

From:**Sent:** Saturday, May 18, 2024 12:17 PM**To:** citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>**Subject:** Agenda Item 10-1: Kains and Adams Bikeway Pilot Evaluation

May 18, 2024

Dear Albany City Council Members,

I live on the 500 block of Kains Avenue and have participated from the beginning in all the meetings and (walking) sessions regarding the Kains/Adams Bikeway Project. This has been a long and arduous process. Before making any decision, I urge you to consider FULLY implementing the pilot project as it was approved in 2019. The pieces of the pilot that have not been implemented are (1) signage at the vehicle entrance intersections of each block and (2) enforcement of the legal parking requirement. These two things could alleviate the confusion many drivers experience regarding two-way vehicle traffic on what appears to be a one-way street and the unsafe feeling of cyclists traveling in the contraflow direction.

I understand the desire for Staff to meet this year's California Active Transportation Program grant application deadline, but, as was mentioned at the 4/25 Transportation Commission meeting, there will be another opportunity to apply for the grant in two years. By that time you will have a fully implemented pilot project to evaluate. We've waited this long. It doesn't seem unreasonable to wait a bit longer.

Thank you and good luck!

Ruth Gjerde
528 Kains Ave.

From:**Sent:** Sunday, May 19, 2024 7:10 PM**To:** citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>**Subject:** public comment for Item 10-1 Kains and Adams Bikeway Pilot Evaluation

As a resident of the 600 block of Adams Street who would have to live on a daily basis with whatever is decided and who values the local and regional benefits to non-car transportation, whose wife rides her bike to work up and down Adams St every day, and whose children, when at home, ride their bikes up and down it regularly, I would be fine with the staff recommendation, the contraflow bike lane with various other improvements as given in the staff report. If chosen, I would like to see it paired with additional infrastructure that gives bikes a higher priority like stop signs turned to stop cross-traffic and also something that slows vehicular traffic which tends to speed down 1-way streets.

I am also fine with preserving the current pilot program, with the addition of improved signage for 2-way internal vehicular traffic, which has been successful in Berkeley for ~50 years. But I appreciate a) the simplicity and legality of the new, proposed 1-way vehicular traffic with a contraflow bike lane and b) the minimal cost required to make minor changes to implement it.

If the city council goes with 1-way vehicular traffic with contraflow bike lane, I should add that I am not in favor of diverters at cross streets. Diverters would improve the experience for cyclists and would reduce traffic speeds on my block which are both good but would result in the onerous consequence that local residents only be able to enter our block from San Pablo Ave with a right-turn north onto Adams St. We would no longer be able to enter Adams St from the west.

I should note that I am also fine with option #2 as given in the prior Transportation Commission staff report which was for 2-way vehicular traffic on Adams/Kains with diverters at cross streets so that cars could not go north or south from block to block. Diverters would have benefits for local residents like me who value slower traffic on my block and would help minimize spillover traffic from SPA when it backs up. And with 2-way traffic on each block, local residents could enter my block on Adams St from the north or south thereby allowing approaches from the east or west.

All of the plans I advocate for here provide a legal way for bikes to go 2-way thereby allowing the county to continue to use Adams/Kains as a regional biking transportation solution for bike traffic that would otherwise be on San Pablo Ave.

Despite efforts by some of my neighbors to warn others with flyers and web pages of literal "chaos and anarchy" if biking infrastructure is improved on Adams/Kains, the pilot project has shown that nothing of the sort has occurred. I think all of my neighbors are thankful for improvements to cycling infrastructure that helps more people get by with fewer or no cars particularly since our neighborhood will be the most impacted by recent changes in state laws and local zoning which remove the requirements for off-street parking in new construction including for 12-story buildings on SPA which can now be built by right with no off street parking. The approved bowling alley project alone would provide 30 fewer parking spaces than homes in that 207-home development. And each off-street parking space costs tenants extra fees, likely totalling thousands of dollars per year. The end result is we anticipate hundreds of new cars trying to park in our neighborhood when these developments are built. The easier it is for those new residents and existing residents to get around safely and comfortably with fewer or no cars, the better off all of us on Adams & Kains will be. And the safer our sidewalks will be as people feel comfortable to shift e-scooters and similar micro-mobility vehicles off our sidewalks and onto safe streets with infrastructure designed for them in mind.

Bryan Marten

Resident 600 block of Adams St

From:**Sent:** Sunday, May 19, 2024 7:31 PM**To:** citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>**Subject:** City Council Item #10-1, Kains and Adams Bikeway Pilot Evaluation

To whom it may concern,

We are residents on the 900 block of Kains Ave. Our family consists of myself, husband, & two daughters 3 years old and 9 months. The street pilot has been an interesting experience for us. We were excited that our street has allowed two way bike traffic and for vehicles to exit towards Solano. However, the two way vehicle traffic has been complicated. We believe there has not been proper signage or enforcement of the change. On numerous occasions while exiting the street towards Solano (northbound) we have been harassed, blocked in and even encountered someone playing chicken which almost resulted in an accident all while our children were in the car. As residents of Kains we would love the option to exit towards Solano but believe it needs to be properly executed.

Another concern with one way traffic is the speed at which people travel down Kains Ave. Given our proximity to the Y & Solano we have a high number of non resident traffic on our block. We see many cars looking for parking close to the Y or Solano and when they don't find anything they speed down the rest of the block to circle around again. They tend to forget that the 900 block is still a residential area. We would love to see speed humps added to our street to slow down traffic going both ways.

In addition, we would like to have a flashing pedestrian crossing sign (similar to Talbot & Marin) where Kains crosses Marin. On numerous occasions while crossing on foot with a stroller we have had close encounters with cars not stopping for us. Often what occurs is cars going in one direction will stop but cars in the other direction do not stop.

Safety is a major concern for us on our street and would like any measures put in place to keep our residents safe. We love the vision of the pilot and want to make the streets of Albany a safer place for bikers, vehicles and pedestrians.

Sincerely,

Jaime Harari

From:**Sent:** Sunday, May 19, 2024 7:59 PM**To:** citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>**Subject:** Re: public comment for Item 10-1 Kains and Adams Bikeway Pilot Evaluation

I should add that it is important to build transportation infrastructure when and where it is possible even if not all the outside connections are in place in advance. So this segment on Adams St, part of a bigger regional plan, is important but it will be significantly more useful when connected to the north and south.

I urge the city council to do what it can to create connections north and south for Adams St. For the north, a bike/ped bridge, as laid out in city plans since 2012, that is a design that works well for the Institute for the Blind, is ideal. To the south, the city owns the property where Adams ends so the city could build bike paths around or through it to connect with the bike path at Sprouts. I have advocated in the past for the city to turn city hall triangle into dense public housing with city services on the ground floor. Any design for that would have even more flexibility in implementing bike paths around or through the property.

Bryan Marten

On Sun, May 19, 2024 at 7:09 PM Bryan Marten <bdmarten@gmail.com> wrote:

As a resident of the 600 block of Adams Street who would have to live on a daily basis with whatever is decided and who values the local and regional benefits to non-car transportation, whose wife rides her bike to work up and down Adams St every day, and whose children, when at home, ride their bikes up and down it regularly, I would be fine with the staff recommendation, the contraflow bike lane with various other improvements as given in the staff report. If chosen, I would like to see it paired with additional infrastructure that gives bikes a higher priority like stop signs turned to stop cross-traffic and also something that slows vehicular traffic which tends to speed down 1-way streets.

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Adams & Kains will be. And the safer our sidewalks will be as people feel comfortable to shift e-scooters and similar micro-mobility vehicles off our sidewalks and onto safe streets with infrastructure designed for them in mind.

Bryan Marten

Resident 600 block of Adams St

From:

Sent: Monday, May 20, 2024 10:20 AM

To: citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>

Subject: May 20 City Council Meeting - Agenda Item 10-1

Hello,

I bike on the 800 block of Kains multiple times a day taking my kids to/from Ocean View elementary, as well as other trips around town. There are too many cars using this block to make it feel like a comfortable bicycle route, and I would not feel comfortable with my kids biking alone there. I feel especially uncomfortable biking north on Kains because even though it is supposed to be 2-way, it feels like I'm going the wrong way.

I agree with the staff recommendation to **change Kains and Adams back to 1-way for vehicles with contraflow bike lanes, especially if you also do something to address vehicle volumes on the 700 and 800 blocks of Kains.** It would also be helpful to **add bicycle boulevard signs and reduce the speed limit**, so drivers know they will need to go at bicycle speed when taking those roads.

Thank you!

Carrie Schulman

From:

Sent: Monday, May 20, 2024 10:24 AM

To: citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>

Cc:

Subject: 5/20 Agenda Item 10-1: Kains and Adams Bikeway

On behalf of the Albany Strollers & Rollers:

Position Statement on Kains/Adams Options and support of Resolution 2024-33

AS&R supports Option 4, Contra-Flow Bike Lanes on Kains and Adams with consideration of the following:

1. Prioritizing cyclist through movements by adding stops signs for cross traffic
2. Reducing motorist through movements by adding diverters or reversing the direction of some one-way blocks (for example, the 700 block of Kains)
3. Reducing vehicle speeds by lowering the speed limit to 20 mph and/or through other traffic calming measures
4. Encouraging cyclists to ride outside the door zone with road markings in the bike lane
5. Adding more indications that cyclists have dedicated space on the street and showing what motorists are allowed to do

Thank you for your continued support for Kains & Adams as bicycle priority facilities!

Ken

Ken McCroskey

Core Group Member, Albany Strollers & Rollers

From:**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 7:34 AM**To:** citycouncil <citycouncil@albanyca.org>**Subject:** Item 10.1, Kains and Adams Bikeway Pilot Project

Council Members;

I have several comments regarding Item 10-1, Kains and Adams Bikeway Pilot Project.

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Evaluation of the Pilot Project

Tonight's agenda item is described as an "Evaluation" of the Pilot Project". This is or should be an important step in the process. The Council in approving the pilot in 2019, asked for the collection of data and an evaluation of appropriate metrics to determine the success of the pilot (FN#1). The Council assured us that a decision on the pilot would be data-based and would not be political.

In fact, to date, no one has paid much attention to the data. The original data showed a decrease in bicycle trips on Adams and only small increases on Kains. There was a large increase in bicycle trips on San Pablo. At its meeting on October 26, 2023, the Transportation Commission "evaluated" the data and promptly asked for a do over. The city subsequently collected some more data, but the results were largely the same.

I will offer my evaluation. It seems clear that based on all the data collected, the pilot project can be considered to be a failure; certainly, on Adams St. The modifications to traffic flow resulted in decreases in bicycle travel on Adams and an increase in bike travel on San Pablo Avenue. Clearly, the main goal of the project to provide a lower-volume alternative to bike travel on San Pablo Ave. was not achieved.

Staff has proposed several options going forward, but has never included the option of simply restoring the pre-pilot project conditions. This would be a perfectly reasonable response to a failed project and again the bicycle count data show that the pilot was a failure. I think that many residents on Kains and Adams reasonably expected this as a possible outcome. However, staff did not include this option in its two reports to the Transportation Commission and it's not included in tonight's staff report for the Council's consideration.

Contra Flow Bike Lanes

City staff is now recommending that we should return Kains and Adams to one-way vehicle traffic with the addition of a contra flow bike lane. While this option may seem to address the legal parking issues, it doesn't address the safety issues for bicyclists associated with contraflow parking. In fact, it makes things worse. By encouraging or requiring the bicyclist to ride in a narrow 5' lane immediately adjacent to parked cars that face the bicyclist, you certainly increase the likelihood of a collision. The 2017 report by Parisi Transportation Consultants rejected the contra flow bike lane concept (Concept 2), finding that it was too dangerous given the narrow streets, the many intersecting driveways, and inability of the driver to see the oncoming bicyclist when pulling out of the parking space. In 2019, city staff characterized the contra flow bike lane as dangerous because of "visibility" issues. If it was too dangerous in 2017 and 2019, it's too dangerous now.

Survey of Kains/Adams Residents

The 2012 Active Transportation Plan did not approve bikeways on Kains and Adams and instead the Council directed staff to conduct "additional public outreach targeted at residents on Kains/Adams". The current staff report under the Background section refers to the need for "targeted public engagement" before approving any bikeway proposals, but here, city staff conveniently omitted Council's' direction to target the engagement "at the residents on Kains and Adams". In fact, the current staff report describes the collection of data "through various communication channels; via email, phone, public comment at the Transportation Commission, and the recently disseminated, feedback survey." Staff's goal here as stated in the staff report was to obtain feedback from "a wide cross-section of the community." This approach cannot even be described as "targeted public engagement". It is clear here that City staff made no attempt to engage with or assess the opinion of residents on Kains and Adams. These are of course the folks most affected by the proposed bikeways.

“Intersection Improvements”

Besides recommending contra flow bike lanes, the staff report describes “intersection improvements”. The report did not provide any specifics here and only offered some general examples of these “improvements” (e.g., traffic islands, traffic circles, forced right turns, partial traffic closures, ...). The staff report did note that the intersection improvements “are a key component to any revised street design along Kains Avenue and Adams Street,” so apparently these “improvements” will be important. At the same time, staff acknowledge that these measures would “require some motorists to alter their routes to their homes or other destinations throughout the city,” so obviously the improvements will be controversial. Residents on Kains and Adams will be most affected, but as noted above staff have shown little interest in getting any feedback from residents.

The staff report notes that the “intersection improvements” are consistent with the concept of the “Kains-Adams bicycle boulevards”. This term bicycle boulevard can be interpreted as having a technical meaning. The NACTO standards define a bicycle boulevard as a street where bicycle travel is given priority over vehicular traffic. Many of the city’s proposed changes here are clearly based on the premise that Adams St. is a “bicycle boulevard”. However, in its 2019 resolution the Council approved “bicycle facilities” on Kains/Adams”, not bicycle boulevards. The vaunted Active Transportation Plan describes the Adams St. “improvements” as establishing a “bicycling route”; again, not a bicycle boulevard.

The staff report also proposes unspecified measures to reduce vehicle traffic volumes on parts of Adams and Kains in order meet NACTO bicycle boulevard standards. It’s important to note that the presumption that Kains and Adams have become bicycle boulevards is not consistent with the projects approved by the Council. Maybe more importantly, the traffic counts don’t justify bicycle boulevard type treatments on Adams or Kains. There are 20 times more automobile trips than bicycle trips on Adams.

Where do we go from here

The pilot project was a failure. The bicycle count data and the experiences of bicyclists confirm this. Nobody is using the Adams St. bikeway. This is hardly surprising, since Adams St, goes nowhere. Designating Adams as a bikeway was silly. Kains Ave. was at least used but there were apparently many reported problems with bicyclist/vehicle interactions. This also shouldn’t be surprising. There

are many multifamily units on Kains and consequently lots of traffic. Staff will now apparently propose some unnamed measures to reduce traffic volume on Kains. This makes no sense. The current vehicular traffic is serving the residents on Kains. It would make much more sense to move the bikeway one block East to Stanage. There is less traffic on Stanage. The bicycle groups have claimed that moving the bikeway two blocks off San Palo Ave. would be a terrible hardship for cyclists. However, in Berkeley, their actual "bicycle boulevard" is three blocks off San Pablo Avenue and bicyclists apparent mange this hardship.

My recommendation is for the city to eliminate the Adams St. bikeway and move Albany's single alternative to San Pablo Avenue to Stanage.

Clay Larson

FN #1

In 2019, the Council approved the pilot project by a narrow 3:2 margin. The members voting in favor of the pilot all promised that there would be a careful examination of the data generated by the study. Council member Pilch noted that the project was "worth it to try", but that "we do need to look at the data" and "Let's make sure we collect the right data during the pilot." Mayor Nason stated "I lean toward going forward with this pilot, getting the data. Seeing how it works with an absolute commitment that this is one year and that we study it carefully." Council member Maass was a bit more cautious and stated, "He would apply a close magnifying glass to whatever results come out of this." He also warned that he wished "we had more defined metrics as to what we're expecting to see or what problems get solved because it sounds now that we're going to collect data and then it will be another political decision by the council as to where this is permanent or not permanent." Council member Barnes was more prescient and predicted the data collection was a "charade" and that any final decision of the pilot project would be completely political.