

March 12, 2026

To the Mayor, City Council and Alameda City Staff:

My name is Bill Niland, and I'm requesting you approve the proposed Diverter Islands at Lincoln/Walnut, which is Item 7 B on the City Council Agenda for March 17.

My wife Sarah and I have lived on Walnut Street for about 44 years four doors from the intersection of Lincoln and Walnut. As you may know, the neighborhood is within blocks of many daycares, Alameda High School, Love Elementary, and is where a young woman was struck in the cross walk on September 24, 2019, by an auto traveling east towards City Hall, and a pedestrian crossing Lincoln was killed in an accident on June 27, 2021. Over the years there have been many multi-car collisions, and in some cases, cars have crashed into homes at the corners of the intersection.

We have very much appreciated the time and attention that the Transportation Commission, City Staff and City Council Members both past and present have spent consulting with us about the safety concerns at the intersection over the years, especially the flashing lights for pedestrians installed at the intersection recently. We are also very pleased that the City proposed Diverter Islands at the intersection which is Item 7 B on the City Council agenda March 17, 2026. We whole-heartedly support this proposed change to the intersection.

According to my records there were seven collisions at Lincoln and Walnut in 2025. Those were on January 3, a hit and run on February 22, the crash that ran over a fire hydrant and into the fence of a neighbor's home on June 26, a two-car crash on July 10, a two car collision on November 2, a crash on November 7 and a two car collision where multiple police, fire, and ambulances came to the scene because of injuries on December 5. In the last case, at least one driver was taken away by ambulance. I note that these are just the accidents I was home for in 2025 and may not be a complete record of the collisions last year.

Although I'm not a traffic professional, it is my belief that most of the accidents at the intersection are caused by the high speeds drivers are driving on Lincoln, poor visibility for drivers who make left hand turns from Walnut onto Lincoln, and drivers who don't properly stop at the stop signs on Walnut while crossing Lincoln.

The proposed Diverter Islands accomplish several things to improve safety. First and probably most important, the islands make the intersection right turn only onto Lincoln for cars travelling on Walnut, but the diverters may also reduce the number of drivers using Walnut as a north/south shortcut to get in and out of town, and they may reduce the speed of cars travelling on Walnut and Lincoln.

I strongly urge you to support this change and get the Diverter Islands installed as soon as possible. As the staff report indicates, Walnut at Lincoln is acknowledged to be one the most accident-prone intersections in the City and has been for a while. Thanks again for your consideration and anticipated support.

Bill Niland and Sarah Baroody
Walnut Street Residents