



# UNIVERSITY AVENUE STREETScape

Concept Plans  
Discussion & Next Steps

Holly Boyd, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Steve Guagliardo, Assistant to the City Manager  
Megha Bansal, Senior Engineer Public Works  
Robert Stevens, Project Manager, CSWST2

# PURPOSE & OVERVIEW

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1. Discuss and confirm the preferred concept plan for the University Avenue Streetscape Improvements.
2. Direct the City Manager to negotiate and prepare a scope of work for future phases through a contract amendment with CSW.



# City Council Priority – Economic Recovery and Transition

The 2023 City Council Priority of Economic Recovery and Transition included a specific objective for this work, discussed in November Update.

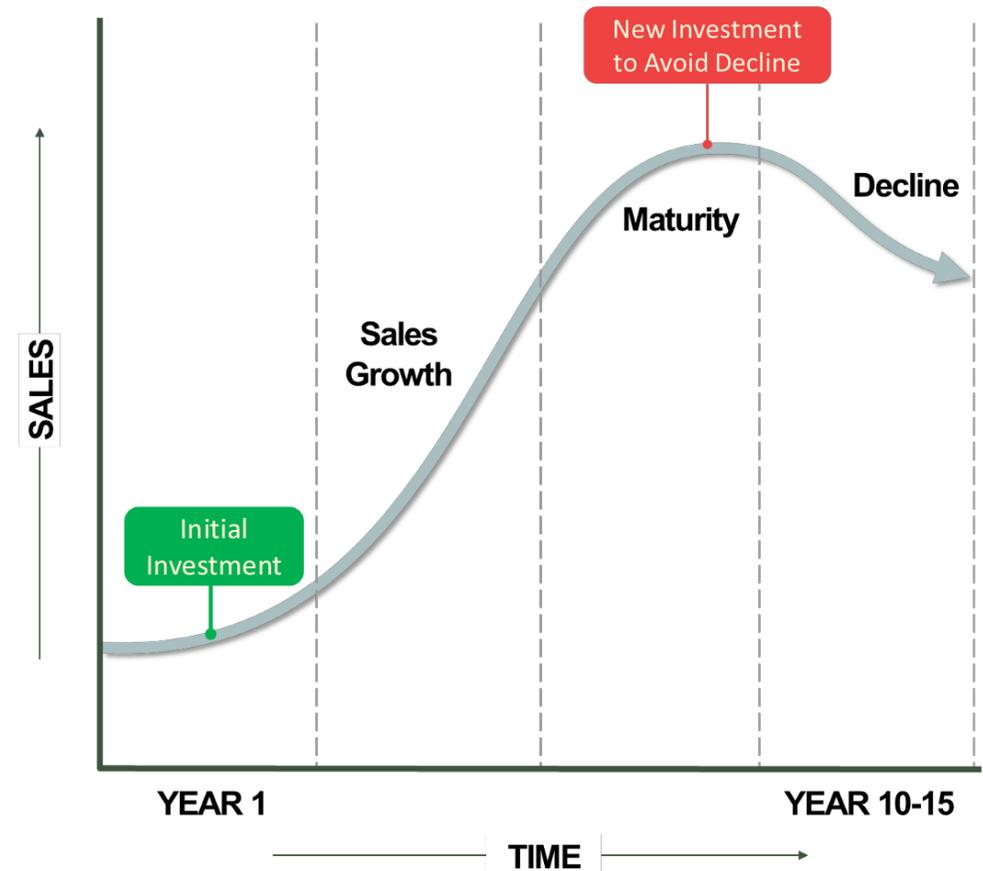
<b>ERBT i. Approve concept plan for University Ave streetscape and provide direction on capital project funding (ERT 5)</b>			
Lead Dept.	PWD	Holly Boyd	
Status:	<b>On Track</b>	Estimated Completion:	Q4
Project Description: Complete data collection, develop concept alternatives, and prepare cost estimates, while implementing the community engagement strategy approved by Council in the consultant contract.			
Update: Staff has completed data collection and field surveys, and held focus group meetings, a community workshop, and an online survey to gather community needs and input to develop project alternatives. Staff is reviewing concept plan line options and will hold additional outreach meetings to gain consensus on a preferred option.			



# Economic Development Strategy – Approved August 14, 2023

**Recommendation #1:** Upgrade...spaces to promote district definition and encourage activation

**Action 1.1:** Redesign University Avenue streetscape to provide wider sidewalk space for walking, gathering, and outdoor dining through construction project to be funded through property owners.



# SCOPE OF STREETScape STUDY

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- Scope of work components approved by Council on September 13, 2021:
  - Enhance retail environment
  - Maximize pedestrian and bicycle use
  - Maintain two-way vehicular access
  - Enhance the overall appearance and activation of the street
  - Facilitate safe and convenient temporary closures to motor vehicles for special events
  - Funding mechanism through an assessment district

# STUDY AREA



- Along University Avenue between Alma Street and Middlefield Road
- Streetscape improvements within the public right of way

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Between November 2022 and November 2023, four Block Ambassadors focus meetings
- March 1, 2023, Community workshop
- March to April 2023, Community on-line survey - 712 responses
- March 2022 to November 2023, three City department-wide meetings and several discipline focus meetings



# STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

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- Enhance economic activity including a diverse array of retail and dining options
- Fun, lively and vibrant
- Clean, safe, and nature focused
- Simple and visually attractive
- Preserve on street parking
- Seek strategies for events at Civic Center Plaza

## Top 3 Concerns (On-line Survey)

#1: Business vacancies

#2: Decrease in retail operations

#3: Not enough social gathering areas

## Top 3 Improvements (On-line Survey)

#1: Outdoor dining

#2: Expanded sidewalks and enhanced pedestrian pathways

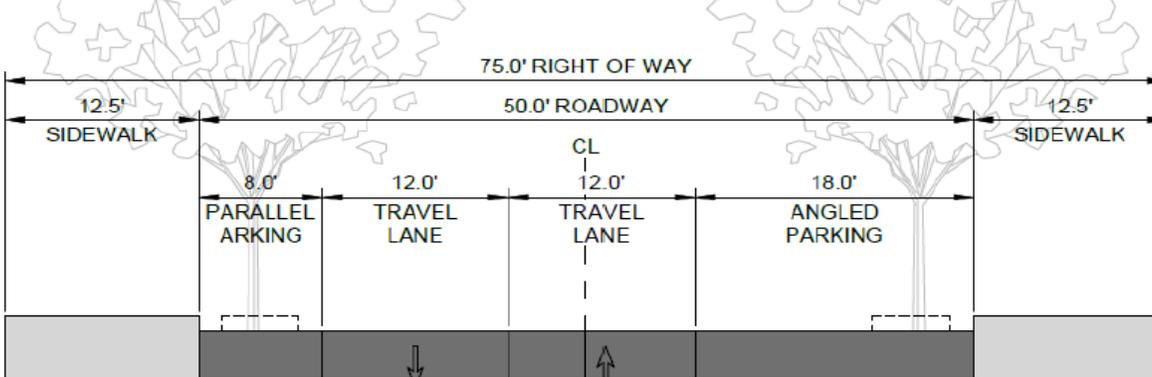
#3: Social gathering areas and seating nodes

# COMPONENTS OF AN “IDEAL” STREETScape

An “Ideal” Streetscape needs about 94 feet of right of way



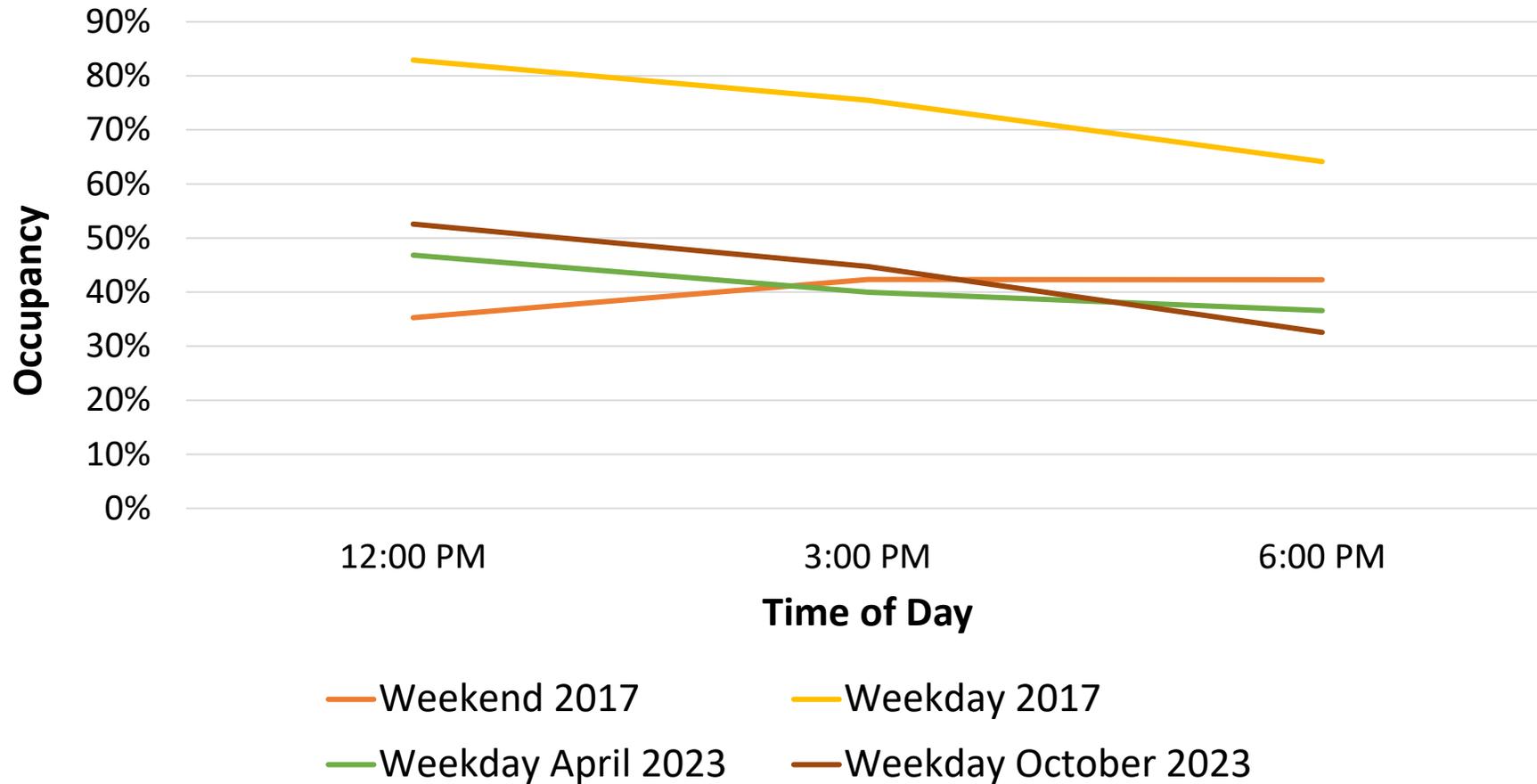
# EXISTING CONDITIONS



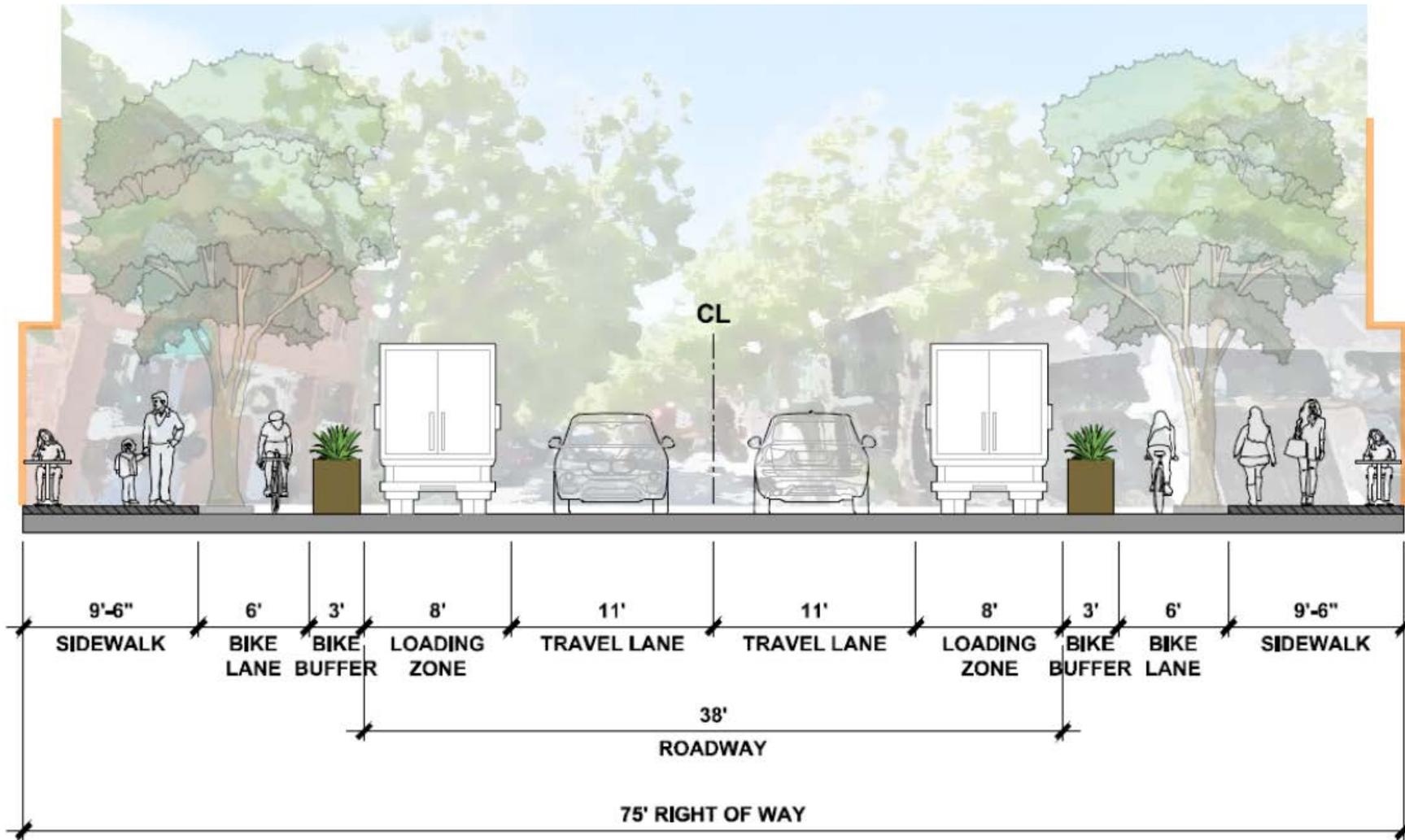
- Right-of-way 75 feet wide
- Sidewalks 12.5+/- feet wide
- London plane trees, majority in good health
- Pavement in good condition
- Sidewalk and crosswalk need improvement

# DOWNTOWN PARKING

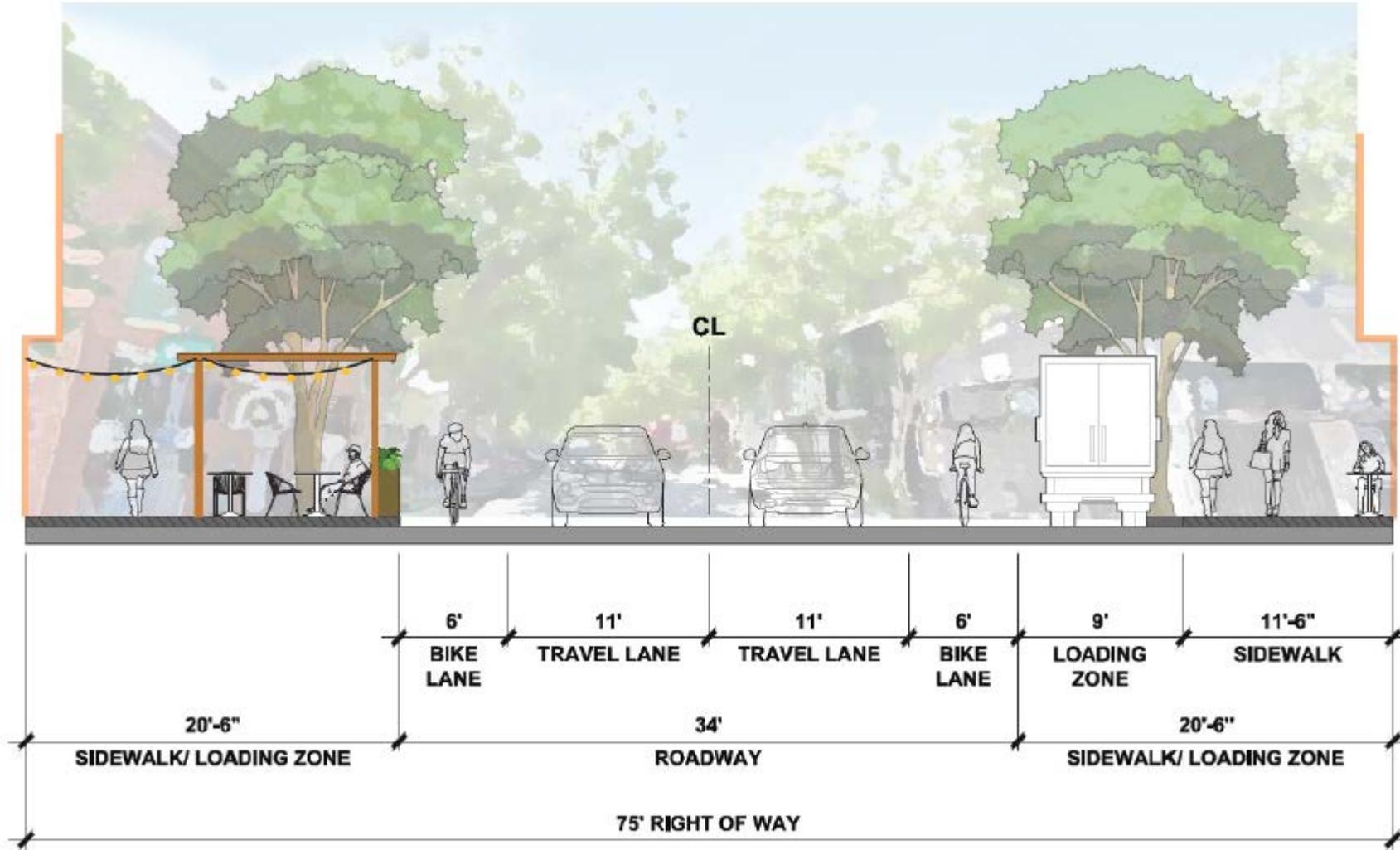
## Comparison of Parking Occupancy Downtown Palo Alto Pre and Post COVID-19



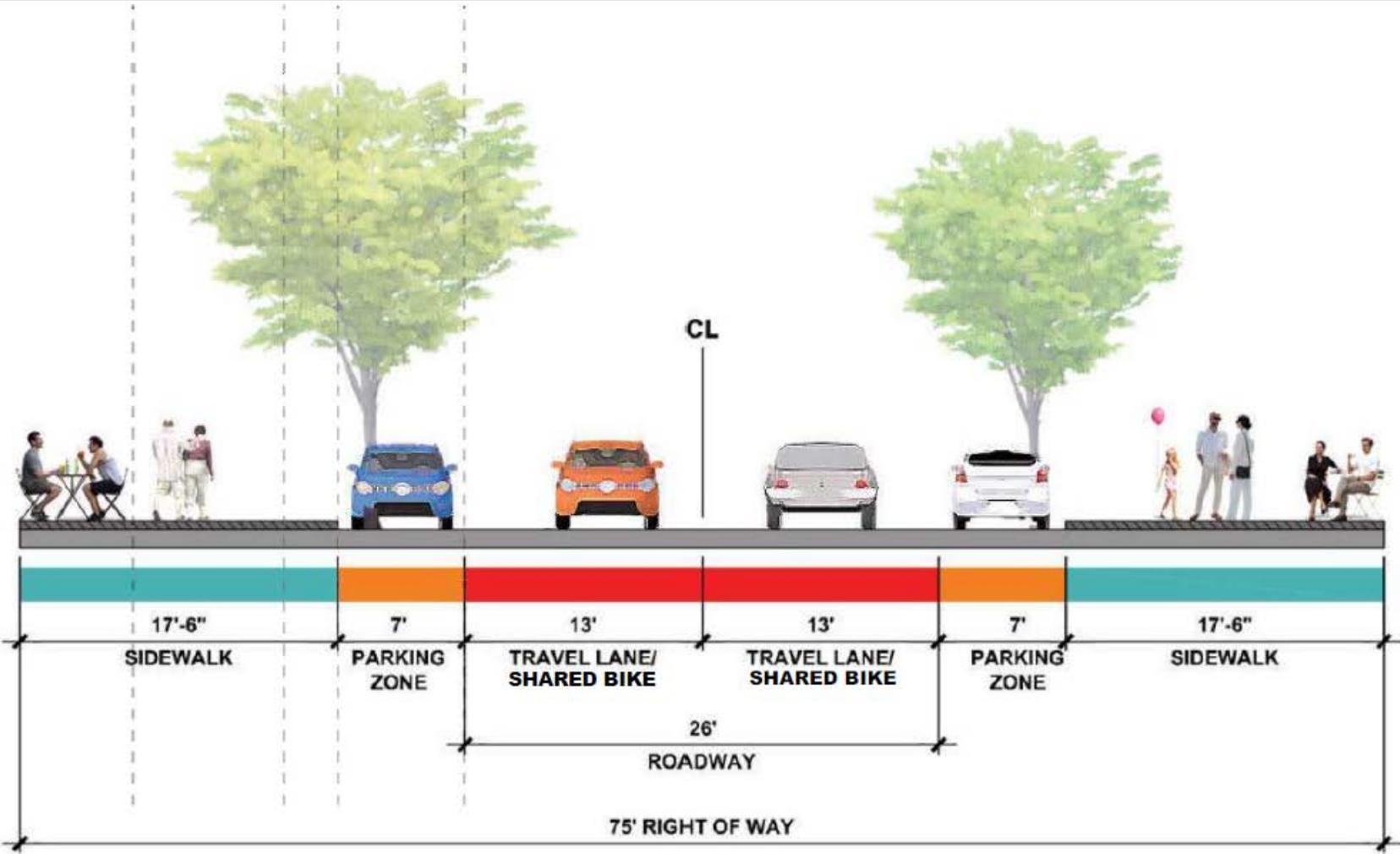
# OPTION 1 - BIKEWAY



# OPTION 2 - PASEO



# OPTION 3 – ACTIVATION FLEX (PREFERRED)



# OPTION 3 – ACTIVATION FLEX



# OPTION 3 – ACTIVATION FLEX



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# OPTION 3 – ACTIVATION FLEX PARKING ANALYSIS

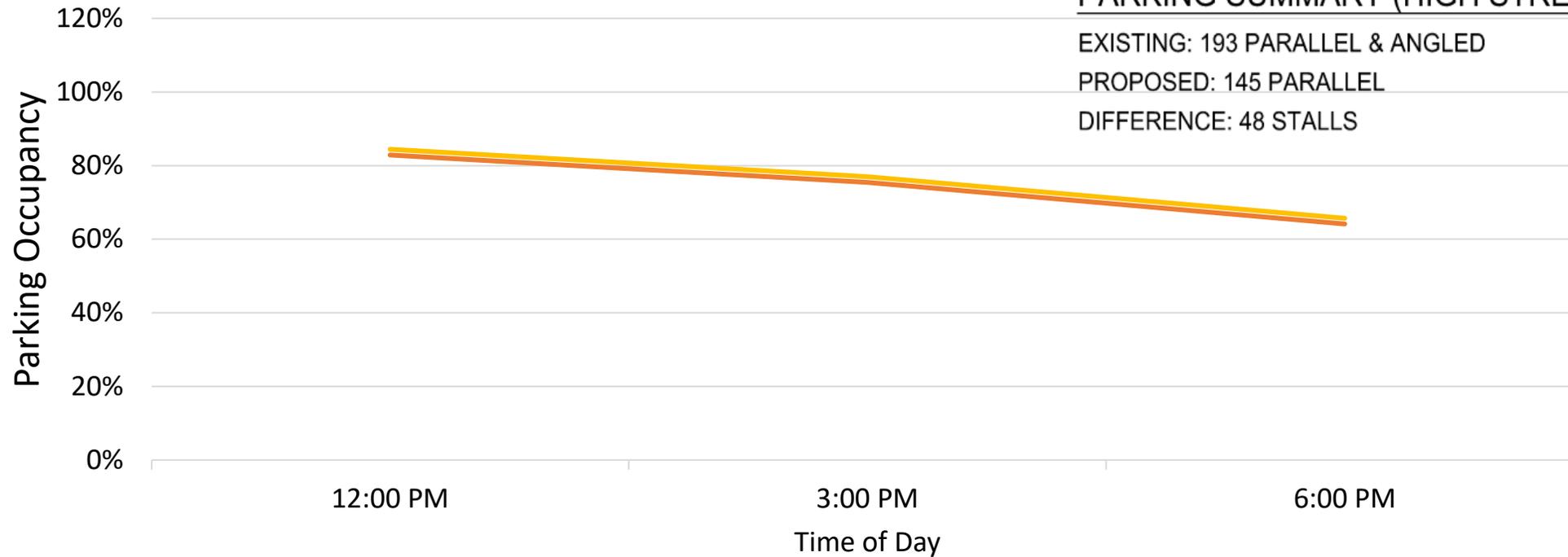
## IMPACT OF ON STREET PARKING REMOVAL ON OFF STREET PARKING GARAGES - PRE COVID 19

### PARKING SUMMARY (HIGH STREET - WEBSTER)

EXISTING: 193 PARALLEL & ANGLED

PROPOSED: 145 PARALLEL

DIFFERENCE: 48 STALLS



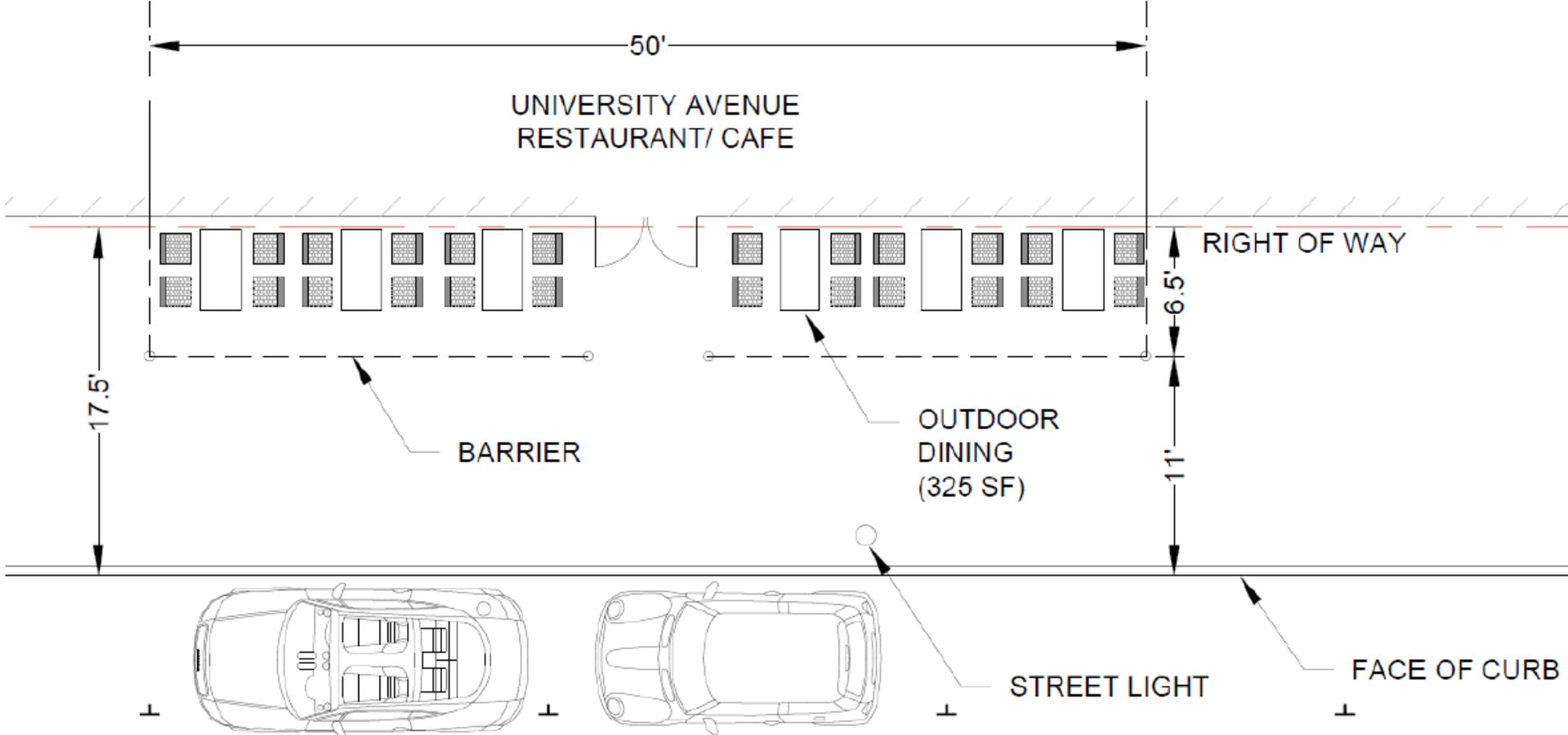
— 2017 weekday % occupancy — % garages occupancy accomodating additional 48 vehicles

# STREETSCAPE SPECIAL EVENT SPACE



Opportunities to close University for special events

# OPTION 3 – ACTIVATION FLEX OUTDOOR DINING



# STREETSCAPE OPTIONS SUMMARY

## Option 1: Bikeway



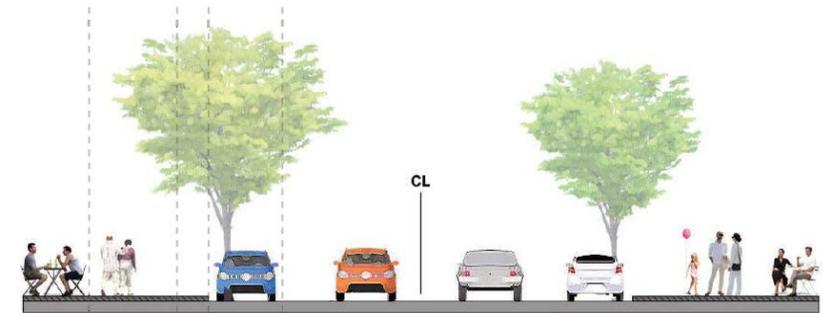
- Protected bicycle lanes
- Limited sidewalk space
- Removes on street parking
- Does not meet fire clearance requirements
- \$35 million to implement

## Option 2: Paseo



- Grand sidewalk area
- Removes on street parking
- Potential for increased vehicle speeds
- \$43 million to implement

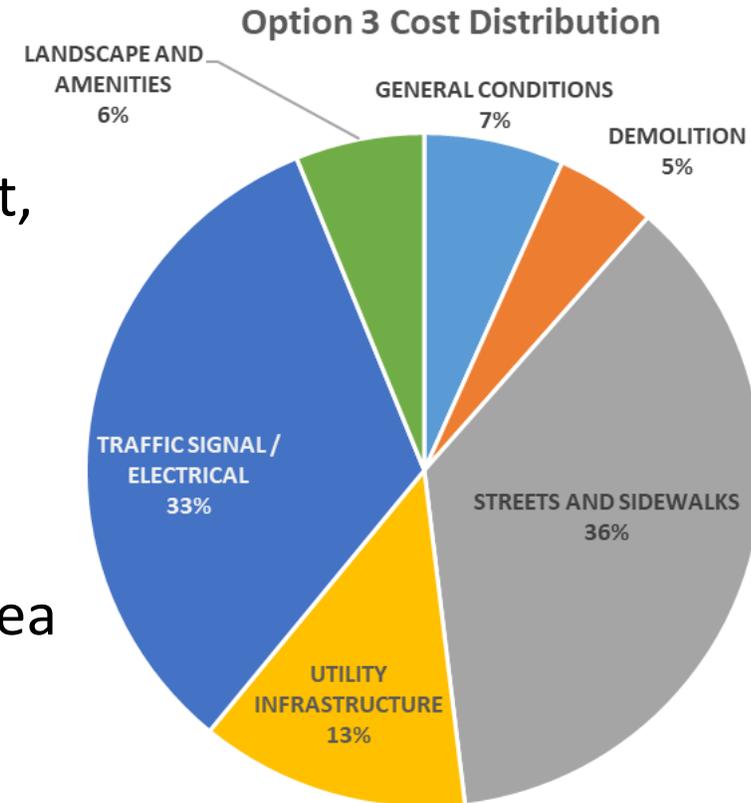
## Option 3: Activation-Flex Preferred Concept



- Sidewalk allows for retail and outdoor dining use
- Preserves 75% of street parking.
- Accommodates needs of all users given the site constraints
- \$40 million to implement

# BUDGET AND FUNDING OPTIONS

- \$40 million in 2030 dollars (hard and soft costs)
- City funds not programmed
- Likely to be funded through an assessment district, development impact fees, and grants
- Special Assessment District:
  - Apportionment of costs among properties fronting the improvement area
  - Three City owned properties within project area
  - General versus specific benefits and Prop 218
  - Additional costs to form assessment district



# OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

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1. Enhanced Maintenance: **\$395,000 per year**
  - Weekly power washing
  - Trash removal at least six times a week
  - Preservation of street trees
  - Maintenance of accent lighting
  - Maintenance of landscaping and irrigation
2. District Management Entity – **\$250,000 per year** for concerts, movies, plays, etc.



# NEXT STEPS AND TENTATIVE TIMELINE

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Upon Council direction to proceed with the preferred concept plan:

1. Consultant Contract Amendment for Phase 2 services (early 2024)
2. Phase 2: Preliminary Design & Environmental Assessment (spring 2024 - summer 2025)\*
  - Boards and Commissions meetings and additional outreach
  - Preliminary design, streetscape plan and cost estimate refinement
  - Environmental assessment consistent with CEQA
  - Engineer's report for assessment district planning
3. Phase 3: Final design, construction documents & bidding (summer 2025 - summer 2026)
4. Phase 4: Construction (anticipated to last two years)

\*City to retain a municipal bond counsel for the Assessment District planning, election and implementation with Phase 2.

# RECOMMENDED MOTION

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1. Confirm Option 3 - (Activation Flex) as the preferred concept plan for the University Avenue Streetscape Improvements.
2. Direct the City Manager to negotiate and prepare a scope of work for future phases through a contract amendment with CSW.



CITY OF  
**PALO  
ALTO**

Holly Boyd, Assistant Director of Public Works; [holly.boyd@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:holly.boyd@cityofpaloalto.org)  
Steve Guagliardo, Assistant to the City Manager; [steve.guagliardo@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:steve.guagliardo@cityofpaloalto.org)  
Megha Bansal, Senior Engineer Public Works; [megha.bansal@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:megha.bansal@cityofpaloalto.org)  
Robert Stevens, Project Manager, CSWST2; [rstevens@cswst2.com](mailto:rstevens@cswst2.com)