BWA: The transportation element of the city’s General Plan envisions streets for all users. In order to achieve that mix, tradeoffs sometimes need to be made. Are you willing to take back space from cars and reallocate it to people who walk, bike, and take transit?

City Council Candidates:

Stewart Chen:
My track record on the council will show that I supported the Shoreline Drive Cycle track and the reduction of four travel lanes to two.

John Knox White:
Yes. Embedded in this question is how does the city address issues of safety for families, seniors and all people who walk and bicycle in the face of other competing interests. One of the Council’s core jobs is essentially to identify the greatest good for the use of limited public resources. On a transportation front, this means allocating public right-of-way to maximize the benefit to all Alamedans.

Too often, a single voice is empowered to raise their personal interest above the greater interest of the community. Safe Routes to Schools projects get watered down to protect a specific homeowner’s parking space, for example; this happened with programs aimed at creating safe connections to Otis and Edison schools. If we think about this, it’s crazy: we literally choose a less-safe option for projects so that a single household can park in a specific area. Children and families and the rest of the neighborhood who benefit from safer streets are put at risk in order to accommodate a single parking space. It is a constant issue in the city’s decision-making process when safety improvements are needed.

As a council member, I would base my decisions on whether our streets are safe for people ages 8-80. I would approach these difficult decisions asking whether a family in Alameda would feel comfortable sending their 11-year-old out to bicycle or walk to a friend’s house in a nearby neighborhood. How is our decision creating safer, more livable neighborhoods?

Robert Matz:
Where appropriate, and on a case-by-case basis.

Jim Oddie:
Short answer – Yes. Not to go way back in time, but when our streets were first developed – before automobiles – they were built to accommodate multiple modes of transit, so there is a long history of all modes of transportation – autos, bicycles, pedestrians, mass transit – sharing the roads. I did the original referral to the city council to bring bike sharing to Alameda, which ultimately led to staff doing a pilot with Lime Bike, albeit without bringing it to Council first.