

DATE: February 5, 2024
TO: Lisa Foster, City of Alameda
FROM: Jimmy Jessup and David Parisi, Parametrix
SUBJECT: Community Input on Fernside Boulevard Existing Conditions
PROJECT NAME: Fernside Boulevard Traffic Calming and Bikeways Project

Executive Summary: Fernside Boulevard Existing Conditions Feedback

The Fernside Boulevard Traffic Calming & Bikeways Project aims to reduce traffic speeds and improve safety and mobility for all roadway users. The first round of public engagement occurred in late 2023, and sought input on existing conditions and people's experiences, priorities, and general desires for the corridor. The City of Alameda (City) and Parametrix team gathered feedback from the community via an online survey (600 responses), in-person community workshop (85 participants), a virtual workshop (28 participants), emails, and SeeClickFix reports.

Public Input consistently reflected concern over the following issues:

- High vehicle speeds,
- Difficulty of crossing the street,
- Safety of bicyclists and pedestrians, and
- Illegal vehicle passing maneuvers and vehicles not coming to a stop at stop signs.

When asked what improvements would be appropriate for this project, pedestrian enhancements such as more marked crossing locations and flashing beacons throughout the corridor are the most commonly suggested improvements. This is closely followed by a desire for safe bicycle facilities appropriate for children biking to school, most frequently described as bicycle facilities that are fully protected or otherwise separated from vehicle traffic, and that facilitate safe passage through intersections, for left turns, and across Fernside Boulevard. Additional concerns involving driveway access, noise, appearance of improvements, and suggestions for installation of speed humps or other traffic calming elements were also consistently received during this project phase. Across the multiple feedback gathering forums, a steady rate of approximately 5-10% of respondents indicate that the roadway is sufficient as currently exists and accordingly do not desire to see improvements implemented.

The project team will use this feedback to guide development and evaluation of potential concept alternatives for Fernside Boulevard to guide development and evaluation of potential concept alternatives for Fernside Boulevard, and anticipate a second round of public engagement in the spring. Note that while the team used multiple methods to get the word out and received a large response, the findings are not statistically significant. The Active Transportation Plan includes a statistically significant survey about walking and biking attitudes and needs in Alameda, included in the plan's [Community Survey and Public Engagement Summary](#).



Project Goal and Considerations

The goal of the Fernside Boulevard Traffic Calming and Bikeways Project is to reduce traffic speeds and to improve safety and mobility for all roadway users. The project seeks to leverage community input to develop both a near-term “Early Action” concept plan that would allow for implementation in coordination with proposed 2025 pavement resurfacing of Fernside Boulevard between Tilden Way and High Street, and also to develop longer-term solutions to improve multimodal safety that would be in alignment with relevant adopted plans and policies. These include the Alameda Vision Zero Action Plan, which identifies Fernside Boulevard as a Tier 3 High Injury Corridor for all modes of transportation, and the City’s Active Transportation Plan, which identifies separated bikeways to be installed on Fernside Boulevard as part of the City’s 2030 Low-Stress Backbone Network.

Community Input on Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions Phase of this project took place in October-January 2023. This phase of the project focused on establishing a broad understanding of the current environment along the 1.3-mile corridor. While data collection and physical condition observation were notable components of this phase, gathering input from community members that travel along or across Fernside Boulevard was also crucial to the Existing Conditions study. The upcoming project phases will consider potential improvement options, and care will be taken to account for community needs. The intent is for proposed changes to address existing challenges and improve community experience with Fernside Boulevard.

Prior to starting the project, the City had already gathered information via over 30 Street Safety Concern reports via SeeClickFix and numerous emails regarding Fernside Boulevard traffic or safety issues in the past few years. Various near-miss locations were identified, and comments were received indicating high rates of vehicle speed, illegal vehicle passing, and difficulty crossing the street safely.



Figure 1: Community safety concerns summarized from SeeClickFix submissions from 2021-2023.

Input regarding community experience with Fernside Boulevard was collected by various means, including a Community Workshop, Virtual Workshop, Online Survey, and other emails and submissions to the City SeeClickFix system. Invitations for the workshops and to participate in the survey were conveyed to the public through notices sent to all 400 postal mail addresses along Fernside Boulevard, 5 A-frame posters placed along Fernside Boulevard for 2 weeks, and through over 40,000 emails and text messages delivered via 10 newsletters/notices to various City of Alameda mailing lists. In addition, local schools and community groups, including but not limited to the Fernside HOA, East Shore HOA, Alameda Vista View Neighbors, Edison Elementary School, Otis Elementary School, and Bike Walk Alameda, shared information regarding the project with their communities and notified members of the upcoming engagement activities.

A summary of existing conditions community input collected through these forums about mode and frequency of travel, challenges encountered, and desired improvements along Fernside Boulevard are further described below.



Community Workshop

The Community Workshop was held on December 4, 2023 from 6-8 PM at Edison Elementary School, which is located two blocks from Fernside Boulevard. There were 85 participants in attendance. The agenda featured a presentation from the project team reviewing collected traffic and crash history data, followed by an open house and input session. During the open house, attendees perused project information, maps, and examples of potential traffic calming and bikeway ‘toolkit’ measures for potential future corridor improvements.



Figure 2: The Community Workshop on December 4, 2023, was attended by 85 participants.

Large maps on tables welcomed attendees to offer feedback using various annotation materials. Attendees were invited to write down input describing their challenges, or lack thereof, of traveling along and across Fernside Boulevard, and to comment on the list of potential toolkit measures. In addition to the annotation maps, input was gathered via Input Forms that were handed to all participants and through individual conversations with attendees.

<p>FERNSIDE BOULEVARD TRAFFIC CALMING & BIKEWAYS PROJECT</p>	
<p>COMMUNITY WORKSHOP 1 Monday, December 4, 7:00 - 9:00 pm Presentation at 7:15 pm followed by open house Children's coloring table and light snacks provided</p>	
<p>What do you think are the key issues affecting Fernside Boulevard?</p> <p><i>Auto Speed!</i> <i>There have been accidents recently in front of my house</i> <i>Need crosswalks between High Street & Fernside</i></p>	
<p>Where do you see these issues, e.g. intersection, mid-block location, block, segment (a, b, or c), or full corridor?</p> <p><i>Seg 4-100 of Fernside Ave and continues down past car wash to midblock</i></p>	
<p>What measures would you like to see implemented to address these concerns?</p> <p><i>Crosswalks, crosswalks</i> <i>Paint is cheap, use it.</i></p>	
<p>Name (optional): _____ Email (optional): _____ Add me to a mailing list: <input type="checkbox"/> Fernside Blvd <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Greenways (includes Corfield Ave & San Jose Ave) Address (optional): _____</p> <p>transportation@alametrix.com www.alametrix.com/fernside 510-747-6833</p>	

Figure 3: 27 Input Forms were collected at the Community Workshop on December 4, 2023.

27 Input Forms were collected by the end of the Community Workshop. Of these, 93% of forms indicated safety or vehicle speed as one of their main concerns. Other key issues included vehicles passing in the two-way-left-turn-lane (west of High Street) or in the bike lanes to the right of the vehicle travel lane (east of High Street), difficulty crossing the street, and cars running stop signs. 7% of Input Forms desired that no changes be made to the existing configuration of Fernside Boulevard. Other important input reflected resident requests for barriers to be installed that would restrict turning from High Street on to Marina Drive in order to limit cut-through traffic, for installation of speed humps on Fernside Boulevard and side streets such as Liberty Avenue, and for increased traffic enforcement.

The annotation maps measured 10 feet by 3 feet and displayed Fernside Boulevard in three long ‘strips,’ which facilitated handwritten notes and comments directly connected to issue locations or locations where a ‘toolkit’ improvement measure was suggested. Overall, there were 155 individual comments collected on four large maps, scattered among post-it notes, drawings, and other descriptions made directly on the maps.





Figure 4: Four large annotation maps allowed Community Workshop participants to remark on transportation challenges and desired improvements along Fernside Boulevard.

Most comments described issues and user challenges, including driving failing to stop at stop signs, speeding, making illegal passing maneuvers; bicycle facilities that felt unsafe; and difficulty crossing the street. Approximately the same number of comments (25-30) suggested specific pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements from the ‘toolkit’, and there were 17 suggestions for other traffic calming ‘toolkit’ measures, as summarized in the following table.

Pedestrian Improvement Suggestions		Bikeway Improvement Suggestions		Other Traffic Calming Improvement Suggestions	
Flashing beacons	12	Protected bike lanes	13	Speed humps	6
Additional crosswalks	10	One-way separated bike lanes	7	Roundabouts	6
Improving sightlines	3	Two-way separated bike lanes	2	Speed feedback sign	3
Bulbouts	2	Protected intersections	3	Medians to prevent passing	2
Pedestrian refuge islands	1	Buffered bike lanes	0	Bus enhancements	0
Raised crosswalks	1				

Table 1: Summary of traffic calming and bikeway ‘toolkit’ suggestions made on annotated maps by Community Workshop participants.

The geographic nature of the map exercise facilitated locational feedback on existing safety improvements and gave participants an opportunity to identify exactly where improvements may be needed. Comments included:

- Support for the flashing beacons currently installed at three uncontrolled crossing locations (Versailles Avenue, Harvard Drive, and San Jose Avenue), and numerous requests for crosswalks with flashing beacons at additional intersections, including Pearl Street, Cambridge



Drive, Fairview Avenue, Garfield Avenue/Eastshore Avenue, Liberty Avenue, and Central Avenue.

- The Fernside Boulevard intersection with High Street and Gibbons Drive received the highest number of total comments for a specific intersection (19), each of which described either confusing and dangerous situations for vehicles and/or bicyclists, or suggesting consideration of a roundabout, turning restrictions, or other intersection reconfiguration.
- Protected and separated bicycle facilities throughout the corridor was frequently suggested, especially requesting connection to the existing two-way separated bikeway that currently ends at San Jose Avenue, and wider bike lanes that accommodate tricycles was suggested.
- Other 'toolkit' measures such as improved sightlines, curb extensions, speed feedback signs, and pedestrian refuge islands received a small number of comments. Though not listed as 'toolkit' improvements on the visual material used during the open house, there were six suggestions for raised crosswalks or speed humps along the corridor and six suggestions for roundabouts (at Encinal Avenue, Central Avenue, and High Street).

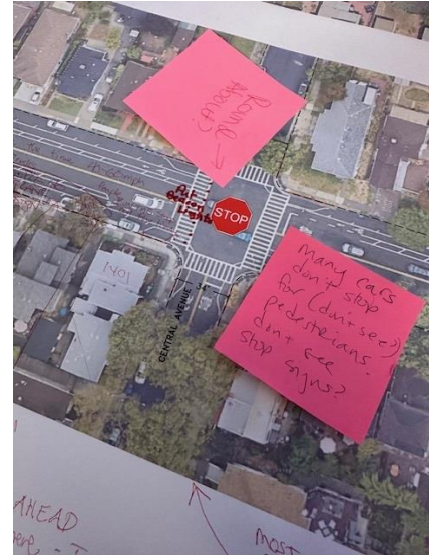


Figure 5: The geographic nature of participant map annotations facilitated location-specific feedback on desired improvements.

Individual conversations with attendees at the Community Workshop also garnered feedback that vehicles often do not stop for pedestrians attempting to cross the street and frequently roll through stop-controlled intersections. Additional feedback gathered through individual conversations also indicated the desire to provide bicyclists with facilities that are appropriate for school-aged children, to reduce traffic noise, to consider protected intersections and roundabouts at larger intersections, and for more traffic enforcement.

Virtual Workshop

A Virtual Workshop was held on December 11, 2023 from 12-1 PM on Zoom. There were 28 participants in attendance. The material that was presented at the Community Workshop was also presented during this session, followed by a Question & Answer session during which 12 participants asked questions or made comments that were addressed immediately following by the project team. In addition to comments that expressed desire for pedestrian improvements, safe bicycle facilities, particularly bicycle routes to schools that accommodate children, consideration of speed humps and roundabouts, and improved traffic enforcement, commenters also emphasized the importance of landscaping and for installed improvements to be visually pleasing. Concerns were also expressed regarding the potential for parking-protected bicycle lanes to increase difficulty of vehicles entering and existing driveways, and for the potential for traffic calming along Fernside Boulevard to result in re-routed traffic to other nearby roadways such as High Street.



Fernside Blvd Virtual Workshop this Monday 12/11

Thank you to the 85 people who attended our first community workshop for the [Fernside Boulevard Traffic Calming and Bikeways Project](#)! Participants heard a presentation introducing the project and providing data about existing conditions, then gave extensive feedback via discussions with the project team, input forms, and map markups.

The presentation slides are a trove of information! View them [HERE](#).

Couldn't make the in-person workshop? Join us to hear the same presentation and share your thoughts at our [lunchtime virtual workshop](#) on Monday, December 11.



12/11 Virtual Workshop

- Monday, December 11, 12:00 - 1:00 pm
- Register for Zoom: https://alamedaca.gov/zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TfUjAIXNWSi4nTYXAZS2Q
- By phone: call 669-900-9128 and enter Meeting ID 893 7931 7424

Figure 6: A Virtual Workshop was held on December 11, 2023.



Online Survey

An Online Survey gathered 600 responses between November 21 and December 17, 2023. The survey consisted of 13 questions and took an average of just over seven minutes per user to complete. Of the 600 respondents, 61% answered that they lived along or within one block of Fernside Boulevard, and 50% answered that they use Fernside Boulevard daily, as opposed to 7% that use Fernside Boulevard less than once per week. Respondents were able to select one or modes of travel they use when traveling along or crossing the roadway; 546 answered that they travel by vehicle, 385 walk, 314 cycle, and 29 take the bus. When allowed to select multiple destinations that prompt travel along or across Fernside Boulevard, the highest number of respondents (435) answered that a bridge is their typical destination, indicating that the corridor serves as a major route between such access points as Bay Farm Bridge, High Street Bridge, Fruitvale Bridge, and Park Street Bridge. Respondents also indicated that residences (399) and shopping (382) destinations generated use of Fernside Boulevard, along with work (244) and school (138).

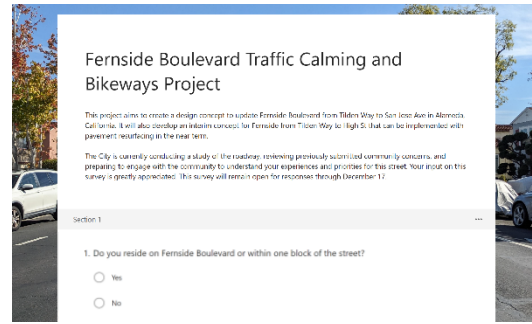


Figure 7: Information was gathered via an online survey from November 21 to December 17, 2023

The survey listed 15 potential challenges, from which respondents were able to select up to seven issues to represent what they find most pressing when using Fernside Boulevard. Of these, the challenges of high vehicle speeds, crossing the street, safety of people walking, and safety of people biking all garnered more than 300 responses. Traffic congestion, safety of people in vehicles, and noise were the next highest-selected challenges, garnering 122, 121, and 109 responses, respectively. Challenges with street lighting or visibility, roadway or sidewalk condition, and truck traffic

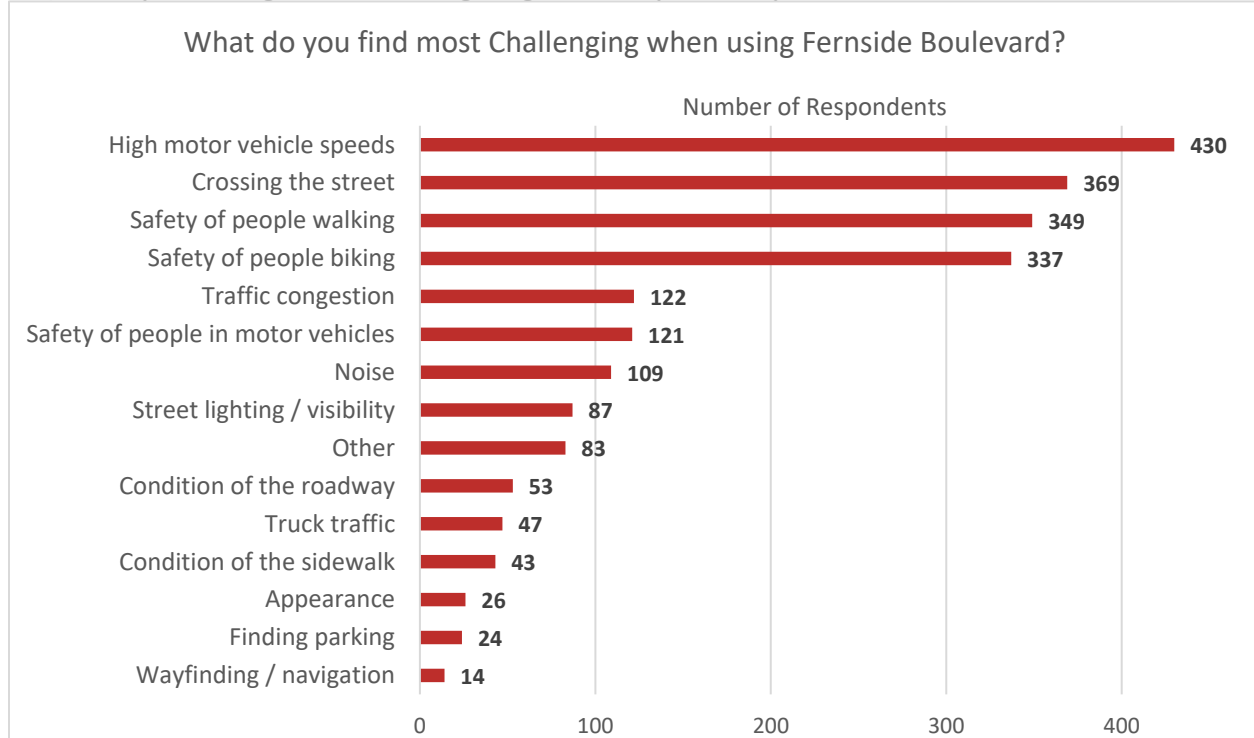


Figure 8: Online survey response results to the prompt “What do you find most challenging when using Fernside Boulevard?”



each collected between 40 and 90 responses. Wayfinding / navigation, finding parking, and appearance were the lowest-selected challenges, each selected by fewer than 30 respondents.



Figure 9: A sample of online survey respondent free response comments describing existing challenges or improvements desired along Fernside Boulevard.

The survey also included a free response question, with a field for text to be entered in response to a prompt asking for survey participants to describe their current challenges using Fernside Boulevard, as well as any desired improvements for the roadway. Over 75% of all

respondents entered text for this question. As such, this body of responses represents the largest collection of qualitative feedback gathered throughout the project’s Existing Conditions study. Though most of the responses describe challenges with high vehicle speeds, illegal vehicle passing maneuvers, vehicles not coming to a stop at stop signs, or pedestrian and bicyclist safety, five percent of respondents indicate that the street is satisfactory as it currently exists, and/or that improvements to the corridor are not necessary. Some participants describe difficulties in entering or existing driveways due to high vehicle speeds, limited sight lines when approaching Fernside Boulevard from a side street, issues with lighting and noise, and there are also some comments that bicyclists have been observed to not stop at stop signs.

The vast majority of improvements suggested in the survey free response question suggest pedestrian and bicyclist improvements such as additional marked crosswalks, flashing beacons, and protected bicycle lanes both in general and at specific locations. In addition to these, 12% of free response comments reflect a desire for increased traffic enforcement, 8% of comments suggest speed humps, and 3% of comments recommend roundabouts. Other suggestions include additional speed feedback signs, narrower travel lanes, median islands, and curb extensions.

The online survey also asked demographic and socioeconomic questions. Of all survey participants, 26% were over 65 years of age, and 47% of participants had children under age 21 living in the household. Of these respondents, numerous households have children that attend local schools in the vicinity of Fernside Boulevard such as Lincoln Middle School (121), Edison Elementary School (78), St. Philip Neri School (22), Rising Star Montessori School (10). 60 respondents have children that attend preschool or other schools. In terms of racial or ethnic identity, the vast majority of respondents (400) identify as white. 69 respondents identify as Asian / Asian American, 41 as multi-ethnic or multi-racial, 29 as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 11 as African American or Black, 11 as Middle Eastern, and eight as American Indian or Indigenous.



Online survey participants were 90% homeowners and 10% renters. The online survey was largely comprised of participants from higher reported household incomes, listed per the following ranges:

- 1% of survey participants reported household income under \$40,000
- 9%: \$40,000 – \$100,000
- 20%: \$100,000 – \$150,000
- 40%: \$150,000 – \$300,000
- 30%: \$300,000

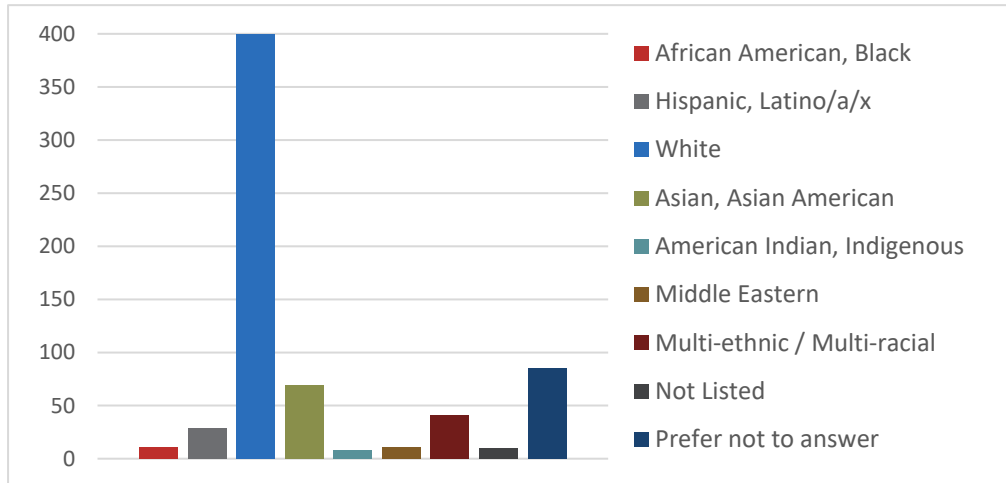


Figure 10: The number of online survey participants that identify as white greatly outnumber participants of other racial or ethnic identities.

Transportation Commission

Results of the Existing Conditions Phase were presented to the Alameda Transportation Commission on January 24, 2024. The feedback from commissioners to the project included:

- Ensure enhanced safety at marked crosswalk locations;
- Consider the City’s neighborhood connector roadway classification in determining appropriate treatments and design guidelines;
- Consider the potential for traffic pattern evolution in a post-COVID future
- Integrate treatments that sufficiently calm traffic such as hardened centerlines, narrowed travel lanes, rumble strips, vertical deflection elements, and other measures into the project;
- Integrate lessons learned from other traffic calming projects in the City such as along Otis Drive, and set the current project up for measuring before and after metrics and success indicators.

Feedback from all forums will be considered by the project team to guide development and evaluation of potential concept alternatives for Fernside Boulevard in the coming months. An additional round of community engagement on concept alternatives will commence in late Spring 2024.

