices to DOTs, but nothing yet. Currently doing follow up to encourage FHWA to reissue guidance on rumble strip installation as it relates to bicycling. FHWA setting up task force to revise/update rumble guidance - what's acceptable for cyclists?

Report on best practices: http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/rumble_strips.pdf

Notes from meeting: <http://blog.adventurecycling.org/2010/04/rumble-strip-report.html>

Darren:

We sent a survey to 600 League-member clubs to get "on the ground" info on rumble strips. We had 74 responses from 35 states.

Two thirds of the clubs had contacted agencies (Departments of Transportation, Municipal Planning Organizations, local road commissions).

Three in ten are familiar with their state's rumble strip policy

Forty percent say rumble strips have been added in the past twelve months and 20 percent know of plans for upcoming rumble strips. 11 clubs say they have already been put on popular routes and 7 say the planned strips will be on popular routes

Eighty percent of respondents who've had recent rumble strips say the quality of the route declined. The most common complaints were that rumble strips were on shoulders that left less than 4 feet of ride-able space and that strips took up more than six inches of shoulder space.

Eight groups gave "don't touch" routes to agencies

Tom Ezell (Arkansas experience):

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) started to aggressively install Shoulder Rumble Strips on 2-lane roads using ARRA funds, citing 180 deaths in 2010 so far from run off the road collisions. AHTD only answers to the Highway Commission, not Governor - very insular. AHTD received "Critical mass" of complaints. Turns out that the AHTD databases on shoulders was very out of date and led them to put rumble strips on roads without sufficient shoulder width. They suspended rumbling until inventory of adequate shoulders. And the rumble stripping machine broke.

Note: Centerline rumbles incensed motorcyclists

Mark Wyatt (Iowa experience):

There is a High run off the road crash rate in IA. 90,000 miles of paved roads makes it difficult to narrow list of high-priority roads. There are about 500 bike routes to document for DOT. 2010 projects are already underway -- Hard to stop underway projects.

The road agency was putting in 16" rumbles on just about every 4 ft shoulder, leaving 16" space.

Tennessee:

Started to work with TDOT in 2008 after rumbles appeared. In 2010, new rumble design & policy – better. Information on process & lessons & TDOT spec on Bike/Walk TN website -- <http://bikewalktn.homestead.com/Rumble.html>

They are IDing roads sensitive to cyclists. TDOT re-evaluating suitability of all roads. When talking to Departments of Transportation, it is important to understand value of SRS &

Concerns: inconsistency (not following policy). They have 3 different designs for different circumstances. Available funds led to rumbling simply because money was there. Centerline rumble leads to too-close passing.

Richard Moeur (Arizona DOT):

Emphasize that rumble strips have a disproportionate impact on cyclists. Work with DOTs - start with Bike/Ped coordinator then work with folks actually controlling rumbles. Centerline rumbles are the next big thing - CL doesn't increase run off the road crashes & vice versa.

Raised markings are an option, but not in snow areas - gaps not needed for markings.

Commercial vehicles (large trucks) greatly underrepresented in ROR crashes - don't design rumbles around 18-wheelers.

Good rumble policy addresses noise issues in developed areas.

Discussion:

Are ROR statistics valid? Flusche cited NCHRP report – http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_641.pdf

Forkosh: Do centerline rumbles lead to increased ROR?

Extremely high cost/benefit ratio for rumbles

What about rumble line / RainLine?

Rumble pushes cyclists into debris zone, even w/narrow rumble

MN: good relationship with DOT - dialogue: is road appropriate? is there recovery zone? Is road curvy = low effect?

What about rumbles on edge of road w/ poor shoulder?

Hard to get safety \$ in MN for bikes

"Toward Zero Deaths" in MN ignoring bike/ped

Is remaining shoulder width bike-able?

WA: Contractors aren't following good WSDOT guidance/policy How to enforce?

CA: promise shoulder widening, but delay until well after

Ginny: South Carolina experience was that is 9 times as expensive to fix a bad rumble than to install correctly.

MI: excellent policy, but MDOT & contractors often fail to follow their own policy

Recommendations:

Create relationship with DOT - use B/P coordinator as lead contact, but don't expect the B/P coordinator to be your advocate or do your work

Create database of upcoming projects that might have rumbles

Every state is different - hard to develop national guidance

Look for STIP & project info databases, even bid plans

Don't be overtly anti-rumble - be positive

Partners:

Motorcyclists
Snowplow issues (?)

Wrap up:

Don't be painted as obstructionists, or not understanding magnitude & effect of ROR crashes - example: "you need to attend funeral of ROR victim"

Develop relationships with other groups & advocates

Work with media, but don't let them make you look "anti-safety"

Can endanger popular bike routes - can galvanize advocacy

TN: Strategic Highway Safety Plan calls for rumble strips

This is tied to larger distracted driving issue - leverage link

League & Alliance working on educating re transportation funding

A big thank you to Richard Moeur for taking excellent notes and sending them along

Thank you to our partners:

