

From: [Kyle Harrison](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Cal ave shut down- keep permanent
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 1:55:41 PM

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Dear City Council:

I am writing to convey my strong support for the permanent closure of California Avenue to vehicles.

Over the past couple of years the Avenue has been more dynamic and more interesting than I have ever experienced since I arrived at Stanford for school in the 1990s.

It has helped foster my goal of being as car free as possible. Having Cal Ave closed has made more likely to visit the restaurants, markets, and other stores.

The closure to vehicles has made the Avenue feel more inviting, more vibrant, and has brought a deeper sense of community, which we need now more than ever. I appreciate the concerns of retail owners but the lack of cars is not the cause of their diminished sales. Reopening the street will only hurt the vibrant dining scene and take away a major community benefit not to mention a benefit that aligns with the city goal of reducing our carbon emissions and reducing traffic.

Again, I urge you to consider closing Cal Ave permanent to vehicle traffic.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kyle Harrison

Sent from my iPhone

From: [deborah plumley](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please keep the barriers on California Avenue!!
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 1:23:21 PM

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From: [Fernando Cabildo](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Cal Ave - please consider permanently closing to vehicle traffic
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 12:11:33 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from fernando.cabildo@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

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Dear Council:

I have lived in College Terrace since 2016. Over the past two years I have frequented Cal Ave almost everyday, to grab a coffee, to dine outside, bank, mail/FedEx, walk to the supermarket (which I used to drive to), or just people watch.

I love the vibrancy of the Ave now and hope you consider permanently closing Cal Ave to vehicle traffic.

I appreciate the number of vacancies of retail spaces is concerning, especially to the property and business owners, but also understand that the change of shopping and spending habits has facilitated vacancies throughout our area and the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Fernando Cabildo

From: [William M. Conlon](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: California Avenue
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 12:10:20 PM

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I urge you to re-open California Avenue to vehicular traffic as soon as practical, subject to the exigencies of the pandemic.

Future consideration of street closure and repurposing should include:

- * traffic impacts on surrounding areas
- * environmental impact report, particularly as other projects such as the new police building, parking garage, etc. have relied on Cal Ave for traffic
- * survey of business owners and neighbors
- * appropriate allocation of costs and benefits, particularly the increased value to property owners who currently are using the public's property at no charge.

Moreover, it is important to note that the current situation

- * is shabby and makeshift
- * is not in conformance with building and fire codes, particularly with respect to life safety
- * relies on propane cylinders which are both polluting and HIGHLY hazardous with the risk of BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Evaporating Vapor Explosion) that could kill or maim dozens
- * removes pedestrian traffic from the sidewalks that we recently invested in upgrading
- * mixes bikes and peds in the street, with the risk of accidents and injury
- * disproportionately benefits a few restaurants at the expense of other businesses in the currently restricted blocks, and the nearby restaurants that do not have the benefit of freely provided outdoor spaces

Any permanent change to Cal Ave must address these problems and impacts.

Regards,

Bill
William M. Conlon, P.E., Ph.D.
bill@wmconlon.com
+1 650 906 9929

From: [Todd Burke](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Keep California Avenue as a pedestrian area
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 11:26:38 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tburkeus@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Palo Alto City Council members,

I live on California Avenue near the train station and have greatly enjoyed our street being partially closed to car traffic. I know most others in our community do as well. The pandemic has opened the door for this experiment which most residents want to stay. Sure, the design of the closed street needs attention and some retailers need additional affordances, but the concept overall has been extremely beneficial on many levels.

We encourage the continued use of California Avenue as a pedestrian focused area between Birch and El Camino with improved design for such use. I'm happy to participate in any of those design meetings and discussions.

Thanks,

Todd.

Todd Burke
President, Palo Alto Central HOA

From: [Karen Jacobson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please keep Cal Ave closed to car traffic and parking--Keep It as a vital walking street
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 7:06:22 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from jacobson.karen.a@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

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Dear Palo Alto Mayor and City Council,

Thank you for all your hard work on behalf of our city. I write to urge you to keep Cal Ave closed to car traffic and parking. By closing the street to cars, it's become a vital walking street and pleasant place to relax, shop, and dine outdoors. In fact, we prefer Cal Ave to University Ave. because of the wide spaces and relaxed pedestrian space. We need this space for residents to relax and enjoy and draw in foot traffic to patronize the businesses on the street.

Please keep Cal Ave closed to car traffic!

Best Regards,

Karen Jacobson
729 Mayfield Ave.
Stanford, CA 94305

From: [Melanie Grondel](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Melanie Grondel](#)
Subject: Closing of part of California Ave as a permanent Pedestrian zone.
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 2:41:43 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mel.grondel@gmail.com.

[Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Mayor Burt and City Council Members,

I am writing you in support of making California Avenue a pedestrian - only space, according to the successful arrangement currently in place.

Cal Ave is the heart of our neighborhood. With the pedestrian - only arrangement it feels like a plaza we need to shop, eat, drink, and meet.

The decision to make this pedestrian - only arrangement permanent, will give Cal Ave the stability needed to make it truly the plaza in the heart of the neighborhood, where we can shop, eat, drink and meet in comfort and safety.

This stability will allow for an investment in a better coordinated and more attractive spatial arrangement for shopping and browsing on foot and for seating for coffee and meals during day and evening hours, designed around a common and coordinated theme. Neighboring Los Altos and Mountain View show the effectiveness of simple and coordinated spaces with green plants in containers and colored umbrellas, instead of the current haphazard, pandemic-inspired, temporary collection of seating and view obstructing tents in Palo Alto.

A Plaza approach will bring more foot traffic to enhance the current businesses who have so courageously provided Cal Ave with the spirit displayed during the up and down challenges of the Pandemic restrictions. There are new businesses announced and more will be attracted to a lively environment of a well chosen mix of shopping, food and drink opportunities. The Farmers' Market on Cal Ave is a lively destination as is Town & Country.

In view of the greater density in housing being planned for this area in the immediate future, a permanent pedestrian Plaza is of even greater importance and urgency, as good cities pride themselves on attractive space to meet and mingle.

The benefit of this Plaza as the Heart of the neighborhood on a few blocks of Cal Ave, will more than make up for the loss of some parking spaces and some drive and bike through access.

As a person who uses a walking cane, I have adjusted myself to the reality of having to park nearby or in the rear of businesses and walk around to the front, without experiencing significant inconvenience.

I urge the Council to approve creating a permanent pedestrian only Plaza on Cal Ave and to do everything in their power for support services needed for a revitalized Cal Ave and for timely permit approvals for new businesses trying to establish themselves on Cal Ave and nearby.

Thank you for your consideration,
Melanie Grondel
College Terrace.

From: [Anke Audenaert](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Regarding California Avenue
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 12:48:58 AM

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Dear madam, sir,

Since the closure of California Avenue to traffic, me and my family have enjoyed dinners outside with friends at least once a week. Because I have now frequented California Avenue so much more often than before, I have discovered the other stores on the street that I otherwise never stopped in since I just parked wherever I had to be. Now, I walk past them and see their changing windows and what they have to offer.

I think that the sense of community that comes from enjoying a drink outside and serendipitously see a neighbor or friend pass by who then joins the table is something I have missed for the longest time in Palo Alto. The street closure and the opportunities it offered to meet up with friends during the pandemic have been very valuable to me and my family. For us, California Avenue has become a place we love, something it never was to us before. I am hoping we can keep this vibrant street car free!

Thanks for your consideration,
Anke Audenaert
Stanford Resident

From: [Barbara L Dunn](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Keep California Ave closed as a pedestrian mall forever
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 11:34:46 PM

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Please keep California Ave closed as a pedestrian mall forever, I am loving it—the outdoor eating, the strolling, the music, even the occasional dancing! And then I hope the mall could also become more “settled” looking somehow...such as letting the restaurants, retailers and the farmers market have more permanent or semi-permanent structures in the mall, not just tents, and also more greenery throughout.

Thanks,
Barbara Dunn
Harvard St
Palo Alto

From: [Ruth Ann Daines](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Cal Ave
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 9:02:59 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rdaines@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi there--

I understand you are considering whether to keep California Ave as a pedestrian mall or to open it back up to vehicular traffic. I live on the Stanford campus, and my vote would be to open it up again. It has been helpful to support the dining businesses on Cal Ave during the pandemic by allowing dining in the middle of California Ave. But I for one am ready for a return to as "normal" as possible... and to me, that means being able to park on California Ave (or bike to the various businesses and restaurants) again.

Thanks for considering my opinion. I know this is a difficult time to be running a city.

best,

Ruth Daines

From: [John McDowell](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please keep Cal Ave as a pedestrian mall, and invest in making it better
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 8:50:45 PM

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My family loves Cal Ave as a pedestrian area. It adds such a great social vibe to our city. We love walking the street before and after a meal. And with the huge garages on both sides, it's so easy to access, whether we're shopping or eating. And it's already not a major thoroughfare, so the impact of closing the street is quite limited (even if there is some impact).

I think the city should fund studying options to make the area great, whether putting in more outdoor seating, a gathering place, outdoor stage or exercise area, etc.

Thanks,
John

From: [Jeremy Platt](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Calif Ave to Remain Pedestrian or Not?
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 7:00:25 PM

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My two bits:

I think it's too soon to adopt a permanent closure, although doing this on a temporary basis while tracking pandemic trends has apparently offered a vital lifeline to many spots. This could be revisited on some sensible schedule.

Going forward, are we tapping the views of the full variety of businesses affected by what happens?

Jeremy Platt (College Terrace)

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Katherine Weller](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: In favor: Cal Ave permanent closure
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 6:34:44 PM

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Greetings City Council,

My name is Katie Weller and I have been proud to call Palo Alto home for 5 years. I am writing to express my support of making the California Avenue closure permanent.

The outdoor dining options have been lovely, especially during the pandemic when it is not safe to eat indoors. I also feel much safer as a pedestrian. The closure has not been an inconvenience to me as a motorist, either, because the adjacent streets are still open to vehicles.

I hope you will vote to make the closure permanent. Thanks for the opportunity to express my support.

Best wishes,
Katie Weller
Midtown

From: [brenton hanlon](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: California Ave
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 5:08:17 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brentonhanlon@hotmail.com.
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Please leave California Avenue closed to traffic. Unlike University Avenue, California Avenue is a "road to nowhere" so the effect on traffic flow would be negligible.

Brenton Hanlon
125 California Ave

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Jane Harris](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: California Ave. Closure
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 4:23:19 PM

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To City Council Members,

I want to urge you to keep California Ave. as a pedestrian-only road from El Camino to Birch St.

As a neighbor who frequents Cal Ave multiple times during the week, it really is a true public amenity for not just the neighbors, but other visitors.

I fully expect to continue enjoying the lack of cars after covid restrictions. Too much of our environment prioritizes motor vehicles. Please keep this 2 blocks for pedestrians only.

There are alleys in the back for people to access shops if they can't walk far or for deliveries and there is ample parking in the area, including the public lots and garages, so the spaces on Cal Ave are not needed. Also, since the parallel streets (Cambridge & Sherman) are commercial streets, any additional traffic on those streets will not impact residential areas. I know a few shop owners will complain about the impacts on their businesses, but i seriously question whether those businesses are indeed impacted by the closure or is it because they can't compete with online or big box retailers given their higher pricing structure and limited options.

i do hope that we can make the Cal Ave. closure permanent and then work to make it a truly special pedestrian environment that will be enjoyed by many for years to come.

Sincerely,

Jane Harris

230 Sequoia Ave. (Southgate neighborhood)

From: [Gail McFall](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Jim McFall](#)
Subject: Permanent Closure of California Avenue
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 3:50:29 PM

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Dear Mayor Burt and Council Members,

We are writing in support of permanently closing California Avenue (portion that is currently temporarily closed). As long-time Palo Alto residents, we hope that Council will move forward with the proposed study and ultimately decide to permanently close California Avenue for the following reasons:

- *Welcoming & Pedestrian Friendly Street:* The closure of California Avenue has had a significant positive impact on the atmosphere and sense of community here. Since the pandemic began, we have made a conscious effort to patronize many of the businesses on the street, frequently several times each week. It has been a pleasure getting to know the business owners in this new pedestrian friendly environment. Frankly, it has helped us safely survive this pandemic in a reasonably normal fashion.
- *Provides Flexibility for Continued Outdoor Use:* If the current pandemic continues (or a new one erupts) permanent outdoor space allows safe gathering and social distancing. Many residents are not ready to spend time indoors- both retail and dining.
- *Street Closure Supports Local Businesses:* Not only are restaurants able to provide dining outside but we have noticed retail businesses making use of the area in front of their stores for displaying their products- enabling increased visibility. All of this contributes to an engaging environment.
- *Street Closure Minimally Impacts Local Business:* We are not aware of any businesses on this two-block stretch that have closed due to the street closure and would suggest that the pandemic itself has had a much greater impact than a lack of cars.

In closing, we strongly encourage Council to move forward with the study and ultimately permanently close California Avenue. The temporary closure has already proven to benefit residents, visitors, and local businesses. This is an opportunity the City should not pass up. Thank you for your consideration.

Gail & Jim McFall
Escobita Avenue

Sent from my iPhone

From: [John Dawson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: dawsonjohnp@gmail.com
Subject: please keep cars off of California Avenue
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 3:20:06 PM

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Hi City Council members,

I have been a resident of Palo Alto since 1964. I grew up in College Terrace and currently live a few blocks East of California Avenue in Professorville.

Over the decades, stores and businesses have come and gone from California Avenue, like with any business district. But it was never a great place to walk around.

When the Farmers Market started, that made it a much more interesting and attractive place to walk on Sunday. But it took covid for most of the street to be closed to cars during the week.

There is plenty of parking within a block or so of California Avenue. When it was open for traffic, most of the time all the parking spots were taken, so you often had to park in a parking garage anyway.

Now, it is much more enjoyable for residents to walk around; there is really not much downside for people who drive there, because they can park in a nearby parking garage, which includes handicap spots, just as they mostly had to before, but the pedestrian experience is a whole lot better.

So I strongly urge you to make the closure permanent, and to work with merchants to make the use of the sidewalk and street beautiful, convenient for pedestrians, and functional for the businesses.

I expect this will be good for some businesses and bad for others, as most regulation of business districts is. I also urge you to consider that you are primarily responsible to Palo Alto residents, and to take our needs, wishes and preferences

into account first,
since you represent us.

Thanks for your consideration,

John Dawson

From: [Katie](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Support Cal Ave
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 3:08:50 PM

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We would like the city to continue to keep California Avenue closed to cars.

We have lived here over fifty years and have seen how the traffic has increased in the area and find it more dangerous.

Also, please keep the College Terrace Library open!

Thank you.

— Haskin Family

From: [Marilyn mayo](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Reopening Cal Ave
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 3:04:42 PM

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February 6, 2022

Members of Palo Alto City Council:

As a resident of Evergreen Park, I am in favor of reopening Cal Ave to cars & parking in some creative way. During the years of Covid, the middle-of-the street restaurants have been much appreciated. However, now the street & asphalt look dirty & temporary structures look worn.

Historically, Cal Ave's appeal was as a CONVENIENT place to park, make a purchase, use a service, and/or eat a meal. Many new demands are now impacting the area but closing the street permanently will not add to its vitality. University Avenue is experimenting with a plan allowing cars, restaurants, offices and retail. I hope the City Council will explore such alternatives for Cal Ave. You have already supported a new police/public safety building, a public parking structure, and neighborhood parking permits. Continue the street's revitalization with some mix of parking and street reopening.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marilyn Mayo
404 Oxford Ave
Palo Alto

From: [Mary B.](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Maintaining California Avenue as a pedestrian mall
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 1:27:46 PM

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Members of the Council:

A bright spot in the past two years or has been seeing California Avenue being turned into a walkway street, at least for a block or two. It's created a heart in this area, where no heart existed before, a destination place at a time when we all sorely need that vibe of a community coming together.

Please consider maintaining California Avenue as pedestrian mall. The neighborhood wants it, the stores seem to like it. Allow it to continue to breakdown the barriers between people. Later we can think of ways to augment the aesthetics and increase the community vibe (maybe with street musicians as they have in Sta Cruz and Half Moon Bay?)

Mary Bartholomay
College Terrace

From: [Charlotte Epstein](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please keep part of California Avenue as a pedestrian mall
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 11:37:18 AM

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Hello,

I have lived at 2192 Waverley St for 40 years and feel so fortunate that I can easily walk to California Avenue. Of course the pandemic has changed the offerings on Cal Ave but I expect that the future will bring Cal Ave back. I have enjoyed the pedestrian mall format over the last few years and think the appeal will continue when the pandemic is over. There is something quite pleasant about eating in the street. Now that there is the new garage, street parking may not be as necessary so a pedestrian mall will not discourage people who come by car. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Charlotte Epstein
2192 Waverley St
Palo Alto 94301

From: [Sharon Viggiano](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Frank Viggiano](#)
Subject: Please vote to keep California Ave closed to cars
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 10:42:24 AM

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Dear City Council Members,

It is so lovely having California Ave closed to cars. I always park in a public lot, the new garage or arrive by bike and really appreciate being able to stroll without inhaling car fumes and dine or have coffee in the safety of the outdoors. When I frequent my hairdresser, Molly Stones, the post office or Country Sun, I have no problem parking and accessing them. Please don't miss the opportunity to move our community forward by keeping California Ave. closed to cars.

I urge you to vote to keep California Ave. open for pedestrians and bicycles in our town, so that we can enjoy the carefree and safe environment. Thank you for your support in this quality of life matter!

Thank you,

Sharon (and Frank) Viggiano
830 Talisman Drive
Palo Alto

Ps my 97 year old mother in law, Dina Viggiano, a Palo Alto resident since 1963 asked me to add her wish to keep California Ave open to pedestrians and bikes and closed to car traffic. She is already distressed to see University Ave in its reopened state each time we visit Cafe Venetia. Please don't take away yet another car free zone.

From: [Terry Roberts](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: pedestrian-only Cal Ave
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 10:02:04 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from terryr2564@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi City Council,

I understand you're planning to discuss reopening Cal Ave to vehicle traffic. I encourage you to leave it pedestrian-only. Cal Ave has become a much more pleasant place to visit since it became pedestrian-only, and I go there regularly for restaurants and other businesses.

As I understand it, the primary argument for reopening it to traffic is that businesses would like cars to be able to drive right up to their front doors. But given that it's unlikely that a driver will find parking right in front of the store they're going to, parking on the next road over isn't all that different from the customer's perspective than parking down the block. If loading bulky items is part of the issue, the businesses can always use the alleys behind the stores. If discoverability is the issue, pedestrians probably notice more new stores than people driving by do. It's unfortunate that some businesses are struggling, but I don't think that lack of vehicles out front is the major issue.

In fact, I would encourage you to make a firm decision that Cal Ave will remain pedestrian-only indefinitely. That would allow the city to design and build beautiful and functional barriers, rather than the ugly, makeshift barriers we have now.

University Ave has reverted to vehicle traffic. Let's let Cal Ave take the other path and stay pleasant for pedestrians.

Thanks for considering this,
Terry Roberts, 2564 Greer Road, Palo Alto

From: [Michael Eager](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: California Avenue street closure -- 2/7/22 item #11
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 9:50:02 AM

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Dear City Council members --

The temporary closure of California Avenue and creation of outdoor dining areas was an appropriate response to the Santa Clara County health order prohibiting indoor dining. Many restaurants shifted to take-out or delivery, while others created outdoor dining areas, enabling them to continue in business. Retaining these businesses in the face of a pandemic was an admirable goal; one which has been achieved.

The circumstances leading to the closure of California Avenue ended some time ago with revised health orders permitting indoor dining. As the staff report says, the issue is now about how best to use public space. At this point, the street closure and large areas dedicated to the outdoor dining offer a great benefit to restaurants, some of which have doubled their seating capacity at minimal expense, with little public benefit and likely to the detriment to other businesses.

The staff report mentions a desire for "more aesthetic cohesion" on California Avenue. Let me be a bit more blunt: California Avenue, with the many very large tents, is ugly. The street, rather than being a welcoming environment, looks more like an army bivouac. It is impossible to look down or across the street. When I walk along California Avenue, the previously widened sidewalks are now blocked by restaurants asserting that this is their sidewalk, not the public right of way. In many places restaurants have left just enough room for people to walk by single file. In the evening, walking along the street is like maneuvering through a crowded dining room, because that is exactly what California Avenue has become.

I am a strong proponent of pedestrian-only shopping areas and there are numerous examples of cities creating a welcoming environment which promote businesses (and not just restaurants) as well as supporting the community. Palo Alto has done a very poor job of creating such an environment on California Avenue. While some of this may be blamed on the desire to take quick action, compared to other neighboring cities faced with the same problem, California Avenue is the least appealing.

I encourage you to reduce the number and size of tents and outdoor dining areas on California Avenue, independent of whether the street is reopened either partially or completely or remains closed. This will go far to make the street more inviting and support non-restaurant businesses.

Finally, the staff report mentions meeting with restaurant owners and retail business owners. They also state "Palo Alto residents continue to support continuation of the street closures" and that "Staff

has been meeting with the community regularly". I have reached out to neighbors in Evergreen Park and College Terrace and have been unable to identify any meetings with community members and certainly there have been no regular meetings. The anecdotal comments which I have received from neighbors have almost all been in support of re-opening California Avenue. I encourage the City Council and the City Staff to actively engage in dialog with the community about the future of our neighborhood commercial zone.

--

Michael Eager

From: [Cherry LeBrun](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Opening Ramona Street
Date: Sunday, February 6, 2022 8:32:31 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cherry@denovo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Mayor Burt, Vice Mayor Kou, and Council members Cormack, Filseth, DuBois, Stone, and Tanaka,

I live in Palo Alto and have owned my business, De Novo Fine Contemporary Jewelry, on Ramona Street for over 32 years. First of all I want to thank you for opening University Avenue to vehicle traffic. Having traffic flow through the City again has greatly improved access to my business and our town has a pulse again after being closed down for so many months. Now it is time to open Ramona Street so it can once again become a functional city street. At the beginning of the pandemic half of the block of Ramona Street between University Avenue and Hamilton Avenue was closed as a temporary measure to accommodate outdoor dining. Indoor dining has been allowed again for many months now yet this half block on Ramona Street remains closed. This closure has turned Ramona Street into a dead end street which limits access and visibility for my business and other service and retail businesses on the street. I walk down Ramona Street several evenings a week. I observe that the restaurants have lots of customers seated indoors and in their parklets but very few customers use the seats that are in the open street area outside the parklets. The need for the street closure is past and the seating outside the parklets is not being used in a significant way. Please even the opportunities for all businesses on the street by opening the street again to vehicle traffic in June and allow Ramona Street to become a functional city street again.

Respectfully,

Cherry LeBrun

De Novo Fine Contemporary Jewelry
250 University Avenue
Entrance on the side of the building on Ramona Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Leslie McNeil](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Keep Cal Ave for pedestrians!
Date: Saturday, February 5, 2022 6:46:38 PM

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It is only a few blocks, and there are lots of new parking spaces nearby (and maybe even a new garage underway??)

Eating in the middle of the block has been delightful both day and night. Don't let the Sunday farmers market get forced out by the restaurants, however. And maybe allow the shops to have outdoor stands if they don't already. They may have to shift hours of operation, but they should get even more new customers.

Lower rents for "basic neighborhood stores" like hardware, shoe stores, stationery store stores, bakeries, pharmacies , to add incentive to those kind of necessities to stay or return for neighbors and diners.

Keep Cal Ave for people, not cars!

Thank you,

Leslie McNeil

A College Terrace neighbor at
2050 Harvard St, Palo Alto

--

Leslie

From: [Katie M](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Burt, Patrick](#); [Cormack, Alison](#); kou.pacc@gmail.com; tomforcouncil@gmail.com; [Stone, Greer](#); [Filseth, Eric \(Internal\)](#); greg@gregtanaka.org
Subject: Please vote to keep Cal Ave open to pedestrians only
Date: Saturday, February 5, 2022 6:12:17 PM

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Dear City Council,

It's been brought to my attention you'll soon be voting on whether to keep California Ave open to pedestrians or open it back up to vehicles.

I am a resident of College Terrace and absolutely love living in this neighborhood. I would like to ask you to please vote to keep California Ave open to pedestrians only, allow restaurants to continue to seat people on the street, and have live music during dining hours.

My family and I have really enjoyed having California Ave open to pedestrians only these past few years. Everyone I've spoken to in College Terrace would also like to keep Cal Ave open to pedestrians only. It's truly brought the community closer together and it's a street to look forward to visiting and eating outdoors. Eating outdoors is so much more enjoyable without traffic going by, and it's very easy to reach all the retail stores and browse around. There also seems to be ample parking on the streets and in the garages to either side of California Ave and still very accessible to reach all of the retail stores, including Mollie Stones.

I understand Mollie Stones may be petitioning to re-open Cal Ave to vehicles because they say it's hurt their business but quite honestly it's still very easy to access Mollie Stones with Cal Ave being open directly in front of Mollie Stones and having access to their parking lot from Cambridge. I honestly wonder if Mollie Stone's really high prices (compared to other local grocery stores) is what's hurting their business. Having a portion of Cal Ave closed to vehicles hasn't stopped me in the least from visiting any retail store, grocer, or restaurant on the street.

Thank you for your consideration of my voice and opinion. I know that I speak on behalf of myself, my family, and all of our friends in College Terrace.

Kind regards,
Katie Miller

From: [Ann Balin](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fwd: California Avenue
Date: Saturday, February 5, 2022 2:40:59 PM

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From: Ann Balin <alafargue@mac.com>
Subject: California Avenue
Date: February 5, 2022
To: Palo Alto City Council

Dear Mayor Pat Burt & fellow council members,

I am writing to register my opinion that the closure of California Avenue should remain that way.

I have spoken to shop owners who say that the closure does not impact their business in a bad way. I have spoken to the owner at Leaf & Petal. One of the owners at Country Sun also said that he was ok with the closure. A long time wine seller at vin, vino, wine said it was not impacting their business either.

The vocal merchant in opposition is Jessica Roth who was hurt by the lack of commuters spilling off the trains. She and her husband told me that was the main reason for decline in sales. Like all businesses this is a competitive one. I have always gone to the Village Cobbler from the days when they were at T&C Village. This family business does outstanding work. Retailers over time develop a roster of loyal clientele. The Cobbler on California Avenue is a quasi boutique selling floppy hats, socks and other goods. Roth's business concept has changed from bags and shoes. Roth complains that her business is down because Hector Sol does not do lunch at this time. Yet across the street Joanie's Cafe and Bohème do offer lunch. I am speculating as to why Roth's business has lessened and it could be a combination of no commuters, the internet and a different business model. The point being that the avenue being closed to cars is NOT the reason.

In today's PA Daily Post Jessica Roth says that College Terrace residents are for keeping the avenue closed as it creates a European atmosphere. She does not speak for an entire neighborhood. This attitude demonstrates a lack of business acumen.

I shop at Mollie Stones which is convenient, clean and a union shop. The owner is also vocal in opposition to the avenue being closed. Loyal shoppers know how to get to the store via Cambridge Avenue and Park Boulevard. I see many cars in the parking lot when I go there which is two or three times a week. I do not agree that his business has flattened because of closure to cars.

Judy the owner of Leaf & Petal told me that she gets customers walking over from restaurants like Terun. She also does well on Farmers' Market Sundays as is the case for Country Sun. In other words there is spill over from restaurants and the market to shops. I believe the restaurants are MAGNETS bringing in customers from all over town and from other municipalities as well.

What disturbs many residents in Palo Alto is that city staff has again like with the tree FIASCO not included the residents in the conversation. Instead they only listen to merchants and landlords which is unfortunate and frankly unfair. According to the city staff the 'stakeholders' are landlords and merchants only. When I say the city I do not mean council members. Another issue is the high rents and past former council decisions to change the zoning which drove out retailers such as the florist, bookshop, bakery, art supply store etc. leaving a smaller ratio of shops. I feel that that council, sadly, has left its mark on California Avenue.

There is a pattern here.

The poll taken showed that the majority of residents want the avenue closed to vehicles.

I believe the restaurants will have to undergo a facelift regarding the design of the structures to create an attractive ambiance. The city should study other successful avenues such as Burlingame Avenue. There is an upbeat vibe when one walks on the avenue there. Others include Menlo Park's Santa Cruz Avenue and Mountain View's Castro Avenue that have closed to traffic. One appealing design on California Avenue is italico! which has won the bistro Michelin category award.

I realize that some restaurants have larger use of the public space than others. I understand that the city has a challenge in how to appropriately address that issue. Still these restaurants have offered a respite during this pandemic. We are on a roller coaster with the virus. Even if we reach a more stable world where more and more people are vaccinated I would argue keep the avenue closed as it offers a safe refuge from polluting cars where one can dine and shop.

University Avenue was opened for specific reasons as it is a thoroughfare. California Avenue is different and creates a slower paced and safe haven in an urbanized suburb called Palo Alto. Traffic

is back. Therefore please keep this attractive destination intact so residents and others can enjoy its genial and relaxed atmosphere.

Thank you for taking into consideration my thoughts on this important topic.

Respectfully,

Ann

From: [Arnout Boelens](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please turn California Avenue and Ramona Street into pedestrian streets permanently
Date: Saturday, February 5, 2022 2:01:21 PM

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Dear City Council,

We are writing to urge you to turn California Ave and Ramona St into pedestrian streets permanently. There is overwhelming support from residents and a large group of businesses, and all the ingredients to make these streets successful public spaces are present in Palo Alto.

As mentioned in the staff report, residents as well as many business owners have shown overwhelming support for turning California Ave and Ramona St into pedestrian streets permanently. This includes ourselves. We very much enjoy the atmosphere at California Ave and visit there all the time. However, we have avoided visiting University Ave since this street was opened back up to motorized vehicles because it does not feel as safe to walk anymore and because of the loud traffic noise.

Amos (2020) analyzed 140 pedestrian malls built between 1959 and 1985 and found that warm weather, nearby college or university campuses, and growing populations, are contributing factors to ensuring the critical mass of people necessary for a thriving, successful public space. These factors are all present in Palo Alto. In addition, successful pedestrian streets are programmed to encourage vitality and attract pedestrians. e.g. the farmers market.

We understand that some business owners think they have fewer customers because people cannot park in front of their store anymore. Therefore, as part of the feasibility study, we propose that the City conducts a survey of both shoppers and business owners and ask them which mode of transportation they use/think their customers use. Business owners tend to structurally overestimate how many customers arrive by car and how far they travel. However, there is a small but growing body of literature that suggests improved active travel and transit infrastructure is likely to benefit local business, including in North America (Dirk von Schneidmesser 2021).

Lastly, we would like to ask Council to also consider bicyclists in their streetscape design. California Ave is a major bicycling route. While it makes sense to walk your bike during, for example. the farmers market, during normal times there is plenty of space for both pedestrians and bicyclists. We think that signs that tell bicyclists they are guests on this pedestrian street are much more appropriate than the current signs telling bicyclists to walk their bikes at all times.

In summary, there are many good reasons to turn California Ave and Ramon St into pedestrian streets permanently, and we are looking forward to continuing to be able to walk there without having to worry about car traffic.

Kind regards,

Nicole, Arnout, and Ava Zoeller Boelens

References

Dave Amos, "Understanding the legacy of pedestrian malls", Journal of the American Planning Association, 2020

Dirk von Schneidmesser and Jody Betzien, "Local Business Perception vs. Mobility Behavior of Shoppers: A Survey from Berlin", Transport Findings, 2021

From: [Paul Machado](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Filseth, Eric \(Internal\)](#); [Burt, Patrick](#); [Kou, Lydia](#); [Tanaka, Greg](#); [Stone, Greer](#); [Cormack, Alison](#); [DuBois, Tom](#); [Shikada, Ed](#)
Subject: California Ave.
Date: Saturday, February 5, 2022 10:44:10 AM

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I have lived within walking distance of California Ave, virtually my entire life. It was a full service retail center that served the needs of the surrounding community. Understandably during the pandemic accommodations were made to help merchants. However the pandemic is expected to ebb soon, and life is expected to return to a more normal pattern.

Unfortunately Cal Ave. has become an unattractive collection of tents that blocks the signage of storefronts. The street is vacant for most of the week as the tents are not used everyday, nor during the afternoon hours between lunch and dinner.

Prior to the pandemic the City invested a large sum of money redesigning this avenue to allow for sidewalk dining. This design was intended to not only help restaurants, but also all the other retail in the area. It is time to return to the pre pandemic design the City envisioned when it remodeled the street. Further it allows drivers to see what the avenue has to offer as they drive to the newly completed parking garage.

Thank you

Paul Machado

From: [promiserani](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please support pedestrian streets
Date: Thursday, February 3, 2022 9:29:50 PM

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Dear Council,

I am writing to support turning California Avenue and Ramona Street into pedestrian streets permanently. Please continue to offer driving-free safe pedestrian zones and more "common spaces" that will provide bicycle routes, support the local businesses, and also help reach our climate goals. My family enjoys this local space and are looking forward to doing so for years to come.

Prerana Jayakumar
Midtown

From: [Audrey Gold](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Support for the California Avenue pedestrian street
Date: Thursday, February 3, 2022 9:15:25 PM

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Dear City Council members,

I strongly support the permanent closure of California to cars. I visit the area several times a week and find the quiet street a wonderful place to stroll, pick up take-out, dine and shop.

Car parking is easily found on both sides of Cal Ave and the street is popular with cyclists. They are safer with less danger of being "doored" by people opening car doors without looking for people on bikes.

Please vote to support making this change permanent! I expect restaurants will become even more popular when the days become longer and the weather warms up.

Regards,
Audrey Gold
Lathrop Dr, Stanford

From: [Jack Baker](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please keep California Avenue closed to traffic!
Date: Thursday, February 3, 2022 9:13:55 PM

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Dear City Council,

One of the few bright spots of our challenging pandemic has been the pedestrian-only California Avenue. I love biking over with my family for outdoor dinners at Italico, where we can listen to live music while our kids run around in the street. Many other restaurant and coffee visits have turned from humdrum stops into a more memorable patio experience. Our mild climate is excellent for outdoor dining and gatherings, and is all the better without the noise and commotion of traffic on the road.

California Avenue is now my favorite dining neighborhood on the peninsula, with the quiet street and excellent nearby parking and transit access. I hope you will keep this jewel of an arrangement, and allow it to grow into an even nicer setup with a permanent closure. I appreciate why University Avenue needed to re-open, but please keep our special California Avenue! It is a great family destination, and a role-model to encourage our neighboring towns to create their own car-free environments.

Thank you,
Jack Baker

650-799--4577
834 Esplanada Way, Stanford, CA 94305

From: [Ken Joye](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: street opening retained
Date: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 1:00:35 PM

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I live within walking distance of the California Ave shopping district. I understand that an item will come before you soon regarding devoting part of that roadway to pedestrian (non-vehicular) use.

I strongly support the idea of having a place where one may dine outdoors without motor vehicles moving by on the pavement.

Please vote in favor of making those blocks an “extended plaza” instead of a street. I would be in favor of installing a permanent stage, for when outdoor concerts resume.

Having this space preserved for humans the past two years has been such an improvement to our community, please retain it for future residents.

thank you for weighing this input,
Ken Joye
Ventura neighborhood