



Memorandum

TO: RULES & OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Raul Perez

**SUBJECT: THE FUTURE OF SAN PEDRO
SQUARE AND POST STREET**

DATE: April 14, 2022

Approved by:

Date:

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for the April 26 City Council discussion the following:

1. Direct City Staff to
 - a. Fully convert the existing Al Fresco closure of San Pedro Street between W. Santa Clara Street and St. John Street to a **permanent** closure including procuring permanent infrastructure to safely facilitate the closure.
 - b. Commence by summer of this year a **weekly** closure of Post Street between S. First Street and Lightston Alley from Thursday evening to Sundays and procure all relevant permanent infrastructure to safely facilitate the closure.
 - i. Return to City Council after one year of commencement of weekly closures to evaluate and consider expanding the closure.
 - c. Include reasonable design guidelines to maintain consistent aesthetic and operations throughout each of the respective corridors.
2. Direct the City Manager and City Attorney to extend the local emergency order affecting San José Al Fresco to March 31, 2023 to allow for adequate time for implementation of Recommendation #1.

BACKGROUND

Since first taking office in 2015, I have tirelessly worked towards the conversion of San Pedro and Post Streets to pedestrian malls. We have implemented one-offs of these conversions for San José Sharks-related events, Super Bowl 50, San José Jazz Summerfest, and many other special events.

In 2019, after advocating strongly through the budget process and conducting extensive community engagement, we were able to pilot San Pedro's "Meet in the Streets", a month-long, weekend-only open streets program that proved successful. While preparing to implement another pilot in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic expedited our plans through the introduction of the city's "Al Fresco" outdoor dining program, which allowed for both San Pedro and Post Streets to be opened for pedestrians only as a lifeboat for our struggling local business owners and community.

ANALYSIS

The results have been phenomenal, as I had always expected: businesses extending their operations into the streets, patrons safely walking, running and/or biking through our urban core's vibrant corridors, and San José showcasing the wonderful benefit of having 300+ days of sunshine year round.

As of the authoring of this memo, San Pedro Square remains closed to vehicular traffic and active for pedestrian and business use. A recent update to the Downtown Parking Board also indicated that the Market Street Garage can support the street closure. Meanwhile, Post Street was reopened to vehicular traffic to allow for regrouping and rethinking of how we can reopen the street equitably. After conducting community outreach with stakeholders from our business and LGBTQIA+ community, a fair and balanced approach that has consensus would be ongoing weekend closures of Post Street.

CONCLUSION

I would like to thank those who have remained engaged in this process including our local businesses in San Pedro Square and Post Street, the San José Downtown Association, ProjectMORE and City Staff.

This Council direction would further support our climate smart goals, our general plan goals, and our Vision Zero goals. I recognize that the work to move these streets permanently to an open streets program is complex and requires great coordination, which is why I am requesting that we start now. Outside of the legal mechanism to move beyond the existing local emergency order, we must account for permanent infrastructure and operations in consultation with our first responders. As the largest city in the Bay Area, San José should be ahead of the curve in activating our public spaces and refocusing our public right of ways on serving people first.