

Woodside cracking down on Canada Road Cyclists not stopping at stop signs (We can do better)



Woodside is making enforcement of cycling infractions a priority again. It's nothing new, but we haven't seen active enforcement of cyclists not obeying stop signs in a while. The photo above is the scene from our ride last Sunday, Canada Road & Glenwood, just north of the town of Woodside. This has long been the favorite spot for catching cyclists cruising stop signs; the cop just sits around the corner on Glenwood and gets a perfect view, without warning to the cyclist.

Should they cut cyclists some slack? They already might be. So far I haven't heard of anything getting pulled over and ticketed because they didn't put a foot down. The truth is, there is no requirement anywhere in the DMV code that says you've got to put a foot down at a stop sign. There was a time when some gung-ho law enforcement officers pretended that was a requirement, and you had to go to court to get it tossed out (if the officer stated that was the reason for the ticket; otherwise, he/she can still claim you were not stopped and the ticket would be legit).

But sadly, Woodside is not wrong to take on the cavalier attitude of many cyclists passing through town. When my son and I are heading south on Canada, nearing that stop sign, our biggest fear is that we're going to get run over by a cyclist coming up fast behind us, who is assuming we're not going to stop. And sometimes they'll come flying past us, too close for comfort, sailing through the intersection without ever touching their brake levers.

The other intersection where cyclists routinely sail through a stop sign is again on Canada, again heading southbound, at Jefferson. Nearly all of my rides involve heading down Jefferson and making the right turn onto Canada, and I've learned that the biggest hazard for me at that intersection is not cars but bikes flying through it. You have to assume they will not stop.

And we wonder why many motorists and local residents don't like cyclists.

I've ridden something over 350,000 miles in my life. Exact numbers escape me; Strava wasn't around when the wheel was first invented. In all of those miles, I have not received a single ticket when riding my bike. Am I the absolute perfect model citizen on a bike? No. When I'm making a right turn at a stop sign in a deserted area, I slow down but can't take much more credit than that. Think Albion at Olive Hill. But if I'm going through an intersection? Even without cars approaching? My speed drops close to zero. Maybe a tortoise walking pace. My foot never unclips (unless I'm going to be waiting for a while), and if a car gets to the limit line before me, I wait for them. This is where it gets frustrating, because so many assume I'm going to blow through, so they'll just sit there. I motion them on, and usually they eventually go, then it's my turn. Sometimes they'll just sit there forever, and it's safer for me to proceed out of turn than play a game where nobody knows when the next move will be made.

I look forward to some gung-ho enforcement officer giving me a ticket for not completely stopping. They're going to have a rough time trying to claim I was never stopped at some point; the law doesn't state how long you must remain fixed in place. And if

someone says I didn't put my foot down, so much the better. The same rules apply to bikes and cars, and I've never seen anyone expect a motorist to open their door and put their foot on the ground, to prove they've stopped. Neat trick, made even tougher when you're holding a cell phone in your hand. And just to be sure, in case I ever get that ticket, I'll also head out to the intersection, and record video of motorist vs bike behavior, because if anything, what my son and I do at intersections on our bikes comes far closer to a complete stop than the "roll through at low speed" that is becoming increasingly common for cars.

Please keep in mind that what keeps us alive on the road is predictability. The rules aren't there to harass us; they're to keep all road users safe. Not to mention that, the few times I've been harassed by a motorist, it's likely fallout from something the last cyclist they passed did. Let's do a better job and really bore that motorcycle enforcement guy in the photo to death. Maybe we can befriend him and convince him to try riding a different type of bike.