

Look how the main roadways show that the fairgrounds is the geographic center of town.

An aerial photograph of Petaluma, California, in 1952. The image shows a dense urban area with a grid street pattern, a river winding through the center, and surrounding agricultural fields. A red circle with a yellow center is placed on the northern edge of the town, indicating the location of the fairgrounds. The text 'Fairgrounds were the outer edge of town in 1952 next to agricultural fields.' is overlaid in the top right corner.

Fairgrounds were the
outer edge of town in 1952
next to agricultural fields.

Petaluma in 1952



West Side of Town

Fairgrounds is the center of town today. Mid-town divides the East Side from the West Side.

Mid - Town

East Side of Town

A tale of two towns – east and west side – divided by a drive in and drive out Mid-town "island". No one walks in Mid-town. Community doesn't gather Mid-town except for a few rare times per year.

- **Almost no one is walking and almost no one is riding a bicycle in mid-town. It's mostly a "dead zone" in terms of people congregating, hanging out and rubbing shoulders together. Mid-town does not foster community.**
- **Except for the fair a few days out of the year and the speedway racetrack, there is a small school, and a paintball game site. Otherwise it is a dead zone for most people, most of the time.**
- **But this is literally the Central Park of Petaluma, behind a chain link fence, where 95% of the population has no access 95% of the time.**



Fairground entrance on a typical Saturday at 10:00am.

GNOSS CONCOURSE

**NO PUBLIC
ACCESS**



**10 MPH
SPEED LIMIT**

**NO PARKING
BETWEEN POLES**

**Our publicly owned Central Park
is not accessible to the public.**

Our Central Park is hidden behind a chain link fence and disconnected from the street to the north.



The chain link fence “access” to our Central Park from the east side.



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Sunday June 26, 2022
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Pre-80 All Makes - All Models
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**No access from the west
side either. All fenced off.**



The consistent urban design **language** is chain link fence and limited public access.

Swimming pool as seen from skate park.



**Looking from the skate park across to the
speedway racetrack: a series of chain link
fences and parking lots.**



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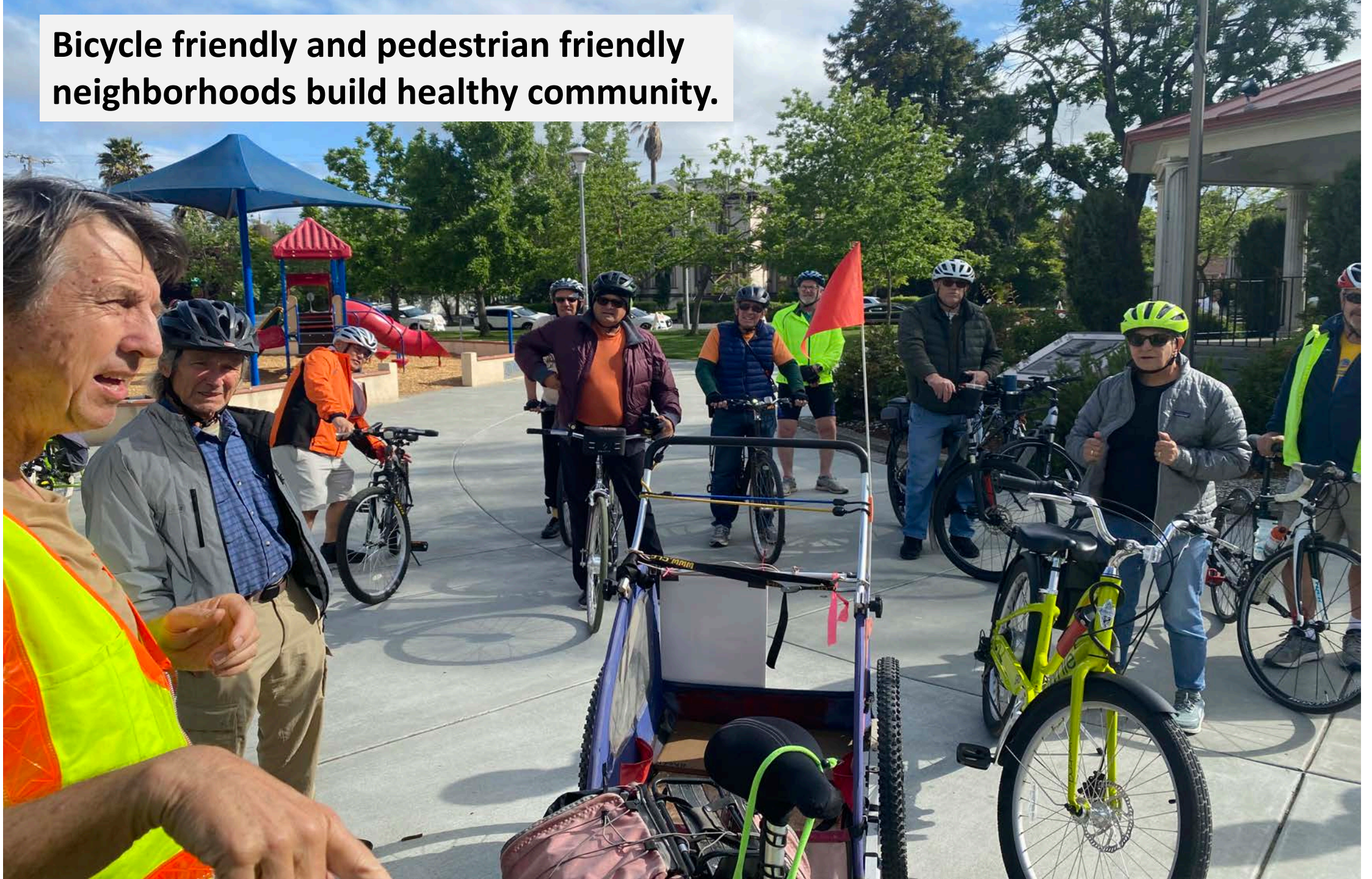
How can a publicly owned park have no general public access?

- **Our Petaluma Central Park is a series of chain link fences, limited access, automobiles only and, of course, no one wants to ride a bicycle here or walk here.**
- **The current design of the fairgrounds property – our Petaluma Central Park – is for 95% of the people, 95% of the time, a dead zone. No access. Nothing going on.**

But our Petaluma Central Park could be an everyday community gathering place full of people and activity like in this photo.



Bicycle friendly and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods build healthy community.





Our Central Park could become a true destination for everyone, everyday.



Or like this place. Who wouldn't want to come here everyday?

But for 95% of the people in Petaluma, 95% of the time, most of our Central Park land is not useable and not accessible.

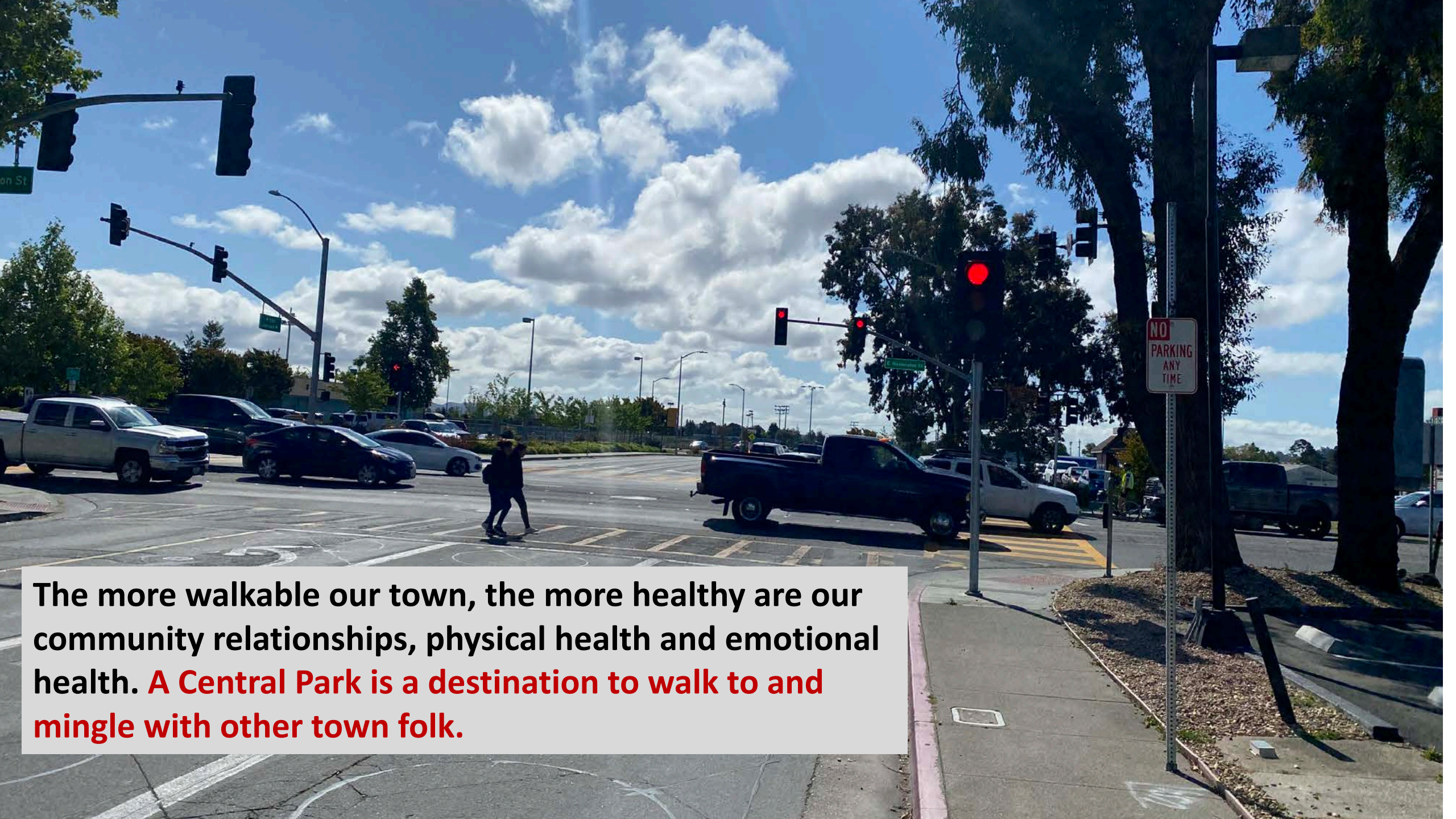


No gathering of community, only some passive shopping. Mid-town is drive in and drive out because there is no reason to walk there. No one gathers here because our Central Park is fenced off to the public.

What if our Central Park became a place to walk to instead of drive by?

Our Central Park is
a dead zone
95% of the time
for
95% of the people.





The more walkable our town, the more healthy are our community relationships, physical health and emotional health. **A Central Park is a destination to walk to and mingle with other town folk.**



Our fairgrounds Central Park could be something more like this, instead.



Or like this.

Or more like this, 365 days of the year, for everyone.



My recommendation to this committee:

- Before planning the specific land uses such as a fairgrounds, a school, more stores, a public park or more houses, what are the **guiding principles** that you would suggest to the City Council?
- **Is this property a central park for everyone to use everyday?**
- **Should this property be locked behind a fence?**
- **Is this location the geographic center of town?**
- **Who gets access to this property? Everyone? Everyday?**
- **Can this property build a stronger sense of community?**
- **Do we want more nature and plants on this property?**

- **Develop a guiding set of principles first.**
- **Figure out the uses of the property second.**
- **What is the purpose of this property?**
- **What role does this land play in the overall urban fabric of our town?**
- **This is the center of our town. Why is it fenced off?**

Petaluma's Central Park

Guiding Principles:

What is the purpose of this land?

Who gets to use it?

When?

Why?



Specific Uses:

Informed by the purpose and
the why above.



What if our Central Park became a place to walk to everyday instead of only drive by? Take down the fence. This is public property.