

Public Review Draft Active Transportation Plan (October)

Emailed comments

#	Comment
1	<p>I read through the plan and was very happy to see Gibbons Drive on the Bicycle Vision map (figure 6) as a Neighborhood Greenway. But to my dismay it is not included on the Vision 2030 plan (figure 9). Although Gibbons Drive is currently shown as a Neighborhood Street it is being used as a Neighborhood Connector by cars coming from and going to High Street Bridge. It needs immediate attention to stop it being used this way. Immediately changing the speed limit to 20 mph would be easy (I think). But really we need to at least not allow cars coming off of High Street Bridge to go down Gibbons or speedbumps to discourage them to use Gibbons as a Neighborhood Connector which they are using the street as currently.</p>
2	<p>Thank you for the email and announcement. Can you please comment on which groups were involved in drafting the plan as far as external consultants? I didn't see any direct notations in the plan thus far citing those groups.</p>
3	<p>Here again are my reasons why I am against the Slow Streets initiative for Alameda. [Attached]</p>
4	<p>I just reviewed the transportation plan, and I absolutely love that I live in a city that prioritizes safe, eco-friendly, inclusive transportation and recognizes actual behavior and common routes and seeks to make them even more accessible for all.</p> <p>I live on San Jose Avenue and see the large number of middle schoolers that bike down our street and on the multi-use bridge from Bay Farm, and I love the efforts to make those routes even safer for all.</p> <p>I'm also an avid cyclist myself and try to substitute commute / errand driving with bike rides where I can, and you captured both the existing level of safety and the areas of improvement that would be most impactful.</p>
5	<p>Thanks for the Zoom presentation tonight. In response to the City's move to get us out of our cars, I've been researching ebikes as I am disabled and no longer able to pedal my old bike. I'm concerned about ebike theft and have scoped out the availability of permanently installed bike racks around town. Much to my surprise they don't appear plentiful all around town and they are also somewhat randomly placed.</p> <p>I hope the transportation plan will include installation of additional bike racks, and bike storage boxes like those installed at ferry terminals. If the City is planning to eliminate parking stalls and get us into alternative modes of transportation, then please ensure we have safe parking for our bikes, ebikes, wheelchairs, etc. to protect from theft and also avoid having our bikes/wheelchairs from blocking sidewalk traffic. Additionally, not all residences provide parking for residents cars, bikes or wheelchairs.</p> <p>I expect you anticipate the number of alternate vehicles, like ebikes, will increase as a result of the Active Alameda plan and that will need appropriate parking. If the City is pushing residents out of cars, then it has an obligation to help ensure places for us to park other modes of transportation, city-wide.</p>
6	<p>These road blocks impede travel through the island. These new proposals disempower Alamedans by removing their ability to move and travel. This plan feels more like a foundational plan toward setting up check points and roadblocks in the future. It feels disingenuous and nefarious as it's proposed to Alamedans under the guise of environmentalism. However, electric cars and bikes are being hailed as an alternative when those lithium batteries are just as damaging and unsustainable as our current petroleum based economy.</p> <p>Where are these plans coming from, who is incentivizing city council to implement them and for what end goal? Slow streets disempower citizens.</p>

7 My suggestions are the following:

1. Willie Stargell ave and 5th st (Alameda Landing) - intersection is very slow (lights) for pedestrians and bicyclists (dangerous since willie stargell ave is a narrow with no separate lane for bicycles).
2. Webster ave - extremely dangerous for bicyclists (requires separate lanes for bicycles) - no easy way to bike to farmer's market from alameda landing without going through the dangerous traffic of webster st)
3. All over Alameda - very difficult to turn the light green at any intersection when riding a bicycle. Have to get off and press the button and then come back to your left turn lane is not very dangerous and inconvenient.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to give my feedback concerning the Active Transportation Plan.

PLEASE reopen the slow streets to cars. I personally am a walker and I can tell you without hesitation that pedestrians, bicyclists, playing children, etc are not using those streets as they did when we were all quarantined. People are using the sidewalks, not the middle of the streets. With the exception of cars that either ignore the barricades or live on those streets, their centers are empty.

On the other hand, streets that are adjacent to the slow streets are busier than ever with automobile traffic and these streets are sometimes too narrow to allow cars to pass each other from opposite directions. College Avenue, for instance, has traffic passing through constantly now. It's become dangerous. Crime has also increased on College Avenue since wide, comfortable, easy to maneuver Versailles has been closed to traffic.

I appreciate you wanting to make walking and cycling safer for people like me who enjoy leaving my car at home, but closing major streets is not the answer.

Our surrounding cities have all reopened their slow streets. Schools are open. People are working and traveling again. The slow streets are not being used to gather, play, pedal or walk in the center anymore.

PLEASE allow cars to drive down them legally again!

Thank you.

9 I'm confused as to how this is supposed to "save" Alameda. People live their lives as conveniently as possible for them. By being forced to go out of their way, not use the most direct or common sense means of getting from point A to point B, does nothing to improve their situations.

I definitely don't understand how you think causing gridlock on many streets is saving the environment. Since parklets and slow streets have come about, cars are blocked up, in single lanes, idling, whereas, before, they would move on to their destination. As an example, while sitting at The Local, on Park St., we watched as the UPS truck blocked traffic from Central to Encinal. Traffic completely stopped! Through three signals! A cement truck driver kept leaning on his horn, didn't help, but made him feel better. Pre-parklets, traffic would have kept moving. Cars would get to their destinations more quickly, without the idling time added in. Slow streets, which seldom have bicyclists or walkers on them, cause detours and longer drives. More unnecessary pollution!

What might look good on paper, and in designs, is not always the best, in reality.

Alameda was a quiet little community, where people figured out their own routes, and you're changing it into a noisy, place with blocked off streets, cheap, dirty plastic barriers, dirty sand bags at slow street barriers, bumper to bumper traffic, and bicyclists who fly through red lights and stop signs, putting walkers at risk, and causing near auto/bike accidents.

Perhaps, you should do a survey as to how many City Hall employees and safety personnel, and general city employees ride their bikes to work. It's one thing to support this bike style, in a parade, but how many support in day to day life? Maybe, check the designated employee parking spaces to see how many have cars and how many have bikes.

10 There are a LOT of materials to review and if you're using your computer or tablet to Zoom, you can't refer to them. It would be great to have two screens!

Thank you for listening this afternoon. It feels like everything is bike-focused, so people like me and my neighbors who don't use a bike for errands because we don't have the strength and/or equipment to carry stuff on a bike, or are too lazy, or are afraid our bikes will be stolen without a \$100+ lock (or who don't have a bike because they can't afford it or it was already stolen) feel left out. Unless the city wants to buy everyone all the cycling equipment needed and better enforce bike theft and completely change our innate laziness, most adults just aren't going to ride here to complete errands so there isn't much point to creating good biking downtown. That's reality. I do think there's more opportunity to design for bikes in the newer parts of town (which also tend to be occupied more by younger, stronger people) so focusing on that does make sense.

People like to talk about how people bike everywhere in Europe, but I haven't actually seen that in the European cities I've visited. I did see thousands of bikes in Amsterdam, but they were locked up in double-decker bike storage near the train station rather than actually being ridden in the city. Most of the people actually riding bikes in downtown Amsterdam were tourists — the city is absolutely not designed for riding a bike, and they don't have bike lanes. The Dutch use bikes to ride from their homes in the suburbs to the train, then walk or take local transit to their jobs in Amsterdam.

I went to school in Davis and of course rode my bike everywhere. Loved the bike circles! But Davis also did have some major roads which cars used because they were more efficient than the neighborhood streets. That left little car traffic on the neighborhood streets (which also mostly had large trees for shade), so they were fine to ride through — like much of Alameda, actually. But it's the campus itself that was really bike-friendly, because the whole thing was designed to work that way and there were no existing houses to deal with.

The most pleasant place to walk is Bay Farm. They have separate shady paths in many places along the green belts, and on the shoreline there is only a multi/use path but you can walk off-path along the shore so that works. I wish I didn't have to drive to get there to walk my dog - at least my car is electric. New development offers great opportunities to do it right like Bay Farm!

[Continued from above]

Unfortunately Alameda seems determined to make even the wide streets that ARE suitable for cars into car-unfriendly routes, which moves cars into narrow residential streets to avoid the signals and other obstacles because realistically 99% of people who go off-Island would never consider riding a bike to do so. Would you want to ride a bike into Oakland over the Park Street Bridge? I sure wouldn't. The only reason to use the High Street Bridge is to get onto 880, so there are no measures you could put in place to reduce that car traffic. And those cars have to go somewhere once they get to Alameda. Gibbons is the best way into the middle of town. I'd be fine with more stop signs to slow traffic down, but driving traffic from Gibbons to neighborhood streets is not the answer.

Unless the plan is to put speed bumps on every single street in Alameda, traffic calming on one street will just drive cars to other streets, which are generally narrower and even less suitable for the traffic, and even more unsafe.

I do try to walk for errands as much as practical, but the routes to places like the main library (from points east) are just not pleasant. The main ways to improve walkability for me are provide shade trees, sidewalks wide enough for two people to pass to pass (unlike the sidewalk on Park next to the Southshore parking lot) and make sure street crossings at intersections are safe. I do feel safe at most intersections except Lincoln and Park (traffic in too many directions, plus the narrowing of Park from one lane to two right there) and Fernside/Blanding at Tilden (also too much going on; closing off Pearl altogether in conjunction with the roundabout would probably help a lot).

You asked about the path arrangement at Ralph Appazato and I actually did try that once, but the lack of shade and landscaping made it unappealing to me. Separate paths are great though!

I'm not sure why no one is factoring in the weakening of traffic enforcement as an explanation for increasing speeding. That's probably the single change that would have the most impact on making Alameda safer - and isn't that the most important goal?

[And, in follow-up email:]

Oops, I meant ride over the High street bridge rather than Park (although basically the Oakland side of any of our bridges is not very bike-friendly).

- 11 First of all, I want to thank you for being at the outreach event today. I appreciate the outreach to the public but I hope that the number of people who participate are tallied in order to understand who is participating. I get the push for transportation that is carbon neutral but it seems to me that, that agenda is being pushed regardless of the data. We will all be driving electric cars in the future which will mitigate all those arguments. You mentioned Davis today as an example of a city that is now bike friendly due to the redesign of the streets. Are you aware that the median age of a Davis resident is 26.2 years old as of 2021. The census data for Alameda is 40.2 years old. That should be a sobering statistic.

I do reiterate my concern about removing parking in front of residences due to its impact on the disabled-either temporary or permanent. As I mentioned today, my husband has Parkinson's and will not be able to drive in the near future. Fortunately, I do not live on Grand, but if I did I would be outraged if this plan goes through. The blocks on Grand are the length of a football field. If we lived on a block that did not have parking nearby, he would not be able to navigate that distance to get to a ride. The bike lane would prohibit a transit van or ride share to stop in front of our house. At your suggestions, I have contacted Mr. Vance to investigate this further and he has gotten back to me. We are awaiting a meeting.

My skepticism starts with the survey that was done showing the sample 60% owners and 35% renters which is not representative of the Alameda population and continues with comparisons of Alameda to Davis given the median age differences. This is an ill conceived transportation plan. I fear that in the case of Grand, staff was given the task of placing protected bike lanes and came up with the only way you can make it work regardless of its practicality. I feel like this is a done deal and I am sure the unintended consequences will be great.

12 I have read your plan for Slow Streets and have concerns that don't seem to be addressed in this draft. The draft states that Versailles is a long standing bicycle route yet it is not painted for bikes. Is Versailles going to be painted for bike use? Central has a painted bicycle path so why does the Slow Street go to San Jose and stop? There isn't a painted bicycle path on Encinal or San Jose so it seems to just leave bicyclist on an unprotected road. The draft mentions a network of bicycle travel yet none of these routes connect. When will that happen?

I walk Versailles where the slow street closure currently is in place. I have attached photos of a summer camp program that used Edison School for the summer. The drop off was and continues to be for Edison School on the Versailles entrance. The cones were put in the street so drivers could drive through to drop off their children on a slow street. People parked across the street and the children crossed over through the car drop off. The signage of slow street leaves pedestrians and bicyclist with a false sense of security when cars are encouraged to use the same roadway. Why are city operated buildings exempt from operating within the slow street program and continue to encourage automobile use? The school district should require drop offs on the 3 adjoining streets not on a slow street. Will that happen?

On San Jose I routinely share the sidewalk with bicyclist who are riding to school on the sidewalk. There is no painted bicycle route here and despite the street blocked with the slow street signs the bicyclists continue to use the sidewalk. Many middle school and high school students are now riding Ebikes and travel at a higher speed. The plan does not address this increasingly used transportation. Will they continue to have access to our sidewalks and bike paths? Look forward to understanding the Slow Street program since it appears it will continue.

13 Hello: I submitted a survey for slow streets but also want to add an item. I live on Versailles Ave. near the intersection of Versailles and Fernside and many drivers continue to make the illegal turn onto Versailles from Fernside. I recommend removing the left turn lane on Fernside.

14 We had the opportunity to review the Active Transportation Plan at Pride in the Park about two weeks ago, and looked it over more closely in recent evenings.

We're delighted that our street, Garfield Ave, has been selected as a Neighborhood Greenway, and are crossing our fingers that we'll be early in that process. As bikers, runners, and dog-walkers, we've loved the Slow Streets program and are in favor of those or their safe and green counterparts like the Neighborhood Greenway for as many of Alameda's primarily residential streets as possible.

It's especially great that Garfield was selected, because it feels as if we're among the least safe streets on the East End for pedestrians. It's one of the widest streets connecting two main thoroughfares (High and Fernside), which invites motorists to speed for a quarter-mile. This is most troubling at the intersection of Fernside-Garfield, where not a week goes by without someone having an extremely close call or being hit by a car. A boy on his bike was hit on a recent Friday morning, and we've had close calls while walking our dog at multiple times of day.

From the High St. bridge, ours is the first stop sign on the "Fernside Freeway," and it's often ignored as drivers have built up speed throughout the curve; on the other side, drivers have often been accelerating since Central Ave, two-plus blocks away. We're now parents to a future Lincoln Lion who'll be walking or biking that way to school in the years to come and loves watching kids bike as we stroller along in the mornings; we shudder to think about how unsafe it might be in the next ten years given what it's like now - even during the pandemic with less commute traffic.

Again, it's very appreciated that Garfield will become a Neighborhood Greenway - but something has to be done for crossing safety at Fernside-Garfield intersection much sooner. Residents have taken it upon themselves to place orange handheld flags there to increase visibility but they have not proven to be a significant deterrent to drivers who fail to stop at that intersection. Can highly visible crossing lights be added at the crosswalk in the near-term?

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

15 I use a wheelchair. What area would I be using in your new roadway: bicycle pathways, sidewalks, roadways?

16 I am afraid I have come a little late to this issue and have not offered any input thus far. However, today I took the Survey and I would also like to submit some thoughts about this draft Transportation Plan.

First let me say, we have lived on the North side on Buena Vista Ave. for over 40 years. During that time we have seen many changes (mostly good) come to Alameda and our neighborhood. During that time we have also had to fight for quality of life issues for our neighborhood. It took us 20 years to finally get the Truck Route designation removed from this street and we enjoyed a truck-less existence for 18 years. However, the trucks have started using Buena Vista again, we believe as an alternative to the “improvements” that have been made on Clement. We love the bicycle route on Clement however, the new STOP signs that have been put there (for the developers) are causing trucks to choose to take what they must consider a faster and easier route onto Buena Vista. We have spoken to the Police Department about this problem, and they are doing what they can with limited resources to enforce the No Trucks on Buena Vista policy. But we would like to see some sort of traffic calming on this street to discourage the truck traffic in the first place. We would love to have more STOP signs installed (like on Willow and Buena Vista). However, we have been told, in the past, that we don’t have enough accidents to warrant that. Yet, Clement gets STOP signs at intersections that don’t even have cross traffic. How is that justified?

In the entire draft Transportation Plan there is not one amenity given to Buena Vista. Heck, we don’t even rate street resurfacing. Your Plan boasts goals of Equity, Environmental Justice and High Quality of Life. None of that is apparent for our neighborhood.

We are a working class neighborhood with a majority of multifamily residences. Just in the area of Willow to Park St. there are more than 175 residences, most of which are in two or three family houses with a smattering of apartment complexes. The neighbors here are many renters who don’t or can’t take part in City affairs like this transportation plan. But just because of their lack of participation does that mean they should be shut out of your goal of Equity? This is a very ethnically diverse neighborhood, too, so does that mean because of their cultural differences they should be denied Environmental Justice? And, the people who live here are by no means high income. Does that mean they should be without a High Quality of Life?

I ask that you consider this neighborhood in your plans. Give us a “road diet” or “traffic calming” and let us experience the same Quality of Life, Environmental Justice and Equity as you are giving to other parts of Alameda.

17 Like numerous other city projects here in Alameda the city staff preparation begins months, if not longer, before the public is even aware of a very large, expensive or controversial project is underway.

This particular project again is consistent with the city’s process of making decisions on a project before asking for citizen input. How can staff truly know in which direction to proceed if they do not have public input? Like the Central Avenue project and the homeless medical facility issue this current project is tantamount to a fully loaded freight train barreling down the track and can not be stopped. To me, the “survey” you are asking for is worthless and pro forma in that decisions have already been made. It is simply a meaningless effort to justify and support what has already been decided.

I understand that the city has received a \$200 million dollar grant to be utilized in the walk/bike project. I am sure that a majority of citizens if allowed to a pre-survey or input prior to committing this huge amount of money would be able provider other projects which serve the entire community rather than a minority of bicycle enthusiasts who lobby quite efficiently.

After attending for years literally dozens of meetings, “work shops” and discussions about pending projects in Alameda I have finally learned that for the most part decisions have already been made prior to those supposed information input gatherings making them just a meaningless process.

This is why I will not be completing the requested survey for this project as it certainly appears that history is repeating itself and the bureaucracy will continue down the tract like the aforementioned locomotive.

18 I have submitted the survey and here are my questions:

Who are the bicycle groups: Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda, Bike Walk Alameda, Bike EastBay? How many people are in these groups? Do they live in Alameda?

Because I live on Versailles Ave., I'm most concerned with that street. Since the barriers went up 2 years ago it is much more unsafe, causing more crimes and because people are forced onto Pearl St. there are more accidents and near misses at the intersection of San Jose Ave. Also, very few bicyclists use Versailles Ave. but those that do sail right through the stop signs, even with children.

I can't tell from the vague description of Separated Bike Lane if parking will be prohibited on one side of the street. This would be a disaster for all the residents on this street many of whom have no off-street parking. I'm old and disabled and need to park near my back gate.

I understand that some of the on-line neighborhood groups have asked their participants if they are in favor of what the city is doing to the streets and the majority are not.

Has anyone counted how many people are using the street for walking and biking? Have any live surveys been done where bikes and walkers have been counted? Do you have statistics? I am not asking for opinions or poll results with this question. I am asking for hard numbers. How many of the survey participants are not Alameda residents? Why are they included? These changes affects businesses and residences and is being presented as a benign change but it is not.

Please listen to all of Alameda.

19 Just a note to let you know: I spent 2.5 hours typing my thoughts into your survey on my phone, only to have the results completely disappear when I tried to send it to you.

Won't be doing this again.

[And, follow-up email: Whoops! Used the wrong acronym. My bad. I meant the ATP survey. The one with 30 projects in 8 years.

Really would like to know why a class 4 one way costs \$2.4 million per mile more than a class 4 two way.

And many other comments. 20 days in the middle of tax and election season was just too short to review such a large document and comment on it.]

[These two comments received after the October 23 comment deadline.]

- 20 Hello, hopefully I'm not too late, but I'd love add my feedback in a couple points:
- I'm thrilled St. Charles St. is becoming a Neighborhood Greenway
 - We will need physical traffic slowing measures - such as speedbumps - to make that safe. Right now around 25-30% of cars treat the road as a speedway and are traveling at speeds dangerous to pedestrians, including hooking hard turns onto Fair Oaks and sending children scattering.
 - All my neighbors and local residents are concerned given the growing number of young families on St. Charles and really appreciate these measures.

- 21 As a homeowner I truly appreciate our slow street on Versailles and wish it would become permanent. Reason: It stops drivers from speeding 40 - 50 miles down the street. With little to no respect for the residents of the area...who pay high taxes to support the community.

This is a school street (Edison) and before the slow streets it was like an expressway and quite dangerous. Cars constantly speeding (yes constanttly speeding) down from Fernside to Otis. When asked to slow down speeders were beligerant, screamed, and threatened the residents here. It happened so frequently that we can say it was a common occurrence.

People who do not live in this area complain 'it inconveniences them not being able to race down this direct street.' These drivers feel entitlement and exhibit little to no respect nor consideration for safety of the people living on this street.

Beyond that people within the community truly enjoy biking and walking in the safe slow street zone. And utilize it quite frequently.

My 15 adjacent neighbors all feel the same way. We've all talked about it.

I implore you to please consider making Versailles a permanent slow street. For the residents, community, and especially the kids. Thank you.

I wish to weigh-in against institutionalizing Slow Streets in Alameda. My stance against institutionalizing Slow Streets is:

- (1) Safer for Slow Streets is not a safer plan for the entire city
- (2) With increased building in Alameda, safe egress in the event of an emergency is more crucial than ever
- (3) The stated need to create open space for pedestrians and bicyclists due to Covid stay-at-home mandates is no longer true
- (4) Inequality- Why do some streets and their inhabitants merit extra care and others do not?
- (5) Small businesses along Slow Streets are negatively impacted from lack of egress and parking.
- (6) My tax payer dollars were to support the infrastructure of streets for cars. I vote in extending bike paths separately. This is now bait and switch

I sent a letter (copied below) to the Alameda City Council and the Alameda sun expressing my concerns over an unsafe situation **caused** by funneling two lanes down to one when two cars approached an intersection at the same time as a woman bicycling with two children. My correspondence with Erin Smith and John Knox was misinterpreted even upon reiterating the scenario. Neither car was driving too fast or inattentively. They were navigating around the Slow Street barrier, and I dread what would have happened if the woman wasn't accompanying the two children on bikes and the children proceeded into this confusing merge.

I asked for clarification and figures supporting that Slow Streets actually decrease serious accidents. I was provided links (Slow Streets program ; Active Transportation Plan) that had "upcoming" city council dates apparently from 2020. Another unanswered question pertinent to decide if the Slow Street initiative actually reduces accidents and morbidity is Alameda's rates for 2020 vs 2022. If it follows other Slow Street cities and the national figures, accidents involving cars have actually increased since Slow Streets were implemented- connoting that while those protected streets may be less hazardous, it actually shifts the danger to neighboring streets. Trish Spenser of the council provided a document from the Alameda County Department of Transportation:

<https://www.alamedaca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building>

	Average per year, 2009-2018	2019	2020	2021
All modes				
<i>Killed</i>	2	1	4	4
<i>Severely injured</i>	10	6	5	9
<i>All injuries</i>	221	273	167	158

While the numbers are blessedly too low to show a statistical significance either showing that Slow Streets decrease accidents or increase them, there is a trend of increased serious accidents associated with when the Slow Streets initiative was enacted.

The Slow Streets need to come down to restore safe passage for all Alamedians.

Sincerely, Jennifer Kidd

Letter to the Alameda City Council and Alameda Sun 7/26/22

It's Time to Take down our Barriers

Streets are for cars; bike lanes are for bikes and sidewalks are for pedestrians. Stating the obvious is not obvious when looking at our Alameda streets. It's time to take down the Slow Street barriers because not only have they outlived their purpose, but they are actually causing safety hazards.

At the onset of the pandemic when children were kept at home, we read that the Slow Streets provided a safer environment for children and their families to exercise. That is no longer true and what we are left with is worsening traffic congestion in Alameda. I have witnessed one neighbor turning into a Slow Street while another neighbor was approaching the same single-lane intersection at the very time that a woman and two children on bicycles had to come to a standstill.

By all means, let's continue to set aside access trails for bikes and pedestrians as Alameda grows. But let's take down the Slow Street barriers so cars can pass safely.

Sincerely, Jennifer Kidd, a 50+ year Alameda resident