California Traffic Control Devices Committee
Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: October 21, 2025 **Item Number:** 25-13	**From:** Mike Malyy, Caltrans
Sponsored By: Amjad Obeid, Caltrans	**Presented By:** Mike Malyy, Caltrans
Description: Request for review and recommendation to finalize CA MUTCD 2026 Part 9 titled "Traffic Control For Bicycle Facilities" proposed documents that have been revised in response to 10/2/25 CTCDC Meeting comments and is being prepared to adopt Federal Highway Administration's National MUTCD 2023 (11th Edition) before the January 18, 2026, deadline.	

Recommendation:

Motion by committee, recommending Caltrans to finalize and prepare the CA MUTCD 2026 Part 9 titled "Traffic Control For Bicycle Facilities" draft documents and incorporate them into CA MUTCD 2026 version that is being prepared to adopt Federal Highway Administration's National MUTCD 2023 (11th Edition) before the January 18, 2026, deadline.

Agency Making Request/Sponsor:

Mike Malyy, Caltrans / Amjad Obeid, Caltrans

Background:

For detailed background on this item, including the previously proposed revisions upon which the CTCDC provided comments shared below were based, as well as the meeting minutes of the meeting discussions, please refer to agenda item 25-13 document and its attachments, that were included in the August 7, 2025 and October 2, 2025 meeting and are available at: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/ctcdc/meetings.

This item was discussed previously in the October 2, 2025 meeting. During the meeting, several CTCDC members, the public, and the FHWA CA Division representative shared their comments and concerns on the proposed revisions. The meeting discussions resulted in the CTCDC providing multiple comments to Caltrans and requesting Caltrans to review and address these comments, as appropriate. Caltrans was asked to revise these draft documents based on review of the CTCDC comments and provide them to CTCDC for review and discussion in a future meeting. Summary of the CTCDC comments provided on October 2, 2025, meeting and Caltrans review, response and resolution to these comments, is as follows:

1. **CTCDC Comment – Figure 9A-1:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes note in the figure:

Note: Refer to State and Federal ADA standards for sign requirements when shared-use path is adjacent to sidewalk

CTCDC member comment: Couple of issues with this 1) If you have a Class I path that is adjacent to a sidewalk, it is not longer a shared-use path because the pedestrians are required by law to use the sidewalk. 2) I don't think that there is a State ADA as a federal law. There are state accessibility guidelines but they are not ADA standards in my understanding. Regardless, those accessibility standards apply to a shared-use path or to a sidewalk. I am not understanding where the distinction is here which requires that note to be added.

CTCDC member comment: Reference to State and Federal ADA standards should refer to "accessibility" standards or guidelines. ADA is a federal only law, though an oft-used shorthand for accessibility.

Shared use paths need to meet accessibility standards, too, so why the distinction between them and sidewalks? The note seems unnecessary.

If a sidewalk is adjacent to a shared use path, pedestrians are required by state law to use the sidewalk and therefore, the shared use path is no longer shared use but instead a bike path only.

Caltrans comment: Agree, will revise to "Refer to Federal accessibility standards and State accessibility guidelines for sign requirements."

2. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9B, Section 9B.01, Paragraphs 06:**

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

Guidance:

06 When the placement of STOP or YIELD signs is being considered, the priority at a shared-use path/bikeway with roadway intersection should be assigned with consideration of the following:

A. Relative speeds of shared-use path, bikeway and roadway users,

B. Relative volumes of shared-use path, bikeway and roadway traffic, and

C. Relative importance of shared-use path, bikeway and roadway.

CTCDC member comment: Question use of "bikeway" in P06. May apply to Class I, III and IV, but hard to imagine a situation where a bike lane would get priority over cross traffic since it would, by definition, be part of a road with vehicular traffic as well.

Slash (?) in "shared-use path/bikeway" in first part of Paragraph 06 is inconsistent with comma-separated use in A, B and C below.

Caltrans comment: "/" being used to mean "or". Comma used in A, B, C being used to mean "and".

3. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9B, Section 9B.07, Paragraph 02:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

   Option:

   02 The Bike Path Exclusion (R44A(CA)) sign may be used to identify a bike path or shared-use path and prohibit motor vehicles and motorized bicycles from entering the bike path. If motorized bicycles are permitted, the "Motorized Bicycles" portion may be replaced with "Motorized Bicycles Permitted".

   CTCDC member comment: Should include cycle track here.

   Caltrans comment: Cannot include Cycle Track in this Option because R44A(CA) is specific to "Bike Path" (defined as a Class 1 Bikeway or "shared-use path" in 1C.02). Cycle track is a Class IV Bikeway. We will need to look into designing a Class IV (Cycle Track or Separated Bikeway) Exclusion sign in the future.

4. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9B, Section 9B.15, Paragraph 01c:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

   Support:

   01c CVC 21202(a)(3) defines a "substandard width lane" as a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and vehicle to travel safely side by side within the same lane.

   CTCDC member comment: Why reference the CVC (substandard width lanes) here? There is no reference to substandard width lanes anywhere else in this particular section. There is in the previous section. There may be in the law but it is odd to provide a definition for something that is not mentioned.

   Caltrans comment: The Support statement seems to be included as one of the roadway conditions (CVC 21760(d)) that the motor vehicle driver would need to account for when trying to pass a bicycle, and that the bicyclist should try to avoid. Thus, it would be a likely situation to use the R4-19 sign.

5. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Section 9E.02, Paragraph 03b:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

   Guidance:

   03b Where through motor vehicle lanes approaching an intersection become mandatory turn lanes adjacent bike lanes should be delineated using Figures 9E-4 and 9E-4(CA).

CTCDC member comment: I believe the first one is incorrect, it should be Figure 9E-3(CA). 9E-4 does not address this situation, where approaching lane become a mandatory turn lane, but 9E-3(CA) does. I think that was the intent of that.

Caltrans comment: Agree. "9E-4" here will be changed to "9E-3(CA)".

6. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Sections 9E.06 and 9E.07, Paragraph 00a:**

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

Support:

00a In California, Class II and Class IV Bikeways are classified as follows:

A. Class II Bikeway (bike lane, bicycle lane or buffer-separated bicycle lane) - Buffer-separated bicycle lanes provide additional lateral separation between a bicycle lane and a general-purpose lane by a pattern of pavement markings without the presence of vertical elements.

B. Class IV Bikeway (cycle track, separated bikeway or separated bicycle lane) - Separated bicycle lanes provide a physical separation between a general-purpose lane and a bicycle lane through the use of vertical objects or vertical separation between the general-purpose lane and bicycle lane.

CTCDC member comment: The federal MUTCD refers to "Separated Bicycle Lanes". The closest thing that CA has to separated bicycle lanes is "Class IV Separated Bikeways". There is plenty of room for confusion for enforcement personnel as well as people attempting to develop bikeway signage. Rather than referring to "Class IV Separated Bikeways" as Separated Bicycle Lanes", refer to them as "Class IV Separated Bikeways" or Cycle Track (which is popularly being used).

CTCDC member comment: Reconcile Class IV Bikeway differences with definition in Section 1C.02. Proposed Language for 9E.06 and 9E.07, Paragraph 00a, Subpoint B:

B. Class IV Bikeway (cycle track,-or separated bikeway~~or separated bicycle lane~~) - Right-of-way designated exclusively for bicycle travel adjacent to a roadway and which is physically separated from vehicular traffic. Types of separation include, but are not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers, or on-street parking. ~~Separated bicycle lanes provide a physical separation between a general-purpose lane and a bicycle lane through the use of vertical objects or vertical separation between the general-purpose lane and bicycle lane.~~

Caltrans comment: After consultation with FHWA, we will remove definitions for Class II and Class IV bikeways in 9E.06 and 9E.07, Paragraph 00a Subpoints A and B, to avoid redundancy (repeating definitions from 1C.02).

7. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Section 9E.07, Paragraph 00c:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

   Standard:

   00c All topics in this section referencing buffer, buffer area, buffer space, buffer-separated bicycle lane, shall mean to apply to Class II Bikeway, bike lane, bicycle lane or buffer-separated bicycle lane.

   CTCDC member comment: The list at the end should include separated bike lanes, Class IV bikeways, separated bikeways and cycle tracks. The buffer provisions apply to all of them, as well as to the buffer-separated bike lanes covered in 9E.06.

   Caltrans comment: Will revise to:

   Standard:

   00c All topics in this section referencing buffer, buffer area, and buffer space for a buffer-separated bicycle lane shall mean to apply to a Class II Bikeway. All topics in this section referencing buffer, buffer area, and buffer space for a separated bicycle lane shall mean to apply to a Class IV Bikeway (Cycle Track or Separated Bikeway).

8. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Section 9E.07, Paragraph 05:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

   Guidance:

   05 BIKE LANE (R3-17) signs (see Figure 9B-1) should be used to distinguish a separated bicycle lane from a general-purpose lane. Refer to Paragraph 00a and 00b in this section.

   CTCDC member comment: This paragraph calls for the use of BIKE Lane signs, which are not appropriate for Class IV bikeways, which are not, per SHC 890.4, bike lanes.

   Caltrans comment: Based on federal definition in Part 1, Bicycle Lane is a more general term that encompasses both CA Class II and Class IV bikeways. So that sign works in the federal context. Based on the bikeway classification and need in California (where "Bike Lane" equals Class II), we will work on a sign for Class IV Bikeways in the future.

9. **CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Section 9E.07, Paragraph 22 & 24:**

   CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

   Option:

22 For the separated bikeway (cycle track or separated bicycle lane) on a sidewalk, the separation may include the flexible bikeway separator posts 1.5 feet minimum from face of curb.

24 On a sidewalk, the separation may include the inflexible physical barrier 1.5 feet minimum from face of curb.

CTCDC member comment: There is a definition of cycle track on a sidewalk. By definition, a cycle track cannot be on a sidewalk. It might be raised behind a curb, but if it is a cycle track, cycle tracks, by definition, do not allow pedestrians. For Paragraph 22, propose replacing "on a sidewalk" with "at sidewalk level". This would be consistent with DIB 89-02. For Paragraph 24, propose replacing "On a sidewalk" with "For a separated bikeway at sidewalk level".

Caltrans comment: Agree with proposed changes.

10. CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Section 9E.09, Paragraph 03b:

CTCDC Comment: CA MUTCD Section 9C.07 has an exception to the prohibition of the use of shared lane markings on roadways that have speed limits over certain levels (e.g. 30, 35 mph or more). I request that exception be included: "Shared lane markings may be placed on roadways that have a speed limit of above 35 mph where there is bicycle travel and there is no marked bicycle lane in the right hand traffic lane…"

Caltrans comment: That exception was an Option in a previous CA MUTCD (Revision 8). That paragraph has been removed from the CA MUTCD since Revision 9, due to Section 891.9 added to the Streets and Highways Code. Refer to CTCDC Agenda Item 24-16, dated November 7, 2024.

11. CTCDC Comment – Chapter 9E, Section 9E.09, Paragraph 05, and Figure 9E-1:

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes text:

Standard:

"**Green-colored pavement shall not be applied as a background to shared-lane markings (see Section 3H.06)."**

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal: Figure depicts word, symbol, and arrow pavement markings for bicycle lanes.

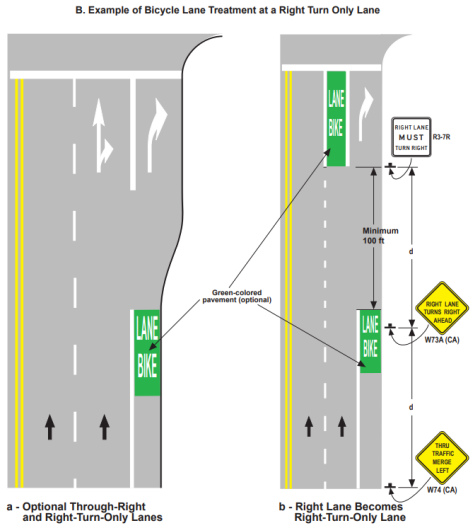
CTCDC member comment: I am concerned that many agencies will continue to use green under sharrows, helmeted bike rider stencil, and green plastic posts on bikeways, even though CAMUTCD now states that we are not allowed to use them. If Caltrans is a member of AASHTO and can work with 49 other states on this, this should provide adequate justification for FHWA.

FHWA comment: The experimental process in the national committee provides an outlet for these concerns to be brought forth and it has been done. The green bikeway under the sharrows has been extensively tested in experiments across the country. The policy and the manual now is the result of that experiment and research. There are 49 other states that do things differently and by law, has to be uniform. There hasn't been lack of discussion on this. The designer cannot vary. I cannot support a variance from the standards in the national manual. Our job is to ensure that the CA manual meets the code of the federal regulations. Caltrans staff has worked hard to do that, but it has not been without discussion and some good points have been raised by the subject matter experts. But the regulation is what it is, and the standard is what it is. The designer who chooses not to go with the standard has to make that choice, has to violate that consciously. Phasing out the helmeted bike symbol will take time. 20 years ago Caltrans agreed at that time that these things will be phased out with the next revision. The next revisions came and went and here we are 20 years later and it is time to conform with the CFR. Unfortunately, there is going to be disagreements and there are thousands of examples in the state on one type of device that are non-compliant. Caltrans has made that conscious choice over and over again to not comply with the manual. That does not make it right. We cannot support deviations from the standards and guidance unless it complies with the CFR. Caltrans can pass a law which make it more restrictive but they cannot pass a law to make it less restrictive than the MUTCD. So, 1) We do not a lot of leeway and 2) Caltrans doesn't have a lot of time on this manual update.

Caltrans acknowledged the comment and explained that FHWA produced the new standard, and justification is needed to deviate from Federal standard.

12. CTCDC Comment – Figure 9E-3(CA)(Sheet 2):

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes in the figure:



CTCDC member comment: For drawing a, Optional Through-Right and Right-Turn-Only-Lanes, there should be a BIKE LANE ENDS sign at the start of the turn lanes.

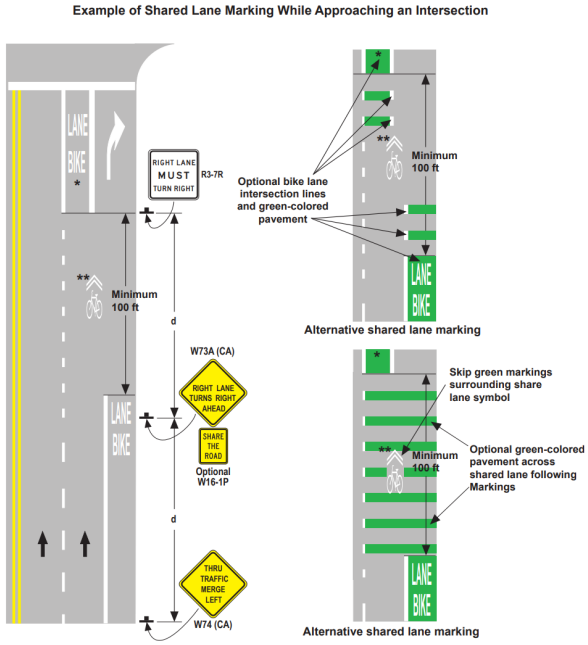
CTCDC member comment: Both drawings a and b are situations where shared lane markings may be appropriate, as shown in Figure 9E-4(CA). Recommend either combining the figures, or at least providing a note referencing Figure 9E-4(CA).

Caltrans comment: Will add shared lane marking as used in Figure 9E-4(CA).

13. CTCDC Comment – Figure 9E-4(CA):

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes in the figure:

Figure 9E-4(CA). Example of Bicycle Lane Markings on an Approach to an Intersection that Transitions from a Shared Lane



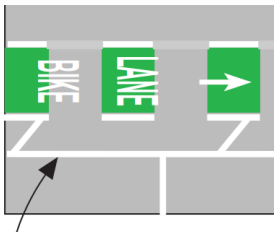
CTCDC member comment: The title is incorrect. Should be: Example of Bicycle Lane Markings on an Approach to an Intersection where the Right Lane Becomes a Right Turn Only Lane.

Also, because it is not directly related to national MUTCD Figure 9E-4, it seems like it should be part of the Figure 9E-3 series.

Caltrans comment: 9E-4(CA) is similar to 9E-3(CA)(Sheet 2) drawing b, but is more focused on the shared lane markings and adds additional details regarding that. Will change 9E-4(CA) to 9E-3(CA)(Sheet 3), and shift the following sheets.

14. CTCDC Comment – Figure 9E-6(CA)(Sheet 2), Drawing C:

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes in the figure:



CTCDC member comment: Should BIKE LANE markings and arrows be shown on the green paint or between the green paint? They are currently half on and half off.

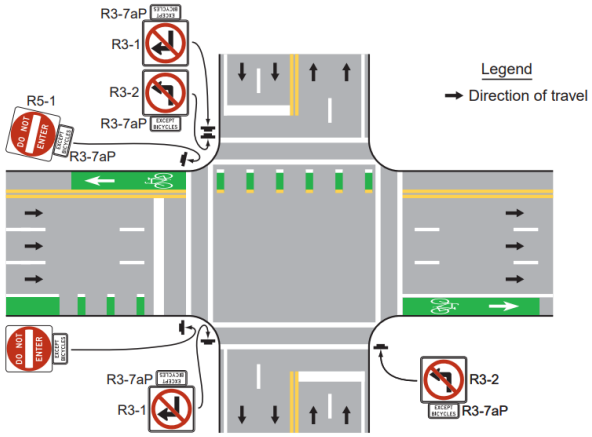
Caltrans comment: Will fix figure to show the word and arrow markings in between the green paint.

15. CTCDC Comment – Figure 9E-8(CA)(Sheet 2), Alternative 2:

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes in the figure:

Figure 9E-8(CA). Example of Counter-Flow Bicycle Lanes (Sheet 2 of 2)

Alternative 2. With Optional Green-colored Pavement



CTCDC member comment: This figure is nearly identical to Figure 9E-8 (the only substantive difference is green paint in the counter-flow bike lane approaching the intersection). Should Figure 9E-8(CA)(Alternatives 1 and 2) replace Figure 9E-8 rather than supplementing it?

Caltrans comment: Whenever we make several changes to a Federal Figure, we create a new supplemental figure(s). We feel there are enough changes to have a new figures.

16. CTCDC Comment – Figure 9E-106(CA):

CTCDC member comment: How do these work with Figure 9E-7 Examples of Markings for Separated Bike Lanes (Sheets 1 and 2)? They seem to very closely

cover the same material, and if there is no distinction between Separated Bike Lanes and Separated Bikeways, then why two sets of very similar details?

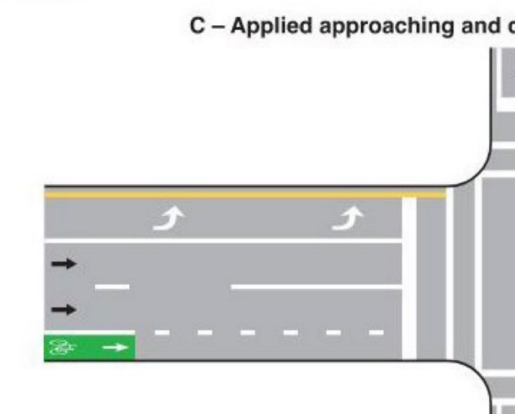
Caltrans comment:

Both bikeways (CA figures) and bicycle lanes (federal figures) are being used in this case as general terms for dedicated bicycle facilities. CA Figures exist to provide more examples. Can evaluate for redundancy in the future.

Also, the Figure on Page 40 should be titled Figure 9E-105(CA).

17. CTCDC Comment – Figure 9E-109(CA):

CA MUTCD 2026 Proposal includes in the figure:



CTCDC member comment: This figure is inconsistent with Fig. 9E-109(CA). This one (correctly) shows optional dotted lines and green paint in the conflict zones where there is not a RTOL. Fig. 9E-109(CA) shows only the dotted lines, not the green paint option.

Caltrans comment: We will add green paint for the dotted lines.

18. CTCDC Comment – General Comment

CTCDC Comment: The federal MUTCD refers to "Separated Bicycle Lanes". The closest thing that CA has to separated bicycle lanes is "Class IV Separated Bikeways". There is plenty of room for confusion for enforcement personnel as well as people attempting to develop bikeway signage. It is inappropriate to refer to "Class IV Separated Bikeways" as Separated Bicycle Lanes" for several reasons. It appears at least 30 times, referencing separated bicycle lanes. I think that it is inappropriate for CA. They should be referring them to "Class IV Separated Bikeways" or cycle track which is popularly being used. I have no objection to the buffered separated bicycle lane references. They are not the same as separated bikeways

Caltrans response: The term "lane" is being used generically in the National MUTCD to refer to any bicycle lane, not necessarily Class II bicycle facilities. The NMUTCD has never intended by the term "bicycle lane" to mean Class II facilities. If one were to take look at the term "bicycle lane" in the NMUTCD glossary contained in Part 1, one would come to the conclusion that "bicycle lane" is a term that is being used generically in the manual. When using the manual, it is essential that the practitioners understand the generic/linguistic use of the term (by the NMUTCD) and the technical use of the term (by the CAMUTCD). The former is in Times New Roman font in black color while the latter being distinguished clearly by Arial Narrow font in blue color.

The term "Bikeway" is likewise generic, it is not restricted to any particular class. The NMUTCD defines it as, "Bikeway—a generic term for any road, street, path, or way that in some manner is specifically designated for bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes. According to the SHC Section 890.4, " 'bikeway' means all facilities that provide primarily for, and promote, bicycle travel. For purposes of this article, bikeways shall be categorized as follows..." Then the code goes on to list bike paths as "Class I bikeways", bike lanes as "Class II bikeways", bike routes as "Class III bikeways, and cycle tracks/separated bikeways as "Class IV bikeways."

It should be pointed out that other publications like *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* likewise often use the terms bike lanes and bikeways generically, and in some instances, interchangeably.

19. CTCDC Comment – General Comment

CTCDC Comment: the federal MUTCD has no distinctions between bikeways, Class IV or Class II. In California, we have adopted the distinction between separated bikeways which are Class IV, not part of the roadway, and bicycle lanes, Class II, which are part of the roadway. The distinction is important for possibility to use Class IV or Class II when a bikeway is signed and marked as a bicycle lane, then bicyclists using the roadway are required under CVC 21208 and CVC 21202, to use the right most portion of the roadway, or to use the bike lanes with some exceptions - those vehicle codes are not applicable to Class IV bikeways. It is important from the perspective of a California Association of Bicyclist Organizations (CABO) that we continue to have that choice. More importantly, for those designing and implementing traffic control devices, since bicyclists are not required to use Class IV Separated Bikeways and may use the adjacent roadways, people who are designing and implementing roadway TCD should be aware that accommodations of bicyclists using adjacent to travel lanes should be accounted for.

Caltrans comment: Class IV Separated Bikeways are still part of the roadway, in contrast with Class I Bike Paths. As per DIB 89.01: "Separated bikeways typically operate as one way bikeway facilities in the same direction as vehicular traffic on the same side of the roadway." Similarly, SHC Section 890.4(d) defines Class IV Bikeways as, "Cycle tracks or separated bikeways, also referred to as "Class IV bikeways," which promote active transportation and provide a right-of-way designated exclusively for bicycle travel adjacent to a roadway and which are separated from vehicular traffic. Types of separation include, but are not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers, or on-street parking."

We will look into signing for Class IV Bikeways in the future.

20. CTCDC Comment – General Comment

CTCDC Comment: Caltrans recently created Class IV bikeways in El Camino Real and Palo Alto in Mountain View and installed brand new bike lane signage directly in the area of the Class IV Bikeway. Our organization has noted this discrepancy. The concern is that if these rules that you are discussing today are adopted, it is perfectly fine to put those signs there and are probably law. Then we will have mass confusion about whether the CVC 21208 applicability is appropriate. It will confuse motorists, law enforcement and bicyclists.

Caltrans comment: We will look into signing for Class IV Bikeways in the future.

Caltrans has prepared the finalized proposal on CA MUTCD 2026 Part 9, incorporating CTCDC recommendation and Caltrans decisions, and it is attached to this agenda item. It is being provided for review to the CTCDC members and the public to share Caltrans decision on the CTCDC comments that were provided. Upon receiving formal CTCDC recommendation to finalize CA MUTCD 2026 Part 9 proposal, it will be revised as per the CTCDC passing motion details and then submitted to FHWA CA Division for review and determination of "substantial conformance" finding with the National MUTCD 2023 (11th Edition).

Attachments:

Attachment #1 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9A Draft (Text)

Attachment #2 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9A Draft (Figures)

Attachment #3 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9A Draft (Tables)

Attachment #4 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9B Draft (Text)

Attachment #5 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9B Draft (Figures)

Attachment #6 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9C Draft (Text)

Attachment #7 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9C Draft (Figures)

Attachment #8 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9D Draft (Text)

Attachment #9 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9D Draft (Figures)

Attachment #10 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9E Draft (Text)

Attachment #11 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9E Draft (Figures)

Attachment #12 – CA MUTCD 2026 Chapter 9F Draft (Text)