

## Ed Lauing

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**Personal transportation choices:** What are your primary and secondary modes of transportation for getting around town? If one of your preferred modes is bicycling, how often do you ride? What type of trips do you make and why do you choose this option over other modes?

Auto and bike. I put about 5000 miles a year on my car, as I have worked from home for the last 12 years. My wife works at Stanford so has a 1.5 mile commute.

Bike is more often for pleasure or a ride to get a coffee.

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**Summer Streets:** Palo Alto's [2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan](#) notes that "Walkable, bikeable downtowns attract residents and visitors to spend money at local businesses". In addition, our [2030 Comprehensive Plan](#) proposes studying "the feasibility of converting parts of University Avenue to a pedestrian zone". "[Summer Streets](#)", the opening of California Avenue and University Avenue to pedestrian and bicycle traffic only, has provided the city with an opportunity to pilot this program. Would you support making these street modifications either seasonally recurring or permanent? Why or why not?

We would need to survey all types of businesses in areas where that is considered. Data from summer streets indicate restaurants are very supportive, retailers have mixed views. Residents seem to love eating outdoors amidst walkers and bike riders. "Very European" is what I have heard multiple times. Pending new data from merchants and city staff relative to expansion or permanent closure, I would at least support seasonal closures.

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**Programs:** Programs can be very effective at increasing the walking and biking mode-share within a population. An example of this is the [Safe Routes To School](#) (SRTS) program. Last year, about [60% of high school students](#) in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) walked or biked to school. While this program has been successful at getting students to adopt active transportation, among adults and seniors the walking and bicycling mode share is only around 10%. Considering the significant health benefits of active living, would you be in favor of investing in a pilot program for adults and seniors? Why or why not?

Safe Routes to Schools has been a raging success. I think it would be a great idea to migrate this program to adults and seniors.

Not only is that good for our environment; it is great for community building and simply meeting new people!

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**Road Safety:** The [2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan](#) lists the [locations of hazardous intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists](#) in Palo Alto, and suggests treatments to improve safety. The city has addressed a number of these intersections, but, unfortunately, for many of them no safety improvements have been made. In early March, there was a tragic crash at one of these unimproved intersections, resulting in the death of a young bicyclist. What policies would you support to reduce risk for all users at hazardous intersections and roadways?

It seems like this is a priority issue more than a policy issue. Certainly as a policy we must keep our residents safe! With specific input from your group and others we should prioritize the intersections to be inspected in order of probable risk. Then our transportation office can move down the list one-by-one and make recommendations to council on what to do in order to increase safety. (Some may not need council approval). It is easier for the city to spend money on projects that protect citizens or increase safety than any other type of issue.

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**Commuting:** The [2016 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan \(S/CAP\) framework](#) states a 2030 goal to “Increase bike mode share, including work commute trips, from 7% to 25%”. What kinds of programs and/or infrastructure improvements do you support to encourage more people to commute by bicycle to help the city of Palo Alto reach this ambitious goal?

This answer is directly connected to the last question/answer. It is all about safety. A personal example: I have nagged my wife for years to bike to Stanford. She always declines as she is terrified of biking on Embarcadero and Galvez. She also does not trust cars at the El Camino/Embarcadero intersection lights to actually STOP! Perhaps lights there should stop ALL cars at certain parts of the commute - similar to what police officers do at Stanford games. In general, the answer is that residents feel exposed to vehicles crushing them.

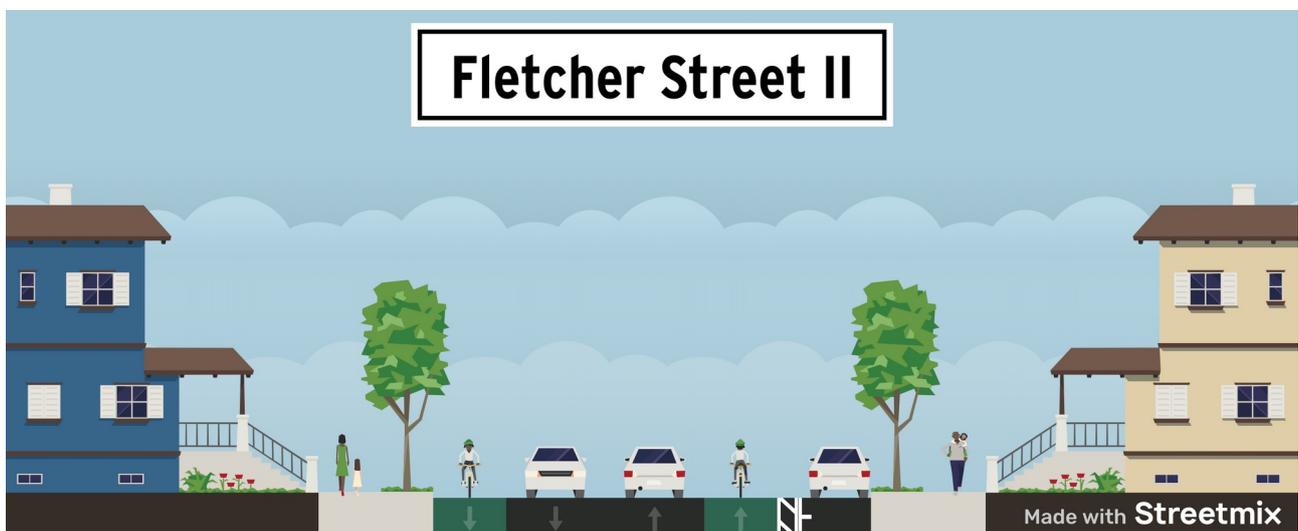
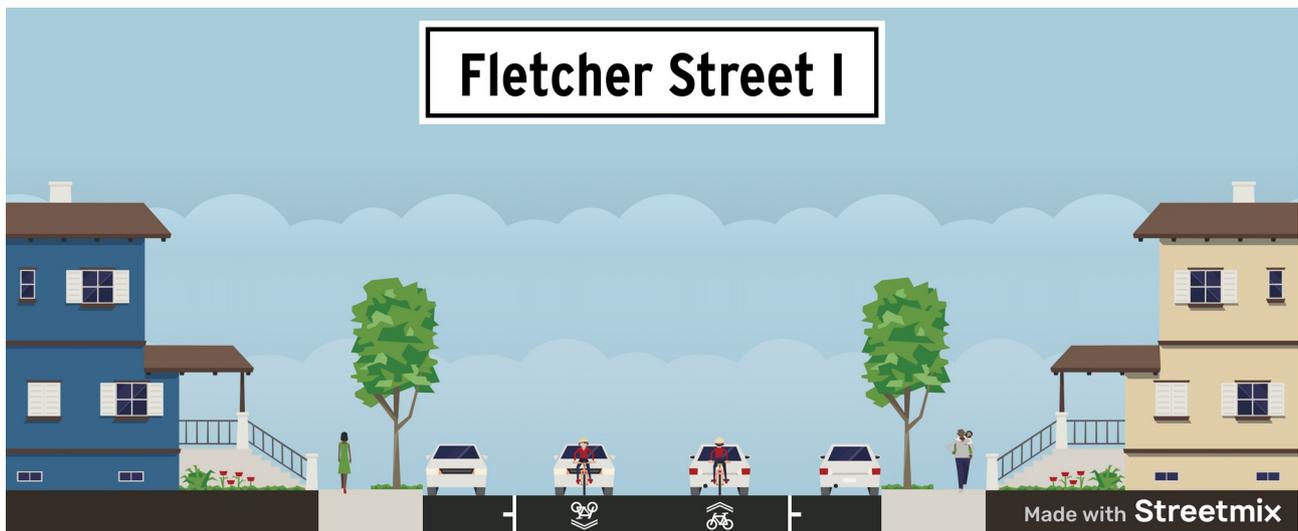
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**Equity:** The [2030 Comprehensive Plan](#) states that “ Due to the high number of jobs relative to a low number of employed residents, many workers must commute to Palo Alto, resulting in traffic congestion, air pollution and parking constraints”. This is especially true for service workers. In addition, the [Calendar Year 2019 Annual Report](#) from the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA) finds that 70% of service workers at University Avenue and California Avenue use single-occupancy vehicles (SOV) to commute to work. What barriers do you think could prevent these workers from using green transportation options, and what policies could the city adopt to alleviate these barriers?

A few "barriers" to overcome :

1. No CalTrain system - The only viable public transit option for citizens is CalTrain. So for post-pandemic commuting, CalTrain HAS TO BE FINANCED - and then upgraded. The entire peninsula depends on this.
  2. Cheap Parking - Price commercial district parking garages via day passes at a high rate so it "hurts" a bit to park here.
  3. No place to live - The lack of truly affordable housing for people with income levels like service workers is a massive gap that has to be closed. corrected. If they afford to live here , they can bike or walk here, And NOT drive.
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**Design:** Designing complete streets for safe and convenient travel for all users -- pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, users and operators of public transportation, emergency vehicles, seniors, children, youth, and families -- is a part of [state law](#). Which of these alternatives shown below for a fictional Fletcher Street would you prefer, and why?



I strongly prefer Fletcher Street II. Primary reasons:

1. SAFE bike lanes in both directions
2. The elimination of two lanes for cars in each direction will cause MORE congestion.

The combination of these two factor are the carrot and the stick that will put more people on bikes or other non SOVs.

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**Infrastructure:** Active transportation infrastructure makes walking, biking, and electric boards (like e-scooters) feel safer and more convenient. What kinds of infrastructure projects, supporting active transportation, would you like to see come forward for City Council approval in the next 4-8 years? What kinds of projects would be your highest priorities? How would you choose?

A list of bicycle and pedestrian projects is proposed in chapter 6 of the [2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan](#). The [City Office of Transportation project page](#) has a list of all Palo Alto transportation projects -- the status for these goes from early development, to planned, to complete, or halted. Larger capital projects are part of the [Palo Alto infrastructure plan website](#).

As we ramp up the necessary transition away from greenhouse gas producing transportation, investment in active transportation infrastructure is increasingly important. But it's not as simple as sourcing funds and pressing "go" on identified projects. As we learned with the uproar over the Ross Road Bike Boulevard, the design details and on-the-ground implementation matter. Although the bike and pedestrian transportation plan was very well received in 2012, it's clear that some of the tactics outlined in the plan do not currently enjoy uniform support.

So in addition to identifying priority projects, we need to better communicate about what we're trying to achieve, the specific tactics we want to deploy, and how it will impact multi-modal users and neighborhood experience - and do the work to build community buy-in before we break ground.

Generally, I would prioritize projects that fill gaps in existing high volume commute routes, create east-west connectors providing cross-city access to current bike boulevards, and improve safe connections to transit and retail hubs. And across the board we should continue expanding bike parking facilities at high traffic destinations.

Criteria: Safety, expected return on investment in terms of uptake, spill-over impacts, likelihood/suitability for attracting new active transportation users (e.g., interested, but concerned bicyclists).

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**Community engagement:** Bryant Street is one of Palo Alto's most beloved streets. However, when Bryant Street became a bicycle boulevard, the proposed changes were quite controversial and sparked community pushback. How would you balance concerns raised by residents who may oppose a change to their street with broader city goals to make streets more accessible to different modes of transport?

This is the critical question with any major city program that optimizes broad community benefit with some neighborhood impact. "Balance" is exactly the right word to describe the necessary approach. All neighbors need substantive input -FROM THE START. Their concerns need to be mitigated without losing sight of the overall objective and goal to improve the community and - in this case - lower use of SOVs while also providing safe recreational bike routes.

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