



(510) 516-0497
P.O. BOX 2732
ALAMEDA, CA 94501
www.bikewalkalameda.org

**Board of
Directors**

July 27, 2021

Denyse Trepanier
President

RE: Item 6B, Commercial Streets Program Recommendation

Brian Fowler
Treasurer

Dear Transportation Commissioners,

Cameron Holland
Secretary

We are writing in support of staff recommendations regarding the Commercial Streets Program (Item 6B). We see how the street reconfigurations and parklets, even as a quick-build response to COVID-19, have been popular for reasons beyond social distancing. They are allowing these districts to blossom into dynamic and inviting destinations because they focus more on people and socializing than on ease of car travel and parking. Fortunately, not only is this realignment of space allocation proving popular with the public, but by deprioritizing driving and parking, it syncs with many of our city's stated goals around climate and resiliency.

Pat Potter
Board Member

Cyndy Johnsen
Board Member

Tim Beloney
Board Member

There are very valid concerns around program aesthetics and parking enforcement, and we're glad to see staff recommending that those get addressed as we go forward.

Lucy Gigli
*Founder,
non-voting*

One item that we'd like to see added, however, is consideration for long-needed safe access for bicyclists. Currently, our key commercial streets are high-injury corridors, where only a small percentage of experienced bicyclists feel comfortable riding. These streets should be safe, 'complete' streets that welcome users of all modes of transportation, including bicyclists of all ages and abilities. That they are not is unfortunate for a number of reasons. Beyond the obvious issues of safety and equity, it's a missed opportunity for businesses to get more visitors, and it increases the amount of sidewalk riding, as cyclists seek safety from cars. Accommodating bicyclists with safe infrastructure will also fix gaps in the bike network, which lacks north-south connectivity, most acutely in the Webster Street corridor.

The Active Transportation Plan has been delayed, but will soon be under way, and its draft recognizes all of this in calling for low stress bicycling facilities within both of these corridors. Also, Street Design Resolution #15648 states that

“when designing, redesigning or resurfacing streets...improvements and right-of-way space shall be allocated based upon the following principles and priorities...Provide safe and convenient access for vulnerable users including children, seniors, and people bicycling and walking..., and **Safety for people walking and bicycling shall be the highest priority.**” Although it’s a 2-year proposition, the extended Commercial Streets program represents a more measured and semi-permanent evolution to a potential future state, and it should align with the ATP, the Street Design Resolution, and Vision Zero.

Given that only a subset of businesses want parklets, and only very limited on-street parking is needed along each street, there should be room to meet all prioritized needs, including protected bike facilities, but it will take careful planning. We see these next two years as a great opportunity for that in the form of design, pilots, and even potentially implementation of protected bike lanes. We ask that the extended Commercial Streets Program explicitly recognize this need and include this objective.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Bike Walk Alameda Board