

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Garcia, Kami](#)
Subject: For the city council please. Re: D St safety program
Date: Monday, May 15, 2023 9:57:28 PM

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Dear Council,

I am a Petaluma resident living with my family on D Street for the past ten years. I wanted to reach out to the Council regarding a matter that has become an increasing concern- D Street safety.

Let me begin with the survey. There is a new survey that just came out for the D St calming and safety project, but it is demonstrating a clear bias, making it at the very least unreliable and wholly unfair. I have sent several emails to the project manager Bjorn asking him to please reply by email or with a call, but he has never responded so I want to write a few of my concerns to you directly.

The D St program website purports to be about safety measures and includes a site introduction stating- **"The historic residential street is traveled along and across by many people on foot and bike, including children and families accessing nearby parks and schools. Unfortunately, D Street was recently identified as part of Sonoma County's High Injury Network, meaning traffic collisions on D Street occur more frequently and with greater injury severity relative to most Sonoma County roads"** yet it offers a survey with numerous problems.

- The survey is dominated by bike lane questions (ie: multiple screens of questions about the size of the bike lanes, the configuration options for the bike lanes etc etc).

- The survey also has different questions for bikers than for non bikers, questions that non bikers are unable to even see or be able to reply to in the survey.

- It has no parameters for those able to take the survey so people from anywhere can have input on a Petaluma D St safety program that impacts Petaluma residents.

- It offers only one safety measure (about 5th St) with no other safety measures being addressed, although it is suppose to be a safety survey.

- Many of us, who signed up on the D St plan website, did not even receive notice that there was a new survey- as was promised to us.

These are just a few examples of the survey bias which are being presented by a Petaluma City employee who is also a self declared "Bike Advocate", Chair of the Petaluma Bicycle Advisory Committee, Founder of Bike Petaluma, Policy & Planning Director for Marin County Bicycle Coalition, a biker with a career in bike agenda policies from SF to Santa Rosa. He proudly declares in his various profiles that his focus is on the biker agenda, not to mention the numerous posts on his own Facebook page which basically state "us against them" declaring war against those who drive cars. We are not against bikers and do not see this as a war. This is about one thing and one thing only- safety- and not anyone's personal agenda. Such a biased survey, presented, if not created, by a D Street Safety project manager who has a clear conflict of interest.

This D St program began with residents asking for help with a truck route in our neighborhood which has becoming wholly unsafe. We were happy the committee agreed to review safety measures and many of us asked to be kept informed. I personally asked Gina the engineer to keep me updated and never heard back about any of this. There has been no attempt to reach the residents in this regard, no letters sent to to inform them of the existence of a survey let alone information about a D St proposed plan or even that a website exists for it. When I asked the project manager Bjorn about this in a zoom meeting (which I only found out about because a resident left me a note in my mailbox) he said he "did his best." I asked what

did he do to proactively inform the community he said - "they can find us on the website." How is anyone to know about it if they are not informed that it even exists. Our civic leaders should want to extend the courtesy to inform the residents by making at least a minimal effort. We want what we had asked for and desperately need - safety measures for D St and to be kept informed on the proposals and developments so that we can be heard.

It is reasonable to think that the addition of two bike lanes (removing 120 parking spaces) and the narrowing of vehicle lanes on a truck route that runs through a residential neighborhood will increase risks for all. So why then is the topic of adding two bike lanes on such a street, which has been identified by the Sonoma County's High Injury Network as one with "greater injury severity", being allowed to dominate the time and attention and the survey to what was suppose to be a program to make D St safer and calmer for all.

I could go into the risks of adding bike lanes on D Street as stated by the bikers themselves, but do you think adding two bike lanes with trucks, on a truck route, and traffic all moving on narrowed lanes in both directions will reduce the risk. What about a biker being mistakenly "doored" and put into harms way of passing traffic or having to avoid a truck while turning at an intersection and not being seen.

Where will vehicles go when the D St fire station receives a call and the fire truck must race down D St to save life and property only to be blocked because vehicles can't pull over to let it safely pass. Where are the vehicles to go during these times. Are they to pull over into the bike lane with bikers then falling into the curb and side walk and what about vehicles on the other side of the street where are those cars and trucks to pull over to when the parking side of the street is full of parked cars as it's the only side for parking needs as well as trying to avoid hitting bikers passing by there as well.

What about all the California bicycle laws that are evolving. At present gas-powered bicycles and type 3 electric bicycles, those with top assisted speeds of 28 mph, are forbidden from using bike paths unless allowed by local authorities, but can usually enter bike lanes when they are directly adjacent to the roadway (California Vehicle Code Section 21207.5). Type 1 and 2 electric bicycles, those with top assisted speeds of 20 mph, are allowed wherever regular bikes are allowed unless a sign specifically prohibits electric bicycles. How do you enforce and stay on top of the changing statutes and do you think trucks and cars on a designated truck route are going to know how to manage such a chaotic array of bikes. It's not the driver of the truck or car who will be injured. The biker, experienced or not, will be put in harms way while the city knew before the planning and the design phase of the quick and permanent build that bodily injury was inevitable- especially on a Sonoma declared high severe injury road.

CA law prohibits motorists from stopping or parking on bicycle paths, lanes, and parkways under CVC 21211(a) and § 890.4 of the Streets and Highways Code, but there are exceptions to this law. Commercial and transportation vehicles can block bike routes when it's "necessary for safe operation or is otherwise in compliance with the law." (ie: San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA) vehicles have blanket permission to load and unload passengers in bike lanes.) Will Petaluma have exceptions for public utility vehicles, newspaper delivery vehicles, garbage trucks, delivery trucks, tow trucks, postal worker vehicles, fire trucks, home maintenance worker trucks like gardeners, pool cleaners, house cleaners (all needing to carry equipment) and will bikers know to watch out for all of them parked in the bike lanes or have to turn into the traffic lane quickly.

I think you can see just based on these few examples this is not a simple decision of adding bike lanes and seeing how it all turns out. The idea of adding bike lanes even in a quick build evaluation is fraught with great risk to life and limb. There are safe bike lanes on B and F which are not truck routes so why are they not being explored for any needed improvements vs placing bikers on a truck route and elevating the risk for everyone. Why have all the proposed safety and calming measures for the D St project been put aside, silenced, by this whole new risk of adding bike lanes which is being given, by the project manager, the spotlight to dominate what is suppose to be a safety program.

There is also the issue of elevated municipality risk. A public entity ordinarily has immunity regarding the plan or design function exemption in the FTCA however case law has shown that depending on the circumstances a public entity's immunity is not necessarily ironclad. A public agency should remain vigilant and be cognizant of a dangerous condition, plan or design and once aware take appropriate

action to remedy it. Adding two bike lanes to a dangerous truck route in a residential neighborhood, removing parking on an entire side of a street while narrowing vehicle lanes, knowing there is an active fire station on that same street, is elevating an existing danger. In recent cases Courts have remanded them for a determination of whether the public entity's board had engaged in a decision-making process consciously balancing the risks and benefits I am asking you to do the same.

Thank you for your time,

Jill Trompier

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