

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Garcia, Kami](#)
Cc: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Re: Please Forward to City Council re: D Street Quick Fix Proposal
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 3:59:11 PM

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Thank you Ms. Garcia.

I had also reached out to City Staff member Mr. Bjorn Gripenburg. He let me know that the City is actually planning on widening the bike lane to 6-1/2 feet, not the 5 feet that is the California Department of Transportation recommendation for a Class II bike lane with adjacent on-street parking, which is what I mentioned in my letter below as I assumed the City was adopting the CA DOT recommendation.

Please may you also forward this email to the City Council as an addendum to my original email, to correct for the 6.5 ft proposed bike lane width, and also because I obtained feedback from the cycling community, summarized below.

I reached out last week to others in the community who are experienced cyclists like myself, specifically, with cyclists that I know who are members of either the Petaluma Wheelmen Cycling Club or the Santa Rosa Cycling Club. The general consensus shared with me is that having a bike lane on D Street is not responsible design. The analogy drawn is, if a parent planned to teach a new driver how to drive, would they teach the student learner how to drive on D Street? Of course not. The reason is that the large volume of traffic coupled with heavy commercial truck activity does not make it a safe learning street. Instead, parents would teach new drivers how to drive on a relatively safer side street, or in a parking lot that has almost zero traffic. Similarly, would a parent want to have their children ride their bicycle on D Street, or prefer them to ride on a relatively safer side street? Our cycling group thinks that parents would want their children to bike on a safer, low traffic street, and not D Street, all else being equal.

Our cycling group also pointed out that even with a 6 foot wide bike lane, any experienced cyclist will not bike to the right. close to where parked cars might be, but rather, farther to the left away from where parked cars might be located. The reasoning is to avoid a car door opening into the bike lane and into a cyclists path, Car doors swing out 3 feet, and a bicycle such as a mountain bike (with slightly wider flat handlebars compared to a 11-speed road bicycle) will measure 3 feet wide. To have enough space to avoid a "car dooring" accident, an experienced cyclist will ride in a straight line with at least 2 feet comfort clearance + 3 feet door swing, or at least 5 feet to the left of parked cars. Cyclists will ride in a straight line at least 5 feet from where parked cars might be even if no car is parked there, because an experienced cyclist knows that staying visible and in a predictable straight line will reduce the risk of being hit by a car or truck that is passing the cyclist at a higher speed. California's Three Feet Safety Act requires motorists to pass cyclists with at least 3 feet of space to the left of a cyclist. This means that the bike lane should be at least 8 feet wide (5 feet safety clearance from parked cars + 3 feet clearance from passing traffic), not 6 feet wide, as proposed in the Quick Fix design. Anything less, and an experienced cyclist will instead ride in the vehicle lane and "take the lane" in order to avoid a swinging door and a truck or car passing the cyclist with less than 3 feet of clearance. This "take the lane" cycling behavior is what experienced cyclists will do because they know how to ride, how to stay visible, how to

avoid being rear ended by a vehicle, and how to avoid a car dooring accident. Less experienced cyclists, such as families with children, are much less likely to ride with enough spacing from parked cars or passing vehicles, placing them at higher risk of a collision with a passing car or an unexpectedly opened car door. Thus, our cycling group recommends that the City of Petaluma instead make D Street a bike route, without bike lane markings, so that more experienced cyclists are encouraged to use D Street, and that the City of Petaluma should focus the bike lanes to side streets that have much car less traffic and no/little commercial truck traffic, which will be safer for less experience cyclists. A white bike lane line will not protect a bicyclist from bad car or truck drivers, or car door openings. We believe that having a bike lane on D Street will provide families a false sense of security, when in fact, it is an unsafe street for bicycling for the less experienced cyclists. Add to that these additional issues:

- by removing parking on one side of D Street, D Street residents and their guests will now cross the street from a parking spot on the other side of D Street, and that will increase the number of pedestrians not using a crosswalk (which is more visible and safer for pedestrians)
- it is likely that delivery vehicles will park in the proposed bike lane rather than make a U-Turn to park on the legal side of the street, especially if the deliver truck has large packages that need to be wheeled across a high traffic street - this will most likely force bicyclists to move closer to or into the lane of vehicle traffic.
- if D Street looks visually wider due to no parking on one side, drivers may be more apt to speed rather than slow down, and speed is a known contributor as to why D Street is designated as a High Injury Network street.

If we all share the same goal of increasing safety for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc., then those in our cycling group are not convinced that a wider bike lane on D Street is the safest option. Neighboring B Street has nice bike lanes already with no/little commercial truck traffic, and F Street and G Street both have low traffic volume with little to no truck traffic as well. We suggest that the City of Petaluma focus instead on the other solutions that address traffic calming and collision safety, rather than reconfigured bike lanes that could create additional safety issues and potentially open the City of Petaluma up to liability due to poor design that can increase risk for less experienced bicyclists.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Mike Sarmiento

On Mon, May 15, 2023 at 9:59 AM Garcia, Kami <kgarcia@cityofpetaluma.org> wrote:

Received, thank you for your public comment.

Thank you,

Kami

Kami Garcia

Deputy City Clerk
City of Petaluma | City Clerk
kgarcia@cityofpetaluma.org



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From: Mike Sarmiento [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 9:02 PM
To: -- City Clerk <CityClerk@cityofpetaluma.org>
Subject: Please Forward to City Council re: D Street Quick Fix Proposal

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OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear Petaluma City Council.

As a 9 year resident of Petaluma, I am writing to express my deep concern on the current City of Petaluma's Quick Fix Proposal to remove parking on D Street in order to widen existing bike lanes.

The bike lanes, one in each direction of D St, are 10' 9" wide when a car is not parked in the lane. I also measured from a parked car to the white line of the bike lane, and that measures 4' wide.

The City is proposing to make the bike lane 5' wide. So for 1 extra foot, the City will eliminate approximately 120 parking spaces? If we use the 3 data points on parking utilization that the City engineers looked at during the late fall and winter of 2022, where they concluded from weekday studies (not weekends when visitors who spend money come to town), parking is utilized on average for 14% of the D St area, so it follows that 86% of the time, bicyclists have a generous 10'9" wide bike lane.

It does not make a lot of sense to give up 120 parking spaces for a nominal extra 1 foot of width on 14% of D St riding area, which by the way, many people I know avoid riding anyway due to the volume and nature of car and truck traffic on D St.

More importantly, data from Sonoma County, which identified D St as part of Sonoma County's High Injury Network (meaning traffic collisions on D St occur more frequently and with greater injury severity relative to most Sonoma County roads), shows that there have been **zero** car to bicycle accidents for the 4 year period 2017- 2021. Of the collisions in the study, 49 were car to car (27 broadside, 18 rear end), and 8 were car to pedestrian (7 in a crosswalk, 1 outside a crosswalk). There was 1 bicycle to pedestrian accident that occurred at D St and 1st St during the 4 year study period, where it appears that the cyclist coming down

the slope of D St bridge failed to stop for a pedestrian crossing at D St. There were **zero** car to bicyclist dooring accidents during the period, which tends to be the most common car to bike incident. Thus, it is even more confusing that the City proposes to take away parking in the name of increasing safety for cyclists, when it's not an issue according to accident occurrence data that is driving the Quick Fix proposal. The other Quick Fix proposals by the City make a lot of sense to address the goal of traffic calming and collision safety - better / blinking light crosswalks, improving visibility and sight distance at intersections and crosswalks, speed feedback signs for drivers, progressively reduced speed markings which give drivers the impression that their speed is increasing - and none of these come at the cost of losing 120 parking spaces.

In the October 2022 community survey by the City, the top three priorities by respondents align with the non-issue of bike lane safety:

1. Improve pedestrian crossings
- Tied 2. Slow traffic
- Tied 2. Improve traffic congestion

It appears that the City is trying to solve a problem that doesn't need solving, and the cost is 120 parking spaces that are needed and utilized heavily for the Butter & Eggs parade, American Graffiti parade, Spring Antique Fair, Fall Antique Fair, Saturday markets at Walnut Park, Clove half marathon/10k/5k, Heritage Home tours, Art & Garden festival, Santa's River Boat ride, Lighted Boat Parade, Walnut Park Tree Lighting, Petaluma Historical Walking Tours, Rivertown Revival, and on and on and on. Petaluma is a very active community with year round events that peak in the Spring/Summer and weekends. Reducing by half the convenience of parking on D St will more likely than not make attendees to these economic engines feel less welcome and the events feel more of a hassle to attend, especially to those who have made attending Petaluma events a family tradition for a generation or more.

I bike with my children around the neighborhood of D St and to downtown, and we ride on the sidewalk when we are on D St. Even if there was a dedicated bike lane, the number of drivers who speed up and down D St and the volume of large commercial trucks discourage me from riding with my children on D St itself, so we use the sidewalk, or we take B St or F St and avoid D St altogether. Eliminating parking will also cause residents of D St to place trash and recycling bins in the proposed widened bike lanes, which will decrease safety for cyclists. If the goal is to calm traffic and reduce accidents, widening bike lanes an extra foot will not do that, and the cost / benefit does not make sense.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mike Sarmiento