



Councilmember Ben Bartlett
City of Berkeley, District 3
2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704
PHONE 510-981-7130
EMAIL: bbartlett@cityofberkeley.info

ACTION CALENDAR

February 11th, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett

Subject: 2-Lane Option on Adeline St. between MLK Way and Ward St.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer to the City Manager to analyze the potential for a major redesign of the section of Adeline St. between MLK Way and Ward St., to improve the public space to increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and people living with disabilities, while also meeting the needs of public transit and emergency vehicles. The analysis should prioritize a 2-lane option that reduces the width of the street and creates many benefits for our community. Refer \$250,000 to the budget process to fund this important project.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this referral is to advance safety, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability by redesigning a key section of Adeline St. – an area with a high concentration of destinations that serve many people in our community. This referral is consistent with the City’s Vision Zero efforts as well as the City’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans and Climate Action Plan.

The analysis should prioritize analyzing the implementation of a “road diet” on Adeline St. between MLK Way and Ward St., and should consider many factors, including:

- Enhanced safety for all users
- Assessment of on-street parking demand and curbside activities, such as commercial deliveries, bus stops, and space for mobility services to pick up and drop off riders
- Coordination with AC Transit regarding stop locations and amenities
- Consideration of emergency vehicles
- Detailed assessment of load-bearing capacity of the BART tunnel, and resulting constraints on potential public space, landscaping, facilities, or structures on top of the tunnel
- Detailed balancing of public space programming needs and street redesign
- Detailed balancing of streetscape maintenance needs and available funding

Historically, Adeline carried streetcars that connected downtown Berkeley with urban centers and freight facilities in Oakland and Emeryville to the south and west. The area originally developed as part of a string of streetcar suburbs and was known historically as the Lorin District. Eventually, the automobile replaced the streetcar as the dominant mode of transportation and Berkeley continued to develop, then the city and the California Department of Transportation, completely reconfigured streets in the area to accommodate cars. Many of the challenges that the street currently poses, stream from this period, such as Adeline's wide 180 feet right-of-way and the sharp angle of the Ashby– Adeline intersection, which resulted from the widening of Ashby and a resulting misalignment at Adeline.¹

In 1970, several blocks of residential and commercial buildings were demolished to build the Ashby BART station and parking lots in the triangular area between Adeline, Ashby, and Grove Street [now Martin Luther King Jr. Way (MLK)]. Recently, the Ed Roberts Campus, a center for disability advocacy nonprofits, was constructed on Adeline across from the Ashby BART station, which could greatly increase pedestrian activity in the area, to and from the BART station. In more recent years, there has been the construction of bike lanes and implementation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons System, which slightly increased the safety of traffic for pedestrians, but the street is still the subject of speeding and multiple collisions.

According to a collision analysis conducted by the California Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, Adeline Street and Alcatraz Avenue is one of the three Berkeley intersections tied for the highest number of collisions among Martin Luther King Jr Way and University Avenue, Hearst Avenue and Oxford Street, and Adeline Street and Alcatraz Avenue. Twenty-two collisions have occurred at just this intersection alone between 2001 and 2012.²

Road Diets have had success in other locations such as Oakland and San Francisco. In 2016, Oakland got a road diet on Telegraph Avenue, between 20th and 29th street. This road diet resulted in collisions dropping by 40%, and there were no pedestrian crosswalk collisions for the first time in five years. The amount of people walking and riding bikes increased; in fact, more than 60% of bikers and pedestrians reported feeling safer on the streets. Also, speeding decreased and retail sales in the area increased 9

¹ Griswold, Julia B., et al. *Old Road, New Directions Plan for Adeline Street in Berkeley, California*. Berkeley: University of California Transportation Center, 2012. PDF.
<<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.359.6459&rep=rep1&type=pdf>>

² Vogel, Cassandra. "City of Berkeley unveils updates to bicycle plan." 1 Sept. 2016. *The Daily California*. Web. 16 Oct. 2019. <<https://www.dailycal.org/2016/09/01/city-berkeley-unveils-updates-bicycle-plan/>>

percent.³ San Francisco tested a road diet on Valencia Street for a one-year period. If it was unsuccessful, the street would be returned to its original condition. The project was successful, and studies saw a 20 percent decrease in total collisions, including a 36 percent reduction in collisions involving pedestrians. While the number of bicycle collisions increased, the amount of bicyclists increased by 140%, far surpassing the total bicycle collisions.⁴ Due to the reduction in the number of lanes, people have had concerns of increased traffic with both cities, but this was not an issue. Because of the safety of the road, more people walked and rode bikes, resulting in less cars on the road. In occasions where there was an increase in traffic on other road diets, commute time increased by seconds, not minutes. In general, with both cities, the road diets delivered the results expected.

Current Situation:

South Berkeley Now! and many community members have put forth a vision for a road diet along Adeline St. Among many other benefits, advancing a road diet could create a permanent space for the Flea Market, which must be permanently preserved and strengthened. A road diet could also enable more linear park space along Adeline St.

Fiscal Impact:

This item refers \$250,000 to the budget process to enable the referred analysis.

Environmental Sustainability:

A road diet would enable a range of low-carbon transportation modes.

Rationale for Recommendation:

The 2-lane option for Adeline Street from MLK Way to Ward St., which signifies a road diet, would create a safer environment for the Adeline Corridor that would pave the way for more space on this road utilized for a variety of purposes. A road diet is defined by the “conversion of a four-lane undivided road to a three-lane undivided road made up of two through lanes and a center two-way left-turn lane.”⁵ According to the U.S.

³ Blair, Steve, Steve Goldenberg and Tom Willging |. "My Word: There are safe, successful road diets in Oakland." 7 Mar. 2018. *East Bay Times*. web. 25 Oct. 2019.

<<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2018/03/07/my-word-there-are-safe-successful-road-diets-in-oakland/>>

⁴ Browne, Karalee and Melissa Kuehne. "Road Diets Make Streets Leaner, Safer and More Efficient." 1 Feb. 2015. *Western City*. web. 25 Oct. 2019. <<http://www.westerncity.com/article/road-diets-make-streets-leaner-safer-and-more-efficient>>

⁵ “Road Diet Informational Guide - Safety: Federal Highway Administration.” U.S. Department of

Transportation Federal Highway Administration,

https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/guidance/info_guide/es.cfm.

Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, a road diet leads to a decrease in the number and severity of crashes, namely a 47 to 19 percent reduction in crashes⁶.

Other benefits of a road include⁷:

- Improved safety by reducing the speed differential
- Pedestrian islands that can reduce pedestrian-related crashes by up to 46 percent
- Creation of bicycle lanes, transportation drop-off zones, parking spaces, buffers, etc.
- Fewer travel lanes that make pedestrian crossings less complex and allow for wider travel lanes
- Two-way left turn lane that provides a dedicated left turn lane

The road diet would allow for more access to transportation lanes and thus, foster more opportunities for jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, safer streets, etc. However, these various benefits of the road diet can only be fully achieved with proper implementation that accounts for safety, operational, and livability impacts. Therefore, this item recommends for a road diet study on the Adeline Corridor to determine how to create the best road diet for a safer neighborhood on this street.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Although hiring police to monitor speed on this street is another viable option, the city of Berkeley lacks the adequate funding for constant 24/7 monitoring from the patrol cars. Furthermore, patrol cars would not create pedestrian islands nor bicycle lanes, both of which would increase the safety of civilians and bicyclists by allowing more space on the road and reducing the speed differential. In contrast to the police cars, the road diet would grant more space on the road for more important and useful options, such as housing and a public plaza for the Flea Market. The road diet, in the long term, would lead to a safer and more prosperous environment on the Adeline Corridor.

CONTACT PERSON

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Road Diet Informational Guide - Safety: Federal Highway Administration." U.S. Department of

Transportation Federal Highway Administration,
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/guidance/info_guide/ch2.cfm#s21.

Councilmember Ben Bartlett
James Chang
Reequanza McBride
Kimberly Woo

bbartlett@cityofberkeley.info
jchang@cityofberkeley.info
510-981-7130
510-981-7131