

**From:** [Martha](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** University Ave.  
**Date:** Sunday, June 2, 2024 10:17:52 PM

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

Dear City Council,

We have heard that you would like to refresh University Ave. Every week our family visits one of several downtowns which are Los Gatos, Campbell., Mt. View, Redwood City, San Carlos, Burlingame and of course University Ave. Each are interesting in their own way, but the best one by far is Burlingame Ave. between the train station and El Camino. Besides being busy, vibrant, and clean the sidewalks are wide and made with the same level pavers. In all the other towns we have to be constantly aware of the sidewalks due to tripping hazards. I suggest a field trip to Burlingame Ave.

Whatever you do to improve University Ave. be careful about how you treat the present business owners. If they are taxed for improvements they might move to another location in another town. I would if I owned a store.

We visited University Ave. on Saturday afternoon and parked under the city hall. The elevator smelled strongly of urine .All three of us held our noses. Obviously it wasn't the type of experience that one would like for their visitors. Perhaps a restroom should be installed on the plaza of city hall. Everyone needs a restroom.

Thank you,

Martha Gregory

**From:** [slevy@ccsce.com](mailto:slevy@ccsce.com)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Bansal, Megha](#); [Nose, Kiely](#); [Guagliardo, Steven](#); [Arce, Ozzy](#)  
**Subject:** Monday discussion of University Avenue  
**Date:** Sunday, June 2, 2024 2:58:54 PM

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Dear Mayor Stone and council members,

Thank you for the progress in the latest staff report, Megha and all.

I have have watched several transitions downtown in the 55 years my office has been downtown and the almost 20 years my wife and I have lived downtown.

I have a two-part vision for downtown that bears on what you choose for University Avenue:

- 1) As a place providing everyday shopping and services for the people who live and work downtown and
- 2) As an experience center that attracts people from around our city and the nearby region.

But whatever you decide Monday for the street, the main barriers to my objectives are restrictive and out-of-date zoning and the reluctance to add customers though more housing and filling the vacant spaces.

For the street, I envision parklets (we use them a lot), gathering spaces and places for activities/experiences as mentioned in the staff report.

Retail that can be bought online or at T&C and Stanford Shopping Center is not a priority for me though I welcome any tradition retailer who thinks they have a feasible idea.

I do not at all buy the argument that street parking is essential for people coming to University. Lots of evidence for my argument:

as your consultant just reported vacancies are rising steadily with full parking

people who go to T&C and Stanford especially walk long distances to get to most stores and that does not seem to stop them

your consultant also made two additional points that resonate with me:

- 1) downtown has ample parking now
- 2) people do "destination" shopping as I bet most of you do on your phone-search xxx near me

For the street design, I want safety for pedestrians and bicyclists (see Amie Ashton's email to you) with buffers from the through traffic, wide sidewalks and as little space for parking as you can tolerate so there is more space for dining, gathering and experiences.

But I am open to a large garage at Hamilton and Waverley hopefully with some housing and

with that more housing on DTN city parking lots.

I think financing this and other improvements with a bond may be the fairest and also most practical way to move forward rapidly.

Stephen Levy

**From:** [Deborah Goldeen](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [City Mgr](#)  
**Subject:** University Ave Streetscape  
**Date:** Sunday, June 2, 2024 11:38:25 AM

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From the City Council Staff Report: *Staff agrees that there are other parallel routes such as Hamilton and Lytton, which may be a better fit for bicyclists.*

No one who uses a bike to commute would have ever said that. I bike to downtown for three reasons: to attend council meetings, or to see a movie at The Aquarius or at The Stanford. Otherwise I avoid downtown like the plague because it's so awful to bike around. When I am forced to travel east-west in downtown, deciding which road to take - University, Lytton or Hamilton - is a matter of eenie, meenie, minie, moe. Each is bad in it's own way.

Downtown is a mess. Though the reports by staff and consultants that are provided to council are impressive in their thoroughness and professionalism, they don't seem to be helping. I'm thinking if the city selected consultants based on how effective their urban designs were rather than on how slick their presentations are, the city might get better results.

Deborah Goldeen, 2130 Birch St., 94306, (650)799-3652

PS - At this point, I'm more concerned with having a place to lock my bike than I am whether I can navigate downtown on my bike. All those parking garages and there's no place to lock up my bike when I go to the movies? Do I have faith staff and consultants will get that sorted out? No.

**From:** [Robert Neff](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Bicycles in the University Ave. Streetscape  
**Date:** Saturday, June 1, 2024 11:59:21 PM

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Honorary City Council Members,

Regarding the University Avenue Streetscape Project Vision item on the agenda on June 3

Bicycle accommodation on University is relatively small part of this plan, but it does suggest that bicyclists would be better served by being encouraged to use Lytton or Hamilton as class III bike routes, instead of using University as a class III bike route.

This is a poor idea - It would be better to accommodate bicyclists at least equally on all streets, and University is a less stressful bicycle street than Lytton or Hamilton.

First, let me say that any of these routes meet the standards of 1995, when all bicyclists were expected to share the lane with automobiles, even when the streets have fairly heavy motor vehicle use, and even if the speed of traffic is above 25 MPH. In 2024, we know that good cycling accommodation means that cyclists should have a comfortable, low stress route to their destination.

All of these streets -- Lytton, Hamilton, and University -- require sharing the lane with many automobile users, but University is actually the best of these, because traffic flows slowly, and bicycles can travel at the speed of all the traffic. Lytton and Hamilton are much worse streets for bicyclists, because the cars are traveling faster.

So I think city staff should NOT encourage the use of Lytton or University as "preferred" bike routes, but treat all equally with sharrows down the middle of the lanes. Cyclists will choose the streets that work the best for them, and the better the experience, the more cyclists we will see.

I look forward to staff's additional recommendations from the ongoing Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update.

Thank you for your service to our city of Palo Alto.

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-- Robert Neff  
[robert@neffs.net](mailto:robert@neffs.net)  
Emerson, near Loma Verde.

I personally use Lytton or Hamilton to access the CalTrain station, thanks to the traffic signals, but if my route gives me the opportunity, I choose any of Channing, Homer, Forest, University, or Everett instead of Lytton or Hamilton.



**From:** [Amie Ashton](#)  
**To:** [Bansal, Megha](#); [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item #16 - University Ave.  
**Date:** Saturday, June 1, 2024 1:41:39 PM

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Honorable Mayor Stone, City Council, and City Staff,

Thank you for moving the University Avenue improvements forward. As a daily shopper/diner on University, I am invested in its success as a thriving business district. I love living car-free -- and a vibrant University Avenue makes that possible!

With regard to the current proposal, the 13-foot travel lanes are dangerous and not consistent with Council direction for other roadways throughout the city where narrowing travel lanes is seen as key to safety. [Research shows us](#) that the number of crashes on a street with 12-foot (or wider) lanes is significantly higher than on streets with narrower lanes.

To keep us all safe (including the 40% of us arriving at University Avenue as pedestrians or on bikes), I would suggest **revisiting Council's previous discussion that the street be striped with 10-foot travel lanes, and 3 feet of diagonal striping to indicate a "door zone"**, where motorists and cyclists should not travel. Also, **painting sharrows in the travel lane would indicate that cyclists should ride there and that motorists should expect them.** This treatment to slow traffic and increase awareness does not physically impede the 26-foot travel lane needed for fire access.

Slower traffic in a 10-foot travel lane keeps everyone safe and is beneficial for businesses. Striping a 3-foot door zone, decreases the chances of getting "doored" by a parked car, and discourages motorists from trying to squeeze past other road users in an unsafe manner. Since approximately 40% of the people arriving at University Avenue do so in a mode other than a car, these improvements will keep all of us safe.

Sincerely,

Amie Ashton

**From:** [Paul B Goldstein](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Bansal, Megha](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item #16 - June 3, 2024  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2024 3:24:31 PM

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Honorable members of the City Council,

Regarding the proposed direction for the University Avenue streetscape, the Staff Report recommends:

Staff is recommending maintaining the 13-foot width of the current travel lanes for a total travel lane width of 26 feet.

and

staff would encourage the use of Lytton and Hamilton as the preferred bike routes

As a bicyclist who often uses University Avenue, I recommend that the street be striped with 10 ft travel lanes, and a 3 ft diagonally striped gore to indicate a “door zone”, and that motorists and cyclists should not drive there. Painting sharrows down the middle of the travel zone would also indicate that cyclists should ride there and that motorists should expect them.

I have ridden my bicycle on University Avenue for nearly 60 years, and because the traffic is moving slowly, and there is lots of friction from parking, turning vehicles, and pedestrians, I find it is a safe place to ride; however, it is only safe if the bicyclist rides in the middle of the travel lane. If the cyclist hugs the door zone, it is doubly dangerous: 1) you can get “doored” by a parked car, and 2) you encourage a motorist to squeeze past you unsafely.

I prefer to ride on University rather than Hamilton or Lytton, as my destination is more often on University, and the traffic on Hamilton and Lytton generally moves faster.

Sincerely,  
Paul Goldstein  
Emerson Street



**From:** [Christopher A Kantarjiev](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Concerning plans for University Avenue  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2024 11:22:15 AM

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Dear members of City Council:

I am writing in regards to your upcoming agenda item regarding future plans for University Avenue's streetscape.

I highly agree with the goal of creating a more people-focused environment on University Avenue. To that end, I urge you to consider completely closing the segment of University Avenue between High and Cowper to vehicle traffic, and designate this area a pedestrian mall.

Vehicular traffic can be redirected to Hamilton and Lytton - my suggestion is that these would be converted to one-way traffic in opposite directions.

The downtown area has more than adequate parking in garages to make up for the rarely-available street parking spots, and delivery access can be managed via cross streets and rear building entrances. Other cities have figured this out; surely Palo Alto can do so as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christopher Kantarjiev  
Southgate

**From:** [Jo Ann Mandinach](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Do NOT approve the University Ave Streetscape Project  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2024 10:52:25 AM

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Please leave University Avenue and its sidewalks alone!

Have you forgotten how the very long and silly Cal Ave project to put in bejeweled sidewalks destroyed the merchants there?

Have you driven down University Ave recently and seen all the empty storefronts like Footwear Etc which left SPECIFICALLY because Palo Alto rents were way too high? Footwear Etc. kept their other stores open in places like Los Altos that STILL have thriving retail UNLIKE Palo Alto!

How about doing the common sense things like cleaning the streets that have been requested for YEARS?

When will you stop wasting OUR money on retail consultants who only want to waste our money WITHOUT even bothering to go to Menlo Park, Redwood City and Los Altos to see why THEY -- unlike Palo Alto -- are still thriving?

Any chance you'll ask residents who actually go shopping for OUR input? Our comments are free!

Silly me. You won't even force the city to fix the barriers on Cal Ave without taking years and \$\$\$\$\$\$\$ wasted on retail consultants!

Palo Alto, the CAN'T DO City!