

From: [Andrew Stoltzfus](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Item 7-B (Intersection Access Equity)
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 6:40:25 PM

Beg buttons make traffic worse - esp at rush hour. Here's why:

When Beg Buttons stand between us & our kids' schools & preschools, **we end up driving to school**. Multiply this by hundreds (if not thousands) of families, and **traffic gets worse ...** on every route to/from schools. Traffic that is preventable.

Eliminate Beg Buttons, and parents like me will make the choice we want to make: to **NOT** drive. And that will **REDUCE TRAFFIC**.

My example: 5 mins to go 500 ft & take the bus

The 51A bus picks up 500 ft from my house. But there are 2 beg buttons to cross the 3-way Tilden/Broadway/Eagle intersection. If I miss them with my 2 young kids, it takes 5+ mins *just to cross the street*.

So I drive. I sit in traffic, and **add to congestion** on Broadway, Central & Park St. At rush hour. And hundreds (or thousands) of other families make the same choice.

Because Beg Buttons make bus or walking *too inconvenient to be an option*.

Eliminating Beg Buttons will reduce rush hour traffic.

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Andrew Stoltzfus
andrewjstoltzfus@gmail.com

From: [Lara Weisiger](#)
To: [Ashley Zieba](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] IEAP Agenda Item 7-B
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 5:29:13 PM

From: Pat Potter <pttr_pt@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 4:51 PM
To: City Clerk <CLERK@alamedaca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] IEAP Agenda Item 7-B

I support the IEAP's concept, but would particularly like to focus on two issues: 1) every stop light should have a pedestrian signal at the same time without having to push a button. The intersection of Grand and Santa Clara which has a bus stop on either side of Santa Clara, can require a pedestrian to wait a whole round of car signals before it gets to a pedestrian signal which leaves the pedestrian standing on the corner an inordinate amount of time and encourages them to walk against the car signal because it takes so long. 2) Every intersection that has a bicycle in street signal activator should be checked to be sure they are operational just as they are for cars, otherwise bikes will be forced to cross the street against a light. To start, the in-street signal activators for bikes at the intersection of Grand and Central do not work. If there is no car on Central, the bicyclist will not be able to change the light unless s/he gets off their bike and pushes a pedestrian button.

Thank you,
Pat Potter
1430 Paru Street
Alameda, CA 94501

From: [Ken Freeman](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding December 7, 2021 City Council Meeting
Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 10:12:46 PM

Dear Major Ashcraft and City Council Members,

I am a long time resident of Alameda, close to 40 years.

I support all the positions of Bike Walk Alameda outlined below.

I ask you to please support these positions as well and vote accordingly.

Thanks for all you do,

Kenneth R Freeman DDS

Here are Bike Walk Alameda's positions, at a high level, for quick reference if you find them helpful (with the full letters we wrote to Council below):

Vision Zero Action Plan (Agenda Item 7-A):

We fully support staff recommendations, underscoring the need for more funding and staffing to ensure success.

IEAP (Agenda Item 7-B):

Our Intersection Access Policy (aka Beg Button Policy) should provide pedestrians and cyclists the same consistent, predictable signal operations the drivers enjoy. The policy proposed by our Public Works department is a good start, but doesn't go nearly far enough. We hope that Council will direct staff to beef up to this policy proposal by 1) expanding the number of signals, and hours of coverage, that signals that will be on full recall and 2) ensuring that our toolbox of pedestrian safety enhancements (LPIs, countdown timers, etc..) are applied consistently wherever total recall is not implemented. Consistency should be the goal, not driver throughput.

Slow Streets (Agenda Item 7-C):

We support staff recommendations to extend the program and improve Slow Streets, but would also like to see barricades on each side of every intersection, and new slow street segments added to Eighth, Pacific, Ninth, and San Antonio for a north-south connection between Jean Sweeney Park and the Santa Jose Slow Street.

From: [Drew Dara-Abrams](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Malia Vella](#); [John Knox White](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] transportation safety on 12/7 council meeting agenda: 7-A, 7-B, 7-C, 7-D, 7-E
Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 10:56:17 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilmembers,

I am writing to strongly support adoption of the Vision Zero Action Plan and associated plans and budget for 2022 and beyond. I would also like to comment on how related items on tonight's agenda can concurrently improve the safety and quality of Alameda's transportation network:

7-A Vision Zero Action Plan and 2022 Budget

It's appropriate to see the VZ Action Plan paired together with a concrete set of projects and budget proposed for 2022. I hope you all will vote to pass both resolutions tonight.

Getting to the true safety of "zero" deaths and serious injuries on Alameda's roads may take years and effort — as represented by the target date of 2035 — but rapidly reducing risks for everyone by redesigning infrastructure and making related policy and programmatic changes is within reach in the next handful of years.

Bad news about traffic safety in Alameda is there are so many physical design features, city policies, and behaviors by all of us that lead to potentially dangerous driving. This is also the good news: there are many "levers" the city and residents can all choose to use to lower the chances of deaths and serious injuries on our streets.

Thanks to diligent work by city staff and consultants, this Vision Zero Action Plan has the breadth and the depth needed to effectively address many causes, direct and indirect, of traffic deaths and injuries. This plan learns from what has worked and what has failed in other American cities that have adopted their own Vision Zero plans (many of which, like San Francisco's, were adopted 7+/- years ago and are unfortunately not on track to meet their targets of eliminating traffic deaths within 10 years).

Alameda's original draft did over-correct by setting a target date of 2040. (Sure was depressing to stand around at one of the outreach events and chat with other concerned residents about how many Alamedans might be hit on streets in the period of 19 years!) Thanks to staff for listening to this feedback — but more importantly, thanks to staff for also submitting to City Council an appropriately aggressive plan for 2022. Both ends of the Vision Zero timeline matter: setting a target date that is inspiring but achievable *and* beginning with sufficient commitment and budget across all the city departments to make substantive progress on the most dangerous infrastructure, policies, and behaviors.

One suggestion: Federal dollars are coming for transportation improvements, particularly to support the "safe systems" approach, "complete streets," and projects that promote equity through transportation. **How can the City of Alameda be ready to apply for as many of these funds as possible? What are the bottlenecks to having "shovel ready" projects? If the bottleneck is staff time, please hire more or bring on more consultants. If the bottleneck is cross-departmental communication, please direct the City Manager to prioritize this.** Given the large infusion of funds by the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill" and discretion Secretary of Transportation Buttigieg and his staff have been given, this is a unique opportunity for the City of Alameda to improve the safety

and quality of its transportation network. Please go get that funding and use it, on behalf of Alameda's residents of today and tomorrow.

7-B Signalized Intersection Access

What an unfortunate contrast with the Vision Zero Action Plan. With all due respect to the city's traffic engineers and Transportation Commission members, they have presented you with a Catch-22: They think it's unwise to provide pedestrians the same experience at intersections as drivers, because if there's an unneeded WALK cycle with no nearby pedestrians, the motorists will sit, emit more CO₂, and maybe get so mad they just run the red light.

But why do the WALK lights have to be on so long? Because post-war American intersections are very wide to provide multiple thru-lanes and turning lanes for motorists. The WALK cycle must stay on longer than a typical green car signal, to allow a pedestrian to get all the way across all that pavement.

It's even worse near senior living centers, where WALK cycles are often made longer as a token effort to enable slower walkers to cross. Therefore, all the more reason — per the traffic engineer's logic — that these long WALK cycles must only happen when a pedestrian has pressed a “beg button” in advance of the light changing. Pressing the button during a green car cycle isn't sufficient — it has to be pressed in advance.

Note that the “beg buttons” are often attached directly to the posts used to support traffic lights, which may already be offset from the sidewalk. Meaning further walking for the potentially elderly pedestrian.

Take this example. It's between the Marina Village Shopping Center (to the east) and Independence Plaza, a senior living complex. I believe it's also where Augusta Collins, aged 69, was killed while crossing on foot in 2015. The WALK cycle is now extra long, but pedestrians and cyclists are most always waiting, since they didn't arrive at the right time to press the “beg button.” (For cyclists, they have to get off their bike and walk down a slope to reach the posts where the buttons are attached.) The extended WALK cycle time just put lipstick on the pig of an intersection that is no more accessible or safer than before.



The full solutions for intersections like these are to reduce the distance pedestrians must cross, or to redo the entire intersection as modern roundabouts (which have much shorter legs for pedestrians to cross). While those types of changes are out of scope for this specific policy, a good traffic signal policy should still somehow reflect this broader context of what actually makes intersections accessible for all users.

Please take the staff recommendation for “1. Construction of new traffic signals should have crosswalks marked on all legs” and send the rest of this policy back to the drawing board.

7-C Slow Streets

My family has used and enjoyed almost all of the Slow Streets. First as places to walk (novel places to go during the doldrums of last year!) and now mainly as pleasant routes to ride our bikes across town.

The temporary barricades aren't the ideal method to slow traffic everywhere. Many intersections where Slow Streets cross larger arterials could also use re-thinks. But that's what makes this a good experiment: the city is now well positioned to decide what features to retain and what to change.

Please continue the program so that the city can transition these routes to more permanent status as part of the Active Transport Plan. These are exactly the type of projects the city should be primed and ready to submit as “shovel ready” to transportation funding agencies, at moment's notice.

7-D Roundabouts

Alameda may not need quite as many roundabouts as the Indiana town featured in The New York Times article that the Mayor emailed around, but modern roundabouts are a good “tool” to add to Alameda’s “traffic toolkit.”

To use this tool properly does require expertise. For example, the City Council’s most recent discussion of the Central Ave Safety Project turned into an exercise in literal hand-waving about the

proposed modern roundabout at Sherman/Central/Encinal. The fact that electeds asked staff and consultants to dig into the appendix to pull out design alternatives is perhaps representative of the homework everyone needs to do to successfully deploy the tool of modern roundabouts in Alameda. Good to see staff presenting City Council with a productive way forward on this topic.

7-E Automated License Plate Readers

I was surprised to read in the staff report that APD already has vehicles equipped with ALPRs, but they aren't currently in operation. For all the repeated calls for ALPRs, I didn't realize the city already had this technology at hand.

This suggests one potential solution: Just install big fake cameras at Alameda's bridges and tubes. I'm only half kidding. ALPRs seem to have an almost totemic significance to some in Alameda. However, that focus on the solution of cameras at city limits does not make for good decision-making.

To my knowledge, more people in Alameda have been killed in recent years by drivers speeding than by other forms of crime with the culprit then fleeing town by get-away car. **Please broaden the focus of this topic from using ALPRs to "catch bad guys" at city limits to encompass automated camera enforcement, including speeding, in appropriate locations around the city.**

Just as there is much homework to do to effectively deploy modern roundabouts, the City of Alameda must do even more preparation before deploying fixed automated camera enforcement. (To wit: BuzzFeed's reporting in 2019 on APD's unauthorized use of facial recognition software.) By broadening the focus of ALPRs to also encompass roadway safety, I hope the city can have more productive discussions about the role of automated camera enforcement in public safety.

Thank you for helping to make Alameda streets safer for me, my family, and everyone else who lives and works in Alameda.

Sincerely,
Drew Dara-Abrams
Calhoun St.



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RE: Item 7B: Signalized Intersection Access Resolution

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I'm writing on behalf of Bike Walk Alameda with our comments and questions for your consideration as you evaluate staff's recommended Intersection Access Resolution in response to your referral from 2019.

We are grateful for staff's work on this. We believe that the move to total recall for pedestrian actuation in our commercial corridors is the right move and strongly support that recommendation.

However, for the areas that fall outside of those prescribed areas, this policy is not an intersection access policy. We believe it could be the start of one, but we don't think this gives our community the understanding of how, or why, our beg buttons function as they do or what's going to change to make walking less burdensome. Nor does it provide Public Works, or the public, with a guide for what needs to change to our existing infrastructure, and how new signals will be deployed.

Per the map presented by staff, there are approximately 44 signalized intersections with beg buttons that are *not* adjacent to our commercial corridors. A portion of those 44 are school-adjacent, so they would have auto recall enabled for a few, unspecified hours, but would mostly fall into the bucket of intersections that would be setup by the following guidance in the resolution:

- pedestrian enhancements such as countdown signal heads and audible/accessible pedestrian signals (APS), **where applicable**
- longer pedestrian phase in school zones and areas with large numbers of elderly pedestrians, **where applicable**
- leading pedestrian intervals **wherever possible**.

It's not clear if the above means that these enhancements will be implemented as our new default signal operation standard at **all existing and new** intersections with beg buttons or, if it simply means that those enhancements are part of Public Work's toolkit and may or may not be implemented, as deemed necessary.

Board of Directors

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Founder, non-voting

Frankly, if it's the latter, then this is no change from what we have now. We already have all of these treatments in every conceivable configuration and timing at those remaining 44 intersections. It's that lack of consistent implementation which forces pedestrians to navigate a byzantine maze of signal behaviors around town, which is an unequal burden, and we do not support it.

"Where applicable" and "wherever possible" are vague and subjective. We need a dictating policy that will outlast the subjective criteria of whomever is making the implementation decisions at each intersection. That subjectivity, and staff turnover, is how we've arrived at pedestrians having to navigate a maze of signal operating decisions in order to cross each intersection in Alameda.

If, instead, this is Public Work's commitment to upgrading all of our existing beg-button-actuated signals to include ALL of the features listed above, then we hope you will not only endorse this policy, but also request an update from Public Works on their implementation plan to bring all 44 non-commercial corridor signals up to compliance with this policy. The criteria and plan should be clear and easy for the public to understand. While we're still not a fan of beg buttons, the consistent implementation of all actuated signals to include LPIs, consistent timing allotment, and consistent cycle behavior, would still be a big improvement over what we have now.

I hope you will ensure that we get clarity from staff on how much 'teeth' these enhancements have.. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Denyse Trepanier

Bike Walk Alameda Board President