

## Calas, Esther (PWD)

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**From:** Martinez-Esteve, Jorge (CAO)  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 30, 2010 1:52 PM  
**To:** Shen, Joan (PWD)  
**Cc:** Calas, Esther (PWD)  
**Subject:** RE: Belle Meade sidewalk closure

Joan:

As you requested, I have reviewed some of the federal, state, and local laws and design standards governing pedestrian access along public rights-of-way. These laws and standards universally provide for pedestrian access along public rights-of-way wherever possible.

First, the Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance for Streets and Highways ("Greenbook") provides minimum standards for the design and maintenance of County and municipal roadway systems, including pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks. In Chapter 8 of the Greenbook, entitled Pedestrian Facilities, the Greenbook provides that "[a]ll new highways, except limited access highways, should be designed and constructed under the assumption they will be used by pedestrians. Provisions for pedestrian traffic should be incorporated into the original highway design. In addition to providing pedestrian facilities on new projects, each highway agency responsible for maintaining or operating streets and urban highways should establish and

maintain a program of pedestrian facilities implementation, maintenance and safety for the urban highway network." The language I have quoted herein is from the 2007 version of the Greenbook, which is the version currently in effect. It is worth noting however, that the 2010 version, currently in draft form, provides even stronger language regarding the provision of pedestrian facilities, stating that: [p]edestrian facilities shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such facilities into state, regional, and local transportation plans and programs under the assumption that transportation facilities will be used by pedestrians. Pedestrian facilities should be considered in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other significant improvement of any transportation facility. Special emphasis should be given to projects in or within 1 mile of an urban area. Each highway agency responsible for a system of streets and highways should establish and maintain a program for implementing pedestrian facilities and also for maintaining existing pedestrian facilities."

Furthermore, Chapter 15 of the Greenbook, entitled "Traffic Calming," provides that, where, as here, traffic diverters are being installed to redirect vehicular traffic, "bicyclists and pedestrians should be provided access through [the] traffic diverters."

Second, these provisions are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan ("CDMP"), which provides, in the section on Residential Communities, that "[p]edestrian circulation shall be provided between activity nodes, all public places, and all subdivisions through connectivity of section, half-section and local roadways constructed with sidewalks and supplemented by pedestrian paths."

Finally, the guidelines provided by the United States Department of Transportation in the Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System provide, in Chapter 5, that "[i]f a street closure is done, it should always allow for the free through movement of all pedestrians, including wheelchair users, and bicyclists."

Thus, based upon the facts as provided here, and based on the local, state, and federal provisions cited herein, the Public Works department should not allow the modification of the existing vehicular traffic diverters to block pedestrian access along the sidewalks in the Belle Meade residential subdivision. Please call me if you have any additional questions. Thank you.