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October 19, 2022

RE: Item 6A (Draft Active Transportation Plan)

Dear Transportation Commissioners and Staff,

We're very excited about the Active Transportation Plan and are writing in support and appreciation of this important initiative. It's critical to improving safe mobility for everyone, and achieving our climate and Vision Zero goals, all while enhancing livability in Alameda.

There are a few broad areas that we think can be improved, described below, which we hope you will consider. We also have compiled more [detailed, specific suggestions in this spreadsheet](#) from select members that we hope will be helpful.

Neighborhood Greenways

Since our 2030 Low Stress Backbone Network relies heavily on Neighborhood Greenways, they must truly function as low stress facilities: car speeds and volumes must be effectively reduced to target volumes, and be safe and comfortable when they are at their worst. Some suggestions to ensure this happens, courtesy of Bike East Bay's Advocacy Director Robert Prinz:

- Include metrics and goals for **peak** hour car traffic and **maximum** measured car speeds, not just average daily traffic and average car speeds. For example, on page 39, expand the metrics from 1500 daily vehicles or less to include peak traffic volumes of less than 50 motor vehicles per hour in the peak direction at peak hour [per NACTO](#)).
- Create a dedicated project (or expand on P.3: *Develop a toolkit to achieve and maintain Neighborhood Greenway volume and speed targets using volume management and traffic calming tools*) to collect data and existing conditions analysis proactively on as many Neighborhood Greenway corridor segments as possible. Bike Walk Alameda would be happy to help with manual counts, but exploring long-term options for data collection is preferred. Having this information will allow staff to monitor, iterate, and make swift design decisions when opportunities arise via paving, utility coordination, development projects,

etc. Here are some example docs from OakDOT, which outsourced much of this analysis work to consultants:

- [scope of work for upgrades analysis project here](#)
- [upgrades screening spreadsheet here](#)
- [draft web map of analysis locations here](#)
- Develop minimum design standards ([like this guide from Oakland DOT](#)) that can be implemented routinely, by default, with all paving projects and other capital improvement projects, with streamlined outreach standards for other upgrades that go beyond the minimum when added funding is available. These minimums should include midblock and intersection traffic calming, as well as intersection controls and crossing improvements.
To minimize through-street driving, we'd like to see partial diverters (or modal filters) used as generously as feasible.
- The reason Santa Clara and Orion aren't recommended as neighborhood greenways is because they, or streets parallel to them, are planned to have low stress treatments. However, it will be a while before that work is done. At least until those improvements are in place, we propose these streets remain traffic calmed. We also support the rationale behind keeping Versailles as a Neighborhood Greenway.

Trails

Many trails that are part of the low stress network are in poor shape and are not maintained by the City of Alameda. We recommend a dedicated project (or expand on Project 26 on page 61: *Maintain and upgrade shared use trails, based on prioritization criteria*) to identify trail ownership on a map, and create a process that ensures minimum standard maintenance of these trails. If they cannot be adequately maintained, alternative facilities should be considered where options exist. Areas of specific concern are Bay Farm and Marina Village.

2030 Low Stress Backbone Map Suggestions

Overall, this map looks great, especially in addressing safe north-south connectivity, a key issue in Alameda. The corridors of Webster and Park Street are not only needed for connectivity and general access, but are high injury corridors that should be fixed, so we're glad to see protected facilities for them on this priority map. There are a few areas that could be better connected, though, including:

- The Marina Village area, which will serve many of Alameda's new residents. Enabling people to walk and bike safely to shopping and jobs here is important. Protected bike lanes along Marina Village Parkway and Challenger will help, and will connect to the Cross Alameda Trail to stitch this area into the larger network better. If the bike and pedestrian

bridge lands here, a low stress facility will be essential to low stress cross-estuary travel.

- McKay and Westline should be on this map, too, to connect Central to the Bay Trail/Shoreline.
- The West End could use more connectivity, in particular, Main Street (to the ferry) and Orion.

Goals/Ongoing Evaluation/Performance Metrics

One of the recommendations in our [Bicycle Friendly City report card from League of American Bicyclists](#), was to “Adopt a target level of bicycle use (percent of trips) to be achieved within a specific timeframe, and ensure data collection necessary to monitor progress.”

This is an area where this plan falls very short. We understand that right now, our city may not have the ability to capture the data needed to do this, but we urge the city to find ways to do so, because it’s hard to improve without measurement. Please consider adding a program that addresses this issue: hire consultants to study how [other cities have done it](#), coordinate volunteers to do counts, buy/rent equipment to automate data collection, etc.

Ideally, each of our performance metrics would include actual numbers and target dates where they make sense (ie, x% of y by date z), and we’d have the data and tools to monitor progress and effectiveness of investments.

Bicycle Facility Types (Table 7)

This table helpfully divides low stress from high stress facilities, but might go further in expressly deprecating standard paint-only bike lanes. While [protected bike lanes have been shown to improve safety for all users](#), paint-only lanes and sharrows do not, and further, are not inviting to the very important 46% of Alamedans who are ‘interested but concerned’ in biking. Often, paint-only bike lanes are built to fill in the space when road diets are implemented. So while they serve a purpose, our city should install these only as a last resort, after safer facilities have been determined technically infeasible. If a street has — or is anticipated to have — motor vehicle volumes and speeds that call for bike lanes, they should be protected bike lanes, and that should be conveyed clearly in this table and in related discussions.

In general, we see our small city as a place where everyone can get around safely, no matter how they do it. We believe that almost anywhere cars go in Alameda, bikes and pedestrians should be able to safely go, too, and our approach to facility type should reflect that thinking. We should start with the safest and most welcoming facility, and degrade only when necessary.

This is in line with [Caltrans’ approach to ‘complete streets’](#) — the exceptions where streets cannot be safe for all users should be rare and fully justified. Our General Plan also takes this approach:

- *Safety First: When designing streets, the safest treatments should be considered the default starting point and be degraded only if necessary after documenting rationale for the approach. (Policy ME-6, Action B.)*
- *Space Priorities: When allocating public right-of-way space, the first consideration shall be for people walking, bicycling, and using transit. Space for on-street parking shall be the lower priority. (Policy ME-6, Action G.)*
- *Low-Stress Bikeways: Provide separated bicycle lanes instead of unprotected, standard bicycle lanes, unless not feasible. (Policy ME-14, Action H.)*

We hope to see this thinking normalized and reflected across various city documents where these issues are relevant, like this Bicycle Facility Type table, and street classification documents.

Staffing

Page 57 references the limits of staff resources, and suggests that some projects won't get done if there's not sufficient bandwidth. Bandwidth is a known issue as is, so we'd prefer that we plan to hire staff or consultants if projects are at risk, or goals are not being met, rather than abandoning or delaying important safety initiatives. This is in line with Goal 2.1 of the [Vision Zero Action Plan](#), which states, "Through the City Council budget process, propose ongoing, dedicated funding and staffing for Vision Zero implementation and coordination (ongoing)," with the City Manager's Office as the lead.

Thank you again for the great work on the Active Transportation Plan to date, and for considering our thoughts.

Sincerely,

Bike Walk Alameda

Lisa Foster

From: Drew Dara-Abrams
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 11:06 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ATP feedback for staff and Transportation Commission

I'd like to share some feedback on the draft ATP with Planning staff and with the Transportation Commission.

Thank you,
Drew

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- **Research:**
 - This is an appropriately comprehensive and thoroughly prepared plan. I particularly appreciated the survey conducted by a market research firm in Appendix B. It's useful to see the wide range of people who walk and bike around Alameda.
- **Business districts:**
 - Great to see Park/Oak and Webster included in the low-stress safe cycling network. It's important for cyclists of all ages and skills to be able to access the business districts and to also connect north/south to the rest of the low-stress cycling network. The Commercial Streets program has already demonstrated how both corridors can operate effectively with some lanes re-allocated from thru-auto-traffic to active transport modes.
 - Why is a full build using permanent materials for downtown Alameda not scheduled until after 2030? That's a long time to maintain "quick build" materials. Both Park and Oak have tripping hazards on their sidewalks currently. Can a full streetscape rebuild happen sooner rather than later? Are there means to fund some of these improvements in collaboration between the city and the DABA business association?
- **Pedestrian network and design treatments:**
 - *Table 5. Pedestrian Design Matrix* is comprehensive, but I'm not sure it's useful to the general public. Please consider identifying a smaller subset of treatments that the city is equipped to prioritize and roll out at scale. Pictures would be useful for the most important of the design treatment options.
 - It would be great to see a sampling of these design treatments built as demonstration projects, similar to how the Slow Streets barricades were rolled out very quickly. For example, neighborhood traffic circles would be great to build with "quick build" materials as a demonstration in a number of neighborhoods.
 - At present, too many of the Gateway Streets would be better identified as "car sewers." It's great to see that the target design speed is proposed as 25 MPH for all of the Gateway Street segments. This will take hard work — and will likely require more literal concrete in certain places. But it's definitely worth the effort. For example, the intersection of Constitution and Marina Village Parkway has been the site of at least one pedestrian killed by a driver. Those crosswalks are used often by seniors in the neighboring AHA complex, and the intersection is proposed to be part of the low-stress bicycle network. To reach a 25 MPH design speed for the roads entering and exiting that intersection is a worthy goal.
 - For both the pedestrian and cycling networks to succeed, there will need to be focus on key intersections and crossings. Some hard decisions will have to be made at intersections, due to space constraints. The logic of "levels of service" will need to be set aside in favor of safety. The

Vision Zero Action Plan identified high injury intersections. For the purposes of the ATP, please consider adding maps that specifically mark the high-injury intersections and also identify intersections that will need to be improved in order to support the low-stress bike network.

- **Cycling design treatments:**

- *Table 7. Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facility Types in Alameda* is good, but it doesn't address the importance of intersections. Please consider adding another table into the ATP document about intersection treatments.
- Consider referencing and using this NACTO publication: <https://nacto.org/publication/dont-give-up-at-the-intersection/>

- **Neighborhood Greenways:**

- A great next step for the Slow Streets. My family walks on Versailles and cycles on San Jose regularly -- would love to see those built out with more permanent treatments as soon as possible.
- To succeed, the bike boulevards need treatments where they cross larger intersections. I would strongly suggest that the ATP include the requirement that a Neighborhood Greenway have crossing/intersection treatments before any sections are allowed to be branded with signage as a Neighborhood Greenway. It is confusing to children and lower skill cyclists to have welcoming branding on signs and maps... and to then leave them almost stranded when they have to cross, say, 4 lanes of uncontrolled auto traffic.

- **Staffing:**

- City of Alameda "punches above its weight" thanks to hard and creative work by its planners, engineers, and consultants. However, to deliver effectively on the ATP goals (as well as the goals of the Vision Zero Action Plan and the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan), the city very likely needs more staff to manage parallel projects, consultants, etc.
- Under the Biden administration, a once-in-a-generation amount of funding has been authorized for transportation and infrastructure projects around the country. To fully take advantage of these funding opportunities, the city needs more transportation planners and transportation engineers on staff.
- In addition to adding more staff, the Planning/Building/Transportation and Public Works departments would do well to explore how to most effectively and efficiently coordinate multi-faceted projects.
- Perhaps the ATP is not the most appropriate document to propose and plan for organizational improvements. But I would at a minimum recommend removing the paragraph that says no additional FTE is required to accomplish the 2030 infrastructure plan. With all due respect, I wonder if that is overly optimistic.

- **Evaluation:**

- Can the city collaborate with ACTC to add additional bike/ped count locations? For example, when I went looking for usage counts for the Bay Farm Bike/Ped Bridge, I found that that is not one of the locations in the ACTC counting program. Perhaps some more coordination could help to make the ACTC counts more useful to evaluate specific corridors and projects in City of Alameda.
- What is the cost to add some additional in-pavement bike counters, beyond the city's existing one of the CAT? Just a couple more of those would help to provide coverage throughout the year, which can be used to adjust point-counts at other projects that don't have automated counters.

Lisa Foster

From: Carol Gottstein
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2022 2:44 PM
To: Lisa Foster; Lara Weisiger
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 10.20.2022 Public Comment Transportation Commission Special Meeting Agenda 6-A

Dear Transportation Commissioners:

Re: Draft Alameda ATP Public Review October 20, 2022

It seems to me this very large document is being pushed through public review in an extraordinarily short time frame: Oct 3-23, 2022. When I mentioned this to Staff, they referenced all the community outreach which had been done since late 2019. However, COVID-19 began in Winter 2019. In mid-March 2020, the Alameda public computer facilities, such as the libraries and the senior center computer lab, abruptly closed to the public for Shelter-In-Place. The Mastick facility remained closed until approximately September 2021.

This excluded many seniors, disabled, and low-income Alamedans; who do not have home or office Internet, from participating in online city meetings or surveys. I know many such people would have wanted to participate: I am one of them.

It appears the survey data was obtained by invitation to select Alamedans only. We are going to have to accept on faith that the survey analysis does not exhibit a bias toward the opinions of elite, computer-savvy Alamedans who are well-off and sophisticated enough to have access to a computer in their home or office.

I hope that some acknowledgement of the unusual lockdown circumstances that occurred contemporaneously with the development of this Plan, and may have limited public comment, will be acknowledged in the public record.

Thank you,
Carol Gottstein
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