

A string of robberies at **La Hacienda Market** in 2005 sparked a new spate of demands for street closures – to block escape routes and “re-claim our roads for Menlo Park residents”.

We all want safe neighborhoods but very few want such drastic measures as street closures.

I'm slightly surprised by the tone and tenor of the attacks on the market (mostly seen through the Willows Neighborhood group emails.) I have been to the meetings at both the Sunset building and the coffee shop next to the market. To be blunt, there is an undercurrent of racism that I find disturbing. There are people on the list who are advocating "closing off the borders" of the Willows (I honestly don't know what that means exactly) to prevent EPA residents from shopping at the market. I have heard it expressed that this brings crime to the Willows. I find it hard to believe that the women I see walking down the street and pushing children in strollers are causing so much crime.

... The hysterical postings I've seen, and the pressure people are applying is NOT what the entire neighborhood believes. I think the market is good for the community.

MM email to Menlo Park City Council 5/3/05

But Menlo Park's Transportation Staff consistently caters to traffic activists – the radical few.

“The Menalto shopping center ... is being transformed into a crime hotspot ... the high flux of outsiders having no allegiance to the neighborhood and an antiquated street layout which affords numerous escape routes ...

Effective solutions ... restrict or eliminate check cashing ... deploy selective street closures to re-claim our roads for Menlo Park's residents...”

RW to Menlo Park City Council 5/5/2005

The Willows Area-Wide Traffic Plan, developed by Staff for Willows activists was clearly designed to divert EPA residents from the activist's streets. It was cancelled in 2011 by the City Council.

The robbery problem was solved when the market secured its cash and hired a guard, preserving our community benefits from the market and Willows open streets.

Selected Flyers and headlines from 2005

Saturday morning is for coffee and pastries, not armed gunmen

MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT: STOP ARMED ROBBERIES IN THE WILLOWS

5 Armed Robberies in 21 Months; 3 in past 7 Months

On Saturday, April 16, four masked, armed gunmen robbed La Hacienda on Menalto Ave. at approximately 10:00 a.m. This was the latest of 5 armed robberies in 21 months of La Hacienda, which includes a check-cashing business. Many believe the store's resulting large supply of cash -- and easy get-away routes -- may contribute to the store being a target for repeated armed robberies. Armed gunmen running down our streets and speeding through

LA HACIENDA ROBBERIES

APRIL 22, 2005

Stop Armed Robberies in the Willows La Hacienda Robbed Again on April 16th

On Saturday, April 16 at 10:00 A.M. four masked, armed gunmen robbed La Hacienda Market at 1933 Menalto Ave. This was only the latest in a string of 5 armed robberies in 21 months at La Hacienda.

Contact:

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650-343-6095 rch@haciendamarkets.com

Fear, frustration grow over robberies at Willows market

■ Police offer reward in La Hacienda Market robbery, and council plans special meeting for May 5.

By **Rebecca Wallace**
Almanac Staff Writer

Fear and frustration continue to grow in the Willows area of Menlo Park after a spate of armed robberies at a neighborhood grocery store. This weekend, residents assembled in front of the La Hacienda Market at 1933 Menalto Ave. with signs and fliers in English and Spanish, warning passers-by that the store had been robbed five times since September 2003 and calling for action from the city. "Armed gunmen running down our alleys and

speeding through our neighborhood pose a grave risk," one of the fliers read.

In the most recent crime, four men with handguns held up the market on April 16. It was around 10 a.m. on a Saturday, which threw extra fuel onto the fire for residents already leery of being near the market in the evening.

"I used to love walking around; I'm scared now," Willows resident Carolyn Fairman told the City Council last week. "I don't enjoy my neighborhood

See **HACIENDA**, page 10

incentive to crime in the willows is the presence in the neighborhood of large amounts of cut-through traffic that brings into our street individuals having no vested interest in neighborhood quality of life and safety.

April 27, 2005

Speak Out:

Saturday, April 23rd 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

650-322-3651 lbuboc@menlopark.org

Tell them that studies and meetings are not enough. They must create a solution now that