

To: Arcata Planning Commissioners
Honorable Mayor Stacy Atkins-Salazar
Arcata City Council Members
City Council member-elect Alex Stillman
Community Development Director David Loya
Arcata Community Development Department
Arcata City Manager Karen Diemer

From: Fred Weis

Date: June 9, 2022

Re: Streetscape misrepresentations in the December 2021 draft Gateway plan
Request for a "Plan B" if the K Street & L Street couplet cannot be constructed

Dear Mayor Atkins-Salazar, et al –

For the record: I am in favor of infill. I am in favor of a unified plan for the Gateway area. I find the December 2021 draft Gateway plan to be lacking in many, many ways. As I have expressed to Community Development Director David Loya, I believe the existence of this plan has made his job considerably more difficult, in terms of trying to support a plan with limited feasibility. In terms of planning for what actually could happen – planning for what has a good probability of truly getting constructed – I rate this plan very close to Zero. The plan is filled with wishful thinking that is unlikely to be seen in reality. That is my opinion.

The Planning Commission has given some review to, and will continue to review, the draft plan's depiction of Streetscapes and Mobility, which includes traffic patterns and bike lanes. A large part of this is the "couplet" that would be made of K Street going northward and L Street going south.

The question is: What is the practical likelihood of this couplet being built?

As we know, the City of Arcata does not have the rights-of-way to build this couplet. Without the couplet, the traffic patterns and bike paths that are shown in the draft plan would be vastly different.

While a proposed alternative is not always a part of a plan of this sort, in this case it is, I feel, 100% necessary. Much of the street design, traffic and bike lanes, sidewalk setbacks, even building design, etc etc is determined by whether K Street becomes 1-lane 1-way or retains its 2-lane, 2-way status.

I request that the Planning Commission and/or the City Council direct Community Development Director David Loya to determine and report to them:

1. The factors at play in evaluating whether the couplet might happen.
2. A true and real assessment of the probability and time-frame for acquiring the necessary rights-of-way.
3. A valid and complete “Plan B” to be presented as an alternative, to be used as part of the plan until such time as the couplet becomes possible and likely to be built.

In addition, I request that Director Loya be instructed to create a presentation, in writing, with sufficient diagrams or 3D modeling, for the Creamery District Community as well as for the general public, of what would happen to the L Street pathway if that couplet were to be created.

The car traffic, delivery vehicles, and transport trucks that currently are a part of the K Street traffic would instead be passing alongside the buildings of the Creamery District – the southbound part, that is. The areas where people now meet, sit, talk, and play will be removed. It is incorrect and a severe misrepresentation to say that the L Street pathway will have “minor modifications” and “will continue to be its current width” as is stated in the City’s Gateway FAQs. In terms of what the L Street pathway contributes to the joy and humanity of the Creamery District, the L Street Pathway will cease to exist.

Thank you.

Fred Weis
Arcata