

To Humboldt County Planning Commission Board Members:

Response from David Meserve, owner, to the Public Works Subdivision Requirements, as filed on Feb. 13, 2025. Application #PLN-2024-19119 PMS - APN 508-121-055

Regarding Section 2.5 (a), requiring Sidewalk and Gutter, with a 5' Landscape Strip:

I see that Public Works, in their Improvement Alternative section, will support removing this requirement. I am happy to have that support and hope that the Planning Commission will agree.

Regarding Section 2.5 (b), the 18"runoff drain under Fischer Avenue requested by Public Works:

The lowest point on Fischer Avenue, between School Road to the south and Montana Road to the north is the portion in front of my property and that of my neighbor to the south. The elevation there is 59', with School Road at 62' and Montana Road at 65'. Because of this dip, the County has a storm drain on the east side of Fischer, across from my property. Fischer is crowned in the middle, so this drain handles all rainwater that runs down between the center of the road and the Hammond Trail. Whenever this drain was built, the County failed to consider the need for a drain on the west side of the road. This was probably because the whole west side of the road to the north is currently green, grassy area, on soil with very good drainage, with no sidewalks and no visible runoff. When the drain was built, there was also no sidewalk directly to the south of me on the west side of the road.

My entire property is almost flat, with a maximum slope of 0.5% (one foot in 200 feet) so there is no possibility of there being any storm water runoff onto Fischer Avenue. The soil is also very permeable, as shown by the perc test I recently did, and even in very heavy rains, almost no puddles appear. The only impermeable areas are the two existing houses, which make up less than 5% of the total land area. Nothing in my subdivision plan will cause any storm water to impact Fischer Avenue, except, of course, the minor impermeable areas of a new sidewalk and driveway apron.

To the south of me, there is sidewalk and gutter, which causes ponding in my neighbor's gutter, as mentioned by Public Works, where the sidewalk ends up against my packed gravel driveway. However, this puddle never gets high enough to crest my driveway, and because the ground below is very porous, the water soaks into the grassy area on the south side of my driveway soon after heavy rains let up.

I have always known that when I subdivided, I would be required to build a sidewalk and gutter, and I have no problem with that requirement. When I do build it, I would be happy to provide a drain to the west, onto my property, that would go to a small underground gravel bed adequate to take all of the water that currently ponds at the north end of my neighbor's sidewalk, as well as any water that accumulates in my new gutter area. This will take care of any drainage requirement that I cause by building the sidewalk and will solve the current ponding problem. It would therefore meet the requirements of the County Code. I am not offering it as a long term solution to drain all of Fischer Ave., once parcels to the north of me start to be developed. But it should not be my responsibility to provide drainage for the whole street.

If future development to the north causes increased runoff on the west side of Fischer, a drain under the road may become necessary. I can only offer drainage onto my property for my own sidewalk and gutter and the current ponding to the south. If a fund could be set up, I would be glad to pay a fair share into a County account to build that drainage across the road.

The cost of draining 1350 feet to the north, on the west side of Fischer Avenue, should not fall entirely on me, just because I am the first to subdivide in this area. This is a very minor subdivision, on flat porous land, and there will be zero drainage from my property onto the street, except from the sidewalk itself, which I am happy to take care of.

According to the County Code, the owner of a property who develops it is responsible for taking care of any drainage that is caused by their development. The owner is not responsible for drainage issues on public roads that are in no way caused by the proposed development.

Thank you for considering my request for an exception to the Public Works requirements.

David Meserve



Looking north on Fischer Ave. My property is on the left with wire fence and blue house. Shows existing drain on east side of road, one day after a heavy rain. Note that there is no water on west side of Fischer, to the north.



Looking south on Fischer Ave. One day after heavy rain. Ponding has mostly perked into my driveway and existing grassy area. To eliminate ponding, when I build my sidewalk and driveway apron, I will place a drain in the gutter, leading to a 6" pipe under sidewalk, with a small leach area on southeast corner of my property.



West side of Fischer Ave. Looking north, during heavy rain. Note ponding in gutter coming from School Rd. Also note no additional water from north, on west side of road.

