

Sidewalk repair and trees on Gibbons

by Jim Strehlow

A representative from Alameda Public Works (APW) recently discussed the following with me. The department finally hired the necessary Traffic Engineer to get some traction on their backlogged projects. Much time was recently spent getting the new engineer familiar with projects, procedures, etc. Other street projects around the City will keep APW busy for about two years before they get back to Gibbons Drive. So no meetings will be scheduled with Fernside Homeowners regarding Gibbons Drive for a while.



Transportation: High and Fernside

by Jim Strehlow

There is a new "No Right Turn on Red" sign at High St and Fernside for vehicles entering Alameda from the High Street Bridge. Vehicles that used to be able to turn right onto Fernside Blvd must now wait. In particular, most vehicles coming from Gibbons Drive will not turn west onto Fernside; so many vehicles used to turn right onto Fernside thus clearing many car lengths for the traffic backed up into Oakland. I have noticed vehicles, instead, turning right (west) onto Marina Blvd with vehicular traffic going through the neighborhood in order to save one or two minutes instead of waiting at the traffic light.

When I asked an Alameda Public Works representative, "When was the 'No right turn on red sign' discussed at the City Council or at an Alameda Transportation Commission meeting?" The most distressing response I heard was along the lines of, "It was not publicly discussed. APW can not wait to get public approval for each of its projects." That means that APW has projects not being vetted by the public before being enacted. That is a dangerous position to take when the citizens are blind to behind-the-scenes decisions that affect the general public and are installed.



Vision Zero

by Jim Strehlow

Of the most importance is the City of Alameda's "Vision Zero" policy that will be discussed and possibly adopted at the City Council meeting on **Tuesday March 17, 2020** under agenda item **6C**.

<https://alameda.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=A&ID=754993&GUID=0A816FDB-D84F-418C-BEE3-D55E113ED6FD> or
<https://www.alamedaca.gov/GOVERNMENT/Agendas-Minutes-Announcements>

Agenda item 6C involves the "Vision Zero" policy in order to reduce traffic injuries or deaths. Accidents are just that ... an accident ... not an "on purpose." Was the motorist or pedestrian or bicyclist at fault? Was one or more people distracted (smartphone, headphones, navigation system), not seen (dark clothing), poor lighting, poor visibility, etc.?

When the City of San Francisco initiated their own Zero policy, after that City spent a lot of money to make Taylor Street safer, there was still a pedestrian death on the improved Taylor Street segment.

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2019/07/21/pedestrian-dead-speeding-tesla-crash-san-francisco-red-light/>

With the published Vision Zero policy (6C_Resolution.pdf) are:

"Standard travel lane width in Alameda shall be 10 feet on all streets, except on designated truck routes and streets accommodating AC Transit services where 11 foot lanes are preferable.

Where auto traffic volumes are low and/or space is constrained, further reductions in lane widths may be considered."

Shrinking the lane width moves vehicles closer to bicycle lanes. Is that "safer?"

Can you imagine moving vans and garbage trucks on smaller streets than Alameda already has?

Can you imagine city-wide: "separated bicycle lanes should be provided instead of unprotected, standard bicycle lanes, when feasible."?

That means the Council wants more cycle-tracks similar to Shoreline Drive throughout Alameda.

"Support motor vehicle speeds of 25 miles per hour or less citywide ... except for on Doolittle Drive and Harbor Bay Parkway."

The policy includes "should" and "support"; so it is not an ordinance or other regulatory statute for now; but it is the "will and pleasure of the City Council" if enacted for consideration of all future ordinances, statutes, and municipal code.

Alameda's Vision Zero is being fueled by the latest pedestrian death. Certainly a death is sad; but accidents happen. There are even bicycle versus pedestrian accidents and deaths in Bay Area cities. Paranoia excites people into drastic decisions instead of more reasoned solutions and discussions.



National Night Out

by Jim Strehlow

The Fernside Home Owners Association (FHOA) is considering not participating in National Night Out on the first Tuesday in August (4th.) Some neighbors like to be able to hold their own neighborhood event. FHOA could hold a smaller "driveway and sidewalk" event still inviting an Alameda Police and Alameda Fire representative; but on a later date and not encroaching a street. We would still need insurance; but on a smaller scale. The influenza (COVID-19) should have died out by then.



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