

**From:** Paul Ashby <[pashby@gmail.com](mailto:pashby@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 22, 2020 4:01 PM  
**To:** Gail Payne <[GPayne@alamedaca.gov](mailto:GPayne@alamedaca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] bikes in Webster tube??

Dear Gail,

Thank you. Here is my official correspondence. I would appreciate it if it was read during the meeting but I do not think I will be able to attend myself.

My name is Paul Ashby. I have been a resident of Alameda for 15 years, first as a renter and then as an owner for the last 7 years. I have always used the tunnels as my main route to and from the Island. I am also a cyclist that occasionally commutes by bike and who prefers riding in the Oakland hills so I often ride through the Posey tube. As a car commuter and cyclist using the tubes I have a few concerns in the following order: traffic flow off the island, pedestrian safety, and quality of experience for cyclists.

City planning is very difficult because there are so many factors to be balanced during the decision making process. It is even harder to make changes to existing systems because one has to uproot what has already been done. I respect all the hard work that has gone into developing the plans for the Oakland Alameda Access Project (OAAP). I understand that it has a long history attesting to the multitude of factors that need to be considered to make good decisions.

I would like to point out that during my 15 years in Alameda, I remember two projects influencing traffic flow and cycling access for the tubes. The first is the remarking of the roads in Oakland including placing traffic barriers which improved flow onto 880N. The second is the widening of the pedestrian walkway in the Posey tube by 4 inches and changing the railing so that it doesn't hook your handlebars. It is only 4 inches but it made a huge difference in making the walkway more rideable and passable.

As I consider the OAAP and how it affects my personal priorities I have the following thoughts.

1. The OAAP will lead to a slight improvement in traffic flow off the Island. I think the main bottleneck is the traffic entering 880N crossing with the existing 980E traffic. OAAP does not address this problem. I even foresee that through traffic onto Harrison might be more hindered because they will be stuck behind people in the left lane that intend to take 880N but waited till the last minute to merge while the tunnel only has two lanes. This happens today but the three lanes just before 7th mitigates that some.
2. Pedestrian safety throughout the area being redone in Oakland will improve significantly. While I have never seen anyone hit, I have seen plenty of near misses and lots of frustration expressed by both drivers and pedestrians. I think the OAAP does a superb job of improving pedestrian safety in Oakland.
3. Cycling the tube is a terrible experience. I could understand if 90% of people say that they refuse to do it but would bike between Oakland and Alameda if there was some other option. Opening another path, especially if the paths were one way like the vehicular traffic, would improve the experience for some including myself. Not having to stop on the slick pavement and dismount so that opposite direction traffic can pass would be great. A 4 foot wide path will also be a substantial improvement to the 3' wide path we have now. Lastly, I expect the noise and dirtiness to decrease naturally as adoption of electric vehicles continues. Although the loudest vehicles (motorcycles specifically Harleys and large trucks) will be last to convert to electric.

With these thoughts in mind I found myself agreeing with much of the Alameda City letter to ACTC. Most of the benefit of OAAP is for Oakland and not Alameda. It definitely does not provide effective bicycle and pedestrian facilities for most citizens. However, because I foresee there being measurable improvement, I again found myself in agreement with the statement, "Yet, despite these significant reservations and concerns, the City of Alameda will stand..."

Then when I got to the last point that talks about diverting the money for the Webster tube pedestrian path improvements to more planning for a bridge that is a very long time away from being funded or built, I was shocked. Making changes is very slow. Giving up the chance to have an incremental improvement in the near future for the hope of getting a substantial improvement later just means we will never have any improvement for the foreseeable future. Please do not compromise on the Webster tube path improvements but continue to demand that ACTC move forward with additional solutions for Alameda residents. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Paul Ashby