



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

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July 15, 2021

Dear Planning Board Members,

In a recent meeting, in a conversation about parking minimums, a public speaker called in and mentioned that he shops by bike. There was some skepticism on the board about the ability to do this, beyond the most simple of shopping trips. We've heard doubts about utilitarian biking raised elsewhere, too, and we hope you will allow us, as the local active transportation advocacy group, to respectfully dispel any uncertainty around it.

While thousands of Alamedans use their bikes just for fun, many are also using them to get life's everyday stuff done. They are shopping by bike, some occasionally, some regularly, and some even exclusively. They carry everything from groceries, to multipacks of toilet paper, to hot pizzas, to fresh flowers, to clothes, to bags of mulch, to propane tanks, to computers, to furniture, and everything in between. They do other errands as well, like dropping kids at daycare or school, or getting to work with laptops and lunches, or dropping packages at the post office, or delivering other bikes even! They prefer biking over driving for a number of reasons, like affordability, health, climate concerns, convenience, pleasure, the sense of community, or because they don't own — or can't drive — a car. Attached are some of the images they've shared.

We fully understand that many people are not interested in doing this, or cannot do this. But we urge you to consider those who are interested, and can. Because it's happening right now, despite the often hostile car-centric infrastructure and lack of accommodations they frequently encounter — imagine what active support and cultivation would look like!

As you plan the future of Alameda, a future in which we need to reduce car dependency and vehicle miles travelled, and enhance transportation options for everybody, we hope you will keep the viability of everyday utilitarian biking in mind, and recognize it for the opportunity that it is. It's not for everybody, but it's very doable for many, and many more if we plan well and nurture it.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your work towards making Alameda the special place that it is, and will grow to be in the future.

Respectfully,

Bike Walk Alameda Board

