

L. Price 3/18/14 # 21

March 18, 2014

From: Lindell Price

Lindell Price

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Regarding: Agenda Item 21. 13-0449 , Board of Supervisors Agenda March 18, 2014

This material is for the discussion of Agenda Item 21. 13-0449. This is to provide you with notice of the substandard and unsafe design of the Northside School Class I Bike Path.

Obtain a good design before letting the contract. Specific points that I raised in a May 2013 email to Kim Kerr are attached. I received no response until Matt Smeltzer phoned me about 6:30 p.m. yesterday evening. Note that my concern is not with individual hard-working staff of our County Division of Transportation, but with El Dorado County's failure to provide a transparent process for public review and input. Also, note that El Dorado County's Trails Advisory Committee is supposed to be advisory on County bikeways per Resolution 58-96, but El Dorado County declines to provide information necessary for this advisory committee to perform its advisory function. My knowledge of active transportation comes in part from my experience, partially noted below.

Please obtain a good design before letting the contract, and direct the County Division of Transportation as well as Parks and Trails staff to follow your Board Resolutions regarding advice on County bikeways.

Experience (partial list):

- Walk/Bike California Conference, 2003
- Project Coordinator for *Los Rios Transportation Connections: A plan to improve Walking, Bicycling, and Transit Access to four Los Rios Community College District Campuses* funded by a Caltrans Community Planning Grant
- How to Develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, Federal Highway Administration, 2007
- Walk/Bike California 2007 Conference
- Designing for Pedestrian Safety, Federal Highway Administration, 2008
- Center for Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS) Institute, 2008
- Office of Traffic Safety Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Training, 2011
- Seven webinars on the AASHTO Bike Guide, 2012
- League of American Bicyclists Traffic Skills 101, 2013
- Safe Routes to School National Conference, 2013
- Cal Bike Summit 2013

From: Lindell Price <lindellprice@gmail.com>
Subject: Northside School Class I Bike Path
Date: May 21, 2013 9:29:58 AM PDT
To: Kimberly Kerr <kimberly.kerr@edcgov.us>
Cc: Randy Hackbarth <trlryder@pacbell.net>, Terri Daly
<jim.mitrisin@edcgov.us>



Kim Kerr,

Please verify the design of the Northside School Class I Bike Path with California's 2012 Highway Design Manual before approving plans and contract documents (Legistar number 13-0449). Note that State Safe Routes to School Grant Funds are included in the funding.

The Trails Advisory Committee was provided with reports on the Northside School Class I Bike Path until staffing for the Trails Advisory Committee was moved to the CAO's Office. I have repeatedly requested that information on all County trail/path projects be brought to the Trails Advisory Committee.

Lindell Price
Member, Trails Advisory Committee
(916) 804-7316

From: Lindell Price <lindellprice@gmail.com>
Subject: **Re: Northside School Bike Path**
Date: March 18, 2014 9:48:18 AM PDT
To: Matthew Smeltzer <matt.smeltzer@edcgov.us>
Cc: Felicia Haslem <felicia.haslem@dot.ca.gov>, John Holder <john_holder@dot.ca.gov>, "James P@DOT Day" <j.p.day@dot.ca.gov>, Janel Gifford <janel.gifford@edcgov.us>, Dustin Harrington <dustin.harrington@edcgov.us>



Matt,

Thanks for forwarding this email. Note that the general reference made to Highway Design Manual "guidelines" is inappropriate in regard to bikeway design; see

1001.2 Streets and Highways Code References Section 891 -- Local agencies must comply with design criteria and uniform symbols.

Claiming that a bike path becomes a sidewalk as an excuse to disregard minimum width requirements is completely unacceptable.

Note that per Chapter 1000.

Obstacles such as posts or gates may be considered only when other measures have failed to stop unauthorized motor vehicle entry. Also, these obstacles may be considered only where safety and other issues posed by actual unauthorized vehicle entry are more serious than the safety and access issues posed to bicyclists, pedestrians and other authorized path users by the obstacles.

The 3-step approach to prevent unauthorized vehicle entry has not been used, and it has not been demonstrated that "... safety and other issues posed by actual unauthorized vehicle entry are more serious than the safety and access issues posed to bicyclists, pedestrians and other authorized path users by the obstacles."

The response to the issues that I raised demonstrates a serious lack of engineering knowledge and judgement in regard to bikeway design. Also, Caltrans must enforce its own minimum standards, especially when state and federal funding are being used, especially for a Safe Routes to School project, as well as when a bikeway is in a state highway right of way.

Unfortunately, neither El Dorado County nor Caltrans has responded appropriately to the safety issues in the email that I sent in May 2013. Also note that I had emailed Kim Kerr,

even earlier on September 11, 2012 regarding California's new standards for bikeways, after she told the Trails Advisory Committee that Fire had to cut a bollard for emergency access. Since the CAO's Office took over responsibility for the Trails Advisory Committee, El Dorado County has consistently declined to provide the Trails Advisory Committee with the information needed to perform its advisory responsibilities in regard to County bikeways, while Kim Kerr was directing both Transportation staff, and Parks and Trails staff.

Thanks again for your phone call yesterday evening. I realize that responsibility the design flaws of the Northside School Class I Bike Path is not your failure, but that leadership for satisfactory active transportation design is still missing both here in El Dorado County and at Caltrans as exemplified by **The California Department of Transportation: SSTI Assessment and Recommendations**

http://www.calsta.ca.gov/res/docs/pdfs/2013/SSTI_Independent%20Caltrans%20Review%201.28.14.pdf.

Please correct design flaws before construction.

Lindell Price
(916) 804-7316

On Mar 17, 2014, at 6:41 PM, Matthew Smeltzer wrote:

Lindell - The following is the draft response that was intended to be sent to you but you did not get. Paul Hom, the project manager, quit shortly after drafting this and sending to Caltrans for review before send out to you. I appologize that you never received this information previously. Let me know if you still have any concerns or questions on these items.

Matt

Ms Price,

We appreciate your comments and feedback regarding the design of the Northside Bike path. We share your concern for the public safety. As engineer of record for the design of this project I have verified that it does meet all minimum mandatory and advisory design standards. Any exceptions have been properly documented and approved by the State.

Please read the introduction to the Highway Design Manual as it explains in detail the differences between guidelines and standards. It is important to have this basic understanding to see the context of your

comments.

Chapter 82.1 of the Highway Design Manual states that the highway design criteria policies provide a guide for the engineer to exercise sound judgment in applying standards. This guidance allows for flexibility in applying design standards and approving design exceptions that take the context of the project location into consideration; which enables the designer to tailor the design, as appropriate for the specific circumstances while maintaining safety.

Please see my responses to your comments below in blue.

Final Plans (Phase 1) 05/21/13

Comment 1 - p. 3, Sheet X-1: Drainage appears to be across bike path which would bring debris onto the path creating a hazard. See California's Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-9 (15) *Drainage* p. 9,

Engineers Response:

The manual states that when a bike path is constructed on the side of a hill, a drainage ditch of suitable dimensions may be necessary on the uphill side to intercept the hillside drainage. This is a general guideline, it includes the word may which allows for engineering judgment. The drainage uphill of the bike path is sheet flow from roadway and it meets the criteria. The flow is estimated to be less than 0.1 cfs. The design avoids concentration of sheet flow (see HDM section 831.4).

Comment 2 - Sheet C-1: Bike path narrows to less than required 8 width, and graded shoulder appears to disappear near intersection with State Route 49. See California's Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-4 (1) *Widths and Cross Slopes*. **The minimum paved width of travel way for a two-way bike path shall be 8 feet, 10-foot preferred.** The shoulder also disappears for this segment. See California's Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-4 (1) *Widths and Cross Slopes*. **A minimum 2-foot wide shoulder, composed of the same pavement material as the path or all weather surface, free of vegetation, shall be provided adjacent to the traveled way of the path when not on a structure.** A shoulder width of 3 feet should be provided where feasible.

Engineers Response:

The bike path starts at station 11+00 and ends at 53+75 (see Sheet C-2). Therein the path is 8 ft with 2-2 ft shoulders (therefore the mandatory standard was met). A 10 ft path with 3 ft shoulders was not feasible.

Comment 3 - Construction note 15, references sidewalk rather than bike path, and at the construction note 6 location, the ramp appears to be a pedestrian ramp rather than a bike path ramp. See California Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-5 (4) *Intersections with Highways*. Ramps should be the same width as the bicycle paths. Curb cuts and ramps should provide a smooth transition between the bicycle paths and the roadway.

Engineers Response:

The note refers to a sidewalk because the bike path becomes sidewalk at this point. Therefore, a pedestrian ramp was used. Sheet C-2 has a sign post detail indicating the begin and end of the formal bike path for this phase.

Comment 4 - p. 10, Sheet C-2: Regarding Center Bollard, see California Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-9 (16) *Entry Control for Bicycle Paths*. Obstacles such as posts or gates may be considered only when other measures have failed to stop unauthorized motor vehicle entry. Also see California MUTCD 2012, Section 9C.101(CA) Barrier Posts on Class I Bikeways, p.1381.

Engineers Response:

Based on a history of vehicle use in the vicinity of the bike path, we used our engineering judgment to decide to include the center flexible bollard. This decision was made jointly with Caltrans.

Comment 5 - Regarding Edge bollard, see California Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-10 (16) *Entry Control for Bicycle Paths*.

Engineers Response:

Edge bollards are proposed minimum 2 ft outside the edge of the pavement. And the edge bollard meets the guidelines listed in HDM section 1003.1.

Comment 6 - p. 13, Sheet C-5: Gravel driveway, See Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-5 (5) *Paving at Crossings*. At unpaved roadway or driveway crossings, including bike paths or pedestrian walkways, the crossing roadway or driveway shall be paved a minimum of 15 feet to minimize or eliminate gravel intrusion on the path.

Engineers Response:

This is not a mandatory or advisory standard. We used engineering judgment to determine it was unnecessary as this is rarely used private driveway.

Comment 7 - p. 15, Sheet C-7: Construction Note 3 and 2 - Are AT&T vaults and poles far enough from the bike path? See Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-4 (2) *Clearance to Obstructions*. **A minimum 2-foot horizontal clearance from the paved edge of a bike path to obstructions shall be provided.** ... 3 feet should be provided.

Engineers Response:

The AT&T vault is not considered obstruction to bike path as it is level with the bike path. No poles fall within this 2-ft clearance area. An advisory design exception was signed by the County and State to have the safety fence 2 ft from the edge of the bike path.

Final Plans (Phase 2) 05/21/13

Comment 8 - p. 3, sheet X-1: Drainage appears to be across bike path which would bring debris onto path creating a hazard. See Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-9 (15) *Drainage*

Engineers Response:

See response for phase 1.

Comment 9 - p. 9, sheet C-1, top right side of sheet: Path narrows from 4 each direction to 2 each direction, See Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-4 (1) *Widths and Cross Slopes*. **The minimum paved width of travel way for a two-way bike path shall be 8 feet, 10-foot preferred.** The shoulder also disappears for this segment. See

Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-4 (1) *Widths and Cross Slopes*. **A minimum 2-foot wide shoulder, composed of the same pavement material as the path or all weather surface, free of vegetation, shall be provided adjacent to the traveled way of the path when not on a structure.** ... A shoulder width of 3 feet should be provided where feasible.

Engineers Response:

See response for phase 1. The bike path starts at station 12+75 and ends at 61+75.

Comment 10 - p. 17, sheet C-9: Regarding Center Bollard, see See Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-9 (16) *Entry Control for Bicycle Paths*. Obstacles such as posts or gates may be considered only when other measures have failed to stop unauthorized motor vehicle entry. Also see California MUTCD 2012, Section 9C.101(CA) Barrier Posts on Class I Bikeways, p.1381.

Engineers Response:

See response for phase 1.

Comment 11 - Regarding Edge bollard, see See Californias Highway Design Manual, p. 1000-10 (16) *Entry Control for Bicycle Paths*.

Engineers Response:

See response for phase 1.

Paul Hom
Sr Civil Engineer
El Dorado County - DOT
(530) 621-5925

On Mon, Jul 15, 2013 at 1:15 PM, Paul Hom <paul.hom@edcgov.us> wrote:

Felicia,

Thanks for forwarding Ms Prices' comments. We will address and include all those cc'ed on this email in the response.

Paul Hom
Sr Civil Engineer
El Dorado County - DOT
(530) 621-5925

On Mon, Jul 15, 2013 at 8:56 AM, Haslem, Felicia
K@DOT<felicia.haslem@dot.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi John and Paul,

Below is the email I received from Lindell Price regarding the Northside school design issue inquiry.

Felicia Haslem
California Department of Transportation
Office of Local Assistance
703 B. Street
Marysville, CA 95901
530.741.4156

Matthew Smeltzer
Deputy Director-Design
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