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**Board of  
Directors**

November 1, 2021

Denyse Trepanier  
*President*

RE: Item 7D, Commercial Streets Program Recommendation

Brian Fowler  
*Treasurer*

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Council Members,

Cameron Holland  
*Secretary*

Bike Walk Alameda is writing in support of staff recommendations regarding the Commercial Streets Program.

Pat Potter  
*Board Member*

We see how the street reconfigurations and parklets, even as a quick-build response to COVID-19, have been popular for reasons beyond social distancing. They're helping these districts blossom into dynamic and inviting destinations that focus more on people and social interaction than on the convenience of driving and parking. Fortunately, not only is this reallocation of space popular with the public, but by deprioritizing driving and parking, it aligns with many of our city's stated goals around climate and resiliency.

Cyndy Johnsen  
*Board Member*

Tim Beloney  
*Board Member*

There are very valid concerns around program aesthetics and parking enforcement, and we're glad to see staff recommending that those get addressed as we go forward.

Lucy Gigli  
*Founder,  
non-voting*

One item that we'd like added, however, is consideration for long-needed safe access for bicyclists. Currently, our key commercial streets are high-injury corridors, where only a small percentage of experienced bicyclists feel comfortable riding. These streets should be safe, 'complete' streets that welcome users of all modes of transportation, including bicyclists of all ages and abilities. That they are not is unfortunate from a safety and equity standpoint, and it's a missed opportunity for businesses to attract more customers. It also creates collateral issues, like increased sidewalk riding, because sidewalks are the only place many bicyclists feel safe in our commercial corridors. Accommodating bicyclists with safe infrastructure will also fix gaps in the bike network, which lacks north-south connectivity, most acutely in the Webster Street corridor.

Though the Transportation Commission unanimously supported staff's recommendation, they did not see the need to accommodate bicycle travel on these main streets. They felt that parallel side streets would suffice for bicyclists. While that may be true for Park Street, which has Oak as a potential parallel street, there is no parallel street for Webster Street.

The Active Transportation Plan has been delayed, but will soon be under way, and its draft recognizes all of this in calling for low stress bicycling facilities within both of these corridors. Also, Street Design Resolution #15648 states that "when designing, redesigning or resurfacing streets...improvements and right-of-way space shall be allocated based upon the following principles and priorities...Provide safe and convenient access for vulnerable users including children, seniors, and people bicycling and walking..., and **Safety for people walking and bicycling shall be the highest priority.**" Although it's a 2-year proposition, the extended Commercial Streets program represents a more measured and semi-permanent evolution to a potential future state, and it should align with our vision.

Given that only a subset of businesses want parklets, and only very limited on-street parking is needed along each street, there should be room to meet all needs, including protected bike facilities, but it will take careful planning. We see these next two years as a great opportunity for that in the form of design, pilots, and even potentially implementation of protected bike lanes, and we ask that the extended Commercial Streets Program explicitly acknowledge this important objective.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Bike Walk Alameda Board