

City of Albany



TO: TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: JUSTIN FRIED, TRANSPORTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – ANALYSIS OF SOLANO AVENUE BICYCLE FACILITY CONCEPT

AGENDA DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Consider a recommendation to City Council regarding inclusion of bicycle facilities on Solano Avenue in the Active Transportation Plan. Provide comments to staff regarding areas for further study.

BACKGROUND

The 2012 Active Transportation Plan does not include bicycle facilities on Solano Avenue in the identified bicycle network. For east-west bicycle facilities in that plan, 'Slow Bikeways' are proposed on Washington Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue and 'Fast Bikeways' are proposed on Marin Avenue and Brighton Avenue. Since 2012, there has been significant focus in the planning field on facility designs for busier corridors to provide safer cycling access closer to destinations.

Additional study of Solano Avenue began in 2018 as part of the [Solano Avenue Complete Streets Study](#). During the development of the study the consultants prepared a [memorandum](#) discussing a range of options for cycling facilities on Solano Avenue with a high-level comparison based upon safety, comfort, loss of parking, construction costs, and construction impacts. At the conclusion of that process, Council directed staff to evaluate bicycle safety improvements for Solano Avenue as part of an update to the Active Transportation Plan (Resolution 2019-69).

At their [May 5, 2025 meeting](#), Council received a presentation on parking and cost analysis for potential bicycle facilities on Solano Avenue and directed staff to further develop an alternative that reorganizes parking to one side parallel and the other side 60-degree angle parking with approximately 11 feet of right-of-way provided to an uphill cycle track (referenced as Alternative 1 in that discussion).

ATP Phase 2 engagement on the future bicycle network included a discussion of Solano Avenue. City staff and consultants held an ATP Technical Advisory Committee meeting focused on discussing Solano Avenue. City staff also conducted outreach to the businesses along Solano Avenue to gather additional input door-to-door, via online

survey, and with one-on-one meetings. The concept requested by City Council has been prepared for the section of Solano from Masonic to Tulare (Attachment 1). Parametrix has also prepared a memorandum discussing the concept in detail (Attachment 2).

The more-developed concept presented tonight is intended to inform Active Transportation Network designations, identify issues for further study, and establish future streetscape project priorities.

DISCUSSION

Functions of Solano Avenue

Solano Avenue serves multiple functions with a relatively narrow right-of-way width of 80 feet. Solano Avenue east of San Pablo Avenue is:

- a designated truck route for commercial truck activity in Albany and Berkeley;
- a bus route for AC Transit with local service (Line 18) and transbay service (Line G); and
- a main street retail corridor with significant pedestrian activity

Different segments of Solano Avenue have different characteristics and upgrade needs:

- Solano Avenue between Masonic Avenue/Ohlone Greenway and Tulare Avenue needs curb ramp upgrades and sidewalk repairs to meet city legal obligation for accessibility improvements, as well as pavement rehabilitation work to maintain roadway function. In addition, sidewalk widths are narrow, and street furniture is dated. This segment is slated for near-term curb ramp upgrades, sidewalk repairs, and pavement rehabilitation and would likely also be the first phase of a future streetscape improvement project.
- Lower Solano Avenue between San Pablo Avenue and Masonic Avenue/Ohlone Greenway received streetscape improvements including lighting, furnishings, and corner curb extensions in the late 1990's/ early 2000's, as well as recent curb ramp upgrades. Although there are improvements that could be made to meet contemporary standards, this segment of Solano would likely be a later phase of any future improvement project.
- Solano Avenue east of Tulare Avenue is within Berkeley. The City of Berkeley's recently updated bike plan recommends this segment for a Class IV cycletrack and a Complete Streets Corridor Study similar to its designation in the 2017 plan. Albany staff do not have any information on where future improvements to the Berkeley portion of Solano fits into the City of Berkeley's overall capital improvement program phasing.
- Solano Avenue west of San Pablo includes two additional commercial blocks to Madison (which have received curb ramp upgrades) and then transitions to a residential street west to Cleveland.

Priorities for Improvements

Opinions on priorities for improvement on Solano Avenue are strong and varied. Different respondents place different priorities amongst pedestrian space, bicycle facilities, and vehicle access. During the network development (Phase 2), an online survey included a question on the Solano corridor. Of the 80 respondents, approximately half responded to this question. Staff subsequently sent a survey to businesses along Solano to try and gather additional stakeholder feedback. This survey was eventually shared more broadly. Based upon survey responses identifying as a business owner or not, responses from this survey are presented in the table below as 'Business' and Non-Bus':

	Phase 2	Business	Non-Bus
Extension of Lower Solano	13 (35%)	22 (65%)	16 (31%)
Eastbound Protected Bikeway	18 (49%)	6 (18%)	25 (49%)
Parking Reconfiguration for Wider Sidewalks	6 (16%)	6 (18%)	10 (20%)

While none of these surveys are representative, they point to a preference for extending lower Solano style improvements amongst businesses and a preference for the eastbound protected bikeway among other respondents. Second place is tied amongst business responses between utilizing parking reconfiguration for wider sidewalks or an uphill bicycle facility; amongst others the second place preference is to extend lower Solano improvements over reconfiguring parking for wider sidewalks. Top business respondent priorities included parking and loading, lighting, street trees, and public art.

In one-on-one meetings with business owners, issues raised included: concern over construction duration, high cost, and construction impacts on businesses; high cost of the project for the benefit; parallel parking would discourage some vehicle users; and risks for pedestrians crossing bike path from parking spaces. Business owners also highlighted the differences in impacts on the north side of the street versus the south side. Business one-on-one recommendations for priorities included slowing vehicle speeds, addressing loading and delivery needs, improving sidewalks and addressing sidewalk pinch points, improving pedestrian safety, reducing vacant storefronts, and keeping parklets over widening sidewalks more generally. Multiple retailers that draw more out-of-town shoppers or that sell larger items highlighted high customer driving needs that could not be easily substituted by other modes.

More broadly, responses continue to be split, with some strongly for facilitating cycling on Solano and others strongly to focus on other modes on Solano with parallel facilities and cross-street access for cyclists. Many preferring bicycle facilities on Solano also want two-way protected facilities. Staff has also received a number of questions regarding the possibility to narrow the uphill bike facility in the concept for additional vehicle lane or sidewalk width.

Eastbound Protected Bikeway Concept

The detailed concept (Attachment 1) and memo (Attachment 2) develop a concept

that reorganizes parking to one side parallel and the other side 60-degree angle parking with approximately 11 feet of right-of-way provided to an uphill cycle track. This is intended to provide improvement in safety and access for all modes of travel while minimizing the overall change to motor vehicle parking along the corridor. Of note is that one block in the study area is unique – the segment at the western edge between Masonic and Key Route. This block has a westbound left-turn lane. The addition of the uphill bicycle lane would require removal of the south side parking or removal of the westbound left turn lane (the former option is reflected in the detailed concept). The attached memo provides a detailed discussion of the traffic engineering and safety elements in the concept for Commission consideration.

Other considerations

In addition to considerations discussed above raised during public engagement and in the attached memo, a number of non-engineering considerations have also been identified for the decision regarding bicycle facilities on Solano. These include:

- Emergency response concerns with narrowing the westbound vehicle travel lane by approximately 3-4 feet and overall curb-to-curb width by 11 feet. This includes operational considerations with emergency response calls on Solano Avenue and potential greater vehicle traffic flow disruptions as a result.
- Narrower lane and curb-to-curb widths also reduce flexibility with use of the roadway for construction, evacuation, and special events. This may require additional design or operational strategies.
- The alternatives discussed provide minimum 11-foot travel lanes and would include in-lane boarding for AC Transit service. AC Transit multimodal design guidelines would inform bike facility design at bus stop locations.
- Existing restaurant parklets and bus stop parklets would need to change to utilize the new parking configuration.
- Potential compliance issues - With narrow sidewalks along Solano Avenue, pedestrians may utilize the bicycle lane when the sidewalk is congested. A one-way facility would also introduce potential use of the bicycle lane for travelling in the opposite direction of the design intent.

For further study

Loading/delivery management and ADA parking requirements require further study to provide additional accuracy to vehicle parking changes. Other items requiring design study include bus stops, drainage needs, green infrastructure requirements, and ADA sidewalk and business access requirements. Locations for additional study include the Masonic to Key Route block and the Tacoma intersection.

NEXT STEPS

We are reaching the end of the scope and budget for Solano Avenue in the Active Transportation Plan. Potential projects on Solano Avenue will be included in the third phase of Active Transportation Plan development focused on identifying and prioritizing active transportation projects. Inclusion of Solano on the ATP bicycle network would entail incorporating bicycle facilities as part of a Solano streetscape improvement project in the ATP and detail next steps for further developing the concept. Exclusion of Solano on the bicycle network would entail a Solano streetscape improvement project in the ATP focused on pedestrian facilities and bicycle crossing improvements.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Solano Avenue Eastbound Protected Bikeway Concept
2. Solano Avenue Eastbound Protected Bikeway Memorandum