The case for a physically separated bike path or cycle track within the "Davis Road Bridge Replacement and Road Widening Project"

Notes by F. Watson 16 Mar 2018, updated 26 Mar 2018 & 26 May 2018

Summary:

- Class IV is depicted in the Marina-Salinas Multimodal Corridor plan presented to the Board of Supervisors in 2015
- Class IV as part of the Davis Rd project was sought by TAMC and the TAMC Bike/Ped committee in 2016 in a public and in a timely manner, with well-documented and well-argued reasons.
- The Board of Supervisors directed staff to pursue Class IV, after staff made assurances that the bicycling community would be included, moving forward
- The possibility of Class IV was subsequently dismissed, but dismissal was unfounded, because
 - It occurred in private, without public notice, reporting, or explanation. In particular, the dismissal was not reported to Supervisors Parker & Adams the next time they were briefed on the matter, as would be consistent with Resolution 16-217, Item "e".
 - o It relied on pre-study cyclist input that was misrepresented and under-represented.
 - Cyclist input during the study was not sought or included
 - o There was insufficient exploration ways of achieving Class IV with no substantial impacts on flood waters
- Changing from Class IV to Class II on a road this long is a major policy shift that has been largely obscured from public view.

Timeline:

- 1971: "Proposed riding and hiking trail" parallel to Davis Rd indicated on 1971 Monterey County Recreational Trails Plan
- Various trails concepts near Davis Rd between Blanco Rd and Reservation Rd indicated in:
 - o 1982 Monterey County General Plan / Recreational Trails Plan
 - o 1984 Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan
 - o 2006 Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan Trails & Paths map by Monterey County Planning Dept.
- 2015 May 12: Board of Supervisors received TAMC presentation on Marina-Salinas Multimodal Corridor Plan (video time: 32:00-), which includes a Class IV bicycle facility along Davis.
- 2015 December
 - Draft EIR/EA. Has essentially 4 alternatives:
 - S.4.1. "No Build Alternative"
 - S.4.2. "Preferred Alternative". Four vehicular lanes. Class II bike.
 - S.4.2.1. "Preferred Alternative Design Variation". Four vehicular lanes. Class IV bike.
 - S.4.3. "Alternative 2". <u>Two</u> vehicular lanes. Class II bike.
- 2016 Feb 3rd
 - o Public Works staff presentation to TAMC Bike/Ped committee.
 - Packet states that TAMC staff support the Class IV and not the Class II.
 - Minutes do not state any deviation from this preference.
- 2016 March 8th (approx. based on PDF scan creation date)
 - Letter from a bike organization (Pedali Alpini / Eric Petersen) (letter later referred to by same organization as having been prepared with very little notice from Public Works staff, see BOS video 7/26/16 minute 19:50).
 - States that it supports S.4.3 and opposes S.4.2.1.
 An incomplete interpretation of this statement is that the letter supports Class II and opposes Class IV.

- However, there are three key reasons why the letter does not constitute clear guidance on the question of Class II versus Class IV
 - 1. The letter never mentions Class IV. Instead, it refers to Class I, and presents arguments against Class I. Class I was not in any of the alternatives presented in the EIR.
 - 2. It makes a questionable interpretation of Cal Trans policy. It asserts that Cal Trans Highway Design Manual is "strongly against" S.4.2.1 and quotes this text from the HDM under the heading "Class I Bikeway (bike path)": "Generally, bike paths should be used to serve corridors not served by streets and highways or where wide right of way exists, permitting such facilities to be constructed away from the influence of parallel streets. Bike paths should offer opportunities not provided by the road system."

 The quoted text is not "strongly against" anything, and in any case is inapplicable to S.4.2.1 because the HDM is referring to Class I while S.4.2.1 is a Class IV alternative.
 - 3. The letter is ambiguous on the singular question of Class II versus Class IV, because the difference between S.4.3 and S.4.2.1. includes more than just bike differences; it also includes a key vehicular difference: 2-lanes versus 4-lanes. It could be interpreted that the primary reason the letter supports S.4.3. is that it involves only two vehicular lanes. For example, Mr Petersen's verbal testimony to the Board in May 2015 emphasized 2-lanes vs 4-lanes, and did not discuss bike lane classifications.
- 2016 July 26th: Board of Supervisors considered certification of EIR/EA in Resolution 16-217.
 - Staff report recommends S.4.2. i.e. Class II.
 - TAMC staff once more advocated for either Class I or Class IV, both with a letter and in person (video time: 17:50)
 - o Pedali Alpini / Eric Petersen objected to lack of timely outreach to cycling groups (video time: 19:50)
 - O Public Works staff responded verbally with 7 minutes of commitment (video 25:00-32:00) to try and make Class IV work, noting that a supplemental EIR will have to be prepared accordingly. Expressed belied that a cycle track (Class IV) could be included in addition to the Class II alternative. "We will work with the bicycling community during that process. That's our commitment." Explained the upcoming Value Analysis Study. "We will make sure that the bicycling community as represented by Mr Petersen and others is included in all those discussions moving forward."
 - Board certified the EIR/EA (4 to 1 vote with Supervisor Parker dissenting, and Adams not yet elected), and with the Board agreeing to an additional direction in the Resolution (Item "e") that staff will further investigate Class IV.
 - As far as I have been able to determine through questions to staff, the staff assurances for further inclusion of the bicycling community have not yet been honored (Mar 2018), nor has a supplemental EIR process been initiated.
- 2016 Oct 3-7: "Value Analysis Study" conducted. See report below.
- 2017 February
 - "Final Value Analysis Study Report". Consultants were hired to facilitate process of considering and valuing alternatives, two of which included Class IV. Team was 7 consultants from 6 firms. Key contacts included 5 staff engineers from 5 agencies, including TAMC. Report recommended against Class IV for several reasons that would not necessarily withstand public & professional scrutiny for the following reasons:
 - Cyclist opinion as perceived was reported being a key factor in the decision to recommend against Class IV. But upon closer examination, this opinion was underrepresented and misrepresented.
 - o The opinion was represented in the study report as follows:
 - Page 11: "<Class IV Bikeway options> would be less desirable from a cyclist viewpoint based on stakeholder feedback from Pedali Alpini which stated a preference for a Class II Bikeway."

- Pages 33 & 34: "Importantly, the ultimate users of the cycle-track, bicyclists, prefer the baseline Class II shoulder/bike lanes over the cycletrack."
- This opinion is apparently according to Public Works staff email responses based entirely on the 3/8/16 letter from Pedali Alpini, and the minutes of the 2/3/16 verbal feedback provided by the TAMC Bike/Ped committee.
- O Both of these opinions are invalid in the context question about Class II versus Class IV. The limitations of the PA letter were discussed above, and the TAMC Bike/Ped committee did not explicitly comment on the Class II versus Class IV issue, and if anything, implicitly supported TAMC staff's preference for Class IV
- These opinions are also an under-representation of the overall cyclist opinion. They are from a single bike race organization and a committee that did not explicitly opine on the question, and they are from communications that occurred before the Board of Supervisors certified the EIR without the Class IV option. Better cyclist opinion could easily be solicited with a more deliberate outreach effort.
- In my professional opinion as a hydrologist with a PhD in engineering, there was insufficient exploration of the relationship between unimpeded passage of floodwaters and the range of ways in which Class IV may be implemented within the constraints of the guiding state policy (Design Information Bulletin Number 89 Class IV Bikeway Guidance). For example, extensive consideration should be given to Figure 3.0, Fourth Diagram, Note 4. For reference, the report states: "Additionally, the hard barrier would be an impediment to flood flows, impounding water that would otherwise overtop the roadway. This would cause a rise in backwater surface elevations which is unacceptable."
- The report makes value judgements that are not the purview of staff and consultants trading dollars for benefits. Such judgements should be executed transparently in the public domain.
- The conclusions of the Value Analysis Study therefore lack sufficient foundation.
- Further, the VAS was never presented for public review, nor as far as I can recall was it explicitly mentioned when Public Works staff brought the project back to Supervisors Parker & Adams at the BOS Fort Ord Committee on 1/25/18.

• 2018 Jan 4

o 65% design plans. Include Class II. Do not include Class IV.

2018 Jan 25

- Report on 65% design plans to BOS Fort Ord Committee (Parker & Adams).
- The Public Works staff report indicated Class II, but did provide the relevant history of this decision, particularly Item (e) of Resolution 16-217.
- o During public comment, Watson asked why Class II and not Class IV.
- Public Works staff verbally reported that it was due to flooding concerns (Class IV barriers blocking water flow)
- o This was arguably an incomplete response before the Supervisors, given the history noted above.

• 2018 Feb/Mar

o Public Works staff worked helpfully with Watson in about 15 emails to provide the documents cited above.

2018 March

 Unlike most major county development projects, there remains no public web site containing all documents relevant to this project. I requested in Jan 2018 that one be created.

0	Public Works staff confirmed by email (3/26/18) that "we did not see the need to have meetings specifically with bicycle groups" subsequent to staff's 7/26/16 commitment to BOS that bicycle groups would be involved.