

From: [Patrice Olds](#)
To: [Martin McTaggart](#); [Jennifer Chen](#)
Subject: FW: Pedestrian Mall – Project Update
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 1:07:17 PM

Patrice M. Olds, MMC
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From: Liz Hall [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 12:50 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Pedestrian Mall – Project Update

Dear City Council,

I am strongly in favor of the pilot program to expand the pedestrian mall between 1st and 2nd Avenue. This area was partially closed during Covid and expanded the downtown liveliness and pedestrian safety all the way to the Caltrain lot, which is an easy and convenient place to park when accessing downtown.

I am also strongly in favor of the installation of automatic hydraulic and fixed bollards between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. The downtown businesses need to see the City commit to real infrastructure investments on the street so they can be confident about their parklet and outdoor investments as well.

It has been a joy to see the community come alive on the closed streets. They bring their children to play, walk their dogs, hang out with friends and family, and patronize the businesses. Between 2nd and 3rd, there is almost always a line for Kajiken, SomiSomi is packed even on cold days, and people are relaxing with a cup of coffee or enjoying the new hotpot restaurant. I am so glad the City chose to keep this street closed to cars, and I think we should keep the closed street momentum going with the 1st Ave pilot program and bollards.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Hall

San Mateo resident since 2006

From: [Patrice Olds](#)
To: [Martin McTaggart](#); [Jennifer Chen](#)
Subject: FW: Pedestrian mall
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 7:22:41 AM

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From: Daniel Schonberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2024 6:25 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Pedestrian mall

Dear city representatives,

I am a 11 year resident of San Mateo and avid pedestrian. When I look at laurel street in San Carlos, I can't help but feel sad in how limited our investment in blocked off streets have been. And for what little we've done, I hear we are scaling that back. That would make me sad. We need to vastly improve life for pedestrians in San Mateo. We give up so much of the city to cars already. We need to give more to humans. Not less. Keep B between 1st and 2nd devoted to people.

Sincerely,
Daniel Schonberg

From: [Francie Souza](#)
To: [City Council \(San Mateo\)](#)
Subject: Support Downtown Pedestrian Mall
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 1:29:15 PM

Dear Mayor Diaz-Nash and City Council Members,

We are all residents of Central San Mateo and are writing as the Board of the Central Neighborhood Association. We are urging you to keep the Pedestrian Mall between 1st and 2nd Streets closed to cars and to complete the improvements recommended by city staff immediately.

The city's project for improvements to this pedestrian mall has taken a very long time, which doesn't allow a fair evaluation of how it is progressing. There have been some great successes with programming in this area, such as Boos on B Street, and various musical performances, along with the street mural and the city should build on these successes, not pull the plug prematurely.

The plans for businesses to invest in parklets, including two between 1st & 2nd, show there is support for this Pedestrian Mall improvement to continue, and conflicts with the developer's survey outcome. An alternative would be to ask the developers in the area to contribute directly to making the Pedestrian Mall a success. For example, there has been much discussion about the need for public restrooms and perhaps this is an opportunity to also plan for this need.

Time has shown that Pedestrian zones are assets and help make cities more livable by providing safe community spaces for entertainment, food and art. This is an opportunity to enhance San Mateo's community spaces and it is far too soon to give up and stop this promising program. What is needed is to promptly complete the plans that have been presented by the City Staff, assist the businesses in the area, and ask the developers to partner in this success.

Our San Mateo City Council has expressed united support for an attractive Downtown Pedestrian Zone in the past. We encourage you to remain true to this vision for San Mateo.

Thank you,

CNA Board:

Michael Weinbauer

Laurie Watanuki

Maurine Killough

David Light

Frances Souza

From: Seema Patel
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 2:54 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Clerk <clerk@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: B St Pedestrian Mall

Hello City Councilmembers,

I serve as a Planning Commissioner for the City of San Mateo but I am submitting this comment on my own behalf as a resident of San Mateo.

I write to you (again) in support of keeping (or expanding) the B St Pedestrian Mall which has become a huge asset to our community, providing a sense of place and vibrancy to our downtown district.

1. This is the fourth time in four years that the City Council has been asked to provide input on the existence of the pedestrian mall and/or its boundaries (May 2021, October 2021, May 2023).

- I think **it is premature to reduce the pedestrian mall immediately before the installation of permanent infrastructure that will help increase vibrancy** (seating, planters, etc.) and after the City has already invested in re-striping the street, commissioning a large-scale mural and adding lighting.
- Rather than re-visiting this decision every year, I think it would be a more efficient use of Council's time to set an evaluation period (5 years? 3 years?), give the permanent improvements time to take effect, and then revisit (if needed) at the end of the evaluation period.
- **I think it's important to install permanent infrastructure, including the bollards, during this evaluation period. Not only are the bollards much safer for pedestrians, but temporary planters on the north block may lead businesses to believe that the pedestrian mall is "temporary" or at significant risk of reversal, and decline to make their own investments in outdoor activation.**

2. It's clear that for the businesses that choose to activate the pedestrian mall, **the pedestrian mall is critical to the vitality of their business.**

- At the May 15, 2023 regular City Council meeting, the owner of Wursthall, [Tyson Mao, gave a public comment](#) explaining that during the partial closure of B St between Baldwin and 1st Avenue, Wursthall was able to leverage outdoor seating to achieve pre-pandemic revenue numbers, hitting an annual revenue of \$3.2M. **After the street was reopened to cars, Wursthall saw a 33% drop in revenue, losing over \$1M.** Tyson explained that his business was currently losing money, the parallel parking spaces in front of his business are too small to achieve a positive ROI on a parklet, and he will be forced to close Wursthall in September of 2025 if they cannot turn business around.
- By keeping B St between Baldwin & 1st open to cars, **the City has decided that the 6 parallel parking spaces on the west side of B St are a better amenity for our**

community than a thriving, vibrant outdoor biergarten. Is that a decision that we think a majority of residents would agree with?

3. **High vacancy of new-construction retail spaces is [a regional problem](#)** driven by market conditions, fit out costs, and facility size. It is unlikely to be solved by re-opening the pedestrian mall to cars.

- Recall that Hillsdale Mall was unable to lease ground floor retail in Building L of their new North Block for over two years before asking the city to allow office uses at the site. There is no shortage of auto access or parking at Hillsdale Mall. We should only reopen the pedestrian mall to cars if there is concrete evidence it will improve vacancy (e.g. signed contracts from lessees stating they will take occupancy if/when the street is reopened to cars) AND we believe those businesses will provide community benefits that exceed those of the pedestrian mall.
- It's also worth noting that Prometheus has a history of advocating for auto-centric development. They successfully lobbied to get protected bicycle lanes on B St removed from the bicycle master plan. Yet ["walkability" is the most prominently featured amenity on Brickline's website](#), including a photo of the portion of the pedestrian mall that they wish to re-open to cars!

Sweet home San Mateo

Lace up those tennies, because this place is walkable with a capital W. The Caltrain station is just 270 steps (we counted) away, and B Street is literally at your doorstep. Downtown San Mateo has a nearly limitless selection of happy hour spots, wine bars, cozy restaurants, and boutique fitness studios. It's all so close, and there's so much to explore.



4. It seems like there is still an opportunity to education residents, patrons **and businesses** about the availability of parking downtown

- In their feedback Ox9 Noodles said they "Want the street reopened. Parking is not easy to find." Ox9 is located a 395ft walk (0.07mi) from the Transit Center Garage which has 226 parking spots and a 400ft walk to the Main Street Garage which has 380 parking spots. The 29 spots on B St between 1st and 2nd Ave are not significant

compared to the 606 spots in these two garages, and the 36 spots on B St between 2nd and 3rd Ave are a farther walk from Ox9 than the two aforementioned garages.

5. The city can and should do more to **facilitate a transition to businesses that want to activate the Pedestrian Mall.**

- In their feedback Urban Ritual said, they "Removed their outdoor dining area because it was being used by Somi Somi customers and Somi Somi didn't participate in keeping the area clean." **It is disappointing that some businesses are not only declining to activate the pedestrian mall, but through their inaction are causing their neighbors to deactivate the pedestrian mall.** A thriving business should not come at the expense of a community benefit.
- Pre-approved parklet designs, the elimination of parklet fees, providing outdoor furniture could all help attract businesses that want to activate and/or monetize the pedestrian mall.
- Perhaps the city needs to go further and require outdoor activation as a condition of use for businesses along the pedestrian mall.

Thank you for your consideration!

Regards,
Seema Patel