



CYCLISTS have been warned of rising crime along Lower Church Street bridge. | Google

SAFETY TIPS

# ‘Cyclists are becoming easy targets’: Woodstock a hotspot

ROBIN-LEE FRANCKE

robin.francke@inl.co.za

CYCLISTS are being targeted by brazen criminals who attack and rob them along the Lower Church Street bridge in Cape Town.

Sharief Peters, chairperson of Western Province Cycling and Cape Town Giants, highlighted Woodstock as one of the crime hotspots for cyclists.

“In previous years, biking equipment was taken but that seems not to be the trend, and now criminals are after what cyclists are carrying, such as cellphones and cash,” he said.

Peters said most bicycles have VIN numbers much like vehicles and can be traced. While criminals are still stealing bicycles, it is no longer at the rate it once was. “We have [WhatsApp] club groups where messages are shared. We also request anyone to report any incidents,” Peters said.

He said entering Woodstock from Paarden Eiland into Cape Town along the bridge has become dangerous.

He said in the latest incident, a woman was robbed of her belong-

ings while a mere 30 metres from her group.

“She stopped for water and she could see the group. The guys robbed her politely. They said: ‘Can you please give us your cellphone, and if you have any cash hand it over please’. While they may have been polite, in retrospect another cyclist landed in hospital after being robbed and attacked, and a hand cyclist also got robbed. The problem we have now is getting people to report it. I think it may be a fear of being targeted, as anyone can be looked up on social media. Only people who report the matters and make cases do so for insurance purposes,” Peters said.

Police have urged cyclists to be vigilant and ride in groups.

“We advised cyclists to operate or ride in groups of at least three or more and to be vigilant at all times, especially when riding the specific route. Report all suspicious activities and people to SAPS, immediately,” police spokesperson, Malcolm Pojie, said.

Pedal Power Association (PPA) spokesperson and CEO Neil Robinson

said the organisation was aware of the attacks and is currently in contact with the City of Cape Town’s Mobility Directorate as well as the Western Cape Government’s Mobility Department..

“Over the past five years, numerous attacks have been reported to us. In November this year, there have been at least three attacks reported to us but we heard there were more, of which some were serious. The area is being patrolled by SAPS but it is not deterring criminals from attacking the cyclists as the area is not being patrolled all day,” Robinson said.

He said the criminals’ modus operandi is to push cyclists off their bicycles and then rob them of cellphones and their bikes. The perpetrators hide in bushes and attack in groups of two or three. Some cyclists have been threatened with knives.

“The PPA advises cyclists to avoid the area until the cycle lane has been cleaned up and restored. If the route is being used, which is not advisable at the moment, cyclists should cycle in large groups at all times,” Robinson said.