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February 5, 2025

To: Amanda Leahy, Kittelson & Associates

From: Nick Falbo, Mobycon

CC: Anna Wyner, Mobycon

RE: Draft Pedestrian District Guidelines for the Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update

The Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update (BPTP) will include Pedestrian District Guidelines to help Palo Alto meet its vision of being a "*city where sustainable, safe, efficient, equitable, and enjoyable transportation thrives*[1]*".* This memo presents a toolbox of potential pedestrian-oriented treatments for use and identifies priority pedestrian areas within the City. These guidelines build upon existing foundational planning, bring in new ideas and innovations, and address changes and developments since the prior plan was adopted in 2012.

The pedestrian toolbox includes a range of selected treatments aimed at improving pedestrian safety and enhancing the pedestrian experience. The elements range from infrastructure improvements such as raised crossings or curb extensions that improve yielding rates to aesthetic changes such as benches or street art that can elevate the walking experience. Together these elements will meet universal needs for safety and accessibility, and create conditions where walking is comfortable and an enjoyable experience for all.

The plan identifies important pedestrian districts across the city as priority areas to apply these toolbox treatments. For each pedestrian district, an area map identifies recommended application of selected toolbox elements.

[1] *Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update: Vision, Objectives, and Performance Measures. Sept 2024.*

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1. PEDESTRIAN TOOLBOX

Implementing pedestrian-oriented enhancements directly supports the Plan's vision of a city that is Safe and Inclusive, Connected and Accessible, and Comfortable and Enjoyable. The pedestrian toolbox for Palo Alto features selected treatments grouped into categories: Enhanced Crossings, Street Reconfiguration, Aesthetic and Functional Elements, Activation and Engagement, Signal Adjustments, and Major Intersection Treatments. The toolbox is color-coded for reference throughout this document.

Enhanced Crossings

1. Raised Crossings
2. Mid-block Crossings
3. Raised Intersections
4. Curb Extensions

Street Reconfiguration

5. Wider Sidewalks
6. Shared Streets
7. Gateway Treatments
8. Reduced Curb Radii
9. Bike Parking Corrals
10. On-street Parking Flex Zones

Aesthetic and Functional Elements

11. Rising Bollards
12. Pedestrian Lighting
13. Treewells in the Street
14. Decorative Pavers
15. Wayfinding

Activation and Engagement

16. Street Art or Murals
17. Alleyway Activation
18. Shade Sails
19. Street Furniture

Signal Adjustments

20. Pedestrian Crossing Signals
21. Leading Pedestrian Intervals
22. Increased Walk Time
23. Reduced Signal Cycle Length
24. Fixed Signal Timing and Automatic Recall
25. Pedestrian Countdown Signals

Major Intersection Treatments

26. Pedestrian Refuge Island/Median Island
27. Protected Intersection

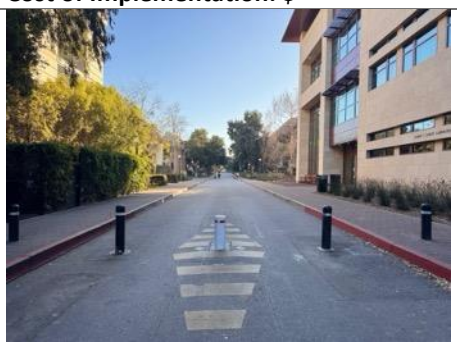
Error! Reference source not found. below describes each pedestrian toolbox enhancement, including their identification number, name, a brief explanation with associated advantages and disadvantages, recommended locations, example photos, and implementation costs. Project costs are categorized by their level of investment intensity:

$ = Suitable for quick build programs
$$ = May be retrofit with minor capital investment
$$$ = Requires major capital investment and reconstruction

	Enhancement	Description	Photo
Enhanced Crossings	**1.** Raised Crossings	Raised crossings are pedestrian crossings elevated to the level of the sidewalk, slowing down traffic and making crossings safer. **Advantages:** Increase pedestrian visibility, slow vehicle speeds, and encourage vehicles to yield to a crossing pedestrian **Disadvantages:** High cost, may need to remove parking and move drainage	 *Raised Crossing in Palo Alto*
		Recommended Location: Along a collector street or mid-block crossings	**Cost of Implementation:** $$
	2. Mid-block Crossings	Mid-block crossings provide pedestrian crossing points between intersections, reducing the need to walk long distances to cross streets. **Advantages:** Facilitates crossings to places that people want to go **Disadvantages:** Vehicles may not anticipate mid-block crossings	 *Mid-block crossing on California Avenue (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: Significant pedestrian desire lines or key access points	**Cost of Implementation:** $-$$
	3. Raised Intersections	Raised intersections elevate the entire intersection to the level of the sidewalk, slowing down vehicles and making crossings safer for pedestrians. **Advantages:** Reduce vehicle speeds, encourage traffic flow, flush crossing increases accessibility **Disadvantages:** Could lead to confusion for new users	 *Raised intersection in Palo Alto*
		Recommended Location: Minor intersectons between local streets	**Cost of Implementation:** $$$

	4. Curb Extensions	Curb extensions, or bulb-outs, extend the sidewalk into the street at intersections or mid-block crossings, reducing crossing distances and improving pedestrian visibility. **Advantages:** Decreases width of roadway, tightens intersection curb radii and encourage slower turning speeds, increase visibility of pedestrians, reduces crossing distances **Disadvantages:** May require moving fire hydrant or drainage, increasing cost	 *Curb Extensions in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: Mid-block or at intersections with wide roads and long crossing distances	**Cost of Implementation:** $ - $$
Street Reconfiguration	**5.** Wider Sidewalks	Wide sidewalks provide more space for pedestrians, reducing congestion and allowing for additional amenities such as seating, greenery, and street vendors. **Advantages:** Supports street life activities and pedestrian density **Disadvantages:** N/A	 *Wide sidewalk on Univeristy Avenue in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: Sidewalks with significant pedestrian demand and active store fronts.	**Cost of Implementation:** $$$
	6. Shared Streets	Shared streets are designed to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles. These streets often feature minimal signage and barriers, encouraging a slow and cautious driving environment. **Advantages:** Slows motor vehicle traffic and opens roadway space for use by community and businesses. **Disadvantages:** Generally requires significant capital investment to transform surface materials and curb drainage to communicate the change of use.	ART CENTER SLOW *Shared Street At the Rinconada Library in Palo Alto*

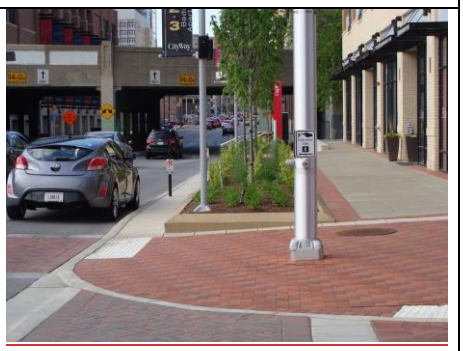
Street Reconfiguration		**Recommended Location:** Local streets with active store fronts, retail or restaurants	**Cost of Implementation:** $$$
	7. Gateway Treatments	Gateway treatments are visual or physical enhancements at the entrances of neighborhoods or districts. They often include signage and greenery to create a sense of place and slow down traffic. **Advantages:** May double as traffic calming. **Disadvantages: N/A**	 *Gateway signage at California Ave. & El Camino Real (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: On local or collector streets at thresholds to pedestrian districts.	**Cost of Implementation:** $-$$
	8. Reduced Curb Radii	Reduced curb radii at the corners of an intersection create a more compact intersection, slow vehicle speeds, and shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. **Advantages:** Allows for better pedestrian ramp alignment, shortens crossing distances **Disadvantages:** May make it harder for larger vehicles to turn	 *Reduced Curb Radii at Ross Rd. & Clara Dr. (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: Arterial and collector intersections with large curb radii	**Cost of Implementation:** $$
	9. Bike Parking Corrals	These designated areas provide organized parking for bicycles, e-scooters, and other micromobility devices, helping to keep sidewalks clear and organized. These can be used for both personal and shared micromobility systems. **Advantages:** Consolidates parking in one area for security and organization **Disadvantages:** Must be well placed to encourage use.	 *Bike parking rack in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*

		Recommended Location: Downtown or commercial areas	**Cost of Implementation:** $ - $$
	10. On-street Parking Flex Zones	These zones allow for flexible use of curb space, accommodating various needs such as vehicle parking, loading, outdoor dining, or parklets depending on the time of day and local needs. **Advantages:** Enhances the curb zone use in response to community needs. **Disadvantages:** Requires program management/permitting and coordination	 *On-street parking flex zone on Hamilton Ave. (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location:	**Cost of Implementation:** $
Aesthetic and Functional Elements	**11.** Rising Bollards	Rising bollards are retractable barriers that can be used to control vehicle access to certain areas, enhancing pedestrian safety and allowing for flexible use of urban spaces. **Advantages:** Limit traffic during times of day **Disadvantages:** Requires new approaches to coordinating access management and operations	 *Rising bollards on Stanford Campus*
		Recommended Location:	**Cost of Implementation:** $$-$$$
	12. Pedestrian Lighting	Pedestrian lighting improves visibility and safety for people walking, especially at night. It often includes streetlights and pathway lights designed to illuminate sidewalks and crossings. **Advantages:** Increased lighting improves feelings of personal safety and reduces crashes at conflict points. **Disadvantages:** Lighting should be dark sky compliant to minimize impacts on light pollution.	 *Pedestrian lighting (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: Arterial and collector streets.	**Cost of Implementation:** $$

Aesthetic and Functional Elements	**13.** Treewells in the Street	Treewells are planted areas around street trees, often integrated into parking lanes. They provide greenery and shade, as well as act as traffic calming elements by narrowing the street when parking lanes are empty. **Advantages:** Adds greenery to street and creates parking bays so that the street remains narrow even when the parking is empty **Disadvantages:** May limit future roadway reconfiguration. Trees require routine maintenance.	 *Treewells on University Avenue in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: In streets with few trees and skinny sidewalks	**Cost of Implementation:** $$
	14. Decorative Pavers	Decorative pavers are aesthetically pleasing paving materials used in sidewalks, plazas, and streetscapes. They enhance the visual appeal and be subtle differences between uses. **Advantages:** Is attractive and can have traffic calming effects **Disadvantages:** Requires maintenance if tree roots grow and uproot bricks, is not a smooth surface and decreases accessibility	 *Decorative Pavers on California Avenue in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: main streets or commercial areas on local or collector streets	**Cost of Implementation:** $$
	15. Wayfinding	Wayfinding involves the use of signs, maps, and other visual cues to help people navigate through an area. Effective wayfinding systems improve accessibility and user experience. **Advantages:** Eases navigation and reduces confusion, encourages users to visit new places by walking **Disadvantages:** Requires maintenance for accuracy and can be costly to install	 *Temporary Wayfinding Signs in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: high-traffic areas, city centres, transit hubs	**Cost of Implementation:** $-$$

	16. Street Art or Murals	Street art or Murals are large-scale artworks painted on buildings or walls. They enhance the visual appeal of an area, making them more vibrant and engaging for residents and visitors. **Advantages**: Enhances public spaces, supports local artists **Disadvantages:** Requires maintenance to remain in good condition	 *Wall Mural in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: Blank walls on the sides of buildings or parking garages, alleys	**Cost of Implementation:** $
Activation and Engagement	**17.** Street Furniture	Street furniture includes benches, trash bins, water fountains, and other amenities that enhance the comfort and usability of public spaces for pedestrians. They are often strategically placed in parks, along streets, and in plazas. **Advantages:** Welcomes community into street spaces creating a lively environment. **Disadvantages:** Requires ongoing maintenance.	 *Adirondack Chairs for Public Seating in Palo Alto (Mobycon, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: Along main streets, Shared streets and street plazas.	**Cost of Implementation:** $-$$
	18. Alleyway Activation	Alleyway activation involves transforming underused alleys into vibrant public spaces. This can include adding lighting, seating, art, and greenery to make alleys safer and more inviting. **Advantages:** Revitalizes underused spaces, **Disadvantages:** Requires many elements to become inviting, lighting increase costs	 *Alleyway activation (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: Alleys in business districts that connect streets or to parking	**Cost of Implementation:** $-$$

	19. Shade Sails	Shade sails are fabric structures that provide shade and reduce heat in public spaces. They can also be artistic and enhance the visual appearance of an area. **Advantages:** Can be attractive and provide cooling effects **Disadvantages:** Cost of materials and maintenance	 *Shade Sails in Spain (Deposit Photos, 2024)*
		Recommended Location: Shared streets or pedestrian street plazas.	**Cost of Implementation:** $$
Signal Adjustments	**20.** Pedestrian Crossing Signals	Pedestrian crossing signals are traffic lights specifically designed to assist pedestrians in safely crossing streets. These signals often include countdown timers and audible cues for visually impaired individuals. **Advantages:** Provides essential safety information for pedestrians. **Disadvantages:** N/A	
		Recommended Location: Signalized intersections	*Cost of Implementation: $-$$*
	21. Leading Pedestrian Intervals	Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) give pedestrians 3-7 second head start when crossing an intersection after which both through and turning traffic are given a green light. **Advantages:** Reduce pedestrian-vehicle collisions, increase visibility of pedestrians, gives pedestrians priority in intersection **Disadvantages:** Can require adjustments to exiting signal timing	 *Leading pedestrian interval (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: Intersection with high pedestrian volumes and heavy turning traffic	**Cost of Implementation:** $

Signal Adjustments	**22. Increased Walk Time**	Increased walk timing provides additional time for pedestrians to cross streets. **Advantages:** Increases functionality and comfort at intersections for slower pedestrians **Disadvantages:** May increase traffic delay	 *Increased walk time in San Francisco*
		Recommended Location: Locations where elderly pedestrians or children may be present.	**Cost of Implementation:** $
	23. Reduced Signal Cycle Length	Reduced signal cycle lengths rotate through signal phases quickly, to serve more movements in less time. **Advantages:** short signal lengths minimize pedestrian delay at signalized intersections increasing pedestrian compliance and convenience. **Disadvantages:** May increase traffic delay at intersections	 *Reduced signal cycle intersection in downtown Los Angeles (NACTO)*
		Recommended Location: Signalized intersections in pedestrian districts	**Cost of Implementation:** $
	24. Fixed Signal Timing and Automatic Recall	Pedestrian signals may be automatically called with fixed signal timing, increasing convenience for pedestrians. **Advantages:** Fixed timing and automatic recall of pedestrian signals increases convenience for pedestrians. **Disadvantages:** Fixed timing and automatic recall of pedestrian signals may increase traffic delay.	 *Actuated signal (NACTO)*
		Recommended Location: At signalized intersections with high levels of pedestrian activity	**Cost of Implementation:** $

	25. Pedestrian Countdown Signals	Pedestrian countdown signals tell users how much time is left to cross an intersection, creating a more predictable environment for pedestrians. **Advantages:** Predictable environment and gives people warning before crossing ends **Disadvantages:** Not everyone walks at the same speed and crossing times may be too short for some	 *Pedestrian signal (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended location: Existing or new pedestrian signal	**Cost of Implementation:** $
Major Intersection Treatments	**26.** Pedestrian Refuge Island/ Median Island	A median island is a designated space in the middle of an intersection for pedestrians to pause and wait while crossing the intersection. **Advantages**: Shortens crossing distances and time and reduces pedestrians exposure in the intersection **Disadvantages**: Requires adequate roadway space, may limit space for turn lanes.	 *Pedestrian refuge island at El Camino Real & Stanford (Palo Alto)*
		Recommended Location: Collector and arterial streets	**Cost of Implementation:** $ - $$
	27. Protected Intersection	Protected intersections create safer spaces for cyclists and pedestrians at intersections by physically separating them from vehicle traffic. **Advantages:** Enhances safety and comfort for pedestrians **Disadvantages:** May require more space and increased cost in construction	 *Protected intersection in Palo Alto*
		Recommended Location: Major intersections with arterials and collectors	**Cost of Implementation:** $$$

Table 1: Pedestrian Toolbox Treatments

2. PEDESTRIAN DISTRICTS

Priority pedestrian areas are key to creating a walkable, accessible, and enjoyable city. They offer areas where walking is prioritized to allow people of all ages and abilities to get around without competing with vehicles. Within these areas, slower movement is encouraged and opportunities are provided for people to pause and enjoy their surroundings. Walking should be the preferred mode of choice for all trips within these areas with sidewalks that support high volumes of pedestrian activity through building a well-connected pedestrian network.

Based on prior planning efforts, including the 2030 Comprehensive Plan[2], and the Palo Alto Economic Development Strategies Plan[3], as well as community input and on the ground knowledge from the in-person working session held in April 2024, the following three pedestrian districts and two priority areas are focus areas for pedestrian recommendations (Figure 1).

- University Avenue Pedestrian District
- California Avenue Pedestrian District
- Midtown Pedestrian District
- El Camino Real Neighborhood Commercial Center
- Embarcadero Neighborhood Commercial Center

The following sections describe the areas and present recommendations for the application of toolbox treatments and identify special projects for implementation.

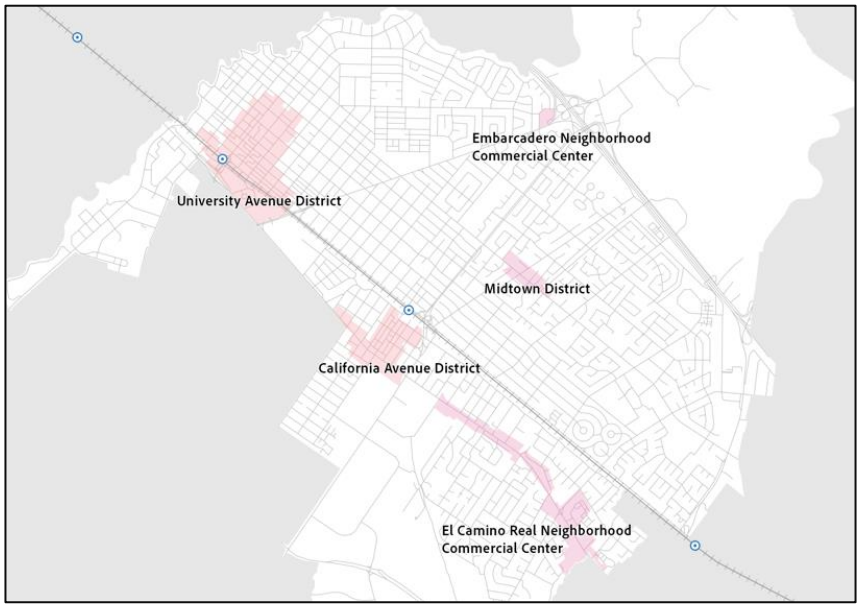


Figure 1: Pedestrian Districts and Neighborhood Commercial Centers in Palo Alto

[2] *City of Palo 2030 Alto Comprehensive Plan. https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Housing-Policies-Projects/2030-Comprehensive-Plan*

[3] *Palo Alto Economic Development Strategies. https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/city-manager/advance-draft-streetsense-comprehensive-economic-development-strategy.pdf*

2.1 University Avenue Pedestrian District

The City of Palo Alto was originally centered around University Avenue and quickly grew south and east to what it is today. Since then, the area surrounding University Avenue has served as an important regional and commercial center for the city of Palo Alto. For many, University Avenue is the first thing people experience and remember when they visit Palo Alto. This importance has been reflected in recent planning efforts such as the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which identified the area as a 'Regional Center,' and the Palo Alto Economic Development Strategies Plan, which recognized the area as a 'Regional/Super-regional Center.'

The map below shows the boundaries of the University Avenue Pedestrian District with the locations of the special projects and proposed locations for the toolbox elements to be implemented which will be elaborated in the following sections.

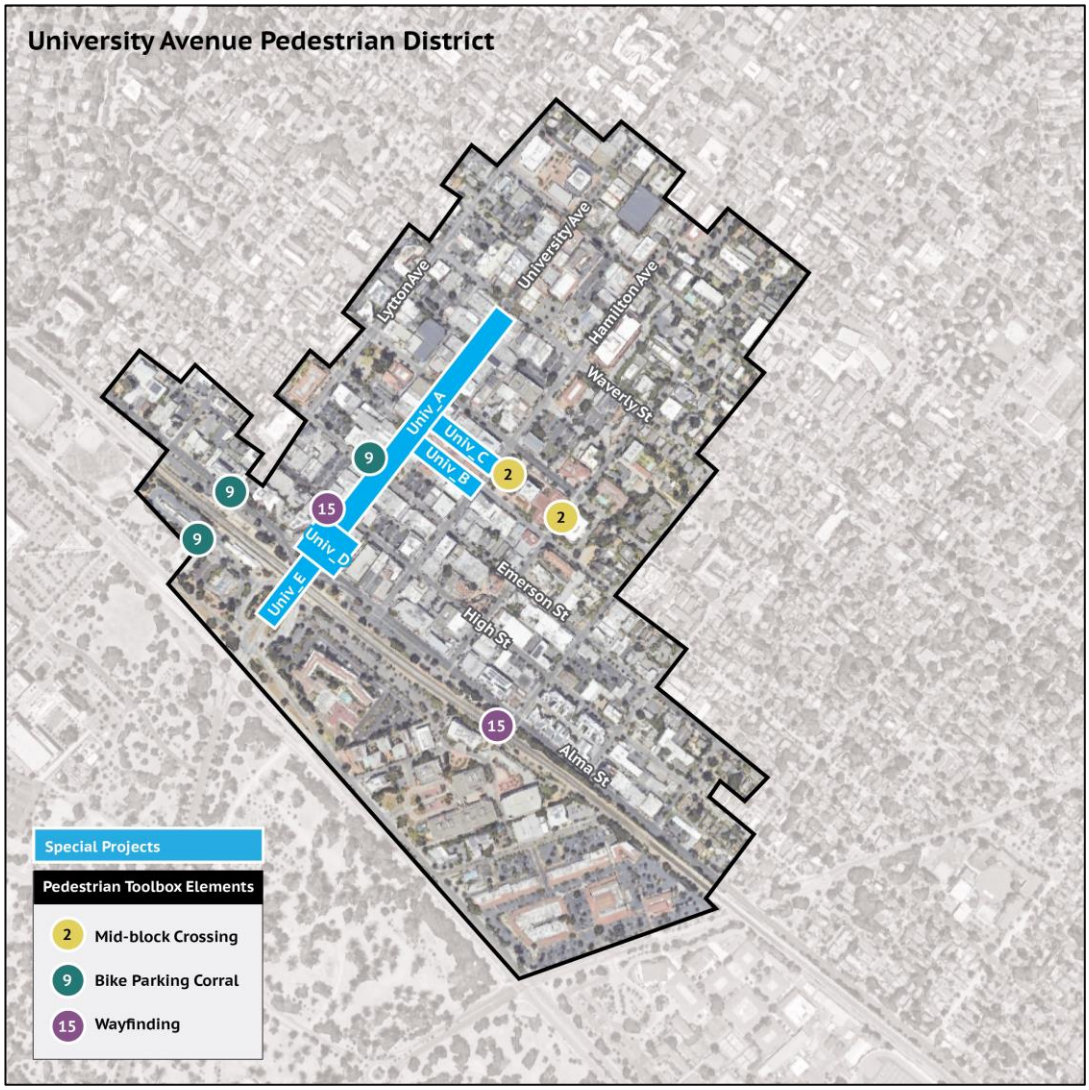


Figure 2: Map of University Avenue Pedestrian District

2.1.1 University Avenue Application of Pedestrian Toolbox

Key toolbox elements recommended in the University Avenue Pedestrian District are listed below with recommended priority installation locations. These changes will reinforce the district's distinct character and improve the walking experience for everyone:

Mid-block Raised Crossings to prioritize pedestrians at mid-block locations

- Across Hamilton Avenue connecting City Hall to the Centennial Walk alleyways
- Updated the existing mid-block crossing at Forest Avenue connecting City Hall to the Downtown Library

Bike Parking Corrals to organize bicycle and micromobility parking for visitors to the district at key destinations such as transit locations

- Caltrain Parking lot at Alma Street
- Palo Alto Transit Center
- Lytton Plaza

Wayfinding to welcome and orient community to the district and destinations

- Anchor wayfinding map at the entrance of University Avenue & Alma Street
- Anchor wayfinding map at the Homer Tunnel
- Additional wayfinding signs in the vicinity to encourage walking in from different parts of the district area
- Beginning January 2025, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will begin a pilot of its Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project. The project seeks to simplify transit travel by introducing consistent signage and maps throughout the region. MTC selected the Palo Alto Transit Center as a pilot location (Image 1). Coordination with the city and MTC should also include the provision of a neighborhood pedestrian map at the transit stop, illustrating connections to nearby transit facilities, points of interest within walking distance, and other Pedestrian Districts.

Image 1: Pilot wayfinding signage for MTC's new regional wayfinding effort (MTC.ca.gov)

2.1.2 University Avenue Pedestrian District Special Project List

In addition to the application of standard pedestrian toolbox elements, five special projects respond to the specific context of the University Avenue Pedestrian District support the goal of creating safer and more enjoyable places for people to walk.

Project ID	Project Name	Description	Pedestrian Toolbox Elements[4]
Univ_A	Raised Side Street Crossings along University Avenue	As part of the University Avenue Streetscape Project, consider implementing continuous crossings along University Avenue to slow cars down and create a continuous walking experience for people walking or rolling the street.	Raised Crossings (#1)
Univ_B	Pedestrianized Ramona Street	Transform the successful temporary car-free Ramona Street into a world-class permanent pedestrian only street. Upgrade the eastern part of Ramona Street from after the public parking garage between University Avenue and Hamilton Avenue. Pedestrian toolbox elements include rising bollards, to allow for deliveries or emergency access, and aesthetic elements such as pedestrian lighting, street furniture, decorative pavers, street art or shade sails to create a welcoming and inviting place.	Rising Bollards (#11) Pedestrian Lighting (#12) Street Furniture (#17) Decorative Pavers (#14) Street Art or Murals (#16) Shade Sails (#19)
Univ_C	Alleyway Activation	Transform University Avenue district alleyways in the district to revitalize spaces and create new spaces for people to walk, sit, eat, play, and more. Implement pedestrian toolbox elements such as pedestrian lighting, street art, and street furniture to create inviting and safe places for people to use and enjoy. Raised midblock crossings should be used to connect these alleyways into a network.	Street Furniture (#17) Pedestrian Lighting (#12) Street Art or Murals (#16) Alleyway Activation (#18)
Univ_D	University Ave and Alma Interchange Reconfiguration	Reorganize the University Avenue and the Circle intersection to improve the pedestrian experience arriving from the Caltrain station to	Wider Sidewalks (#5) Gateway Treatments (#7) Wayfinding (#15)

[4] *See Section 2 for further details*

		University Avenue. Implement pedestrian toolbox elements such as continuous sidewalks and a gateway treatment to slow cars down entering and exiting University Avenue and to create a safer walking experience. Widen sidewalks to provide space for large numbers of pedestrians and implement wayfinding signage for people walking, cycling, and driving to share with residents, commuters, and visitors' locations within and around Palo Alto.	
Univ_E	Palo Alto Transit Center/ University Avenue Undercrossings	Widen and improve the existing sidewalk undercrossings along University Avenue at the Palo Alto Transit Center. This project will improve bicycle and pedestrian access to transit and between downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University's main entrance, and should include lighting, wayfinding and public art enhancements.	N/A

Table 2: Proposed Special Projects for the University Avenue Pedestrian District

2.1.3 Coordination with University Avenue Streetscape Project

As part of the University Avenue Streetscape Project, concept plans for a portion of University Avenue have been developed and align with special project Univ_A (Image 2). One proposed pedestrian improvement, wayfinding (section 2.1.1) is in line with a planned gateway at High Street and University Ave (Image 3).

The community's priorities for University Avenue include improving the pedestrian experience, providing more bike parking, enhancing landscaping, revitalizing Lytton Plaza, and adding murals. The concepts outlined in the University Avenue Pedestrian Toolbox and Special Projects list reflect these priorities. The recommendations in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 are intended to inform future design and planning for the proposed University Avenue Pedestrian District, building upon the work already completed with stakeholders and community members from the Streetscape Project.

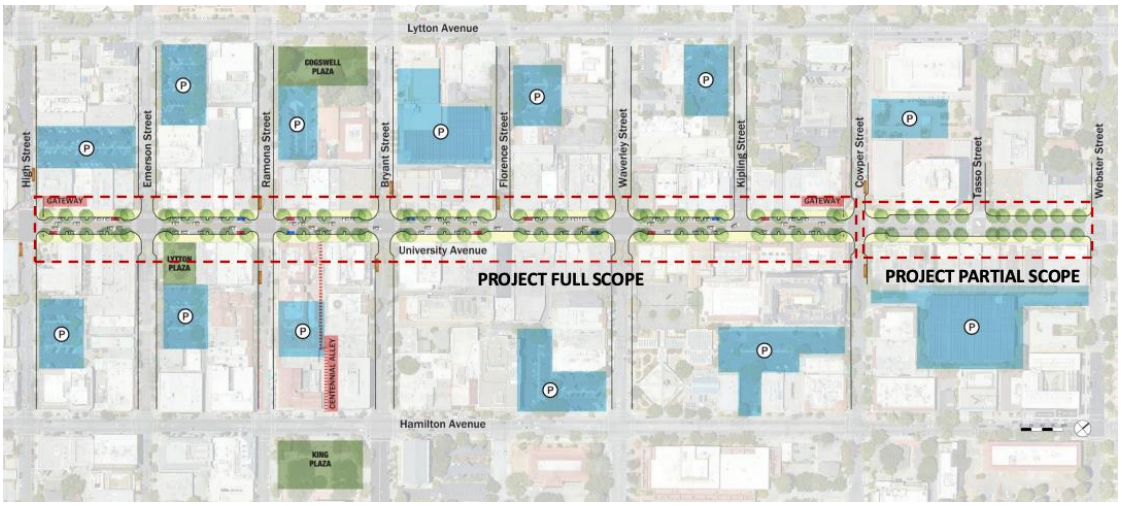


Image 2 Scope of Proposed Streetscape Concept. (City of Palo Alto Working Group Presentation, 11/13/24).

Image 3. Proposed Streetscape Concept for University Ave. (City of Palo Alto Working Group Presentation, 11/13/24).

2.2 California Avenue Pedestrian District

The California Avenue Pedestrian District is a pedestrian activity center with compact blocks, back alleys and ground floor commercial uses. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a portion of California Avenue was closed to traffic to create room for expanded outdoor space and physical distancing. This traffic closure has been extended through 2025, and permanent enhancements are under development as part of the California Avenue Streetscape Project. Additional planning efforts recognize the importance of this pedestrian district. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan identifies the area as a "Multi-Neighborhood Center," and is featured highly in the Palo Alto Economic Development Strategies plan as a "Community-Serving Center."

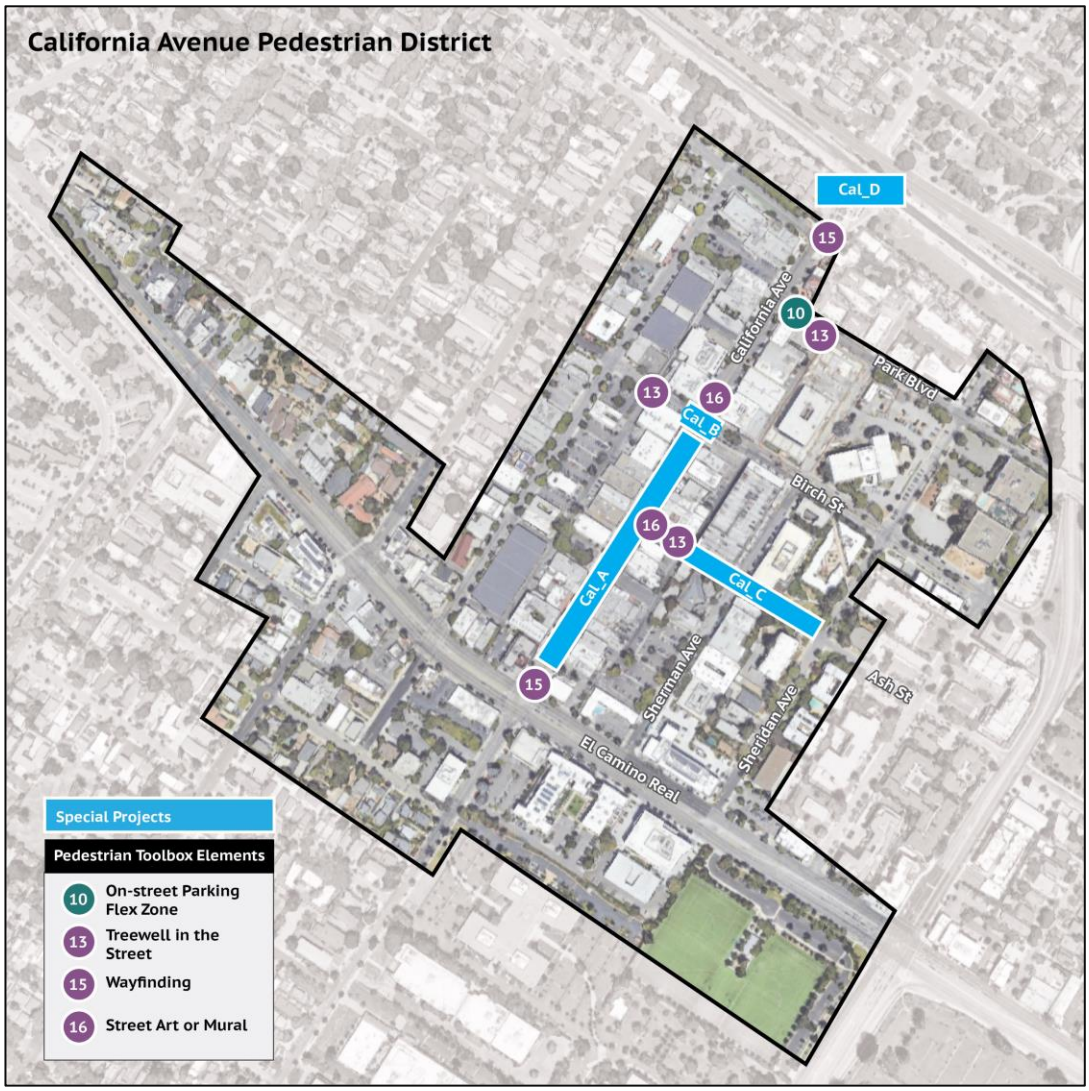


Figure 3: Map of California Avenue Pedestrian District

2.2.1 California Avenue Application of Pedestrian Toolbox

Key toolbox elements recommended in the California Avenue Pedestrian District are listed below with recommended priority installation locations:

On-Street Parking Flex Zones to encourage community placemaking but should be implemented in coordination with local businesses

- Park Boulevard

Treewells in the street to add greenery to sidewalks lacking trees.

- Park Boulevard
- Ash Street
- Birch Street

Wayfinding to welcome and orient community to the district and destinations

- Anchor wayfinding map at the entrance of California Avenue & El Camino Real
- Anchor wayfinding map at Caltrain station. Coordinate with MTC to integrate California Avenue Pedestrian District into the regional wayfinding signage at transit locations as part of the MTC Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project. For additional details, refer to section 2.1.1.
- Smaller wayfinding signs in the vicinity to encourage walking in from different parts of the district area

Street Art to add to beautification and community sense of place

- California Avenue & Birch Street Intersection
- Ash Street approaching California Avenue

2.2.2 California Avenue Pedestrian District Special Project List

In addition to the proposed locations for implementing the pedestrian toolbox elements, four special projects are proposed. These projects will support the California Avenue District in becoming a community center for the surrounding neighborhoods where everyone can walk safely, comfortably, and enjoyably in the district.

Project ID	Project Name	Description	Pedestrian Toolbox Elements[5]
Cal_A	California Avenue Car-Free Street	Create a permanent pedestrianized California Avenue from El Camino Real to Birch Street. Create a pedestrianized street using toolbox elements such as rising bollards to allow access to deliveries and emergency vehicles, street furniture to provide places for people to sit and	Shared Streets (#6) Rising Bollards (#11)_ Pedestrian Lighting (#12) Street Furniture (#17) Decorative Pavers (#14) Wayfinding (#15) Street Art (#16) Shade Sails (#19)

[5] *See Section 2 for further details*

		rest, or wayfinding to direct people to local businesses and transit options.	
Cal_B	Raised Intersections around California Avenue District	Implemented raised intersections on side streets around California Avenue to create a sense of a pedestrian district, indicating to vehicles that they are entering a space where pedestrians are the priority and they need to change their behavior by slowing down.	Raised Intersections (#3) Curb Extensions (#4)
Cal_C	Ash Street Green Street to Sarah Wallis Park	Connect California Avenue to the Sarah Wallis Park via Ash Street. Extend the park onto Ash Street by creating a more open and welcoming space for pedestrians through continuous and wider sidewalks. Plant large treewells and planting areas in the street to increase greenery and narrow and limit access on the street for cars to slow them down.	Wider Sidewalks (#5) Wayfinding (#15) Treewells in the street (#13)
Cal_D	California Avenue Tunnel Enhancements	Install special lighting/light up signage that signals cyclists that a pedestrian is in the tunnel. This would tell them to dismount. This would help PAPD enforce the current rules.	Pedestrian Lighting (#12)

Table 3: Proposed Special Projects for the California Avenue Pedestrian District

2.2.3 Coordination with Car-Free California Avenue

A permanent car-free California Avenue is underway, with key priorities highlighted by community members including integrating bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, as well as adding trees and shade to enhance comfort and aesthetics. Some toolbox elements above, such as district wayfinding (see Image 4), have already been considered. Starting in February 2025, immediate improvements will include the installations of bollards, street resurfacing, stamped concrete crosswalks at several intersections, and other aesthetic upgrades. The California Avenue pedestrian toolbox (section 2.2.1) and special projects listed in Table 3 are proposed as long-term enhancements to be developed in collaboration with stakeholders and the Car-Free California Avenue project team.

Image 4: "Cal Ave" Signage Program underway. Source: City Council Staff Report from February 3, 2025

2.3 Midtown Pedestrian District

Originally developed in the 1950s, the Midtown shopping area is traditionally car-centric but since then, Midtown has experienced substantial growth and continues to serve as a vital hub in the neighborhood. Recent planning initiatives, such as the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Palo Alto Economic Development Strategies, have acknowledged its significance, identifying Midtown as a "Neighborhood Center" or "Neighborhood-Serving." It is now being emphasized as a pedestrian district to ensure that residents can safely walk to access amenities, and that future growth develops in a more walkable manner.

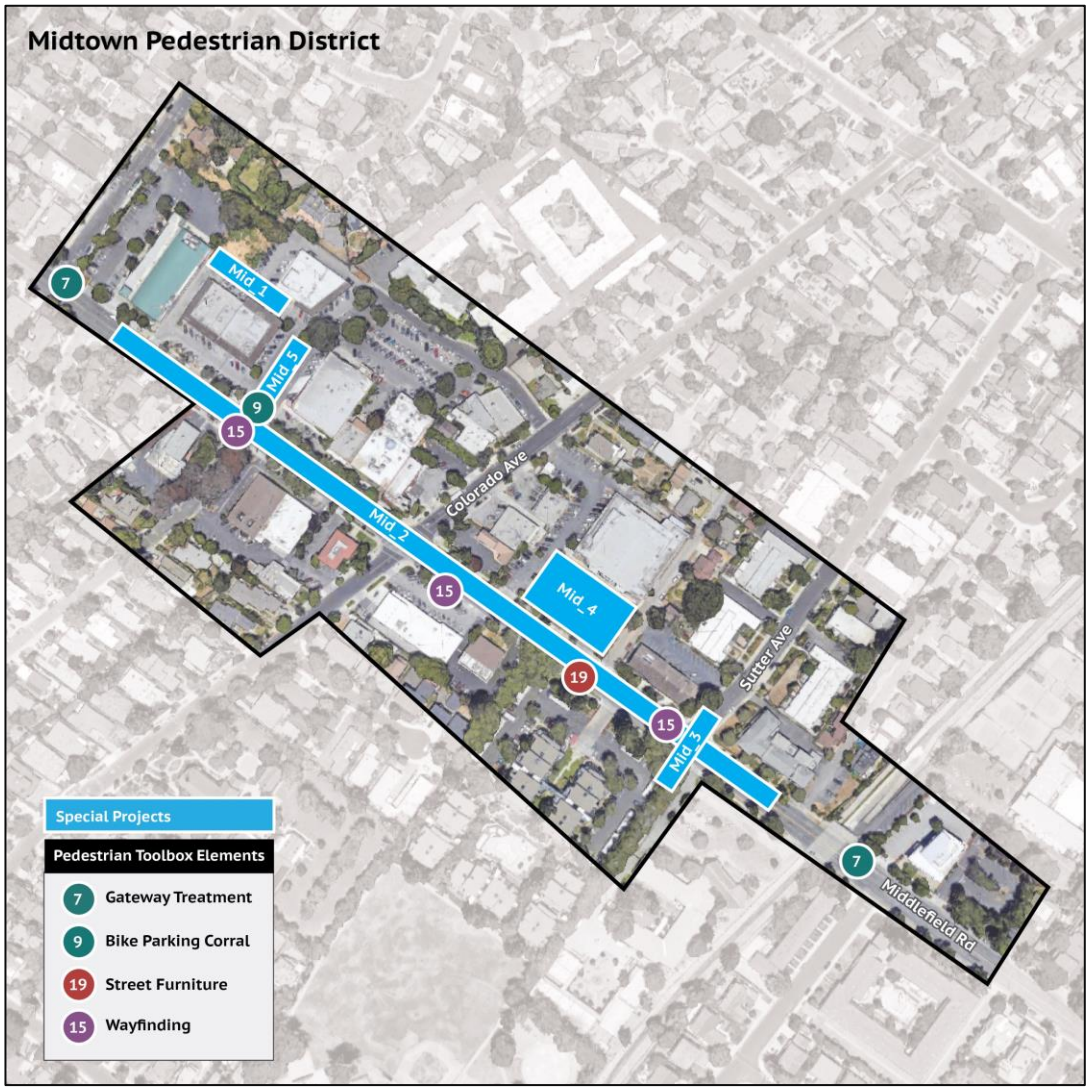


Figure 4: Map of Midtown Pedestrian District

2.3.1 Midtown Application of Pedestrian Toolbox

Key pedestrian toolbox elements recommended in Midtown are listed below with recommended priority installation locations:

Gateway Treatments to boldly signal the transition into a more pedestrian-oriented area
- On Middlefield, at Moreno Avenue to the west, and the Matadero Canal to the east

Bike Parking Corrals to welcome bicyclists with high quality parking areas
- At the entrance of Bryson Avenue & Middlefield Rd

Street Furniture to create a more welcoming pedestrian environment.
- On Middlefield Rd within the sidewalk furnishing zone

Wayfinding to welcome community to the district and destinations
- Anchor wayfinding map at the entrance of Bryson Avenue & Middlefield Road
- Smaller wayfinding signs in the vicinity to encourage walking in from different parts of the district area
- Coordinate with MTC to integrate Midtown Pedestrian District into the regional wayfinding signage at transit locations as part of the MTC Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project.

2.3.2 Midtown Pedestrian District Special Project List

Five special projects are proposed for the midtown pedestrian district in addition to the proposed pedestrian toolbox elements. These special projects include short- and long-term projects that will help enhance the midtown district as a neighborhood center.

Project ID	Project Name	Description	Pedestrian Toolbox Elements[6]
Mid_1	Master street plan for Midtown	Create a master street plan that depicts both current and future streets within midtown to help guide future development in midtown and create a more walkable and livable district.	N/A
Mid_2	Middlefield Road, Road Diet	Implement a road diet on Middlefield Road by decreasing the number of travel lanes from four to three and reconfiguring the road to accommodate pedestrian and bicyclists. Slow cars down by narrowing road space, planting trees, and raising intersections to create a safer and more pleasant walking experience for everyone.	Raised Intersections (#3) Wider Sidewalks (#5) Pedestrian Crossing Signals (#20) On-street parking flex zones (#10) Street Furniture (#17) Treewells in the street (#13)

[6] *See Section 2 for further details*

Mid_3	Pedestrian Crossing Improvement at Sutter Ave. crossing Middlefield Road	Improve pedestrian crossing experience for people crossing Middlefield Road from Sutter Avenue to access local parks and schools. Implement a raised mid-block crossing with pedestrian crossing signals to slow cars and shorten crossing distances for people crossing Middlefield Road.	Raised Crossings (#1) Mid-Block Crossings (#2) Pedestrian Crossing Signals (#20)
Mid_4	Midtown Temporary Parking Lot Activation	Work with property owners to transform parking lot spaces into active public spaces such as food carts and trucks. Create inviting spaces through street art, pedestrian lighting, and alleyway activation.	Pedestrian Lighting (#12) Street Art (#16) Alleyway activation (#18)
Mid_5	Plaza Parkway Entrance	Work with property owners to construct a central plaza parkway to provide a pedestrian-oriented public space in the district. Integrate lighting, seating, landscaping and fencing to create a family friendly space in the Midtown District.	Pedestrian Lighting (#13) Street Furniture (#17)

Table 4: Proposed Special Projects for the Midtown Pedestrian District

2.4 Neighborhood Commercial Centers

2.4.1 El Camino Real Neighborhood Commercial Center Application of Pedestrian Toolbox

The El Camino Real District serves as a vital commercial corridor with a diverse mix of businesses and services. Characterized by its linear layout, the district caters to both local residents and visitors with its accessible retail stores, restaurants, and essential services. Plans to improve walkability, bike lanes, and streetscape elements are currently under construction and anticipated to be ready in 2025, as part of ongoing revitalization efforts.

Figure 5: Map of the El Camino Real Neighborhood Commercial Center

Enhancements in this district can center around the future of El Camino Real as a more multimodal main street. Orienting the streetscape toward people walking and biking can take advantage of recent improvements. Recommended pedestrian toolbox elements for use in this context include:

Raised crossings along unsignalized El Camino Real side streets to prioritize pedestrians walking along the main street and calm traffic entering neighborhoods.

Street furniture to create comfortable places for people to sit and wait for the bus.

2.4.2 Embarcadero Neighborhood Commercial Center Application of Pedestrian Toolbox

The Edgewood Plaza Shopping Center off Embarcadero Road is a key neighborhood hub, offering a mix of grocery stores, cafes, and local businesses. Known for its mid-century modern design, it has been revitalized to enhance its offerings while preserving its historic charm. Today, the Center remains a vibrant, accessible destination for the local community.

Figure 6: Map of the Embarcadero Neighborhood Commercial Center

Enhancements to the Embarcadero Neighborhood Commercial Center can accommodate and encourage access for people walking and biking. Recommended pedestrian toolbox elements for use in this context include:

Bike Parking Corral to organize bicycle and micromobility parking in the district.

Wayfinding to direct visitors to local businesses and nearby trails. Wayfinding to this commercial center is particularly important to link visitors coming across US 101 and Embarcadero Rd.