

Carol Standel-Castanon  
Ojai, CA 93023

I'm not sure the council and Mayor are in full agreement regarding the sale of cannabis within the city's jurisdiction. My guess is that cannabis revenue has been good for the city and that the guests to our valley who wish to purchase cannabis either recreationally and or medicinally add to the income for the other businesses on Ojai Avenue as well. I do not have that specific revenue information, but I would be interested.

In today's world, opposition is often where conversations begin and become embedded in debate not dialogue or collaborative problem solving. Let's acknowledge our commonality.

We are likely in full agreement on some of what our community needs. That list likely includes:

1. A place for teenagers and young adults to have fun free of alcohol or cannabis.
2. Affordable activities for our young and growing families.
3. Multi-generational community-based options for gathering.
4. Socio-economic - equal opportunity - community-based need retail stores.
5. Low income and affordable diverse-income housing.

We might find agreement that cannabis purchased in Ojai be consumed in a contained environment rather than our parks are other outdoor spaces, and that these spaces have a value in our community. In fact, many of our spaces on Ojai Avenue currently provide experiences which include alcohol. The existing ordinances include alcohol consumption and a space to enjoy. Bryant Street is already going through a transformation. It now includes lodging and a beer garden. Cannabis shops thrive on Bryant Street. It is off the beaten path but, every bit part of the community. Bryant Street may be a viable option for cannabis expansion.

I'm not a yes or down vote for cannabis lounges on Ojai Avenue because I really don't have enough information. But, I do know what adolescents, families, people on very low to moderate income, and multi-generational adults seek in a hometown. I, too, experience the gaps in our community.

I urge the council to think of future ordinances in terms of quality diverse experiences providing spaces or bridges between families at home to families in community, and that quality be assessed through the lens of the average citizen and not simply the free market and revenue. The quality of how we grow determines the community we strive for and effects all the citizens of Ojai. It is easier to lead without regulations. It is exponentially harder to govern through thought provoking creative and collaborative vision.