CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for the hard work you are required to do in these difficult times. These financial decisions are complex and I understand it is not easy. I am, however, writing to encourage you to keep the cuts at the level of uncomfortable and inconvenient rather than life threatening.

**The safety of our citizens is a top priority.** In my view, deep cuts into police and fire services especially 911 services, are, in many cases, life threatening. Reliance on county resources which may be delayed or unavailable is dangerous; often a few minutes can save a life, as my own family has experienced.

**A second priority is protecting our most vulnerable citizens.** Our elderly, our unhoused and our youth are some of the groups which need City support. Youth well being has been one of Palo Alto’s top priorities for many years. Organizations such as YCS and Project Safety Net have worked for years, in partnership with the City, to hear and support our youth voice, striving to strengthen well being and mental health for our young future citizens and leaders. We have made progress and have many thriving and beneficial programs supporting our youth in essential ways. I fear that cutting these services and programs, especially in these stressful and uncertain times, is going to put these youth more at risk. Also, once we lose the essential space we are carving out for our youth, we will have to start from scratch to rebuild.

Postponing construction projects, closing libraries (which are only virtual now anyway and are very unlikely to open soon) or eliminating programs that can be restored at a later time seems to me a reasonable approach to solving budget issues.

Again, many thanks for the work you do.

Sigrid Pinsky

Redacted

Sent from my iPhone
I understand that all Youth Services may be on the chopping block in the proposed budget. Please do not cut Youth Services. Our teens have already been disproportionately harmed by the current shelter in place and likely will live through the most disruptions in the coming year as school will look vastly different than what it has in the past. We know that the Shelter in Place is having a tremendously negative impact on teens' mental health. See this article: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/17/us-children-mental-health-coronavirus. We must continue to offer all the mental health services and outlets for community-building that we can to keep this generation of teens on track for healthy, productive, and meaningful lives. If you cut these funds now, it likely will have a deleterious impact on teens in our community, and we know that the communal mental health of teens in Silicon Valley wasn't great to begin with. Please keep as many funds as possible for Youth Services.

Best,
Callie Turk
Greer Road
Palo Alto
I'm against reducing the lease with the school district for Cubberley. Not only should we be supporting the school district, but reducing the lease would displace a nonprofit art community, which has no place to go.

Please consider instead postponing large capital projects.

Natalie Fisher
Palo Alto
Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

My name is Liza Kolbasov and I am a graduating senior at Gunn High School. I’ve recently heard that as part of the COVID-19-related budget cuts, the city is considering cutting all teen services, including the Teen Arts Council, TAB, MakeX, and others. While I understand that the city is facing difficult decisions regarding the budget, I would like to strongly urge you to reconsider cutting these services. Although teenagers may not be the biggest constituent group in the city, I strongly urge you to still take our interests into account; these services provide very necessary support for us.

Personally, I have taken advantage of many of these teen services. I have attended the Teen Arts Council’s Point B poetry readings, TAB events such as Boba and Brushes, and the Buoyancy festival. These events serve to connect teenagers, giving us a much-needed break from the stress of school and daily life. These organizations also support not only teenagers: in these unprecedented times, MakeX has also been working to support hospitals by making face shields (https://www.paloaltoonline.com/print/story/2020/04/10/around-town). This is just a small portion of the wonderful events and services these organizations provide, to the benefit of not only teenagers but also everyone in the city and beyond.

Cutting these services will send the message that Palo Alto does not support its teens—while I am sure that is not true, I would urge you to reconsider your decisions. Please keep our interests in mind as you make these important decisions about the future of our city.

Best regards,
Liza Kolbasov.
Yes, I would like to ask where are the FY 2020 actuals and forecasts for FY 2020 ---- particularly for revenues, but also for expenses?

Where are the projections for revenues for FY 2021?

Thank you.

Kathy Jordan
Hi,

I am writing to ask that City Council not cut the funds to Teen Mental Health Services. These services are vital to our community especially in the context of a pandemic. We expect mental health issues to increase due to the stress of the current situation. Let’s be proactive and make sure our teens have the services they need.

Thank you for your time.

--

---

Regards,
Lama Rimawi, M.D.

Redacted
Palo Alto, CA
Dear City Council members,

Lydia Kou sent out a well thought out survey asking us to rank the cost cutting measures. I hope that you look at the results which show how our citizens think. I am saddened that you began the budget process by considering cutting salaries of safety related personnel when there are obvious nonessential costs that can and should be eliminated first. They are listed below.

1) Eliminate the bike bridge over 101. While it would be nice to have a bike bridge there is already a way for cyclists to get across the highway and the cost of the bridge is far too high. Savings = $23 million. That should be the first cut and last to be reinstated once we have adequate funds.
2) Deferr the construction of the Fire Station until funds are more adequate. Savings=$10.2 million.
3) Defer bike/pedestrian transit plan until after effects of Covid-19 on traffic are known. Savings= $9 million.
4) Defer parking guidance system until after the effects of the Covid-19 on changes in our way of life are determined. May not be necessary. Savings= $2.9 million.
5) Defer animal shelter renovation. Savings=$3.8 million.
6) Defer JMZ renovation since it was planned in phases this should be feasible for the renovations not already completed or in the active phase. Savings = $4.5 million - possibly less depending on in which phase the renovation currently stands.
7) Finish Byxbee Park. Cost=$3.2 million.
8) Build the Public Safety Building which is long overdue! Cost: $118.1 million.
9) Build the downtown garage which has been needed for several years and would alleviate some of the downtown employee parking in residential areas. Cost=$29.12 million

The above are the budget cuts I would make and the order in which I would make them. By just accomplishing the first three we would have over $40 million cost savings.

If you want buy-in from the residents who pay the city’s taxes then you should make it very transparent that your reasons for decreasing the members of the Police and Fire departments are to lessen the burden of their very generous retirement packages on city finances. Negotiation with the unions for newly hired members to come in with less generous packages must be undertaken. (Milpitas manages with half the police budget that Palo Alto has and has about 15,000 more residents). The same is true for City employees. Do not fill vacancies as people leave.

Salary reductions should occur from the top down with elimination of positions near the top before the bottom rung of employees. For example cut one of the assistants to the City Manager before the parks department employee. Reducing each of the rank and file employees’ salary by the same percentage (including Police and Fire) could occur after the reductions in salaries of top city management of a greater percentage. Belt tightening should be felt by all, but especially by the leaders.

As far as cutting classes and recreation programs - they should be cut for adults and reduced (such as camps) for children until city coffers are refilled. Park maintenance should be continued, but no new park projects be begun until funds are available. Libraries may be more essential in the next few years if schools go to part-time to continue social
distancing. Put their potential closure lower down on the list. The Art Center could be closed for two years far more easily without depriving children of major educational opportunities. Maintenance of city trees and other properties should be continued for safety reasons, but new projects, such as upgrading public areas, should be deferred.

Thank you for your consideration of the above thoughts. People are more important than building projects and your residents are more important than enticing new residents and more businesses to our area.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Munch

Redacted
Hi Kathy, The proposed budget is linked to yesterday and today’s agendas.

Thanks and have a great day.

B-

Beth Minor, City Clerk
City of Palo Alto
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
(650)329-2379

---

From: Kathy Jordan <kjordan114wh@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 1:34 PM
To: Clerk, City <city.clerk@cityofpaloalto.org>
Cc: Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>
Subject: questions for budget meeting right now

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Yes, I would like to ask where are the FY 2020 actuals and forecasts for FY 2020 ---- particularly for revenues, but also for expenses?

Where are the projections for revenues for FY 2021?

Thank you.

Kathy Jordan
A city's primary mission is to protect its citizens. I'm dismayed at the Council's decision to place completion of physical structures above maintaining the Police and Fire departments at current levels.

Harold W Korol
Redacted
Thank you, but is the information I requested,

- FY 2020 actuals and forecasts for revenue and expenses, and
- FY 2021 forecasted revenue and expenses

available in yesterday's and today's agendas?

Thank you,

Kathy Jordan

On Wed, May 13, 2020 at 1:41 PM Clerk, City <city.clerk@cityofpaloalto.org> wrote:

Hi Kathy, The proposed budget is linked to yesterday and today's agendas.

Thanks and have a great day.

B-

Beth Minor, City Clerk

City of Palo Alto

250 Hamilton Avenue

Palo Alto, CA 94301

(650)329-2379
Yes, I would like to ask where are the FY 2020 actuals and forecasts for FY 2020 ---- particularly for revenues, but also for expenses?

Where are the projections for revenues for FY 2021?

Thank you.

Kathy Jordan
from: Suzanne Keehn <dskeehn@pacbell.net>
sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:12 PM
to: Council, City
subject: Totally agree

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with Tom. Please read my earlier email.

S. Keehn
94306
From: Ardan Michael Blum <ardan.michael.blum@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:55 PM
To: Council, City; Clerk, City; Shikada, Ed
Subject: Why keeping Janine De la Vega as public-affairs manager is important.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Warm greetings,

Please see this article:


Best regards,

Ardan Michael Blum

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Dear City Council and City Manager,

Besides our excellent schools, one of the reasons Palo Alto is so desirable and the property values are so high is the availability of cultural resources for our community. When I walk through Cubberley Center I see classes for many forms of dance, music, martial arts, meditation, art, yoga, movement, sports who would not be able to find or afford space in a town where almost every available nook or cranny has been turned into a tech company.

The non-profits and arts organizations housed in Cubberley are community assets and treasures whose loss would be deeply felt by many citizens so I urge you to consider this before consequential decisions are made which could change the character of our town.

Sincerely,

Dianne E. Jenett

Dianne Jenett, Ph.D.
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301
djenett@serpentina.com
Dear City Council,

I know you are facing and making difficult budget decisions.

In making those tough decisions, please protect the YCS Youth Connectedness Initiative that includes peer leaders for mental health, and all City teen services.

*I do not have to tell you our youth are a vulnerable population.* The suicide clusters - prior to Covid19 - are a horrific, tragic reminder our teens need community support. Treatment centers for our youth have long waitlists - further showing the stress of teens in our community.

Now our teens face all the uncertainties and anxieties of Covid19. Now more than ever our youth need City support systems. Please protect the City Teen Services programs.

Thank you,

Nancy Krop

Barron Park resident
From: Dan Mahoney <dan@mahoney.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 4:44 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Are you guys reading any of the comments in here?

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.


--
Dan Mahoney
dan@mahoney.net
I hope to express that keeping Janine De La Vega as Public Affairs Manager is an important function for the City of PA.

Carl Darling
NPC PA Midtown 5
Redacted Palo Alto
650-804-6263
cdarling17@gmail.com
Please support activities that are important to the community. Ignore real estate interests who have their own resources.
From: Carl Darling <cdarling@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 7:06 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Janine De la Vega as Public-Affairs Manager is important

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

I hope to express that keeping Janine De La Vega as Public Affairs Manager is an important function for the City of PA
The current budget shortfall is generating a lot of scare tactics, such as reducing public safety and programming, and lessons like “We should have had much more development.” There are more creative ways through this. First, I’m sure that the City can be run more leanly, with staff reductions. Staff salaries can also be looked at; they are incredibly generous. Programming can be maintained with volunteer help from the community, if the Council and Staff use some creativity instead of the quick and easy, “let’s cut things.”

In this wealthy area we need to explore and lobby for ways to tap the affluence of the Palo Alto community. Whether by legislation or public spirit, it is time for those who have accumulated millions and billions living here to come to the aid of the community.

Richard Almond, MD
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Opinion pieces and other recommendations may not always be responded to quickly, due to time constraints, but they are appreciated.
Mayor Fine asked how many people listen to the KZSU broadcast of the Council meetings.

I more often listen to KZSU than anything else (I more often attended in person than watched YouTube livestream prior to this shelter-in-place order).

Given livestream options, I cannot say that KZSU is essential, but I appreciated it and would miss it.

thank you for your attention to the budget, Ken Joye Ventura neighborhood
Dear City Council,

I urge you to please NOT cut police and fire to the extent safety is jeopardized. If there is a way to efficiently reorganize, great. But don’t make cuts that put residents at risk (e.g., relying on county services resulting in longer response times for emergencies).

Please shelve infrastructure projects such as the bike bridge and new police station (along with the $700,000 planned artwork expense for the police station that council approved last year).

Thank you for keeping the community safe with focus on important resident services.

Chris Robell
Dear Mayor Fine, Vice Mayor DuBois and Council Members Cormack, Filseth, Kniss, Koo and Takada -- I appreciate the opportunity I had yesterday (Wed, May 13, 2020) to speak to you in support of restoring funding for teen services to the Community Services budget.

==>> IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION: The continuation of the Youth Community Service contract/grant budget item is in the CSD Human Service Contracts portion of the budget that I believe was added to the 'parking lot' for future discussion (*please see below for me detail). As a result, the future of the Youth Connectedness Initiative (YCI) is still very much in doubt, with the current budget completely eliminating the $50k renewal.

I'm sending this message to elaborate on my oral remarks:

- **Needs for youth services are on the rise, dramatically so in the pandemic era:** I referred to an article just published by EdSource, STUDENT ANXIETY & DEPRESSION INCREASING DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES. It's heart-breaking and makes the case for the city maintaining crucial support for youth programs. Here is the link to the complete article:

- **Involving youth in our community yields extraordinary benefits for all:** A great deal of research-based data proves Acts of service are a powerful antidote to loneliness. When we help other people, we establish a positive and powerful connection with them in that moment. But we also reaffirm to ourselves that we have value to add to the world and to someone else's life. -- Dr. Vivek Murthy, former U.S. Surgeon General

- **Youth Community Service** and the collaborative program it leads, Youth Connectedness Initiative, has been co-funded by the City of Palo Alto and Santa Clara County for the past two years. The County's funding would disappear if the City eliminates its $50k contribution, resulting in the decimation of the YCI at a time when our youth and families need it the most.

I urge you to reinstate the $50k funding for the Youth Connectedness Initiative. Our community's youth - - and future leaders -- deserve a budget that shows we care about them and value them as an integral part of our community.

These are undeniably difficult times and I do not envy you for the challenges you are facing; I appreciate your hard work and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely, Barbara Harriman Spreng

*I cannot refer you to a 'page number,' so I'm attaching a screen shot of the budget slide I am referring to. I am truly perplexed to see increases for young children, senior adults and mediation services, and the complete elimination of the only contract that serves our emotionally-vulnerable teens and young adults.*
# CSD Human Service Contracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Services Contracts</th>
<th>FY 2020 Adopted</th>
<th>FY 2020 Agency Award</th>
<th>FY 2021 Base Budget</th>
<th>FY 2021 Agency Requests</th>
<th>FY 2021 Proposed Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL HUMAN SERVICES CONTRACTS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1,267,592</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,244,907</strong></td>
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Dear City Council,

Residents attend council meetings to effect change, not to defend the status quo. They do not represent me, a member of the city’s silent majority.

The lockdown has been quiet. We’ve seen less traffic and perhaps less crime. This is not a trend that will last.

We see an unprecedented economic depression looming, but we can’t imagine its effects. Many in Palo Alto and more in surrounding cities will be desperate trying to pay rent, buy food, and care for family. And who are we? An enclave of Tesla-driving, biz-class seating, fresh-food eating, empathizing, complacent souls. We are not street smart. We count on our police.

So please do not dismantle the police and fire departments. We cannot assume life will continue as it has since the lockdown.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Foss

Redacted
Hello.

1) Please rescind the $6,000,000 in raises recently awarded to city employees and please explain why this hasn't been done already. "Charity may begin at home" but home is where we the taxpayers live and where the average income is around $125,000 -- half the $240,000 AVERAGE city employee salary. We the residents are suffering and few of us garner the salaries and benefits you keep blithely awarding.

1B) Mayor Fine was quoted as saying he "can't answer" whether rescinding the raises was discussed? Can't or won't?? Either way we need answers and accountability.

2) Review and start cutting employees and their salaries, esp. for those making over $200,000. Make an effort to find and cut waste.

3) Stop the spending on big ticket cap ex projects. We're in a downturn and don't keep remodelling the kitchen when the market crashes and we're out of work. YOU start budgeting rationally. If you want a bridge over 101, use your contacts at Google etc. to get them to fund it. We don't need another new firehouse when the traffic light at Middlefield near it doesn't even work half the time! No more ridiculous spending on hated road furniture and traffic calming. ENOUGH.

4) Start taxing big businesses.
5) Cancel the $750,000 funding for the MTC. I'm tired of paying commuters to over-run us. At the very least cancel the payments to city employees for car pooling and/or taking public transit!! They've got more than enough benefits.

6) Start reading the community comments on Tow Square! You might learn something about community sentiment.

Most sincerely.
Jo Ann Mandinach
Palo Alto, CA 94301
Dear City Council,

As you contemplate potential CIP projects to defer (which I think is appropriate given the critical services that would otherwise be cut), please consider the resident survey results on CIP projects.

The animal shelter came out as the top investment priority (see chart below indicating residents are least willing to defer the animal shelter vs other projects). Clearly our community appropriately prioritizes the public safety and welfare of all mammals (two legged and four legged).

Please consider deferral of ALL CIP projects except the animal shelter. Thank you for your hard work to make the tough (and humane) choices.

Chris Robell

1 - Public Safety Building (approx. $118.10 mil)
2 - Highway 101 Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge (approx. $23 mil)
3 - Downtown Automated Parking Guidance Systems (approx. $2.9 mil)
4 - Fire Station #4 replacement ($10.2 mil)
5 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan ($9 mil)
6 - Downtown Parking Garage ($29.12 mil)
7 - Completion of Byxbee Park (approx. $3.2 mil)
8 - Animal Shelter Renovation (approx. $3.8 mil)
9 - JMZ Renovation (approx. $4.5 mil)
An important tax question is floating around town. Please clarify if private corporate dining in Palo Alto offices generates sales tax.

Does it make difference if food is free to employees or if there are charges for food? If food is free or discounted to employees, is the employer or caterer responsible for sales taxes?

Neilson Buchanan
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301

650 329-0484
650 537-9611 cell

cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com
Dear City Council,

Our residents assume that safety and calm will continue in Palo Alto as always—business as usual. But we face a slow-moving economic catastrophe like no other.

Thus, decisions should be framed as a choice between a preferred service vs. the assumed calm streets ensured by police protection. Why worry about funding police and fire when all is quiet and secure right now?

The pandemic + economic depression will stress our city and we will be vulnerable. Do not take our safety as a given.

Please wake up.

Yours sincerely,

Carolyn Foss
Redacted
Palo Alto 94301
Dear City Council Members.

I know that times are hard for everyone at present and with the proposed budget cuts I would like you to consider doing nothing to cut funds for any of the first responders, fire, police, paramedics, etc. who would be answering our 911 calls for help when we need ambulance or police services. Additionally, I would like you to do nothing to cut funds for any city service that gives recreational or quality of life services to residents. Cutting things like libraries and children’s theatre makes little sense when we all will need to depend on these more so in the future due to the after effects of the shelter in place. Lastly, I think it is wrong to cut the shuttle since we have lost VTA service as the result of having it. If we need to charge a fare for those who use, then so be it, although some groups would be exempt from a fare if that is what you want to do.

If you would like to know where money could be saved I suggest you look at the many administrators at all city departments, particularly those administrators working in positions that did not even exist a few years ago. Those in admin could easily cover more areas of work as much of it appears to be duplicated. I would also suggest that the higher paid administrators receive a pay cut, as the State level staff are doing.

Thank you for considering my email.

Carol Rogers,
Redacted
To the Palo Alto City Council:

I'm Advait Arun, a former School Board Representative from Gunn High School. I graduated two years ago, and many of my classmates and close friends were (and many still are) mentors and leaders at MakeX. I'm not a handsy person like they are, but I've gone to MakeX tons of times just to hang out and watch them create some of the coolest things. I even had the chance to make woodprints and 3d prints there myself, with their help. I was really impressed by how my classmates and peers ran the workspace and how they made it into a welcoming environment for anyone.

As someone who represented the students of an entire high school to the PAUSD School Board, I can say for a fact that MakeX was an important part of many of those students' lives. Especially for students outside the Gunn Robotics Team who were still interested in creating and being creative, MakeX was their outlet for that. My friends on Gunn's rocketry team, which could not use the Gunn Robotics makerspace, relied on MakeX as a community resource for their club. It was a place where students from both Gunn and Paly could interact together and have fun, too!

Even now, in the midst of a pandemic, MakeX has been making masks for the community, for free! To defund such a productive institution so integral to the lives of many students in Palo Alto would be a really sad move by the City. Please preserve MakeX. It makes Palo Alto a better place for its youth.

Feel free to keep in touch with me if you want my own testimonies of my experiences of MakeX or contacts to my friends and classmates, some of whom were MakeX mentors.

Thank you so much for your time.

Yours truly,
Advait

-Advait Arun
Dear Folks,

My recommendations for the budget.

I. Increase taxes. We are a very rich community. I suspect most of us have not been too badly heart by unemployment since working from home is easier for rich people than poor people. Do not do a parcel tax which is very regressive. e.g. charge for parking downtown, employee tax, raise utility taxes..

II. Keep the Police force, especially the traffic patrol. At full employment with full roads there are many drivers who not only risk their own lives by their illegal behavior, but risk the lives of others. They are similar to people breaking the distancing rules for the corona virus. We need law enforcement to protect our lives.

III. Even though I am a cyclist and live close to the long delayed Adobe Creek 101 bridge, I think it is not the highest priority now. Also delay other capital improvements. The city process usually takes 2 decades for anything to be done, adding a year or two more will not be horrible.

IV. Services North of Embarcadero. A glance at the map shows that the habited part of Palo Alto (not including the open space preserves) consists of less than 1/3 N or Embarcadero and more than 2/3 South. Yet all but one of the libraries, most of the community center space, Arts Center, Children’s museum etc. are in this smallest part. If you close anything, close some things in the north.

-Steve

--

Stephen Rock

Redacted  , Palo Alto, CA 94303
Dear City Council,

I am the chairperson of the nascent Friends of Cubberley, an organization of volunteers with a mission to “Support and advocate for the redevelopment of Cubberley for the benefit of the entire Palo Alto community.” I am also a member of the board and past president of Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra and long-term resident of Greenmeadow.

We have two immediate problems we need your help with. First, if the city is unable to lease the space from the school district starting in July, we need to work with the school district to establish new leases as soon as possible. Is there a protocol and timeline for how all of us tenants should be moving forward with leases with the school district? Second, it has come to my attention that during this severe budget crisis, the Palo Alto History Museum has made a request that impact fees generated by Palo Alto residents be used for their museum. Assuming these facts are correct, I’m stunned that you would even consider this. If community center impact fees are available, they should go towards Cubberley and the tenants and families that already utilize this well-used and poorly maintained property. If there are library impact fees, what about the Friends of the Palo Alto Library who uses space at Cubberley to generate funds for our libraries?

Our organization is working on a website and a way to coordinate among all of the tenants so at this point, we do not have an exact count of the tenants and the people who use Cubberley, but we do know that there are xxx tenants and some like PACO, have been in that space for over 50 years. These organizations are the fabric of Palo Alto and in particular south Palo Alto, an area of Palo Alto that historically has not received as much funding and recognition as the northern end of Palo Alto.

To consider using impact fees to help a new museum rather than direct them to dozens of long term Palo Alto organizations and their thousands of participants is unacceptable.

Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

Deborah Simon
dsimonlurie@gmail.com
415-290-5621

Cc:
Don Austin, PAUSD Superintendent
Ed Shikada, Palo Alto city manager
Palo Alto School Board
Support for funding for YCS Youth Connectedness and other teen wellness programs

Points to consider making:
- Thank you Mayor Fine and City Council for your thoughtful budget consideration at this difficult time.
- Please avoid making budget cuts that will impact our most vulnerable residents, including teen wellness contracts in the Human Services budget.
- Because County matching funds for the YCS Youth Connectedness program require equal City funding, the loss of City funding risks eliminating the program completely.
- At the May 26 Council meeting, I look forward to your positive budget decision to continue funding this valuable program and other critical teen wellness programs.

Kaela Fine
Dear Council and School Board Members,

I have lived in Palo Alto for 40 years and during the past 10 years I have been very involved with the Friends of the Palo Alto Library at Cubberley Community Center as a Section Manager, Sorter, and Board Member. FOPAL normally had 2000 people a month come to our sales then after each sale we made materials available for free to teachers and the public. From our profits we made grants to support the libraries beyond what the city budget allowed. FOPAL is a thriving and important community asset.

I attended two of the recent meetings on the redesign of Cubberley and was impressed with the great variety of groups that meet at Cubberley, many of whom might not be able to survive the closing of Cubberley. Palo Alto's community activities are one of the most desirable features of Palo Alto life and they need to be preserved so Palo Alto can continue to be the kind of city that we all cherish.

The pandemic will end and we should not be left with a city that has few community activities. Coming together in community activities will be even more important in the future so please preserve Cubberley Community Center to benefit the entire community.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Epstein

Palo Alto CA 94301
Council:

I am writing to express disagreement with an item in the Proposed City Budget concerning transferring Sidewalk Replacement and Repair to be the property owners responsibility. On my street, Stone Lane, the city currently owns both the sidewalks and the trees planted in front of all properties. The City currently also owns the front 5 feet of all property lots on the street. The sidewalks, in some cases are the original sidewalks installed in the late 1950's. The trees, also planted in that 5 foot area are owned by the City, and if not properly maintained can result in damage to persons and property.

The most frequent cause of sidewalk failure is the roots from the City Owned Trees. Another of the most frequent causes of failure is the low PSI of the concrete that the city specifies for the sidewalks, along with the lack of inspection of sidewalk installation and the lack of a planned maintenance program for sidewalk maintenance.

Based on the above, I and the neighbors I have talked to are not agreeable to assuming responsibility or liability for items constructed or planted on city owned property, by the City or in such a state of repair that injury and liability to the public are possible due to the lack of a planned maintenance program by the city. I am sure that the Courts would side with me on this issue.

I therefore request that this item be removed from consideration during the Budget Discussions and that the City retain responsibility for sidewalk and tree maintenance, repair and replacement, in the areas they own or have easements on, along with the associated liability for any injury to the public from these items.

G.M.Wetzel, PE
Redacted
Dear Mayor Fine and members of the City Council:

Thank you for your careful consideration of the City of Palo Alto during this difficult time.

I ask that as you review ways to balance the City budget that you please avoid making budget cuts that will impact our most vulnerable residents, including teen wellness contracts in the Human Services budget.

Santa Clara County matches funds for the YCS Youth Connectedness program, requiring equal City funding, the loss of City funding risks eliminating the program completely.

At the May 26th Council meeting, I look forward to your positive budget decision to continue funding this valuable program and other critical teen wellness programs.

My main concerns in the City of Palo Alto are our youth, the homeless and our seniors.

Thank you,

Melissa Kirven-Brooks

, Palo Alto, CA 94303

650-400-1427
Dear Members of the City Council and School Board:

I am writing to express my strong support for prioritizing the lease for Cubberley classroom space despite budget constraints. At a time when our children are experiencing unprecedented disruptions of their classrooms and lives, it is crucial that this activity space remain a refuge for them when the Covid-19 situation has been resolved. Many of the tenants of Cubberley provide highly valued arts activities for families with children. Given the costs of rent in Palo Alto, there is no other location that will be able to host all these organizations on their limited budgets. If they cannot operate in Cubberley, the result for many will be that they will simply not continue to operate in Palo Alto, which will be a dramatic loss for the community.

My two daughters, now 6 and 8, have been involved in activities at Cubberley since they were 2, from theatrical and dance camps to music. The impact of Cubberley on their ability to play music has been particularly marked. Almost every week of the school year for the past 5 years, my older daughter has participated in a large-scale musical activity at Cubberley, first through Magical Strings West, which meets on Saturdays in M2, and more recently through the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, which has had a relationship with Cubberley dating back at least to the 1970s. It is hard to overstate the significance in her life of the relationships and connections she has been able to develop through these events in Cubberley.

When I arrived in Palo Alto six years ago and began taking my daughter to activities at Cubberley, Cubberley also furnished a space for me to meet other parents from the community and make connections with neighbors from all walks of life. This kind of public space, which allows for encounters among people of different generations and backgrounds through a shared commitment to a community, is so valuable and so ephemeral in today’s world. It is an aspect of Palo Alto that I greatly cherish and would truly mourn if it were taken away.

I urge you to prioritize the lease for Cubberley in your budgetary deliberations; it is a crucial and in many ways irreplaceable space for many in our community.

Sincerely yours,

Bernadette Meyler
Carl and Sheila Spaeth Professor of Law
Associate Dean for Research
Stanford Law School
Redacted
Stanford, CA 94305
Dear City Council and Manager,

First, I want to commend you for your hard work and heavy responsibility addressing Palo Alto’s unprecedented fiscal crisis.

In doing so, I urge you to make key community services a priority over capital projects that can be deferred or cancelled.

For example, children and teen programs, libraries, open spaces and parks, deserve additional funding beyond current proposals.

In contrast, items such as the El Camino Pedestrian Plan should be cancelled, saving $1M in FY2021.

Now is the time to put our financial house in order, not to use the current a catastrophe as rational for making big policy or code changes, or to rush into experiments in our commercial districts “to see how they work.”

We will be dealing with this crisis for some time to come. Doing so demands deliberate and open processes if we are to get it as right as we can.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Christian Pease
Evergreen Park
Thank you Mayor Fine and City Council for your thoughtful budget consideration at this difficult time.

I urge you to avoid making budget cuts that will impact our most vulnerable residents, including teen wellness contracts in the Human Services budget. As the mother of a teen who was at-risk, I know first-hand how important support is.

Because County matching funds for the YCS Youth Connectedness program require equal City funding, the loss of City funding risks eliminating the program completely. Please try to avoid letting this happen.

At the May 26 Council meeting, I look forward to your positive budget decision to continue funding this valuable program and other critical teen wellness programs.

Patricia Kinney
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94303
I have been watching some of your budget discussions and have been impressed with the manner in which you have been able to deal with the variety of subjects discussed. I’m sure it has been difficult.

However, I have been disappointed that more money has not been allocated to Community Services. As we start to move out of the lockdown phase we have been in (Mrs. Hirsch and I have been Staying At Home for more than two months now, outside only for daily walks and a handful of visits to various commercial places – post office, pharmacy and grocery stores) it is imperative – more than ever - that the City’s Community Services be supported to the greatest extent possible. Capital projects are important, but nonetheless should be deferred to the greatest extent possible and those 20-21 “savings” allocated to those Community Service projects that serve the entire community.

I won’t get into the details of which specific Capital projects can be deferred (many of which we have lived without for many years, so what is one more year) or which Community Service projects should be supported. But, in my opinion, the City needs to support the Services the average resident needs NOW, particularly those residents with young children. I hope that as you finalize the 20-21 Budget, you will share this opinion with me.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Joseph Hirsch
Georgia Avenue

P.S. I will mention one specific item. With so many people presently working from home, and so many companies learning that that can be done productively, why allocate addition staff money to the Planning Department? There is every likelihood that many fewer new commercial buildings will be needed in the future, as there may be a glut of commercial sf in the mid-peninsula if, in fact, more people continue to work from home. Allocate more money to Community Services instead of to a Department that may not be as needed as it has in the past - as we more toward a new “normal” post COVID-19.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
I support continued funding for youth wellness programs including YCS. The need has increased during this time of uncertainty for youth and especially for those coping with anxiety and depression. Thank you for your consideration during these difficult times.

Gail Thompson RN
I was reading the proposed budget and it seems that you are cutting out things that others may need in this time while you are going forward with raises for city employees where I would say most people in companies either don’t have jobs, jobs freeze and no raises at all in these times. I think cutting out 35% for our public safety while administrative staff get 12 % makes absolutely no sense and short sighted. If you havent read the online comments you may like to do so. They offer great ideas. No raises for anyone at this time, it sends all the wrong messages

Amy Keohane
650-346-5306
During these difficult times much has been asked of residents to shelter in place.

Now, during budget talks, perhaps City services aimed at enhancing the lives of residents, who have sacrificed per the repeated requests of City Officials, should be the first to be considered for funding.

Thank you

Paul Machado
Dear Palo Alto City Council and Palo Alto Unified School District Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, a long-time tenant of Cubberley Community Center.

As we plan together for our city’s and our school district’s future in light of the novel coronavirus pandemic, let us stop to reflect on how music and the arts have brought hope and joy around the globe during this unprecedented time. From the balcony performances that have rallied spirits in Italy to the PAUSD Choir teachers’ video that brightened our day here in Palo Alto, we resonate with how music can give us a sense of togetherness and transport us out of our daily struggles and uncertainties.

Our very own Cubberley Community Center is home to many music and arts groups that are a vital and essential part of life here in Palo Alto. As the president of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra’s Board, I would like to tell you a little bit about our organization. We are just finishing out our 53rd season as an award-winning all-strings chamber orchestra that serves regional youth, including many from here in Palo Alto. Our orchestra began in the Palo Alto home of our first conductor and eventually moved to Cubberley, where we’ve had a wonderful close relationship with the City ever since. Our five ensembles (varying in size from two to three dozen members) typically have weekly rehearsals in M-2 and performances at Cubberley Theatre -- these form the rhythm of our orchestra life. Many of our PACO members begin in PACO as elementary school students and remain in PACO through high school because they find that the orchestra not only teaches them about music but also about collaboration, responsibility, and friendship. Indeed, the mission of PACO is to teach young string players to play well with others, to forge a musical community, and to make the world a better place.

As some of the oldest tenants in the history of Cubberley, we would like to ask that the City and PAUSD prioritize the leases that we and other Cubberley-based organizations have in place. We are part of the cultural fabric of Palo Alto and of the neighborhood identity of South Palo Alto. As tenants, we would also like to express our support for the planned redevelopment of Cubberley and our hope that the City will choose to make community impact fees available for this long-discussed redesign. While medicine and science are saving the lives of our citizens, music and art are nurturing the spirits of our citizens. As you embark on difficult budget decisions that impact us all, please do not forget music and art. We are all in this together.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Simon
Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra Music Director
Dear Mayor Fine and all City Council Members:
I am writing as a Board member of Stevenson House, a residence for 165 Seniors with low incomes living on Charleston Road. Many of the residents use the Shuttle Bus to get to appointments and other places. The shuttle is also used by many of the Seniors who come to Stevenson House for the subsidized weekday lunches offered by the county; prepared and given out at Stevenson House. During these Shelter in Place times Seniors pick up their lunches to take home to eat. In better times they eat in the Stevenson House dining room.
I know you have hard choices to make and encourage you to think of this important population in our community. We have a large senior community who live throughout town and benefit from public transportation.
Thank you for your consideration of public transportation for our City senior residents.
Patty Irish
a Senior resident and Stevenson House Board member.

--
Pat Irish
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650-324-7407
650-245-3906 cell
Dear Council Member and City Manager,

I have been following closely the ongoing budget discussions and the proposals to reduce our expenses to deal with a large expected deficit. I appreciate the long hours you have put in, and the myriad of complicating factors that must be taken into account.

In revising our budget to close the gap between revenues and expenses, two principles are most important to me.

First, community services must be maintained to the extent possible. In any discussion, community services should receive priority over such things as capital investments or other proposed new initiatives that require large outlays for consultant services or other expenditures. One example would be plans for any El Camino 'grand boulevard' or El Camino pedestrian walkway. We are in a crisis situation of unknown duration and consequences. These projects can be brought back at a later date as we can afford them or have more visibility into our needs. Once cut, community services will be much more difficult to restore.

Second, the Council should not be making budget cuts through changes to existing policies. Deal with the numbers as they are, and do not use short-term budget concerns as a means to enact policy changes without a thorough discussion and community input and debate. I, along with many residents, will not look kindly upon such efforts to short-circuit community input when the election for new council members comes around in November.

Thank you for your efforts to create a workable budget for the coming year.

Carol Scott
Resident of Evergreen Park

--
Carol Scott
Dear City Council members,

Please save College Terrace Library, a beloved community treasure. We in the surrounding community depend on the easy and affordable access to books, movies, music, audiobooks and the internet, especially in these trying times. As the only library west of El Camino Real, College Terrace provides vital access to resources that bring joy and connection, especially for those without means of transport - or the means to afford the internet, Netflix or other subscription services. My young adult children and I continue to use College Terrace branch regularly-- from the time they participated in the beloved children's story hour and summer reading programs to now. College Terrace is a refuge and gathering place. Closing this branch would be a loss to young and old, families, singles and those of limited means - to all of us who dwell in the surrounding community.

The Children’s Theatre and Palo Alto Art Center help make Palo Alto a special, magical place to raise our families. To abolish these programs is to impoverish the city. These arts programs define us and enrich all of our lives. Please preserve these meaningful community programs.

Jill Kaplan
Dear Mayor Fine and City Council Members;

I am writing today to ask that in your budget deliberations, you pay attention to the many emails and public expressions of sentiment at Oral Communication regarding the allocation of funding for the FY2020/2021 Budget. It seems to me that when you hear over and over from your constituents that they would like public services to remain as much intact as possible, those are difficult voices to shut out and ignore. I will not tell you how to do your job. I appreciate that the process of budgeting in the light of the current significant shortfall is extremely complex and difficult. However, when you have run on a platform indicating that you support residents’ preferences, how can you choose to restore salaries for long range planners and inspectors and put the College Terrace Library in the “Parking Lot” is unfathomable to me. I hope you will hear the voices of the people and be responsive to their requests.

Sincerely,

Beth Rosenthal, Ph.D
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

My name is Will Betts, and I am writing on behalf of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, a long-time tenant of the Cubberley Community Center. I have been the manager of PACO for the last two years, and I'd like to give you some more detail about our organization.

We are finishing our 53rd season as an award-winning all-strings chamber orchestra that serves regional youth, including many from right here in Palo Alto. Our orchestra began in the Palo Alto home of our first conductor and eventually moved to Cubberley, where we've been for more than 40 years.

Our office is located in room M-1, our five ensembles have weekly rehearsals in room M-2, and the majority of our performances occur at Cubberley Theatre. As such, Cubberley is uniquely suited for our rental needs- it provides us a small office space, our weekly rehearsal space, enough nearby additional classrooms for when we break into small groups and need as many as five rooms simultaneously, and our regular performance venue, all in one convenient location. I fear our organization will be damaged if we are forced to find a new location, or more likely multiple locations in order to cover our needs.

The Cubberley Community Center is home to many music and arts groups that are a vital part of life here in Palo Alto. As some of the oldest tenants in the history of Cubberley, we would like to ask that the City and PAUSD prioritize the leases that we and other Cubberley-based organizations have in place. We are part of the cultural fabric of Palo Alto and of the neighborhood identity of South Palo Alto.

PACO has had an active presence at the community Cubberley redesign meetings that have taken place over the last nine months, and we would also like to express our support for the planned redevelopment of Cubberley and our hope that the City will choose to make community impact fees available for this long-discussed redesign. While medicine and science are saving the lives of our citizens, music and art are nurturing the spirits of our citizens. As you embark on difficult budget decisions that impact us all, please do not forget music and art.

Thank you,
Will

--

William Betts
Managing Director, Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra
will@pacomusic.org
650-856-3848

My typical office hours are:
Sundays 2:00-9:00pm
Mondays 2:00-7:00pm
Tuesdays 2:00-7:00pm
Wednesdays 2:00-10:00pm
Thursdays 2:00-7:00pm

I may not be able to respond to messages received on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday until the following Monday. Thank you for your patience.

Virus-free. www.avg.com
Dear City Council,

I started acting at the Children's Theatre in 1986 when I was 9 years old. When I was 17, I started helping out as a pianist, and from 1995 to 2010 I worked as a pianist and then music director for dozens of productions, sometimes working on four or five or more shows a summer. I also performed at special events, such as the opening of the outdoor Magic Castle Stage in 1998.

Live performances have been the heart and soul of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre since the program started in 1932, and since the building opened in 1937. Even during the Great Depression, arts programs flourished, and Palo Alto saw the arts and education as key to surviving economic turmoil.

The current proposal to cut all performances at the Children's Theatre for two years will cripple and hollow out this program that has been one of Palo Alto's gems for over eighty years. The proposed City budget will cut much of the Theatre's budget, and also reduce support for the companies which use the Lucie Stern Theatre: Palo Alto Players (for whom the Lucie Stern Theatre was built), TheatreWorks (founded partly by young adults who had aged out of the Children's Theatre), and West Bay Opera.

Such cuts would be a mistake. Thousands of children's lives have been changed by performing at the Children's Theatre over the last 80+ years. Many adults who have had major impacts on our society have cited the Palo Alto Children's Theatre as a key inspiration in their youth. Don’t let that stop.

In addition, the proposal to close Children's Library three days a week and cut programs and librarians will further reduce services to Palo Alto's children. I remember city staff saying last week that Children's Library has the second highest circulation rate of materials after Mitchell Park, yet it seems to be receiving the brunt of library cuts. During the Recession, a similar proposal was made to close certain libraries on certain days, and it was averted by trimming morning and evening hours at multiple libraries so that no one library would bear the the brunt of the cuts. A similar strategy could be used here.

I am also shocked at the Council's decision to stop leasing the school district’s portion of Cubberley Community Center. Not only does this further impact Palo Alto's children by taking away money from the Palo Alto Unified School District, but it would seem to throw out many of Cubberley’s community tenants, some of whom have been there for decades, such as the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, ANOTHER youth group that will suffer under this budget. I do not understand how the City Council, in good conscience, can make this decision without first discussing it with the school district and Cubberley's tenants.

And if ending the Cubberley lease is in bad conscience, then cutting Palo Alto's teen programs is unconscionable. I have friends who are gone forever. You're worried about public safety? So am I, and it's provided by more than just police and fire. Arts and education and mentoring programs protect and support people in ways that are hard to quantify, yet change lives profoundly.
In fact, a disproportionate amount of the cuts to Community Services and Libraries seem aimed at children and teenagers. From the Children's Theatre and Children's Library to Teen Programs, the Baylands Interpretive Center, and the Cubberley Community Center, the proposed cuts will cripple the City's ability to provide for its youth just when they will need these services the most.

The FY 2021 budget will go into effect on July 1, 2020, and any programs included in its cuts which have managed to continue creatively online, such as the Children's Theatre's Teen Arts Council, will presumably cease. Don't let this happen.

I don't know when the shelter-in-place will end, and all of us will be able to go out and socialize again. I don't know when performances and plays and concerts will resume. But if the City of Palo Alto does not budget for them now, there will be no possibility of them returning in 2021, even in a modified form.

Especially in these difficult times, the City of Palo Alto's needs arts, library and education programs. Please support these important programs.

Thank you,

Jeremy Erman
To the Palo Alto City Council,

I commend yo all for surviving the 3 day marathon you had last week on the budget. I'm sure you needed a couple of off days after that effort.

I filled out two surveys, indicating that our community service were most important, and supportive for so many of us residents. Especially necessary is supporting creativity of our young people. I heard when listening some of the time last week, two high school students, I believe, speaking to support a program that both got so much from, creativity, community, even if on line. Plus they were learning a lot. Funding for the Children's Theater, College Terrace Library, even for 3 days a week.
Nature, which has had a chance to breath during this stay in place order, is reviving. Keep the Baylands paths and interpretative center open. Nature is necessary for our health.

Take care of the mental health of our teens and adults, please keep the Suicide Prevention program. My younger granddaughter, when through this recently and getting help, is very expensive. Anything we can do to support the mental health of our community is more than worth the money it takes.

No one I know feels that the infrastructure planned is a current necessity. In fact we do not as yet, know how this pandemic will effect P.A. and other cities as far as needing more buildings. Most of what you've planned to include has waited for awhile, and waiting another year or so will save a lot of money.

Please review the plan for street maintenance, and find some cuts that could save some money. With the changes we are experiencing, and the effects on what we will experience, we don't need an El Camino Pedestrian Plan. Can money be found in the City parking Lot Maintenance? What about staff reductions in the City Manager's office, I believe there are 10 staff at present.
From what I've been reading and listening to, office buildings will not be needed. Even Google is rethinking how best to use their workforce. Many are seeing that working from home is efficient, and productive, and that perhaps going to a 2 1/2 day week is better for them and their employees.

One project that should be supported, going ahead with the plans, is the historic Roth Building, it has a great history and now to support a Palo Alto History Museum is a good idea, and would probably be best to continue now, before everything gets more expensive.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Keehn
Orme St.
94306
It’s a small thing, but every little bit helps.

I don’t know how much the City pays to run the streetlights. Maybe we can save some money by turning off half of them. Yes, there would be darker spots. In walking around the neighborhood many evenings over the past month, when there has been so little traffic, I’ve noticed that we would have no significant problems if half the streetlights were turned off—or even more. I recall when we had a large power outage in our neighborhood (Midtown) and there were no streetlights: even then, it was certainly light enough to be able to walk safely.

- Alan
Alan Marcum
Midtown Palo Alto

(pronouns: he/him/his)
Hello Council,

I spoke at the meeting tonight, and wanted to send in my speech to allow you to review it as needed. Thank you so much for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about our responsibilities, spending, and attendance.

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I’ve been participating in Teen Arts Council since the beginning of this year, and it has made a world of difference to my high school experience.

Freshman year, I stopped singing live when I aged out of a program that I used to perform with, and found myself missing it immensely without a clear solution.

I started attending TAC events and later meetings, and when I finally worked up the courage to sing at an Open Mic in December, I experienced everything that I had missed so much about performing live; the nerves, the tunnel vision, and the satisfaction of an audience smiling back at me.

I’ve made and kept friends through TAC, and it’s clear to see how our events bring the teen community together, at a time we so clearly need it.

In preparing for this meeting, I learned that TAC was founded in response to a teen suicide cluster, a topic our community has become so numb to it’s an afterthought.

I know that our events take care of community, just as I know the meetings have taken care of me.

I’ve found a voice as a leader, and learned valuable lessons about teamwork, organization, and planning that nothing in my life has ever offered me.

Our adult staff are instrumental to this process, as they guide us and help us make decisions to be successful.

In the coming year, our community will need a place like TAC events to shelter from the storm. We can make social distancing accommodations to our regular event set ups, and take extra care to keep everything clean and safe.

I understand the responsibility we have to our teen community, and I hope you can ensure us the funding we need to fulfill it. Thank you.
To the City Council members,

As an longtime community member, I submit a heartfelt plea on behalf of myself, my wife and my three children that the College Terrace library remain open.

This library is the closest public library to faculty families living on campus. It is safe for the children to bike to. The other two libraries, Downtown and Mitchell, are much farther and require crossing major roads like El Camino and Page Mill.

It has been an important resource for our family. My wife has reached out on the library website to volunteer so that the library could be open on the days has been closed: Mondays, Thursdays and Sundays. These days have often been when our children needed a place to study for exams and projects due the following day.

Beyond my family's needs, a neighborhood library, especially such a picturesque one as College Terrace, is an important piece of the community fabric: a resource and a place for our neighbors and families to meet and socialize, an important piece of childhoods, a safe place, a resource without censorship, and our librarians provide tools and education that can't be found elsewhere.

Finally, closing the library would likely have a negative impact on surrounding property values.

In this difficult time, budget cuts are a necessity. I know you have considered many options. But please know this is a treasured resource without comparable substitutes. I hope there is an opportunity to consider alternatives, such as volunteer support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Peter DeMarzo
Kaui DeMarzo

**************

Thanks,
Kaui Chun DeMarzo
kaui@demarzo.com
(650) 454-7355
Dear Mayor Fine and all Palo Alto City Council members:
Thank you Mayor and Council Members for your thoughtful budget considerations at this difficult time.
Please avoid making budget cuts that will impact our most vulnerable residents including teen wellness contracts in the Human Resources Budget.
Because County matching funds for the YCS Youth Connectedness program require equal City funding, the loss of City funding risks eliminating the program completely.
At your May 26 Council meeting, I look forward to your positive budget decision to continue funding this valuable program and other critical teen wellness programs.
Thank you,
Patty Irish (longtime supporter of YCS)

Palo Alto, CA 94301

--
Pat Irish
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650-324-7407
650-245-3906 cell
Dear Palo Alto City Council and Palo Alto Unified School District Board,

I am a Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra (PACO) Board member and writing on behalf of the orchestra, a long-time tenant of Cubberley Community Center.

I can only imagine the difficulties in planning a path forward for your school district and city after the unprecedented times we are living through with this pandemic. I thank you for your time and consideration of all the members of the Palo Alto community and beyond.

PACO is just such a community that stretches beyond the borders of Palo Alto and pulls in talented kids to learn about collaboration, leadership, expression of ideas and responsibility – all through music. In turn, as part of PACO’s mission, to learn to Play Well With Others, and to make the world a better place, the orchestras perform and share their music with free concerts and small ensembles volunteer to share their music by playing at venues such as senior centers, hospitals, Palo Alto VA.

It has found its home at Cubberley Community Center for over 40 years and as the organization grew over those decades, it has become a unique organization that has been home to elementary school aged children starting out with their instruments all the way to where many graduate high school together. It’s a special organization that prioritizes the nurturing of the creative and sharing over competition – something that students find so rarely these days!

As some of the oldest tenants in the history of Cubberley, we would like to ask that the City and PAUSD prioritize the leases that we and other Cubberley-based organizations have in place. We are part of the cultural fabric of Palo Alto and of the neighborhood identity of South Palo Alto. As tenants, we would also like to express our support for the planned redevelopment of Cubberley and our hope that the City will choose to make community impact fees available for this long-discussed redesign.

Thank you for your time, work and efforts in keeping all of the communities in Palo Alto vibrant!

Sincerely,

Amy Kuan
Dear Mayor Fine & Council Members,

Thank you for working to get the city manager and staff to show solidarity with the community to reduce their salaries. As Governor Newsom set the example if was imperative for our city manager to agree.

I ask that you vote to keep the College Terrace Library in the budget as reflected by the many emails received by you to keep this important amenity. Please heed the voice of Palo Altons who want our library system to be strong during this pressing pandemic and at all times.

Ann Lafargue Balin
College Terrace
Thank you Mayor Fine and City Council for your thoughtful budget consideration at this difficult time.

I hope the budget will continue to include funds that help our our most vulnerable residents, including teens. I'm aware that County matching funds for YCS require matching City funding. It would be a shame to lose that program.

Best,

Joy Sleizer

Redacted

650-324-7425
Hello city council members,

I am writing a second time to voice my support for keeping the College Terrace Library branch open in some capacity. As a direct neighbor of the library for over 15 years, as well as being a regular user, I was outright dismayed to learn that it would be closed entirely, rather than simply scaled back in tandem with the other branches. It is a focal point of not only the College Terrace neighborhood, but of other surrounding neighborhoods in our region of Palo Alto. To single it out as the only library branch to outright close is entirely unfair to all the users and residents of this part of the city — and not just as a resource for books and media, but as a place for those who need wi-fi, computer access, or simply a place to engage with neighbors and community members, all of which are increasingly important in an environment like we are now living.

Please find a way to keep our branch operating even in some capacity so that our neighborhood and community is not disproportionately adversely affected compared to all the other neighborhoods that are keeping their library and community hub.

Thank you,
Mark Whiteley
Dear City Council,

First, a note of thanks for your continued hard work in a difficult time. I know it is not easy being in your position. I note that as a city resident who attended a prior council meeting and made a statement, I did not stay for the entire meeting and later was informed of the council's actions in a way that omitted to explain the procedure the council adopted in using a "parking lot" for items possibly to be restored. I'm sure this miscommunication resulted in many upset follow-ups, like one I subsequently sent. However, I think there is also a learning to be had from this experience: When there is an outpouring of public concern, it is best for the council to proactively do outreach communicating the procedure they are adopting in response to public feedback, rather than assume that people will sit through your entire meeting and know what you've decided to do first-hand or that the adopted procedure will be communicated to the public in a complete way through the grapevine.

Second, understanding the procedure you've adopted, I want to follow up to urge you not to gut a key part of a neighborhood's ecosystem with deep roots that presently gets high use, especially when there are so many far more expensive new projects in the budget that we've survived just fine without up until now. Yes, new projects are great and even important, but not at the expense of living, vital aspects of neighborhoods that have been part of the community for a long time and are well loved and serve important needs.

Previously, some council members have questioned whether the city should be governed by the "loudest voices in the room" in response to the activism of the College Terrace community in seeking to preserve their library. Your prior council meeting showed that the council invested in an online survey indicating that you do care about our voices. It also showed that the disproportionate budget going to public safety over community services did not correspond with the close match of percentages between community services including libraries as the close second highest priority compared to the first priority, public safety. The 175 or so emails and many other forms of public feedback you have received, including the results of the online survey, do not constitute the "loudest" voices, but rather the "most numerous" voices. Yes, this is the basis of democracy; our numerous voices are not to be discounted because they are loud or represent a self-interest (which actually is an interest of the entire city if the value of the library is appropriately appreciated). And the upset tenor of so many voices does not make the College Terrace community a bunch of bullies in a public process, but indicates we are a unified community rightfully trying to protect something widely viewed as extremely valuable, especially when compared to it's cost and when considered in terms of its under-representation in your proposed budget compared to its public support. I have previously wondered how much the signage for the new Public Safety Building will cost. I still wonder.

Council members have also cited cutbacks to staff in other areas and posed the question, which is more important, but this is a false comparison that ignores large areas of budget expenditure. As noted, there are many new projects with budgets in the millions of dollars that are not allocated to staff salaries. Also, sharing the pain through staff wage decreases rather than elimination of positions is another way to avoid having to choose between one staffing priority and another, arguably be kindest to the greatest
number of employees; and still preserve a reasonable degree of service to the public in each area of priority.

At the end of the day, it is just simply not a credible position to say that the elimination of a $165,000 service is going to make or break a $40M budget deficit in which there are so many multi-million dollar projects across which cuts can be made, many of which Palo Alto has not had the benefit of in the past, and which can have the runway for their achievement in the future lengthened.

Again, we, your community, understand the hard work and stress being put upon you and are grateful for your service. In providing our feedback in such a unified and broad-based voice, we are trying to help you make the best choices.

--

Best regards,

Hank Edson
Family Tree Mediation
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94306
(650) 762-8733
http://familytreemediation.net

This email may be a privileged and confidential communication of mediation. If you are not an intended recipient of this email, do not read, copy, use, forward or disclose the email or any of its attachments to others. Instead, immediately notify the sender by replying to this email and then delete it from your system.
Dear City Council,

I moved to Palo Alto and College Terrace 1 year ago. Before shelter-in-place, the CT library was one of my family’s and my favorite things about our neighborhood. Yes, we also occasionally visit the children’s library, but mostly we visit the college terrace one.

Here’s what we love about the library: the library is an ideal refuge for me and my young children to visit to check out books, explore new puzzles, and even to have a change of scene on a day that’s rainy or too hot. Our house, like many in college terrace and Palo Alto, is tiny for our family of 5, and we value the ability to have a gem in our community like the library that’s also a way for adults to have a quiet work space. While there are other library branches for checking out/dropping off books, a library is best as an in-person experience, and we wouldn’t often be able to go to other more distant locations given that our family has one car and my husband takes it to work at a hospital 30 miles away.

Thank you for your consideration to keep this resource open for families like ours, for whom other libraries are out of range of walking with a stroller.

Sincerely,

Pearl Houghteling
Bowdoin St
I support the budget for the Children’s Theater. It may never return if you don’t keep it going --even if on a reduced basis.

Kathryn Akatiff
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA
Are shoe stores allowed? Appliance repair shops? Clock and repair shops? If not now, then on Friday?

I asked these questions on the website but answers are not forthcoming. The website is not helpful. I use email rather than phone the service.

It is terrible that the free City shuttles have been cut from the budget! This is a necessity for many people, those who don't drive, seniors, disabled people who can't own cars. How are they to get around town?

Completely cutting the lease with the school district at Cubberley is unacceptable. Not only should we support the school district but also the art community which will be displaced with nowhere to go.

I urge the Council to reconsider these cuts.

Natalie Fisher
Palo Alto
From: Sue Chang <suechang969@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 2:05 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Vote -Open College Terrace Library

Dear City Council members,

Please vote to have College Terrace Library open, even if only for a few days a week between Down Town Library and College Terrace Library. This will save operating expenses while continuing to serve our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,
PA residents
Baumb, Nelly

From: Patty Chu <patty.chu@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 2:50 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: plea to keep College Terrace Library open

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

My family has been going to the College Terrance library since we moved to Palo Alto in 2004. We continue to visit it weekly (before the shelter-in-place mandate). It’s fine if you need to reduce some hours or days of the week if that helps provide relief to the operating budget, but we urge that you keep it open, at least for one (or more) weekday days and one weekend day (Saturdays). Thanks!

Patty
Hello,

I attended all four co-design meetings and I wanted to provide some feedback on the project based on the "final" results published on the website.

Specifically, it seemed like the meetings were mostly about "consensus" on "existing" programs at Cubberley and there was no forum to propose new ideas or concepts. In fact, it was impossible because the meetings were designed to have consensus by each table and there was no ability for one table to communicate ideas to the other tables. There was no forum to generate NEW ideas; only re-hashing old ones. I believe that this was a serious limitation in the co-design project and the result is that the final plan appears to be modern version of the existing facility -- a revised collection of random buildings with random classes and programs just like the ones they are replacing. This is disappointing. We should not settle for this.

I believe the Cubberley site offers a unique, amazing opportunity for the City. Cubberley should be used to create "magnet" facilities for the City that other cities will envy - we need to take advantage of this space. Palo Alto is missing landmark centers that other neighborhood cities have, but now we have the opportunity to build them all on one site.

First, we need to build a Tennis Center with 12 lighted courts like the hugely successful Sunnyvale Tennis Center or Cuesta Park to support tennis at all levels of play. Currently, the City has tennis courts spread all over the place, usually in pairs. While this may bring courts closer to residents, this provides many challenges to the city staff in terms of maintenance and enforcement of reservations as well as limitations in programming. City of Palo Alto has no formal tennis training program for kids unlike our adjacent cities like Mountain View, Los Altos, and Sunnyvale. While the city offers some tennis classes, they are very poorly organized and limited. In contrast, Los Altos has an amazing USTA ladder training program for kids run by one of the top tennis academies in the Bay Area. Sunnyvale too. Tennis is one of the most popular activities for kids and it shouldn't be only available to those who can afford to join the expensive local tennis clubs or private academies. A Tennis Center in Palo Alto would address this huge need and even be able to support USTA level tournaments generating income for the city.

Secondly, we need a Community School of Music & Arts like that in Mountain View. Every kid takes some sort of music or dance lesson in Palo Alto. This facility would support music and performing arts instruction for residents of Palo Alto and provide a center for this community. Imagine what a great place it would be for students to perform here! It might even be able to support a local youth orchestra!

Finally, we need a state-of-the-art Indoor Aquatic center like the amazing one in Newark. Currently, the City of Palo Alto has scattered swimming facilities at random schools and parks, most very dated and in need of upgrades. Unfortunately, all are outdoors -- this is a huge limitation as the pools are generally closed in the
evenings and totally closed in the winter. In the summer, it can be too hot for kids and adults to swim. An indoor facility would address this issue and allow maximal utilization of swimming facilities. The Newark Indoor Aquatic center includes pools for toddlers, amazing indoor water slides and lazy river for families as well as a lap pool for swimming and lessons. What an amazing facility this would be for residents of all ages. Did you know that Olympic swimmers like Simone Manual are members of swimming clubs in Palo Alto, which currently rent pool time from the city? The Newark Indoor facility even includes a fitness gym for a small monthly fee of $15 like those in San Jose.

All three of these landmark centers could fit on site with room for the high school. These would add an amazing bonus to citizens of Palo Alto and invigorate the city, wouldn't it? Please do not settle for yet another revised hodge podge collection of buildings with random classes. This is the time for the city to make a statement and show everyone what Palo Alto is all about.

Thanks,
Bryan
The College Terrace Library has been a priceless resource for our children. Closing the library is removing an essential service critical to the intellectual health of our children and to the city’s civic well-being.

Michael Gonzalez, EdD

NVM Gonzalez Writers’ Workshop | San Francisco | Diliman The Hinabi Project San Francisco
Honorable Mayor and City Council Members:

My wife and I strongly encourage the City Council to continue its financial support of the Palo Alto Art Center. It is a valuable benefit for the community and sets Palo Alto apart from many similarly situated cities through its support of this great cultural asset.

Thank you.

Daniel K. Seubert
Seubert French Frimel & Warner LLP
   Redacted
Menlo Park CA 94025
T: (650) 322-3049
F: (650) 322-2976
dan@sfflaw.com
www.sfflaw.com
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

Please find attached an urgent letter from my family in College Terrace, Palo Alto - voiced by our youngest members, a 3rd grader who loves the College Terrace library!

A library within a neighborhood is a community treasure that must be preserved - especially as all the structures we rely on are falling apart.

I trust that the City of Palo Alto has sufficient moral, ethical, community values to respect the place a small library holds in a neighborhood - how it ties together members of the community.

Please do not take that from us!

Sincerely,

Anandi
SUBJECT:

From: Kes

Dear Pal

I think close

I often borrow and
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

The College Terrace library means a lot to our neighborhood, but it will mean even more in the months to come. For us students, much of our lives will be online even after we return to school; all of our reading - textbooks, poetry, plays, fiction, nonfiction, and more - will be virtual. It might seem like physical books aren't necessary anymore, but I strongly believe that that isn't true.

A library offers us things that we can never get from an e-reader.

1. **We share our reading experience with others.** There's a community that is created when we meet others at the library. The library is a safe place for kids, teens and adults to connect with like-minded people.

2. **We make memories.** Clicking on a book to borrow it and reading it on the computer is a memory which fades quickly. On the other hand, trips to the library with friends and family can stay in your mind for a long time; when you read a favorite book years later, you remember discovering it for the first time on the stripy couch in the library.

3. **We touch the book.** It may not seem like a big thing, but it lets us separate the reading from everything else we do on a computer. When we read, we aren't online; it's a break from the screen, not an extension of it.

A library lets us borrow a real, complete book, read it, and bring it back. Before the lockdown, that might have seemed like an everyday privilege. But it's actually one of the **best things we can possibly do to stay in touch with real life.**

We need the College Terrace library.

Sincerely,

A library lover.
This library is an important asset to Palo Alto that has served the community for years. It needs to be kept open, as do all the other libraries and Cubberley Community Center.

I keep asking why the pandemic, which has affected all of us in varying degrees, has not produced a real change in the City’s priorities to serve the larger community’s needs, to look out for the underserved among us (those who have been most hard hit), and even more than before, support the workers who ensure our safety. Why are elements that help people and drive community spirit being sidelined so that developers and other “fat cats” can continue to reap profits? Doesn’t the City care about education, community services, safety issues, and animals? Why are developers and expensive contractors always favored, even at this time?

Leonor Delgado
It’s a real albeit modest asset for that section of our city. The neighborhood has lots of young families sponsoring children’s events consistently well attended. It’s also used as a reading room by a variety of citizens as well as providing internet services for some who need it. For residents within a couple of miles in all directions it’s much more convenient than Mitchell Park. Let’s not eliminate this most important civil resource.

Peter K Mueller, Baron Park resident.
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

I am a current resident in College Terrace and have two elementary school aged kids. We live very close to the college terrace library and would love to have the library so close to us. Please do not get rid of it - I’m sure a lot of young children like mine will benefit from it.

Thanks,
Rashmi
Dear City Council Members,

This letter is in support of keeping the College Terrace Library open. It’s imperative that we keep the services in Palo Alto that make it the special place that is it. Eroding these services one by one, (like with Animal Services) slowly will make Palo Alto just another town.

You will have plenty of volunteers to keep the library open, and I am one of them.

Thanks,

LaVonne Young

Redacted
To the City Council,

I am heartened to learn that the City Council and the City's top paid executives have listened to the many people like me who suggested cutting salaries for top city executives before closing highly valued services such as the College Terrace library. This latest budget crisis has put a spotlight on the huge inflation in pay for top executives, not just in private industry but also in government. Let's leave that gilded age behind and distribute more of our limited resources to serve the public's cultural, educational and social needs. Libraries do this!

Sincerely,
Dedra Hauser
Is there any way you could improve “revenues” by using the building for something else when the library is not in session? I know there was the preschool in another part. Is this publically funded or is it a potential source of funds (preschool not a general part of the budget like older grades?) just thoughts I”m sure you’ve had.

Gail
To the members of the Palo Alto City Council:

Please do not close the College Terrace Library.

As the only library branch west of El Camino, it serves as an important community hub. Our family has lived in College Terrace for over 15 years, and we visit the library almost every day, knowing that we will invariably see friends and neighbors there. It is always full of people making the most of the rich set of resources under its roof.

When our children were young, it was a place they could go on their own during the day to find a nice book to read, building a sense of independence as they expanded their minds. Now that they are in middle- and high-school, they use the library as a source of library materials for both school and personal interests — we're always maxing out our library cards. It's such a fun library to visit — its staff are friendly and knowledgeable, and there's always an interesting intellectual treat waiting to be found on the shelves. It's a very special place.

This library one of the things which makes Palo Alto a great city. Please do not close this historic gem of a library — I am sure that the citizens of Palo Alto would be happy to work with you to find the extra money to keep it open, or to collaborate with you regarding trade offs which could be made elsewhere in the budget.

Best Regards,

Diego Rodriguez
Dear City Council,

I have worked as a mentor for teens in the arts for decades now and I am writing to advocate for the importance of funding The Children's Theatre and the Teen Arts Council.

I am a successful writer, actor, and teacher and all three of my sons are successful actors and artists. I was there when the Teen Arts Council was formed in response to the teen suicides in Palo Alto, and I have been working on projects with teens and the theatre ever since. The Teen Arts Council and the theatre programs have given teens a refuge, a voice, supportive companions, and a way to express themselves. This cannot be taken for granted! The arts are literally a lifeline.

Children and teens need continuous support. The community needs the visionary work of the Children's Theatre and the brilliant and caring Judge Luckey. Teens need a refuge and programs to keep them positive and productive.

Thank you for listening,

Betsy Franco

--
Dear City Council,

I have lived in Palo Alto for over 10 years and have loved taking my children to this library. The library trip is weekly and a highlight of our family time. More importantly from your perspective, this library saves residents the car trip to other libraries. There is no other library that is walkable my neighbors and I. Think about the added traffic to an already crowded downtown and midtown.

Do the right thing and keep the College Terrace library open.

Respectfully,
Stephannie Lobell

Sent from my iPhone
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Council,

I’m writing in support of keeping the College Terrace Library open. For me it comes down to values. In the age of so much craziness in the world we need to preserve our library and have access to books. We are a country in deep trouble and closing a library (of all things) seems to me to be exactly the wrong thing to do. Actually, the image in my mind is one of horror, we have seen it in other countries and it hasn’t play out very well. Let’s keep the library in College Terrace — we walk to it, it’s used and it’s loved by those who live here.

I have faith in our City government’s ability to find other solutions to solve our financial problems. Holding off on the park renovation is a good start, reducing salaries, deferring other projects are all possible fixes. If need be you might consider cutting the Downtown library since the Main Library is so close by. Please leave our library, it helps us move forward — all of us, in a time when forward thinking is everything.

Susan Wilson
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94306
Dear Council Members,

To the extent you are still contemplating deep cuts to public safety or important resident services, I urge you to reverse the July 2019 decision to spend $719k on public art for the new police station. I have been told by you that there is some ordinance requiring public art spending must be a certain percentage of the cost of a new building. But I would think you could take 3 minutes at next council meeting and change the ordinance. This is an economic emergency, and the process should serve residents (not the other way around).

Thank you,
Chris Robell
Dear City Council,

My name is Marcello and I am 12 years old. I have been going to the College Terrace Library ever since I moved here, 9 years ago. I love looking at the books and movies and have checked out many of them over the years. I also enjoy looking at the artwork in the Children’s Area from the grade schoolers at nearby elementary schools. The College Terrace Library feels like a reliable place to get a book to read (and I read a lot) because it is so local and has a myriad of books for children of all ages. I also travel a lot with my mom, and we frequently go to the library to check out books about travel. Please don’t close this reliable, local library.

Thank you,
Marcello
Dear Council,

I spoke at the meeting tonight and wanted to send in my speech to allow you to review it as needed. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Hi, my name is Maddie Lee and I was the treasurer of TAC for the 2017-18 school year. I graduated from Paly in 2018, and I am speaking to you on behalf of TAC because of the positive impact that this organisation has had on my life and my high school experience. Not only has TAC always been an amazing outlet for me to express my love for the arts, it has also been a place where I have made some of my closest friends. As a member, I was able to meet likeminded peers and spend time at events that encouraged and rekindled my love for different types of art. I had such a positive experience with TAC that I decided to apply for a committee position so that I could be more involved in this organisation that I had enjoyed so much. As a committee member, I spent countless hours with my friends on the exec board and heads of event committees as well as coordinating with adults at the children's theatre. Two years out of high school and embracing my love for the arts more than ever, I can say with absolute certainty that this is the result of TAC's impact on my life.

During my senior year, I experienced depression and anxiety as a result of the mixture of my grandmother passing away and the stress of college decisions. I feel very strongly that I would not have made it through the year and come out stronger on the other side were it not for the presence of TAC in my life. This is an organisation founded in the wake of the first suicide clusters in response to the lack of teen support, a decision I am extremely grateful for, and why I believe that TAC is an important part of Palo Alto's community. TAC members gave me a community to lean on during a time of crisis, as well as providing an outlet for me to express myself, specifically through poetry at TAC's Point B Poetry event and painting at their Momentum Art Gallery. These events were made possible by the financial support of the city, without which TAC would not have been able to impact as many students as it has. Wednesday nights spent at the Children's theatre with TAC remain some of my fondest memories from my high school experience, and with your continued support, I hope that this organisation can keep positively effecting other high school students the way it has affected me. Though I am no longer a teen, I will always consider myself part of TAC. Thank you for listening.
Hello Council, I was one of the speakers in the meeting tonight. Here is a written copy of my speech if you would like to review it. Thank you so much for your consideration. Stay healthy and safe!

Hello, I am Phoebe Berghout and I am a sophomore at Palo Alto High School. I am speaking towards the proposed budget cuts impacting the children’s theatre and teen programs. I have been a member of the Palo Alto Teen Arts Council since the beginning of my Sophomore year. Through my involvement in the Teen Arts Council, I have seen and experienced the impact our events have on teens. It is one of Palo Alto’s largest teen leadership programs, created ten years ago after a group of teen suicides, and since then has played a huge role in our community. Teen Art Council is responsible for many events, such as open mics, a comedy night, film festival, clothing swaps, a poetry jam, and our buoyancy festival. Each of these events provide teens with a platform to express ourselves, share our artwork and talents, all of which are so important. While incredibly valuable, these opportunities are so hard to find for teens in Palo Alto. I have performed stand-up comedy at both open mic and comedy night. Without these opportunities I would not have been able to discover and pursue comedic arts, something I have found to really enjoy. When making your budgeting decisions, I urge you to consider the impact each of these programs have on teens. Now more than ever Palo Alto teens need art, they need these events and the sense of community they bring. I am aware you have a very challenging decision to make, however I hope you understand that this affects not just those of us who you hear from tonight, but each and every one of the thousands of kids, teen arts council and the children's theatre impact every single year. Thank you.
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

I am a resident of midtown Palo Alto and I agree with councilman Tanaka's proposal. Palo Alto at times claims to be the heart of Silicon Valley, and salary cuts are often a tactic used to keep tech companies and startups afloat during tough times. It also benefits employees overall as no one loses their jobs.

I'm stunned at the numbers reported in this article particularly:
"The average city employee costs $231,968 a year including fringe benefits, according to city budget documents."

In addition, the shockingly high salary paid to the city manager (and the previous one and other top administrators) are already unsustainable in light of this financial crisis brought on by the Corona virus. I just don't understand how the council cannot consider modest salary reductions for the higher paid employees who also get extremely generous pensions and health care.

Wile I did not watch the council meeting I was equally stunned by the way Tanaka's proposal was received, according to this article.

I respectively request this issue be brought to the residents of Palo Alto so that they can provide their opinions and fully understand the position of each councilmember so as to help guide us on election day.

Thank you.

Cynthia Typaldos
Resident, midtown Palo Alto

To whom it may concern,

My name is Craig Smith. I am a researcher working on behalf of Forbes Sr. Policy Contributor Adam Andrzejewski. We are working on a piece regarding the large number of California public employees with six-figure salaries or retirement pensions and their impact on taxpayers. The deadline for comment is Tuesday May 19th at 5:00 PM ET. If you miss our deadline, we will do our best to update the piece when you respond.

In these times of national crisis, please provide us with an on-the-record justification for the salaries of your most highly compensated employees. Here is the relevant paragraph where your organization is mentioned:

- 45,718 small town city and town employees – including 1,420 municipal administrators and employees out-earned the California governor – the highest paid state governor ($202,000). Highly compensated city managers included Deanna Santana (Santa Clara – $396,158); Paul Arevalo (West Hollywood -- $353,603); Fredrick Cole (Santa Monica – $342,780); David Ready (Palm Springs – $340,149); Edward Shikada (Palo Alto – $329,080); and Scott Ochoa (Ontario – $328,500).

Any context, feedback, or comment would be important to our readers at Forbes. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Craig Smith
On behalf of Forbes Sr. Policy Contributor Adam Andrzejewski
Dear City Council,

Many, many city residents feel exactly as I do. Look on Nextdoor to confirm this. I look forward to your response to my questions.

Sincerely,

Walter Enos

-------- Forwarded message --------

From: Walter Enos <walter.enos@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, May 15, 2020 at 6:46 PM
Subject: letter to the Daily Post: Questions for Palo Alto City Council
To: <letters@padailypost.com>

Dear Editor,

I have 4 quick questions for our City Council:
1. Why is our city manager Shikada paid far more than Governor Newsom? ($355,000 vs. $202,000))
2. Why is the city refusing to make any pay cuts when Newsom has now proposed a 10% cut for all state workers?
3. Why when Councilman Tanaka this week suggested a 17% across-the-board pay cut to avoid any job losses, his suggestion was ignored- twice?
4. Councilwoman Kou's online survey of city residents showed overwhelming support for city staff and administrator salaries to be frozen or cut (by 512 votes to 53). Why when she presented the survey results to Council at their budget session did they instead propose to make cuts only to city services, none to salaries?

Palo Alto residents deserve clear answers from their Council. Perhaps one of the City's 4 or 5 highly-paid Communications Officers will assist?

Walter Enos
Palo Alto

(Redacted, Palo Alto, CA 94306)
May 16, 2020

To the Mayor and City Council:

In my opinion, the city should cut the following to reduce the deficit:

1) There should be no raises in the city at all. Also, city salaries should be cut across the board. If Stanford Hospital can cut salaries, so should the city of Palo Alto.

2) Lots of Consultants should be cut. Departments should be reduced and the city should become more lean.

3) New construction should be put on pause or cut completely. Because of the Coronavirus our world is going to change forever.

4) I believe the city should not cut police or the fire dept. If we should have an earthquake tomorrow or Coronavirus should explode or whatever the crisis may be, police and the fire dept. will be essential. Salaries for the police and fire dept. should be reduced especially for the higher paid salaries.

5) All the libraries should be kept open but at reduced hours and staff.

City council should be listening to all the citizens of Palo Alto. We are paying for it and we need a fair balanced budget in the city.

Thank you for your time and all of your efforts. None of these decisions will be easy to make. I appreciate the hard decisions you will have to make.

Sincerely,

Neva Yarkin
Palo Alto
Dear City Council,

I have a house on Newell Road and have lived here since 1996. I have significant concerns about the proposed Newell Bridge replacement project:

1. Traffic has increased dramatically over the years that I have lived here. Not only the overall volume but the speed at which people travel. It is not uncommon to see people come over the bridge and then accelerate out of the Edgewood stop sign and not even slow down for the Hamilton stop sign. I have seen multiple occasions where people are passing my house in excess of 50mph as they head down Newell.

2. At the moment the bridge slows everyone down. Building the proposed bridge will guarantee more traffic and even more people speeding down Newell Road. It will almost certainly result in accidents and likely the occasional death.

3. The current bridge has actually worked very well to slow traffic and keep people safe for over 100 years. It is a potential flood hazard but that would be an increasingly rare event with climate change.

4. With the tremendous budget shortfall that all California governments are facing with Covid 19 this does not seem like money well spent. Please consider delaying any implementation of the project and when it does go through consider alternative 1-a one lane bridge.

Best regards,
Jeff Reese
Redacted
Dear Palo Alto Council Members,

I’m writing today to hopefully encourage you to not overlook the importance of the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre when making crucial decisions about funding.

I understand these are hard times and can’t imagine the amount of pressure on your shoulders to make the right decisions for the city’s future when facing huge deficits. I also know that often when funding is in question the arts are the first thing to go, often not deemed necessary enough to keep spending on. I want to let you know that for me and my family the arts and the Children’s Theatre are very necessary.

My wife Cayla works as the scenic artist and has been in that position for a year and a half now. Working in the theatre industry is by nature very unstable. Jobs come and go, shows open and close, theatre companies emerge and go bust and funding is cut more often than I like to think about, which is why this job has been so very important for us. We all know that life in the Bay Area is increasingly expensive and so working in this industry here is extremely hard. You can’t rent an apartment without 3 months pay checks from the same company to be approved, which never happens in theatre (most jobs last 4-5 weeks at most). You can’t get loans for cars or a home without proof of a reliable steady income, which isn’t possible for most theatre professionals. We can’t prove we’re going to have income for months to come when we don’t know what Cayla’s even going to be working on next week. And so she’s been forced by these demands to work jobs she hates for months at a time just to have some kind of evidence of her money making ability whether it be at Starbucks or Great America or some other company where her skills are unappreciated and she never gets the chance to be truly happy going to work or proud of the work she accomplishes. But this job at the Children’s Theatre has completely changed that. It is so rare to find a theatre job that is stable. Where her ideas are listened to and incorporated, where she’s able to create beautiful things without being rushed “because this job’s only paying me $300 so I can’t spend all week on it”, and where she gets to use all the skills she learned at college and in her extensive career as an artist to make people happy while not worrying about how we’re going to rent this month or if we should move back in to the basement we lived in before this job came in to our lives.

She is perfect for this position and has done nothing but work her hardest to make sure every production the theatre puts on is incredible. The stability of known hours and known paychecks each week has allowed her to do some of her best work and it shows during every performance.

I’ve been to see a few shows she’s worked on, we take our friends 3 year old to “the hot dog theatre” get all dressed up and spend the afternoon watching “Honk” or “Beat Bugs” and we love it. The quality of the shows is incredible, from the design, to the acting, to the way they are run, everything is on a professional level and I can’t imagine how important that is for the actors. We have a great time every time we go to a show and I would be not only disappointed for my family if it were to close but for all of the actors, organisers and production staff who’s hard work is evident in every facet of every show and most of whom will never get the chance to work in such a safe, happy and lively workplace again. I know it’s taken years to get the theatre to the point it’s at right now and it would be such a shame to throw it all away and try to rebuild in a few years. Too much opportunity and hard work would be going to waste. If nothing else
think of Cayla who really doesn’t want to go back to work at Great America this winter to repaint someone else’s ancient scenery under extreme time pressure with no resources.
Thank you for your time, and I hope you’re able to make the right decision for the city and everyone working for it.
Yours sincerely,
Holly Ray-Perry
Dear Palo Alto City Council:

I have the following suggestions for consideration as you look, tonight, at funding cuts for programs in Palo Alto.

This email is focusing on how I believe you could save money, this year, by delaying progress on some programs, in order to fund those programs of most importance to the people and the children of this city.

I propose a one year postponement of all capital projects with the exception of the CA Avenue parking garage. I think this would be a reasonable stop-gap approach. These projects have been in the pipeline for years and are not absolutely critical. In a year, the construction costs may be much lower (which is likely given our current situation), and you may be able to go out for a second bid, which could offer a great savings to the city.

An area that I wish could be stricken from the budget is the TMA (Transportation Management Assoc). Currently, there are no traffic issues in PA and we don’t know when we’ll actually have enough of a regular stream of business traffic to warrant this in the near future. What if telecommuting completely changes the fabric of traffic in Palo Alto! Down the road, but probably not this next year, we’ll know more. I believe that you should question the need to set aside funds for something that is not immediately essential to our city.

*Another thought about the TMA - What if it could be fully funded by the businesses, themselves, as a way to mitigate the impacts to the city!

Thank you for your respectful consideration. You have a very demanding responsibilities and our city depends on your wisdom, fairness and expertise.

Respectfully,
Karen Morrison
   Redacted
Palo Alto
Hello Council Members,

I am a Gunn High School parent, active community leader and advocate for children, families and youth for well over a decade.

We are in unprecedented times and Palo Alto’s youth of today need our continued support and attention as they bridge between childhood and adulthood. They are our future leaders and citizens. I am writing to ask that you preserve funding for the City's Teen Programs and Services. Your survey of citizens has already prioritized Public Safety and Neighborhood/Community Services.

Our teens need a forum without their parents to use their VOICE (advocacy), develop their LEADERSHIP (skills), and EXPRESS themselves (visual, creative & performing arts). Teen programs are not only fun -- although they are. Public programs are the SAFE SPACE where any teen regardless of income or background or experience are welcome. City programs provide EQUITY. They do not discriminate. All this contributes to teenage WELLNESS, a grave concern in our little town that has been in the nation’s spotlight because of past tragedies. Let’s not forget this. Teen programs are PROTECTIVE.

As a recent participant in the Project Safety Net Community Meeting, I spoke on a panel about the impact that COVID-19 has had on the wellbeing of students. My wish during this time is that we hold steady in creating and maintaining a much needed network around families so that they know there is help and hope for them. As our city officials, please don’t eliminate help and hope for our future.

-- Kimberly Eng Lee
Hello,

I hope you are safe and well. My name is Sean with SellMax and I recently led a study looking into cars and how viruses can spread in them. I believe everyone needs to do their part to help flatten the curve. So, my team and I created an article to help cover things such as the dirtiest parts of the car, how you should disinfect your car, and much more.

We found out some pretty interesting things like the fact that the steering wheel has 4x more germs than a public toilet seat and 6x more than your cell phone!

If you have a moment can you please check out my article here and let me know what you think? If you like the article please help me spread the word by sharing a link on your website here.

Thanks so much and stay safe,

-Sean
Follow Up Flag: Follow up  
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

To: City Council Members

IF there ever was a time to invert the list of what to cut from the budget now is the time. Ask people if they miss another round-about or the library. Or, does an assistant to an assistant of a department manager, etc deserve a raise in salary, or build another structure vs items that keep Palo Altans feeling safe.

Once this is over (whenever that may be) or slow down to where life gets back to some regular routine - we need those services that make Palo Alto a very livable city (town concept long gone) NOT infrastructure spending. Those activities/projects can wait.

Thank you
Lenore Cymes
Wildwood Lane
Baumb, Nelly

From: marygallagher88@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 12:52 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Fwd: May 13 City Council Meeting Parking

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Palo Alto Council Members:

I concur with the challenges and solutions regarding parking in the core commercial/residential areas as identified by Neilson Buchanan (below).

This issue has been lingering for years, the necessary resources have been identified and the solutions can be achieved within a short/reasonable period of time.
Let’s fix this!

Sincerely,

Mary Gallagher

Begin forwarded message:

From: Neilson Buchanan <cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com>
Date: May 11, 2020 at 11:40:36 AM PDT
To: Neilson Buchanan <cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com>
Subject: May 13 City Council Meeting Parking

Dear Neighbors in RPP neighborhoods near University Avenue,

I ask you to express your opinion immediately to City Council.

As you know, the Council is making critical rationing decisions for city services. Residential parking adjacent to the two downtowns is at risk.

Below is a very long email encompassing the complex, inter-related issues necessary to protect neighborhoods from intrusion of commercial parking.

You have two good options.
#1 Forward my email to city council and state your support. city.council@cityofpaloalto.org

#2 Compose your own opinions using the email below as a guide.

Here is the Council agenda for Wednesday, May 13. You can make comments directly to Council via Zoom or telephone.

http://cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?&BlobID=76557

Neilson Buchanan
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301

650 329-0484
650 537-9611 cell
cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Neilson Buchanan <cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com>
To: City Council <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>
Cc: Shikada Ed <ed.shikada@cityofpaloalto.org>; Philip Kamhi <philip.kamhi@cityofpaloalto.org>; Hur Mark <mark.hur@cityofpaloalto.org>; Nathan Baird <nathan.baird@cityofpaloalto.org>; Planning Commission <planning.commission@cityofpaloalto.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020, 11:14:29 AM PDT
Subject: May 13 City Council Meeting Parking

Below is a reasonable set of questions reflecting a strong consensus among experienced resident leaders who understand deeply rooted parking issues in the commercial cores and neighborhoods.

The root problem is under-management of the public and private parking assets within the commercial cores. For example, there is absolutely no shortage of parking after 5pm weekdays and weekends. The issue is modern signage to the garages and then guidance to spaces within the garages.

In my opinion City Councils and City Managers have politically mismanaged parking policy by making certain there was no real understanding among city staff. Therefore, the commercial core/residential neighborhood parking can was kicked down the road with advantage tipped for the landlords and tenants of office spaces.

Looking backwards won't help. However, if developer pressures of today's council are successful in weakening the new Office of Transportation we will lose professional staff and the opportunity to harmonize public and private assets within the commercial cores and neighborhoods.

Wednesday's Council key decisions are the following:
1. Staffing levels in the Office of Transportation
2. Guidance systems within the city garages
3. Modern signage to find garages and surface lots
4. Parking permit management system integrated for commercial core and neighborhoods
5. Elimination of Palo Alto TMA...its usefulness has not materialized and it is more irrelevant than ever. Joint city TMAs could be feasible if they can achieve economies of scale.

PS it is important to remember that there is absolutely no parking shortage in downtown commercial core after 5pm and on weekends. This unused capacity will continue for many months forward. The problem is effective guidance to parking capacity.

Here are questions to ask staff. I have great confidence in Philip Kamhi who leads the Office of Transportation.

1. When will city staff and Council reduce non-resident permits authorized for sale in the Mayfield/Evergreen Park neighborhoods? What is the new completion date for California Avenue city garage? Its new capacity will allow a substantial reduction or actual full elimination in non-resident parking permits of residential neighborhoods.

2. What is the city's intent to enforce permit and short-term parking "rules" in the commercial zones? Since April 1 there is unlimited supply of free parking in all RPP neighborhoods. This means unrestricted parking for downtown workers and Caltrain riders.

There is no incentive to buy parking permits within the California and University Avenue commercial cores. It is easier and cheaper (zero cost) to park in the neighborhoods than move vehicles within the time limited color zones in the University Avenue commercial core. When Caltrain riders return, then there is incentive to park in neighborhoods especially Old Palo Alto, Downtown North and Professorville. This will displace downtown workers, customers and residents. What happens when Stanford employees, faculty and students return and park just off campus for free and often convenient.

3. Why is commercial parking in the neighborhoods less expensive than the commercial cores? Pricing differentials should be higher in the residential neighborhoods to create incentives to park in the commercial cores and not park on residential streets. Priorities are ignored for traditional business such as retail goods and services. Lower paid workers, especially sales tax generating businesses, should have some access to commercial core parking.

4. In lieu fees are a bargain to developers. Developers paying in lieu fees are granted parking in perpetuity. Most irrational is that cost of city land is not included in the calculation of in lieu fees. In reality this is a gift of public property to developers who completely avoid land costs when they elect in lieu fees. Thus pricing of parking is subsidized and not market driven.

5. After budget cuts, what level of parking programs will be managed by "surviving" staff in the Office of Transportation? If the head count is reduced from 15 to 10, is the OTT a viable "organization for one of our top priorities or just a homeless section within the Planning Department.
6. There has no parking shortage whatsoever in evenings and nights within the cores of both downtowns. Finding parking is the problem. The mid-day Monday to Friday parking crunch is real and a direct result of chronic under-management by city staff and Council.

*Bottom line*: RPPs cannot survive if enforcement is suspended for more than a few months. RPPs took almost 20 years to establish and they cannot be silently killed without Palo Altans even knowing what is going on!

Re-establish RPP enforcement within 90 days in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan which states *city policy to promote commerce but not at the expense of residential neighborhoods*.

Neilson Buchanan
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650 329-0484
650 537-9611 cell
cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com
Please include my attached letter in the City Council and PAUSD Board packets. I am writing on behalf of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, which is one of Cubberley Community Center's oldest tenants.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Michelle Baldonado
May 18, 2020

Dear Palo Alto City Council and Palo Alto Unified School District Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, a long-time tenant of Cubberley Community Center.

As we plan together for our city's and our school district's future in light of the novel coronavirus pandemic, let us stop to reflect on how music and the arts have brought hope and joy around the globe during this unprecedented time. From the balcony performances that have rallied spirits in Italy to the PAUSD Choir teachers' video that brightened our day here in Palo Alto, we resonate with how music can give us a sense of togetherness and transport us out of our daily struggles and uncertainties.

Our very own Cubberley Community Center is home to many music and arts groups that are a vital and essential part of life here in Palo Alto. As the president of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra's Board, I would like to tell you a little bit about our organization. We are just finishing out our 53rd season as an award-winning all-strings chamber orchestra that serves regional youth, including many from here in Palo Alto. Our orchestra began in the Palo Alto home of our first conductor and eventually moved to Cubberley (one of our PACO alums remembers playing in Cubberley M-2 in 1976), where we've had a wonderful close relationship with the City ever since. Our five ensembles (varying in size from two to three dozen members) typically have weekly rehearsals in M-2 and performances at Cubberley Theatre -- these form the rhythm of our orchestra life. Many of our PACO members begin in PACO as elementary school students and remain in PACO through high school because they find that the orchestra not only teaches them about music but also about collaboration, responsibility, and friendship. Indeed, the mission of PACO is to teach young string players to play well with others, to forge a musical community, and to make the world a better place.

As some of the oldest tenants in the history of Cubberley, we would like to ask that the City and PAUSD prioritize the leases that we and other Cubberley-based organizations have in place. We are part of the cultural fabric of Palo Alto and of the neighborhood identity of South Palo Alto. As tenants, we would also like to express our support for the planned redevelopment of Cubberley and our hope that the City will choose to make community impact fees available for this long-discussed redesign. While medicine and science are saving the lives of our citizens, music and art are nurturing the spirits of our citizens. As you embark on difficult budget decisions that impact us all, please do not forget music and art. We are all in this together.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michelle Baldonado
Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra Board President and long-term Palo Alto resident
Honorable Council Members, UAC Commission, City Manager and Staff,

Enclosed is a PDF detailing Carbon Free Palo Alto’s comments on the FY2021 Budget Proposals.

Thanks for your time to read this.

Sincerely,

Bruce Hodge
Founder, Carbon Free Palo Alto
CFPA Comments on Proposed FY’21 Budget

Our comments below are based on the staff proposals that appear in the following reports:
May 11 Council Meeting: FY 2021 Revised Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets Overview
May 20 UAC Meeting: FY 2021 Proposed Utilities Operating and CIP Budgets

General points

- **Climate change is a parallel crisis with Covid-19 where the highest costs are the costs of doing nothing.** Global warming, like Covid-19 is playing havoc with our future and requires urgent, far reaching and unprecedented action to reduce fossil fuel use. We do not have the luxury to postpone the important work that has been started to make the deep reductions in fossil fuel use that are required.

- **The Covid-19 crisis is demonstrating the feasibility and benefits of rapid action to deeply reduce fossil fuel use in transportation.** Telecommuting allows companies and employees to save money and reduce fuel use. The community gains more use of streets and public space for biking and walking while enjoying less air and noise pollution citywide. This opens significant opportunities to make these beneficial changes permanent.

- **CFPA supports the general split of proposed budget cuts in the Utilities:**
  - A cut of $1.5M from the electric utility can be easily addressed by releasing that amount from the Electric Special Projects Reserve Fund ($41.6 million). It’s critical that the utility continue their work on building electrification strategies.
  - Larger cuts from the gas utility seem appropriate given the fact the utility is facing a shutdown as early as 2040 and that any new investments risk being stranded.

CFPA supports the following proposed changes to the budget:

- **Eliminate the downtown garage.** As discussed in past Council meetings, this project is of dubious value as far as parking supply cost/benefits are concerned. This is especially true during the Covid 19 crisis where demand is expected to remain significantly curtailed in the foreseeable future. It is also in conflict with our sustainability and community goals.

- **Eliminate the gas offset program.** Rates should be adjusted accordingly.
Gas program deferments. Support deferring gas infrastructure spending in favor of more spot checking for safety issues.

Postpone non-cri cal capital investment like u lity undergrounding rebuilds ($2.2 million for FY 2021).

Support con nued funding of the TMA in the changing transporta on landscape. We need the TMA to assess the GHG reduc ons of the expected con nua on of working from home and other transporta on mode shi. s.

Expand bicycle and pedestrian op ons. This is already happening in other ci es and Palo Alto should follow their example.

CFPA Objects to these proposed changes:

Do not cut our use of 100% carbon free electricity. The finance commee is considering a proposal to reduce the amount of renewable energy purchased by the u lity below 100% Carbon Neutral. We should not change this policy since it represents the majority of our GHG reduc on progress to-date and provides the founda on for our carbon free building and transporta on electrifica on strategy going forward.

Do not suspend progress on the Energy Reach Code in the planning department. This is a relatively small budget item and building code changes are essen al to get electric heating system suppliers to enter the market for building electrifica on and build capacity this year. This code is par cularly important in the case of ADUs and remodels where most new construc on is happening in Palo Alto.

Do not suspend building electrifica on ac vi es in u lies. We are at a cr cal stage of defining the best policies and programs that can scale to meet our 80/30 goal. This is a relatively small budget item with high leverage and value for the community.

Thank you for your extra efforts to balance the budget while ensuring a sustainable future during this especially challenging me.

Carbon Free Palo Alto

Bret Andersen - bretande@pacbell.net
Bruce Hodge - hodge@tenaya.com

CFPA Board members:
Lisa Alferi
Bret Andersen
David Coale
Indradeep Ghosh
Bruce Hodge
Sandra Slater
Walt Hays
To the Palo Alto City Council:

Amid this challenging time, it is important to rely on the support of others while navigating uncertainties the future holds. For some students in the Palo Alto Unified School District, relying on the support of others means relying on community-sponsored teen services. These services may include mental health programs, service organizations, or other leadership initiatives. By no longer funding these services, you are sending a disheartening message to the students involved in these programs. Especially regarding our town’s painful past, the removal of these programs seems almost counterintuitive. Why take away such important and useful services during a time when students may be struggling more than ever?

I am a recent Gunn graduate and current college student. Among other extra-curriculars, YCS and mental health services were two of the most important programs I participated in as a student. Said programs involved initiatives I am passionate about and services I utilized time and time again. I joined YCS in middle school and the first YCS-sponsored event I attended was the JLS Service Day. During the Service Day I traveled to Abilities United with students and parent chaperones where we played kickball and created arts and crafts with the adult participants. I first fell in love with service and giving back to my community during this event. I was fortunate enough to return to Abilities United to volunteer each summer from seventh grade to my senior year. This opportunity and new-found love would not have been made possible without YCS and the tireless efforts of the program’s staff. After middle school, I continued to participate in YCS. I became a board member and eventually became co-president of the YCS club during my junior and senior years. Through YCS, I have met some of my closest friends, connected with outstandingly supportive staff members and teachers, and interacted with countless individuals who have shaped my life for the better. But my strong connection to YCS and services alike is not the only one. Many students, both past and present, have had the opportunity to participate in such a strong and positive program. Making it so that future PAUSD students will not be offered the same opportunities may hinder the culture of service in our community. As leaders in our community, it is
your responsibility to ensure students are given all the necessary resources to not only achieve greatness, but also to become the next generation of thoughtful leaders.

Other extremely important teen initiatives facing budget cuts are mental health services. Though their support and resources are one of the most important things offered, the agendas of these services support the greater community, not just students. I was fortunate enough to attend a Project Safety Net meeting during my senior year. Students, teachers, parents, and community members in attendance were encouraged to share their own thoughts regarding teen mental health and wellness. All participants knew the meeting was a safe space to share their experiences without judgement. It is not often students and adults come together in a safe space to share personal thoughts and feelings while feeling equally heard and respected. To cut the budget of teen services would tell students that leaders of Palo Alto do not value their mental health and well-being as much as they say they do.

Initiatives focused on service and well-being help promote leadership, advocacy, and the importance of community building among teens. I implore you not to cut back on services that create a safe space for students to express and learn more about themselves. To cut these services would erase the hard work we as a community have done to improve the lives, and futures, of the students of Palo Alto.

Regards,
Grace Williams
2019 Gunn Graduate

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
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Regards,
Grace Williams
2019 Gunn Graduate
Dear City Council members,

Please read this letter from the Fletcher Middle School PTA on the importance of safety for the thousands of children in Palo Alto that walk and bike to school.

Regards,
Audrey Gold
Fletcher PTA President 2018-2020
Honorable City Council Members,

Choosing budget cuts is a very painful process for you, for the community, and for our valued city workers. We thank you for reaching out to the community requesting information about priorities for continued funding. Here are some items that Fletcher Middle School PTA would prioritize related to Safe Routes to School as you consider what not to cut:

1). **Safe Routes to School Staff**- Volunteers regularly turnover as families move through the PAUSD system, so CoPA Safe Routes to School staff provides continuity that enables training and mobilizing hundreds of volunteers at school sites across the city to organize and implement traffic safety education. Additionally, this staff administers the program, working with partners to set agendas, prioritize projects, coordinate transportation problem-solving across departments and with the partnership agencies. Without their important work the synergies of partnership that have made this program so successful would be lost. They are the “glue” that holds the program together.

2). **Continue the Crossing Guard Contract**- The Crossing Guard contract provides 29 Crossing Guards at critical intersections citywide. Fletcher Middle School students rely on seven of them. Four of these crossings are on state highway 82 (El Camino Real). Students cross six or more lanes posted at 35MPH at each of these high auto volume locations. Please see the complete list of Palo Alto crossing guard intersections and schools they serve here [https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/7298](https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/7298). Many of these are multi-lane intersections that carry traffic volumes exceeding 20-40,000 autos per day with 35mph posted speed limits (in many cases, higher 85th percentile speeds). Crossing guards provide essential visibility and safer crossings, allowing parents to feel comfortable about letting their students walk and bike to school, especially during the busy morning peak hour.

Question: Has CoPA approached the PAUSD about sharing some of these costs?
3). **Finish the Charleston-Arastradero Plan.** This mitigation plan has been twenty years in the making with Terman/Fletcher PTA support throughout. The gap in the bike lanes at the El Camino intersection presents a documented safety hazard to Fletcher students. Let’s get this done.

4). If Council must cut the PAPD Traffic Team, please consider putting a HOLD on the Traffic Team positions rather than eliminating them, so that they can be easily refilled once the budget crisis has been resolved. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Please plan to maintain a PAPD representative on the City School Traffic Safety Committee with liaison mechanisms in place for information sharing and collaboration to continue with regular patrol. PAPD is a valued partner. The program cannot be as effective without their participation.

Again, we thank you for your service to the community and your support of Safe Routes to School. Fletcher students who walk and bike to school are reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing auto congestion, and staying active. Let’s help them help us.

Sincerely,

Audrey Gold

on behalf of the Fletcher Middle School PTA
Dear Council Members and Mayor of Palo Alto

As a health care professional, I'm very alarmed ONLY 2 libraries for children will be open. The reality is that the more libraries are open, the more the community is spread out and less chance of another wave of COVID-19.

College Terrace library is adjacent to 4 to 5 preschools in the area.
Bing Nursery
College Terrace Preschool (Preschool Family)
There is also another Stanford preschool across from Bing Nursery
And there is another Spanish speaking nursery across from Bing

Reconsider funneling the entire Palo Alto population, especially toddlers and young families into just 2 libraries.

It's asking for COVID19 trouble and massive spread.

Thank You,
Eileen

Eileen Kim, PharmD
eileen.rph@gmail.com
How could you in good conscience cut public services and keep the infrastructure projects, that do not at this time do anything to support the health and safety of our residents. Your priorities are skewed.

College Terrace Library should be open at least 3 days a week, plus Mitchell Park, and the Main Library. The infrastructure should not be a priority, no one will be effected by them being postponed, except maybe the developers. We don't need another new Fire House, just finished one, the public service building is not a necessity.

I agree with Vice Mayor DuBois, that the capital fund, for infrastructure, can be transferred to public services, much more a priority during this time.

I feel we are all having to choose in our own lives, what is necessary, and what can wait.

The below are from comments from paloaltoneline.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Keehn
94306

================================================================

Since they've decided they must cut actual first responders, the ones who'll arrive to arrest the burglar or perform CPR on you- I think it is important to remember the council's previous approval of $716,000 for one item of modern "art" to adorn the 9 figure police/fire building. This city has the zaniest priorities. Part of living in a bubble I suppose.

Web Link
Libraries ought not to be cut if only for the reason that they maintain community cohesion and mental health during difficult times. Permanently closing College Terrace library for the sake of saving $167,500 seems really shortsighted and insensitive to the needs of many seniors and children who then must use public transportation to travel 3.5 miles to the next closest library in other parts of Palo Alto.
Dear Council People,

I am writing again to ask that the College Terrace Library remain open. I am a 65 year resident of College Terrace. The College Terrace Library anchors our community as a place for all ages to explore books, use computers, offer book readings and provides a day care center for pre-school children. The picnic tables and lawn bring families together for concerts and meals. I note that the capital project to improve Cameron Park is greater than one year operation of our little library. Could improvements to Cameron Park be deferred and these funds use to keep the library in operation? Far more people in our community use the library than Cameron Park.

Please support keeping College Terrace Library open.

Thanks, Martha

Martha Hauser
Redacted
I am writing to you to express my dismay on hearing that the City of Palo Alto may cut services altogether for the College Terrace Library.

I get my books from there and also get books from other branches delivered to -- College Terrace and don't have to drive across town to another location for my books. Not only is driving to another branch to pick up books a waste of gas and time, it pollutes the environment and exposes patrons to more people, which is not desirable in a Covid 19 world.

Also it is a meeting place for the neighborhood, which is all the more desired once the shelter in place orders are relaxed.

As no other branch is being closed I don't see why my local branch is being closed. You are penalizing the patrons in this location, which serves Stanford and Barron Park people too.

This is unfair. If you are determined to hone the library services, do it in an even handed manner, reduce hours of all branches. Do not close College Terrace Library branch.

Sharon Inouye
Dear City Council,

I learned that funding for the College Terrace library has not yet been secured. I want to reiterate my strong support of the library as an incredibly valuable community space. I urge you to continue to fund the library's important and essential work. My previous message in support of the library is also included below.

Thank you,
Jessica Stark
Redacted

Dear City Council,

I'm a new resident of College Terrace (as of Oct 2019) and was devastated to hear about the proposal to close the College Terrace library. Before the shelter in place order, I visited the library weekly to check out books. One of my first fond memories after moving to College Terrace was the friendly staff members' help in obtaining a library card and teaching me how to request and check out books. The library is a true bright spot in the neighborhood that encourages residents to unplug and reconnect with literature and each other - sorely needed in the heart of Silicon Valley. I urge you to reject the proposal to close College Terrace library.

Best,
Jessica Stark
Redacted
Yes, yes, yes! Well put!!!

I walk through Cameron Park more often than the library, but the CT library is much more of an icon for our neighborhood. I’d rather see the library stay open than to see the park improvements.

The park will be x% nicer with the improvements, and the library system will be a tiny bit poorer with the CT library, but those are minor effects compared to completely shutting the CT library.

I was staying on the sidelines because I get most of my books from the library electronically. But this is the winning argument. Please keep the CT library open. (And are volunteers a possible staffing solution?)

— Malcolm

On May 16, 2020, at 10:20 AM, doria s <doriasumma@gmail.com> wrote:

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So right now the library is in the "parking lot". That means the library is still not in the proposed budget, but on May 26th Council will revisit this item as we finalize the budget.

I think it is important for the Council to hear your opinion on this topic. You can give your input by emailing city.council@cityofpaloalto.org and/or by calling into our meeting. I can send the conf call info when it is available if you would like.

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Sincerely,

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Redacted
6506447160

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Thank you for your consideration and good luck in your difficult decisions ahead.

Stay safe and healthy,
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Richard and Jane Such, Redacted

--
Doria Summa
(650) 867 7544 Mobile

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(650) 867 7544 Mobile
Thanks Doria.

Plan for all this has been:

1. Go through all the proposed cuts and don’t make any decisions on restoring anything until we’d seen the whole budget
   a. Instead, take the most likely things we’d try to add back, and put them in the “Parking Lot,” a.k.a. the “candidates for restoration” list

2. More refinement and analysis by Staff based on feedback and questions from (1), and keep looking for ways to optimize money available

3. Go over the “Parking Lot” list once we knew everything that would be on it, and had the clearest possible picture of what’s possible

(1) was what we did this past week; (2) is ongoing now, and (3) is coming up in a week. The College Terrace Library is one of the things on the Parking Lot list. That’s when the main decision on it, and the rest of the list, will get made.

Thank you all for writing in; everybody is aware of the numbers you’ve cited, and I think it’s safe to say all of us want to minimize the impact as much as possible particularly on Public Safety and Community Services (including Libraries). I’m sorry everybody has to wait on specific answers to all these things. It’s a pretty gut-wrenching process to go through, and we want to do it as carefully as we can.
Regards, and thank you again for your service on the PTC,

Eric
Sairus Patel <sairus.p.patel@gmail.com>; Sally and Whit Heaton <x40trout@gmail.com>; Samidh Chakrabarti <samidh@samidh.com>; Sheila Bonini <boniniwood@yahoo.com>; Sheila Kothari <sheilak@gmail.com>; Simon Firth <simonfirth@earthlink.net>; Steve Woodward <woodwardmarotta@hotmail.com>; Stewart Carl <stewcarl@pacbell.net>; Sujata Patel <patel_sujata@cfnorcalrep@gmail.com>; Susan Wilson <suwilson@gmail.com>; Suzanne Doyle <sjdoyle@comcast.net>; Suzie Lincoln <slincoln@stanfordalumni.org>; Taylor Brady <tobrady88@gmail.com>; Terry and MarieLouise Fries <ttfries@sbcglobal.net>; Toby Brookes <jtobybrookes@gmail.com>; Todd Lincoln <t3lincoln@yahoo.com>; Toiya Black <toiyablack@gmail.com>; Tom Jack <tomrjack@sbcglobal.net>; Ulla Mick <ullahbhma2007@gmail.com>; Ute Engelke <ute@evcl.com>; Valerie Sarma <vsarma@mac.com>; WENDY COOK <drwendycook@mac.com>; Wendy Pang <wendy.pang@gmail.com>; Zeke Herman <zelek.herman@att.net>; Zohar Lotan <zohar.lotan@att.net>; eric heaton <ericheaton49@gmail.com>; william.xuan@gregtanaka.org

Subject: Re: College Terrace Library

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Redacted
6506447160

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Stay safe and healthy,

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Richard and Jane Such, Redacted

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(650) 867 7544 Mobile

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Palo Alto has faced a tremendous crisis with the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, the crisis would not be as devastating if funding were more carefully managed to reflect areas that matter more to most residents—for example, huge “development” costs that make developers richer and add little to the general quality of life here, rather than investing in low-income housing that is livable and blends into the lifestyle of Palo Alto and super-inflated salaries of city “executives”—higher than those in Sacramento and Washington, DC. And the proposed “fix”—cuts in safety—police and firefighters; reductions in animal control services; closing down of libraries such as the one in College Terrace and community centers (Cubberley) and community programs, all elements that enrich life here.

What is wrong here? Where are the values? Who matters? Obviously, only the wealthy and those who stand to profit financially from dipping into the budget.

Don’t cheat residents by relaxing safety, dismissing animals, and destroying community spirit.

Leonor Delgado
On 2020-05-16 13:14, Brent Barker wrote:

My wife and I completely agree with Doria Summa!!

Brent Barker

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Brent Barker
Freelance Writer
650-813-9433
650-388-0927 (cell)
To the Palo Alto City Council members:

I am writing to state that I agree with my fellow College Terrace (CT) resident, Doria Summa's solutions which are the following:

1. That if the annual savings of closing the College Terrace Library is approximately 1% of the library system's annual budget and if the savings are spread across the library system there would be no discernible reduction in service to patrons.

2. At present, there is a capital project for minor improvements to Cameron Park in College Terrace, delaying this project until such time that the city is again in the black would save 200K (which is 30k more than the two year complete) and could go to funding the CT.

I would also like to add my own solutions which would be to cut the City manager's salary to $150,000 as well as cut back on any other city employee that makes over $150,000 and is under working at this time. Lastly, I agree with Councilman Tanaka, who proposed cutting city public relations personnel instead of crossing guards and libraries.

Doria Summer's sentiments that we should not be closing the only library west of the El Camino because it is the only city facility for community meetings within two miles of any other city building, makes it a very
appropriate use of the first library in Palo Alto, which is also an historic resource, having just recently (2010) been completely restored.

Sincerely,
Sumitra Joy
Princeton St.
Palo Alto, CA.
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Brent Barker

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On Fri, May 8, 2020 at 5:35 PM Annette Ross <port2103@att.net> wrote:

Fully agree and would gladly volunteer there. There are going to be myriad changes to our community b/c of Covid; let’s not toss the cherished community-building treasures of our community.

It is important that CC (and other levels of government) not use Covid as a means to an end for certain pre-Covid agendas. Community preservation is critical now precisely b/c of the economic jolt. And neighborhood libraries may well be a primary resource for many Palo Altans once they reopen.

Sent from my iPhone

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and visitors. Please do not close it, not even temporarily. The closure for the pandemic has been hard enough.

Richard and Jane Such, Redacted

--

Doria Summa
(650) 867 7544 Mobile

--

Doria Summa
(650) 867 7544 Mobile

--

Brent Barker
Freelance Writer
650-813-9433
650-388-0927 (cell)
Dear City Council,

We already lost our main community spaces with the redevelopment of JJ&F and World Centric into the College Terrace Centre, that as of now has no grocery store. That was meant to be our community benefit as you know.

So to then, on top of losing our Community Space at College Terrace Centre, to also lose our College Terrace Library is a huge blow.

We are not close to Mitchell Park nor downtown -- California Ave deserves to have some public community space.

A community loses a lot if we do not have places where we can be together. This is the ONLY place for College Terrace at this point and probably Ventura/Evergreen Park.

We take our daughter there every week. Even when I'm not getting a book I will drop in and browse the new books or movies.

Please reconsider,

Warmly,
Mary Jane Marcus
Redacted
4152699079

--
Learn more & support our RENT FUND for East Palo Alto and nearby neighbors- 100% to families.
#FIRSTOFTHEMONTH
Donate Today

LEARN MORE BY VISITING
www.LivelInPeace.org
My solutions. One. The annual savings of closing the ct lib is approx 1% of the library systems annual budget and if it the savings ere spread across the system there would be no discernible reduction in service to patrons.

Two. There is a Capital project for minor improvements to CAmeron park delaying that project till the city is flush would save 200k Which is 30k more than the two year complete

Closure of the only library west of eve the only city facility fir community meetings within two miles and make grand use of the first library in Pali alto an historic resource that was only just completely restored.

On Fri, May 15, 2020 at 8:28 PM Council Member Tanaka Office <Councilmember.Tanaka.Office@gregtanaka.org> wrote:

Dear Neighbors,

Many thanks for taking the time to write in and/or call into our budget hearings this week. I got hundreds of emails in support of the library. In fact, I think there were more emails and calls into the budget hearings on this topic than all the other topics combined.

I know many of you might be wondering what is the current status after over 20 hours of budget hearings this week. At the tail end of this week's hearings (~midnight Weds), I tried to restore the library budget, but I didn't quite have
enough support... one vote away.

So right now the library is in the "parking lot". That means the library is still not in the proposed budget, but on May 26th Council will revisit this item as we finalize the budget.

I think it is important for the Council to hear your opinion on this topic. You can give your input by emailing city.council@cityofpaloalto.org and/or by calling into our meeting. I can send the conf call info when it is available if you would like.

I'll also be holding office hours on this topic again this Sunday 5/17 at 4:20 pm since many were not able to attend last Sunday because of Mother's Day. If interested, please email justin.qiu@gregtanaka.org to let me know within 24 hours and I can send a Zoom invitation.

On Sun, May 10, 2020 at 8:06 AM Hank Edson <hank@familytreemediation.net> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Council Members,

The College Terrace library plays an irreplaceable role in the college terrace ecosystem. College Terrace is one of the most diverse and accessible Palo Alto neighborhoods for young families with young children. Nestled between Stanford, Page Mill Road corporate offices and the California Avenue corridor, this neighborhood’s hub is Palo Alto’s oldest library. It is the only community institution between the three noted commercial enterprise areas. In addition, what you may not appreciate is how the library contributes to the ecology of the California Ave corridor and farmers market, to Stanford and even to the corporate offices between Page Mill and College Terrace. Image Stanford without Hoover Tower. College Terrace gives Stanford, Page Mill and California Ave the feel of bordering an oasis where children walk the sidewalks carrying books to and from the library attended by their parents pushing a stroller. The library gives the neighborhood dignity, solidarity, elegance, tradition. Take it away and suddenly the neighborhood starts feeling like the disappearing remainder of something being squeezed out by commercialism. And the surrounding commercial areas begin to feel like sprawl in the heart of Palo Alto. Meanwhile, all the kids at Escondido Elementary, many not yet old enough to attend, and many more besides will undeniably have the frequency of replenished different books to read substantially diminished and their relationship with and fondness for the library experience as part of American life and values erased without even knowing it. The many elderly living in college terrace also will have their quality of life meaningfully diminished. The entire community, I can tell you, will grieve. (And I dare say that would not be without political consequences.) When it comes to quality of life, some aspects of the ecosystem have a non-quantifiable value that is irreplaceable. The College Terrace Library is one. It would be a huge and destructive mistake for the council to close this library. I often hear people ask, “What does the city council really do?” Don’t let the only answer they consciously experience be: “They close our library. That’s what they do.” The difference between the library’s budget and the cost of maintaining a wasted asset is small. Surely intelligent leadership can come up with a means for saving this living, vitally contributing heart of a showcase Palo Alto community representative of economic inclusivity, family values, and cultural diversity!

Sincerely,

Hank Edson

Redacted
6506447160

Sent from my iPhone

On May 8, 2020, at 7:50 PM, James Cook <jamesfelixcook@yahoo.com> wrote:
Dear City Council Members,

I wholeheartedly agree with my neighbors and friends: we believe keeping the College Terrace is a way to promote community, wonder and happiness during a time of isolation, despair and sadness.

Thank you for your consideration and good luck in your difficult decisions ahead.

Stay safe and healthy,
James Felix Cook

On May 8, 2020, at 6:03 PM, doria s <doriasumma@gmail.com> wrote:

I agree
And i will do all I can to maintain this community asset from unnecessarily being shut down for false economies.
Very best
Doria

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Richard and Jane Such, Redacted
Dear members of the City Council,

The College Terrace Library is the city resource most used by my family. All five of us read a lot and take out dozens of books and CD's. My husband likes to spend time there reading, and I love to browse the Lucky Day shelves and the new books. Both our adult children live with us and read extensively, and my son's wife is also a big user. It's the only library west of El Camino and while we could go to the other libraries, it would be a significant loss of our favorite destination in Palo Alto and of a long-standing family tradition. Surely there are other ways to cut the budget!

Sincerely,
Dedra Hauser
Dear City Council members,

I hope you will take another hard look this coming week at finding ways NOT to close the College Terrace library. It is an invaluable resource for the community who live on this part of town.

- The next nearest library is 3.5 miles away, which makes it really difficult for senior citizens and children.

- There is an oft-repeated assertion that College Terrace Library checkouts are only 5% of total, implying no-big-deal to close it. But per the library circulation data report, this doesn't include online orders. This means that CT Library accounts for _far more_ than 5% when it comes to where books are picked up. Said another way, since the CT Library is small in terms of shelf space, many patrons request books or media online via the Palo Alto library website and then have them sent to the CT Library for pickup. This saves countless car trips across town.

- Libraries, along with parks, “make” the feel and fabric of a town. With so many difficult things going on in the world at the moment, it sends the wrong message to close libraries. I’ve lived in Palo Alto for nearly 30 years, and I know that libraries are core to the identity of this town.

- The expected savings, $167,000, is really small in the grand scheme of things.

ALSO: Can I ask you to put up for serious discussion whether the $6.1 million (4.5%) salary increase for city employees can be pulled back a bit for the sake of shared sacrifice during this crisis? This is not out of the norm. My company VMware (major high tech employer in Palo Alto) won’t have any promotions nor salary increases this year, among other cuts. While no one is happy about this, employees recognize this was a tough decision for senior leadership. They understand the need for shared sacrifice during this once-in-a-lifetime crisis.

Surely we can find $167,000 to keep College Terrace library, perhaps by forgoing the $6.1 million (4.5%) salary increase slated for July?

Thank you,
Joe Lee
Oberlin Street, Palo Alto
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Cut city managers salary-- save the library!
Elan Loeb
Barron park
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On Sun, May 10, 2020 at 8:57 AM Eileen Stolee <estolee@gmail.com> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Hi,
I hope everyone on this thread has sent their concerns to the City Council.

Please send an email to city.council@cityofpaloalto.org
It is very important that our elected officials hear from all of us!

Thanks,
Eileen Stolee

On Sat, May 9, 2020 at 6:20 PM Ronda Rosner <rondarosner@gmail.com> wrote:
Yes, I'm annoyed that $1.3M can be saved from reducing hours at other branches, yet the city will only save $167K from a complete closure of the CT library. There has to be a better compromise, like reducing the open days for CT from four to three perhaps? A complete closure is too extreme and unfair to our hood! Ronda, Redacted

"It is strange how new and unexpected conditions bring out unguessed ability to meet them."
~ Edgar Rice Burroughs

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Richard and Jane Such, Redacted
Hi City Council,

As a resident of College Terrace, we use the local library so often. It would be a huge loss to our neighborhood and community. My husband and I and our three sons all use the library. My children love the freedom of walking there to look for books. Having the local library is so unique and special and additive to our lives. My children and I see neighbors while we are there. It connects us to the neighbors of all ages.

We hope the budget can be altered to keep our special library. It is part of why living in College Terrace is special.

Thanks!
Berkeley Revenaugh

Berkeley Revenaugh  
Senior Client Portfolio Manager, FT Multi-Asset Solutions  
Franklin Templeton Investments

tel +11 (650) 431-5701  
berkeley.revenaugh@franklintempleton.com  
www.franklintempleton.com

Notice: All email and instant messages (including attachments) sent to or from Franklin Templeton Investments (FTI) personnel may be retained, monitored and/or reviewed by FTI and its agents, or authorized law enforcement personnel, without further notice or consent.

Under new Data Protection regulations in Europe your personal information may be subject to our EU specific Privacy & Cookies Notice which you can read here, regardless of where the information originates. Depending on your location, other privacy laws and regulations may also apply to you.
Dear city council

Please vote to keep college terrace library open. It is an essential part of our community and the only library branch safely accessible by bicycle or foot traffic to the residential communities west of el camino. This is an especially impactful consideration for children, retirees and anyone without ready access to a vehicle — tho the library is frequented by all. College Terrace library is a treasured presence in our community and provides critical services for Palo Alto residents.

Please vote to keep College Terrace library open.

Sincerely

Lesley Robertson.
May 15, 2020

City Council Members:

Please keep open the College Terrace Library. It is a valuable and popular resource for College Terrace, Evergreen Park, Ventura, and Stanford residents.

Palo Alto keeps losing commercial resources, especially in and around California Avenue - bookstores, thrift shops, hardware stores, flower shops, stationery stores, and so on. Let's not have our city government contribute to such losses by closing this library.

Mike Forster, Evergreen Park
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94306
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

it is historic. it is a community center. it is inexpensive. it is essential. build it up, don’t tear it down.

Anna Bigelow, PhD
Department of Religious Studies
Redacted
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305

abigelow@stanford.edu

pronouns: she/her
As a resident of College Terrace and Palo Alto and trying to keep the tradition of reading alive please do not close this historical library. I know times are tough but please don’t kill a tradition and landmark. This next gen needs to start reading and the library is a big part of that.

Shuchi Sarkar
Council Members,

I just read about the proposed reduction in library hours and cuts to the Art Center programs. I’m writing to ask whether volunteers could supplement paid staff so that library hours can be maintained per normal. I am willing to volunteer to help at Rinconada library which is my neighborhood library.

Thanks in advance for considering this idea.

Skip Shapiro
sailorskip76@gmail.com
From: Jordan Dietch <jordandietch@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 2:21 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Please Don’t close College Terrace Library

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Please don’t close this library. We frequently use this library to check out books.

Thanks,
Jordan
City Council,

Stop the unnecessary capital construction. Bike bridge?? You have got to be kidding. The underpass is available.

The cost of the City Manager's office per 2020 adopted budget (salaries only):

City Manager - $356,000  
Assistant to the City Manager - $310,000  
Assistant City Manager - $256,000  
Deputy City Manager - $214,000  
Chief Communications Office - $206,000  
Communications Manager - $121,000  
Executive Assistant to the City Manager - $102,000  
2 Admin Assistants - $178,000  
Management Analyst - $85,000

Total salary is $1,830,000; add in benefits, and it's $2,700,000

Five (5) PR positions at City Hall ?????????????!!!!!!

Lisa Caracciolo $131,389 salary, $179,357 salary+benefits  
Meghan Horrigan-Taylor, $180,000, $252,000 salary + benefits (benefits est @ 40%)  
Catherine Elvert: $155,836 salary, $220,529 salary+benefits  
Janine Hartley, $136,449 salary, $185,901 salary+benefits  
Janine De La Vega, $125,000 + $175,000 Salary and benefits (benefits set @ 40%)

Any of those salaries will completely offset the College Terrace library closure.

Voted for cuts to police and fire:

Fine, Filseth, Cormack and Kniss
We will remember when we vote.

Cheers,
Daniel
Dear City Council,

I understand that you are in need of making budget cuts. One of the programs on the block is the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre.

I implore you to continue to provide funding. I began at the Children’s Theatre in 1968 at the age of 9. It changed my life both personally and professionally. It became my beacon and my family. I was there until I graduated from high school. I kept in touch and always went back to visit.

I never realized how privileged and special it was until I went to UCLA and no one had heard of such a place. They only had arts in school.

I continued a life in the theatre for 25 years. My life would have never been as amazing or as rich without the foundation of the one and only Palo Alto Children’s Theatre.

Please value this treasure. It’s one of the reasons Palo Alto is so special.

Most Sincerely,

Diana (née Rollnick) Podolsky

Sent from my iPhone
Baumb, Nelly

From: Ray-Perry, Cayla
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2020 7:20 PM
To: Council, City; Fine, Adrian; Cormack, Alison; DuBois, Tom; Filseth, Eric (Internal); Kniss, Liz (internal); Kou, Lydia; Tanaka, Greg
Subject: My piece about our jobs in the city

I intend to keep this short and sweet. My job as one of the few professionals that produces the shows at the Palo Alto children's theatre (specifically I paint the sets and I am the only one on staff that does so) is an incredibly specific one. Most people wouldn't know that my career path exists, let alone that someone like me has a spot on staff with the city of Palo Alto. Even of those in the technical theatre industry, only a finite percentage of them can paint theatrical sets. Luckily for the children's theatre, I am also trained in education. I work as a teaching artist and have more that 6 years experience working with children. This makes me one of the only people qualified in the Bay Area to work this job. It took 3 years of constant job searching to come across this role at the children's theatre--essentially my dream job.

I have worked countless jobs in the theatre industry, and I can tell you without a doubt, that my job at the Palo Alto children's theatre is the best one I have ever worked. The quality of work we are able to produce for the children in our area is world class compared to other opportunities that these children may have in the arts. This is SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE the city has had the resources to be specific and hire people like me. I don't intend to toot my own horn, only to express that people like me are not abundant. This is also to explain that jobs like mine at the children's theatre are not abundant. If I lost my job here, I would be forced to essentially start fresh with a new career. I would be lost. It would be years before I find another job in my field because it is the only thing I have experience in.

The staff at the children's theatre is small but incredibly mighty. It has taken years for us to all come to the theatre on our own paths, but if laid off, it would take years to build up the staff support again for the children's theatre. Staffing there is not an on/off switch because we are unique. The skills they need at the children's theatre are not abundant in the Bay Area AT ALL and starting over again would be starting over the build of the children's theatre's reputation as well.

I understand the need to not produce shows for the foreseeable future. This is an important and necessary step to keep Palo Alto youth and our staff safe and healthy. But we are a small team and we are able to work socially distant. We have incredible skills to offer the city in other ways, and their are parts of our organization, such at shop upkeep, that we have neglected due to all the work we have been putting into shows in the past year and a half. But given the opportunity to take a break from producing, we can even further improve our programing--and then we'll already be ready to hit the ground running when we can produce shows again, creating that on/off switch!

Thank you for reading. It is my sincere hope that I can continue working in this city for longer. I can tell you with absolute honesty that this is the best job I have ever had. Loosing it would ruin me.

Cayla Ray-Perry
Scenic Artist
Palo Alto Children's Theatre
Scenic Art by Cayla Ray-Perry

Cayla is a scenic painter, designer, and artist with a BFA in Theatre Design and Production (2014) from Central Washington University. Cayla was born and raised in San Jose, California where she developed a love for theatre and performance as early as age 6. She first began to apply her creative and

www.scenicartbycayla.com
Dear City Council,

Please don't close the college terrace library, I am in fifth grade and I get a lot of my studying resources from that library and it would bring me lots of trouble to make my busy parents drive me all the way across town to get 2 or 3 books instead of walking 10 minutes.

Thanks,
Toby Lobell
Dear city council members,

In these incredibly difficult and challenging times we need the small things that make our neighborhood and our lives worthwhile. The College Terrace Library serves the entire community from very young children through to very old seniors.

Books can be very dear friends when people are not available for whatever reason. People need to be close to this library. Please make whatever budget cuts are necessary elsewhere to keep this valuable and important library open. As it is we only have access four days a week.

Thank you for your consideration,

Karen Price
Hanover St

Sent from my iPhone
City Council,

I am a high school student and Gunn, and I go to the college terrace library almost every week. It is the only library within walking distance of where I and many people around me live. To go to another library means to drive through traffic for a while and then go into a big crowded library. This quiet, perfect, library has been the home of many of my fondest memories. Please do not take this place where other and I can relax and learn away.

-Kai Lobell
Dear Council Members and City Manager,

In listening to some hours of the budget hearings last week, it is clear what a very difficult task it is to effectively and efficiently present the material for the Council's decision-making process, not to mention COVID impacts, which cause substantive financial problems (huge reductions in budget) and process problems (how to "meet", work together, and provide public access). It is much appreciated that you are doing what you can to make it work. I am especially impressed with the budget page on the City website making it easy to go back and revisit particular areas of the hearings (thanks for those "jump to" links).

As you continue your deliberations on the budget, please keep in mind how important arts and cultural institutions are to the residents of Palo Alto; kids, teens, and older adults count on many of the community services that make Palo Alto such a great place to live. It is especially important to support the library in College Terrace, the Children's theater, and the Arts Center. These venues are not only culturally significant, but they house community meeting places that are of utmost importance to the residents. Also, I have always thought, after all the hard work raising funds and staving off further deterioration of the Roth building by volunteers over many years, that the City should step in and finish getting it ready to house the City museum. In this city where there is an incredible amount of volunteerism promoting and preserving its history, it has always surprised me that we haven't gotten that museum up and running.

These are not huge investments of funding but letting them die out during this time would be catastrophic; these are one-way doors that are harder each year to re-open. Some changes to the current Capital Improvement Plan, such as street and parking lot maintenance and improvements and canceling the El Camino Pedestrian Plan would be less impactful than closing the Arts Center for 2 years, for example.

Please ensure savings that can be made available from capital infrastructure programs and capital improvement plans are earmarked to support these popular and vitally important community services.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

Andie Reed
Hello

I am a frequent user of the college terrace library, and wanted to voice my support for keeping it open. It’s important for local users, especially children, to be able to walk to a library. It’s one of the best uses of our tax dollars and I doubt would save much money relative to other expenses. there are no other libraries within walking distance of the Stanford and college terrace neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

David Lobell
Warm greetings,

I am quite impressed by the hard and personal steps taken by our city manager.
More on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ArdanBlum/status/1263188521856061440

Best regards,

Ardan Michael Blum

On Wed, May 13, 2020 at 2:55 PM Ardan Michael Blum <ardan.michael.blum@gmail.com> wrote:

Warm greetings,

Please see this article:


Best regards,

Ardan Michael Blum

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Dear city council,
I understand that there are incredibly difficult financial decisions being made in this unprecedented time, and appreciate one has to make tough calls. I would like to ask that you reconsider the decision to close the College Terrace branch library, as it is the only branch that serves residents on the west side of El Camino.

It is a vital resource for many graduate student families and elderly residents who do not have access to a car. Those on a budget find free access to newspapers, magazines and books are an incredible way to continue learning and find pleasure in a tough economy. The relatively low cost of keeping this open should be a factor in your decision on where to cut.

Thanks,
Carolyn Manning
Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for the extremely difficult work you are doing making hard decisions during this time and for your thoughtful consideration hearing members of the community. I would not want to be in your positions and recognize how tough it is to make these choices.

I wanted to write a brief note on behalf of prioritizing the Children's Theatre as much as is possible, in which both my sons have performed in for several years now. My older son, now a junior, has often said "the theatre is my life!" For many students, the Theatre is much, much more than an extra activity. It is a source of their primary community, confidence in who they are, and their outlet for passion and creativity. It is my hope that if social guidelines allow performances this year that we could at least have a Spring 2021 performance and a Summer Hot Dog season, especially important for the Seniors who will be graduating next year, and also for the many other children who will have gone a full year without being able to pursue their passion, creative outlet, and self-expression. After months of disruption, not being able to participate in their favorite activity because of budget, IF it is possible where we are with COVID 19, would be such a disappointment - and it would be such a celebration for the child actors and the audience to be able to perform a show after this trying period of our lives.

My other concern is staff. The Children's Theatre has such a high level of professionalism and excellence and I see it as a true jewel of the City that supports such a program. Much of this comes from the wonderful work of the current staff. It is hard for artists to live in our area at any time and I am worried that if people lost jobs they may not be around to resume their positions when this is past us.

I know things must be cut and that there are so many beneficial programs the City supports. As a parent, I am willing to step up and contribute more to our theatre should a performance be possible and I think others may be as well if the City can continue to support it. May you continue in your decision making with wisdom and patience and thank you for your service and care.

Best, Kim Thacker
Dear City Council Members,

The Children's Theater is one of the prime jewels that makes Palo Alto a special place to live. Please do not cut Children's Theater's budget; we need it, the children need it, especially after shelter in place. We need art and community in our lives.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Garr
I know times are tough, but losing two years of children’s theatre funding likely means that we could lose the incredible staff there. Both of my kids had formidable experiences under Judge Luckey, Patricia Montenegro, Richard at the desk and Jennie the costume designer. The theatre is a gem and we are so lucky to have it in our community. Please reconsider or work with FOPACT to try to reduce the impact on the theatre. Thank you for your consideration and all you are doing at this difficult time.

Jennifer Antonow
Dear City Council,

Please, please reconsider the funding for the Children’s Theatre.

My daughter had struggled with friends at school since preschool and from performing in the many shows at the Children’s Theatre, she begun to overcome her struggles and is now able to make good friendships at school. In addition, the Children’s Theatre is a special place and an invaluable resource here in our community. Please do not take this away from our children. My daughter was looking forward to auditioning for the Summer Hot Dog performances and was really saddened to hear that due to the current pandemic, the performances would be cancelled. Please do not take away even more opportunities. It would truly be devastating for her as well as all the other kids in our community.

Respectfully,

Tammy Kwan
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

______________________________

Dear City Council:
I’m writing in support of our Palo Alto Childrens Theatre. I grew up in Palo Alto in two places: my childhood home, and the Childrens Theatre back when Pat Briggs was there. My roles ranged from “part of the crowd scene” to the leading role of Harlequin. Everything I needed to learn about teamwork and resilience, I learned at the Childrens Theatre. Please support their budget and keep this jewel in Palo Alto open.

Respectfully
Laura Wolfe
Iris Way

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

Hi! My name is Arielle Blumenfeld, and I have been a member of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre for the past six or seven years. I cannot explain how much the theatre has made an impact on my life.

As a third-grader, I had little interest in sports. Although I played soccer, swam, and competed in gymnastics, I never felt a strong drive towards these activities.

I remember seeing one of my close friends preform and decided I wanted to try acting. This was one of the best decisions of my life. When I auditioned for the first time, I felt excited when I saw my name on the company list. I loved the sassy character I played, Garland, and remember the costume I wore. I still recall how magical I felt when I first stepped onto the stage. I loved everything about it.

Since then, I acted in over twenty shows (the majority were at the Children's Theatre). I have participated in plays, musicals, playhouse experiences, cabarets, and was a summer intern for PACT in June of 2019. Through acting in these productions, my goal was to inspire young kids to try acting. Theatre made an incredible impact on my life. By closing the theatre, you are stopping lots of children from feeling their spark. If I never participated in my first show, I would have missed out on some of the best programs, experiences, and friends I have ever had. Without the Children's Theatre, I would never have had a passion for theatre. By cutting the theatre from your budget, you are depriving hundreds of children of finding their potential passions. From the bottom of my heart, please reconsider keeping the Palo Alto Children's Theatre open, for it is my home.

Best regards,

Arielle Blumenfeld
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

We are writing this message of strongest possible support on behalf of the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre. As residents of Palo Alto for over 10 years, and as parents of two daughters, there are few local programs which have brought similar joy, culture, creativity, excitement, imagination, and pure magic to our lives like the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre. Our daughters have been attending productions and performing in the theatre since a very young age, and we cannot imagine living and raising children in Palo Alto without the theatre.

Interestingly, we recently read a novel titled “The Last Train to London”, a nationally recognized best-selling novel by Mrs. Meg Clayton (please see cover below). We were pleasantly surprised after reading her fabulous novel to read the author’s acknowledgment section describing her inspiration for the novel (see below as well). In short, the theatre has clearly influenced countless others well beyond the city of Palo Alto, and it would be absolutely devastating to see this particular program cut. We realize that each program is vital to the longevity of our city, but we urge you to please sustain the theatre on behalf of the families and children of Palo Alto and the region. As Oscar Wilde once said: “I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being”. These words resonate loudly today as we face an unprecedented threat.

Thank you for your consideration,

Yair & Maya Blumenfeld

Yair J. Blumenfeld, MD
Associate Professor
Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology
Stanford University School of Medicine

Director, Fetal Therapy
Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My path to writing this novel began on an afternoon more than a decade ago, with my then-fifteen-year-old son arriving home from the Palo Alto Children's Theater; Michael Lynch, a director I worked with, had the idea that a small group of the theater kids he so loved might learn about the little-known Kindertransport effort and write a play about it. My son—generally so voluble—was troublingly silent when he came home from the first of four interviews he and his theater friends did with Ellen Fletch, Holga Newman, Elizabeth Miller, and Margot Lobrec. When Michael died only months later of stomach cancer, the head of the theater, Pat Briggs, made a deathbed promise to him to carry the story forward somehow. Pat, when she was near the end of her life, and with the children by then grown and scattered, allowed me to take it in hand in my own way. I held the silence of my son in my heart as I wrote this story, and beside it, the love of his directors for the children they nurtured.

This book was inspired by and is meant to honor Traus Wijmuller-Meijer and the children the rescuers, as well as the many people who made the Kindertransports possible. I have done my best to remain true in spirit to the facts of the Anschluss, Kristallnacht, and the shockingly rapid change in Viennese society in the few months between the two, including the role of the then-young and ambitious Adolf Eichmann, and the British and Trusi's efforts to bring about the first Kindertransport.
Hi, city council member -
I am so sad to hear about the proposal to cancel Children's theater performances for two years. This program brings so much joy and skill development opportunities for young actors and theater. It is also provides a platform for Palo Alto communities and families to connect with each other.

It would be so horrific to simply cancel the program for two years; for many children, the period may be the very critical two years to grow and learn. Understanding that there is budget pressure, I still believe that there could be many other ways to continue the program with the reduced funding, such as higher tickets fee, mandatory and higher charge for all actors who participate in the program;

Thank you for considering this and I hope city of Palo Alto makes the right decision during the difficult time in supporting our children and our community.

Best regards
Ting
(650-600-8918)
From: Rachel Lotan <rlotan@stanford.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 7:28 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: college terrace library

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.**

Please, please, please, keep it open!

Rachel Lotan, PhD
Professor (Teaching) Emerita
Dear Palo Alto City Council:

Palo Alto Children's Theater was the highlight of my three children's year. We moved to Palo Alto this past August, an awkward time to have to start 8th grade for my oldest child, Theo. He tried out for and was cast in Phantom Tollbooth, giving him confidence, making friends, and making him feel better about the move.

About a month after Phantom Tollbooth was done, my ten year old twins were cast in Stinky Cheese Man at Juana Briones School where they attend. What a wonderful production and so fun for Noa and Eli who made great friends during the performance.

My wife and I moved away from Palo Alto twenty years ago and when we returned this past summer, we did find some things that we didn't like now (crowdedness, lack of affordability) but Palo Alto Children's Theater made us feel so much better about our move back.

Please don't cut funding. There must be some other ways in this very wealthy area to make it up with additional revenue sources.

Best
Jon Zeitlin
Dear City council member,

As a parent of 3 young kids, a physician, and member of this community, I strongly urge you to consider the importance of the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre. It provides a valuable service for our kids to express themselves and be a part of the arts which is even more important in these challenging times.

Thank you for your consideration.

Annie Chan
Dear Friends,

I am writing to you about the suggested cutbacks and suspension of community theater in Palo Alto. This concerns me deeply as both an educator, a cons and parent. Live community theater is an absolutely essential part of our children’s social-emotional development. It protects their mental health in ways that will encourage resilience for a lifetime. Opportunities for children, their parents – for all community members – to attend and participate in live theater, allows us to withstand the challenges of daily life and to find our voices within a sea of noise. I will not bore you with the research documenting the health benefits of community theater for both adults and children living in a community like ours, but suffice it to say that live community theater is an ESSENTIAL SERVICE in many ways that impact our long term health and wellbeing.

Please consider finding a way to keep community theater alive in Palo Alto.

With gratitude for your consideration,

Maya Adam MD

Maya Adam MD
Director of Health Education Outreach

Stanford Center for Digital Health Education
Faculty Lead | Digital MEdIC South Africa
Clinical Assistant Professor | Dept. of Pediatrics
Stanford School of Medicine
+1 (650) 839 3600 | +27 (72) 237 8926
Zoom: https://stanford.zoom.us/my/mayaadam

Digital MEdIC YouTube channel
Watch our latest animated COVID-19 prevention video.
Together, we can prevent the spread.
Dear City Council,

We are so pleased to learn that the city administrators will cut back some pay. I have lost all my pay during the pandemic and I have worked assiduously to build my business as a realtor for years. But I don't have access to the public library in College Terrace and count on their services for my livelihood. I am willing to sacrifice my pay to have public services like my local library, but I would be hard pressed to lack access after so much sacrifice.

There must be other less important priorities in the city budget that could be cut to preserve the oldest library in Palo Alto. Pls find them and preserve the heritage of learning and wisdom that we all know as the College Terrace Library. Thank you.

Amber Li
To whom it may concern,

Palo Alto has the longest running children's theater in the nation and it is critical the city does what it is needed to protect it. This is an important part of the fabric of our children's lives, as present and future artists and consumers of art and theater. Shelter in place is bringing a huge amount of mental health issues, addiction to screens, anxiety, depression. We have to preserve an outlet for creativity.

My kids have attended every single show since they were two, they are now 7 and 9. It is great for the young ones, fabulous confident builder for the older ones and good role model.

Please take the necessary measure to preserve it.

Kind regards

--

Laurence
To whom it my concern:

Please do not slash the Children’s Theater budget. My child is in 3rd grade and has been waiting for years to be allowed to participate in the Children’s Theater performance. If you cut it for 2 years, she will never be able to do this because she will miss her one and only year that our school was scheduled to have this option. She will be absolutely devastated!

Thank you for your time,
Elly Erlikh (mother to a rising 4th grader and aspiring actress, and to a rising Kindergartner)
Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Dear Council Members,

Hello, my name is Kathryn Johnston. I’m currently living at 325 Channing Ave, but have also lived on Coleridge and Lowell Avenues in my many years of life in Palo Alto.

I write in support of continuing city resources to the Palo Alto Art Center—while understanding full well that there will need to be across-the-board cuts for many important programs this and next year, due to the coronavirus.

My daughter—and now my granddaughter—have been the beneficiaries of the both warm and stimulating talents and programs of the Art Center. These classes are part of the woof and warp of their characters now, and will remain a touchstone of their youth (and the products of these classes? all over our home...) But it is the excellence of the instructors, the many and varied program offerings, that pushed these two youth to explore the further edges of their creative capabilities.

I was a Macintosh computer consultant for 26 years; it was a part of my work to also support women in this male-heavy profession. And, now, is not Art an integral part of S.T.E.A.M.? Hasn’t the work of Steve Jobs pushed this town forward fully as much as Hewlett and Packard’s contributions did--- Steve, with his focus that an aesthetic sense must be an integral part of our technological hard- and soft-ware driven lives?

IF there is a “Regional Advantage” in this Valley---as AnnaLee Saxenian of U.C. Berkeley has contended—a large part of the synergy we all stew in every waking day, flows from the cross-pollination that occurs here among its many-cultured people, between and among disciplines. Graphic sensitivity and sophistication propelled many of our local companies to become global brands—and one reason that has such weight here as a design component is because of the visual sophistication of Palo Altans. The Art Center’s full-throated existence ensures that this influence will continue to flourish....

Thank you for your consideration of my position,
and My Best to you all,
Kathryn Johnston

Kathryn Johnston
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2765
landline: 650 600 8662
mobile: 202 340 9739
kathryn.johnston@mac.com
Hello council members,

I’m saddened to hear of the cuts to performances at our beloved Children’s theatre. PACT has been an important part of our children’s’ lives growing up and a great place for them to develop into young adults. Under the watchful, yet caring direction of Mr Luckey and Ms Patricia, our girls learnt to pursue what they loved and felt appreciated to be a part of the performances. It would be a big loss to the City to cut these performances entirely, especially with the kind of work this particular theatre has been doing. It really is a gem and we should look at ways to keep some performances at least going.

Simrun, our older one, especially overcame her shyness mainly due to the theatre and is now an advocate for youth. Most recently, she was invited to join the alcove YAG, run by the county in partnership with Stanford.

Did you know that the theatre partnered with the Stanford Compression Forum for the past two summers to put up some unique programming? These employed digital tech to create an immersive theatre experience, that can also be extended to some social distancing - appropriate ways to have programming for the public. I urge you to reconsider.

Sincerely,

Lakshmi Rao
(Mom to Simrun and Areet Rao)
From: Elise Singer <elise.singer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 3:27 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: childrens theater budget

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

It is with passion that I write in support of full Children’s Theater programming. Although I know we have a serious budget shortfall to reconcile, our family finds this to be an unacceptable compromise. The theater must continue to offer their nationally recognized programming, including performances and classes.

I am happy to discuss further, as required. Please do NOT pass the proposed new cuts that effectively cancel performances.

Sincerely,
Elise + Elliot Singer
Redacted
Palo Alto
Dear Council Members,

Please reconsider cuts to the Palo Alto Childrens’ Theater programs. Growing up in PACT was a life saving activity for me and enriched my childhood beyond measure. Although I live in another state, I am still actively connected to many of my theater friends from that time. This week I pointed out Zeljko Ivanek on Madam Secretary to my daughter and reminisced how he played an ugly stepsister in the dance production of Cinderella in the 70's with myself in the corps de ballet.

There are several Facebook groups with whom I have shared this news. Many of us would consider donating to keep the theater programs alive and well. The benefits of theater in childhood are lifelong. Please do not be shortsighted at this time. And consider approaching wealthy patrons of the arts to help out.

Best,

Susan Pease Banitt, LCSW, RYT
Author, Speaker, Consultant, Teacher
Lotus Heart Counseling
www.suepeasebanitt.com
@suepeasebanitt

Lotus Heart Counseling
Redacted
Portland, OR 97210
Mobile: 503-869-0314
Fax: 503-241-4250
Good evening, my name is Gil Weissman.

I graduated from Palo Alto High School in 2019, and I wanted to stop by tonight to strongly urge you all to rethink the proposed reduction in funding for various Palo Alto teen programs, as well as the children’s theater and art center.

Through my four years of high school, I was an active member of the community program Teen Arts council, culminating in my serving as president for the 2018-2019 school year.

Founded in 2009 through the Palo Alto children’s theater in response to the devastating suicide clusters, the teen arts council has continued to be an important pillar in creating community among the teens of Palo Alto.

The teen arts council provides a necessary outlet and opportunity for teens to share and experience each other’s art outside of the structured school system, which is particularly important in Palo Alto, in which the arts within the school district have been and continue to be vulnerable to budgetary cuts, as was recently highlighted in the deliberations of the PAUSD school board to reduce instructional leader benefits, regarding further cuts to already undervalued arts programs with the. As is well-known to be strongly supported by a growing body of research, creative expression through art is highly conducive to student’s well being and their mental health.

Growing up in this community, I can personally attest to the crucial role of these art programs for the developing adolescent’s sense of self worth, community, responsibility, and creativity, which I was fortunate enough to have instilled in me from a young age with my time at the Palo Alto children’s theater, a vital source for youth activity and general entertainment in the city.

As is increasingly evident, one of the worst ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic pertains to mental health. Fortunately, these unprecedented times do not mean that art has to stop like so much of the rest of our world, and the Palo Alto arts community has shown us that it can continue to operate, as effectively as (if not more effectively than) ever, via technology for online interaction.

The teen arts council and Palo Alto childrens theater were trailblazers and among the first, with their inspiring leadership, to adapt rapidly to the situation, providing virtual arts events to the community when they were needed most.
I strongly urge you to check out some of the amazing events that they have been able to produce and make available to the community, such as the bi-weekly teen arts council virtual open mic nights, which have been a tremendous success. The fact that the arts always seem to come up first in any discussion about cuts, as is abundantly clear with the history of the PAUSD is, frankly, tiring. This constant battle sends a negative message to students in the community about how they are valued, perpetuating an already toxic and stressful environment for students who find it difficult to thrive exclusively in traditional academic fields. The community arts programs in the city of palo alto provided me a home. They provided me an escape, a creative outlet, and perhaps most importantly, a community. It is heartbreaking for me to think that such severe cuts would be made to programs that have had nothing but a positive impact on the city for such a long time, and that future students will not be given these resources for self expression and well-being at a time when they are needed most.

And so once again, I strongly urge you to rethink the budget cuts for these essential programs.

Sincerely,

Gil Weissman

gilweissman2008@gmail.com

(650)714-5215
I have lived in College Terrace with my husband and children for 25 years.

I am writing to plead that the College Terrace Library not be closed. The building and property has come to represent more than a quiet place where one can almost recede into the past with a book. Every time I walk my dog, I feel that when I walk around the property that I am walking around the heartbeat of the neighborhood. Parks are a wonderful place to meet and greet neighbors but the library and its green represents something different for me, a place to reflect about why I chose to live here. It brings me back to a small library in Truro MA (Cape Cod) where I took my children in the evening, red and sticky from the beach. The library here harkens back to the past just like the Truro one, and there are very few places where we can feel the smallness of a neighborhood amidst the constant progress of big and bigger buildings appearing.

Please protect this precious piece of landscape and all it has to offer.

Thank you,
Angela Sowa
650 269-4035
Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear council members,

I'm writing to you in support of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre.

PACT was my son's second home for MANY years. He started with the Outreach production at Escondido elementary school, and moved on to perform in many main stage, hotdog, and playhouse productions over the years. He is currently a sophomore at Columbia University, studying Computer Science and continues to perform with their theatre group.

Here's a 3min 45sec video clip from 2019's Friends of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre's Gala where my son shared his experiences at PACT and the impact it has had on him:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TR_3BAADKtAYzSnu-BKUvAgCj0Y5rEg/view?usp=sharing

I also like to add that the staff at the theatre are the most competent, caring individuals and have become family to us.

Palo Alto Children's Theatre is a gem in our community and it will be a shame to close the doors on something so valuable that is a community magnet.

I hope you will reconsider your plans regarding the theatre and open its doors as soon as it's safe to do so.

Best,
Nazy Attarzadeh
Dear Council,

I write to you today after hearing the shocking and very alarming news that you are considering suspending funding to the Children’s Theater as a way of overcoming the budget shortfall that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Children's Theater is EXACTLY what we need in order to weather this storm and come through as a community and as a society. Why would you consider cutting one of the lifelines that our children have to a great source of stability in terms of their mental health (and ours!) What could be more healing, more uniting and more important than supporting community theater at this time?

I write to you as a business leader, a parent and a citizen of our community.

Please support community theater and the Palo Alto Children's Theater in this unprecedented time.

We NEED theater to survive this...

Thank you for listening.

--

Thanks

Lawrence
PA City Council Members
I've lived in College Terrance with my wife since December 1996. The Library is an institution that for some seems to be 'easy pickins' when times get tough - as they indeed are. This isn't the first time the Library has come up for retirement to conserve resources!
I appreciate the difficulty the Council faces in trimming to meet obligations while being overwhelmed providing services to us residents as revenues disappear.
However, it seems that a Library, a place for learning and enriching one's life, needs to be protected. For some in falls into the same category as music, dance, mental health, etc that our culture too easily decides we can cut these out without cost. We know the cost as our area has maintained a rich educational, cultural and nurturing attitude of the mind and body for decades.
Please preserve this wonderful landmark.
Thanks
Dennis Facchino
Hello City Council,

Thank you for your leadership during the challenging times that Covid-19 presents. We know the city is going to have to make a number of difficult decisions about the future in order to be fiscally responsible.

I am writing to express my support for the Children's Theater and ask that whatever cuts are made there are not too onerous. The Children's Theater is such a vital resource for our children. In addition to providing access to and inspiration from the arts, the programs there teach the kids so much about responsibility, hard work, and team work.

This is so invaluable to kids who are often times at a point in their young lives where they are just developing their sense of self and who they want to be in the world. The programs are a resource like no other in the city and we really need to keep them alive during what I'm sure will be a difficult time in the future. The program has had an incredibly positive impact on all three of our children and their many friends involved in their various projects!

I would urge you to think creatively about how to support and operate the Children's Theater. Even a little bit of access is better than none, not only for the children involved but for our whole community!

Best,

Ryan

--
Ryan Helft

c) 650 814-5817
The City Council,

We need the children’s Theatre and the teen programs to continue and request to continue funding them. It is important have these programs for our children in the post covid world to be able to grow up and peruse their interests. Absence of these programs will only aggravate the mental health issues we will see after opening up.

Please please continue to find these programs.

Pallavi Tibrewal
Resident of Palo Alto
From: Candace Pierce <cjpierce@sonic.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 9:48 AM
To: Council, City
Subject: Please do NOT close College Terrace Library

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

This branch library serves many Palo Alto residents and is beloved by all. The convenience of having a local site to pick up and drop off library materials, having services for young children (a big population in these neighborhoods), online services and a comfortable reading area are too big a loss. You can save money by keeping this branch open a couple of days a week and closing or shortening the hours of other branches...so that ALL neighborhoods are served.

Thank you for this consideration.

Candace Pierce
Council Members,
I am writing again to provide another citizens input into your process. I am disappointed by the Council’s reluctance to address the issue head-on. This is a serious matter!

This is not going to be as simple as turning an economic switch back on. Many companies are closing for the rest of the summer if not end of the year, some even permanently. This will affect our tax revenue stream! Your estimated shortfall is probably on the low side.

1. **Priority should be given to maintaining city services in as close to the current level as possible.**
   a. This would require an across the board pay cut, until the jobless rate has returned to the 4-5% range.
   b. Rescission of the pay increase given a couple weeks ago. You knew this problems was happening then, why on earth did you go through with it?
   c. Layoff union employees across the board to close the budget gap.
   d. Discontinue work on the new police station until the economy rebounds, this is a non-essential expense at this time.

2. **Curtail redundant city services.**
   a. Eliminate non-essential services.
      i. Closure of most of the libraries. Our libraries are lightly used and residents could easily go a mile or two extra to get to another.
      ii. Cut any mass transit projects for the time being. No one is going to get on a bus with other possible Covid carriers.
      iii. Closure of schools that can be combined to fill up classrooms to maximum capacity (note: this may not be your issue).

3. **Increase efficiency of current management and employees.**
   a. Resume full time working 8-5 M-F every week to fulfil the community needs. As a small business owner, I know that the current 9x80 setup is inefficient resulting in less productivity for the same $$$. This is particularly important when you reduce your workforce.

I am sure you have many suggestions, but unemotional objectivity would be the best course of action in the current predicament. We are all hurting from this shutdown of our economy.

Sincerely,
John Koval
   Redacted
Palo Alto
Dear City Council,

When the time comes to decide on the budget cut, please take this into consideration. Many children, like me, used to or still do go to the Children’s Theatre to enjoy the shows. I remember when I was just turning 8. I had been going to see the shows for years, and was finally excited to audition for one. James and the Giant Peach was the show then, and I had seen my sister acting in previous shows and wanted to get in on the action. Granted, I didn’t get in, but then I kept trying. When I got into Busytown, I was so excited. It was all I could think about until rehearsals started. "Who am I going to be?", "Will I absolutely fail?". Now, many children will be deprived of this. When I walked on stage, I felt so happy. I do not want the next two years of children to be deprived of this joy. And the older kids, who only have a year or two left, will not experience their final play. And I, who just started to do more, want to have more opportunities. Many kids get a lot of joly from watching and being in these plays. So please, do not cut the budget, for the sake of the children of palo alto.

Thanks for your consideration,
Kabir.
I'm sorry, just one more really important thing. I worked hard to audition and got a role in a play, Cinderella, in March, and it abruptly stopped due to quarantine. Our entire cast is waiting to continue with the show as soon as public health lets us. It was very disheartening to have it cancelled after so much work. Please don't cut the funding. Please, let us enjoy this play. I love theater, and I'm just entering middle school. I want to do theater, it is where I build a community. I don't play team sports, so this is my team. Please, find the money to let me continue with this play and this theater. After all, the show must go on.
Thank you,
Kabir.

On Thu, May 21, 2020 at 10:48 AM Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org> wrote:

Thank you for your comments to the City Council. Your e-mail will be forwarded to all seven Council Members and a printout of your correspondence will also be included in the next available Council packet.

If your comments are about an item that is already scheduled for a City Council agenda, you can call (650) 329-2571 to confirm that the item is still on the agenda for the next meeting.

If your letter mentions a specific complaint or a request for service, we'll either reply with an explanation or else send it on to the appropriate department for clarification.

We appreciate hearing from you.
Hoping our library branch survives after being placed in your “parking lot” I add my further thoughts on the budget discussion.

Am I wrong in thinking not ALL libraries in the city will have some budget cutting? If not, why not? The City spent much money renovating CT library, the oldest and the only one this side of town. When I voted for the library bond, I believed this would ensure the continued use of the CT library. I certainly supported the massive remodel of the Mitchell Park library, which I have never visited because each time I have tried to see it I could find no parking. Not a desirable choice for those of us who live miles from it and other branches.

Not sure there has been much neighborhood discussion of the proposed Cameron Park work, which I hear includes a plan to install barbecues. Do the adjacent neighbors want this? I would oppose this for Werry Park, my next door “neighbor “. A suggestion is to defer any such work in Cameron Park until the neighbors can fully participate in discussions and for now use the money to keep our library branch open.

I appreciate the agreement of the managers to a salary cut in these difficult times.

Diane Finkelstein
   Redacted

Sent from my iPad
Dear Council,

This letter outlines our 40% lower funding request for FY21, totaling $453,000, our unique position to support the local service economy during reopening after shelter-in-place, and an innovative bicycle commute program that will recycle city funds into local businesses, further supporting economic recovery. In addition, we request the City of Palo Alto (COPA) allow the TMA to serve Cal Ave businesses and commuters. We have proven the demand for our programs via a Cal Ave pilot, resourcefully utilizing $100,000 in private sector funding.

The TMA is very grateful for the City’s generous FY20 TMA funding of $750,000. Shelter-in-place has changed our need for funds for FY21. Due to Public Health Orders, current demand for TMA services is low. We have proven capability to remove 446 cars per day, 386 from downtown and 60 from Cal Ave. Our FY21 budget request uses the City’s end-of-year economic recovery scenario to ramp up to removing 446 vehicles in June 2021, growing at 4% per month from July-Dec 2020 and then at 12% per month from Jan-June 2021.[1] Hence, we request a $641,000 budget for July ‘20 through June ‘21. Applying $187,500 of unused FY20 funds, our “net budget request” is $453,000, a 40% reduction from FY20.

This request assumes the TMA will be allowed to serve the California Avenue Business District. The current COPA-PATMA funding agreement restricts PATMA to serve only downtown, and we request that Council take action to remove this restriction in the next funding agreement. The success of our California Avenue pilot has attracted merchants in that district to our Board. We look forward to helping more merchants recover from shelter-in-place with the lifting of this geographical restriction.

The TMA is an essential part of helping Palo Alto businesses recover. Council has requested special support for hard-hit local service and small businesses. The TMA will accelerate economic recovery by providing Palo Alto with a competitive hiring advantage over cities without TMAs. Perceived employee risk starts when commuters leave their home, not just when they enter their office. In addition to providing transit and ridesharing programs, the TMA will guide employers on safe return-to-workplace practices that increase employee confidence. The TMA’s groundbreaking federally-funded social equity research found indications that rehiring service workers will be unusually difficult because recently-idled workers will move out of the Bay Area.

Finally, we are developing a bicycle commute program that will allow us to partner with local businesses to recycle public funds back into the local economy. This first-in-the-world pilot with software partner CashByCycling will provide daily incentives for verifiable active mode commutes, up to $599 per year.
Geofenced location tracking will confirm both direct-to-work bike, e-bike, e-scooter, and e-skateboard commutes and bike-to-transit-to-work commutes. Within 60 seconds, incentive dollars may be redeemed for iPhone/android vouchers tethered to individual local merchants that have capable “fintech point-of-sale terminals.” Local incentive tethering causes program funds to be injected back into the local economy, creating a multiplier effect while supporting a contactless form of commuting post-COVID. This program is expected to cost one-half to one-quarter of many commute alternatives, and one-eighth of a stall in a parking structure.

Our **CY2019 Annual Report - google doc** will appear as a consent item in an upcoming Council packet. In CY2019 we lowered our hourly labor costs significantly, to one-half of other Bay Area TMAs. We decreased our management overhead percentage-of-expense down to 10.5%. We reduced the cost of our annual commute survey by 40% while tripling the number of responses and increasing program adoption by 30%. The TMA generated $164,000 in non-City funding in CY2019 and will continue to pursue additional revenue.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

PATMA Board of Directors

- Brad Ehikian, Premier Properties
- Amit Patel, Westin
- Cal Ave restaurateur Zareen Kahn
- Matthew Weinberg, Amazon/A9
- Carmel Moyal, Palantir

PATMA Staff

- Steve Raney
- Kruti Ladani

1. SJSU’s Mineta Transportation Institute expects transit ridership to snap back to 75% of normal and 100% by twelve months after recovery. We expect service worker ridership to come back more rapidly than “choice riders.” We have published commute predictions ([Medium article](https://medium.com), [Palo Alto Weekly article](https://www.paloaltonews.com)), and we expect the SOV rate to increase.
Hello,

When I first walked into the Palo Alto Children’s Theater to audition for a production of Peter Rabbit, little did I know that I would end up coming yet back again to audition for many more plays and participate in their theater camps, outreach programs, and even volunteer. I would get the chance to experience something that a lot of kids don’t get the chance to experience and come back again, for the next 8 years only to call PACT my second home. I’m now 14 years old, an incoming freshman at PALY sitting here on my computer frantically writing an email telling the council to please consider helping the Palo Alto Children’s Theater during this time of chaos. I feel SO grateful to call the PACT my second family and home and I can assure you that many other participants feel the same. PACT gives children the chance to find their voice, learn, communicate, and have fun, all with the theater’s outstanding and professional programs they offer, and their hardworking and professional staff who devote their time to teaching us. I can’t imagine my life, or even Palo Alto without the PACT and I’m truly heartbroken because many kids in Palo Alto and across the Bay Area won’t get to experience what I got to experience. I understand that during this time, it is really hard to consider, but PLEASE consider helping the Palo Alto Children’s Theater because if it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be the person I am to this day.

Thank you,
Gaby G.
Hello City Council members,

My name is Ryan Dyer and I heard the news about the possibility of the Children's Theatre closing. When I heard this news, I was very sad and I want to let you all know that the theatre community is very important to me and to all of my friends I met there. In the middle of each year crammed with homework and stress, going to the theatre is always something that I thoroughly enjoy. I have been on tech and I've been in the shows as an actor and each time it always brings a smile to my face and fills my mind with wonderful memories of the people and the shows I was involved in. As our community overcomes the challenges of Covid, there has never been a better time for creativity and love for the theatre. My concern is if the children's theatre closes, it will impact not only the people who participate in the theatre productions, but the community who comes to watch and love the shows that are put on year round. Now is the time for us to create and have fun while we push through these troubling times so please don't take away the opportunity for us to enjoy what we have.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Sincerely,

Ryan Dyer
Dear Council Members,

I hope you are all doing well in the time of this pandemic, staying safe and healthy. My name is Amann Mahajan, and although I haven’t done a play very recently, the Palo Alto Children's Theatre has always been a big part of my life. As a little kid, I would go to see the shows with my parents, and I always loved them. When I was old enough, I auditioned for Peter Rabbit. It was my first "real" play, and acting in it was the best part of my summer! The year after that, I was in another play, and it was just as good. This went on for a couple of years, each play wonderful in many ways. Being in these plays made me love theatre—all the parts of it, but especially 1) acting itself and 2) the community built with each play! Each cast I belonged to became a family, and then there was also the larger community of the theatre itself: all the people you worked with each time (the directors, the costumers, etc.).

Even recently, I have been enjoying the theatre, though I have not had enough time to act myself. My brother was in one of the fall shows, and it made me so happy to see him acting. It made me doubly happy to see him acting in the Children's Theatre, a place I have come to love. I remember walking in there in the fall, seeing the familiar rooms and the well-loved stage and fondly missing them.

The Children's Theatre is a place where kids can truly find their voices. They learn to act, but they also learn to be good team members. They learn to work with others. They learn to be kind, compassionate, and responsible. And through all of this, they know that the community of the theatre can help them if they need it.

This is why I am asking you, the members of the City Council, to please keep the theatre open. It is a source of joy for both the actors and the audience. It has been with me my whole life, and I cannot imagine Palo Alto without it. Please let it stay open, allowing everyone to enjoy it. It isn’t so much a place now as a community; losing that community because of shutting down the theatre would be a great loss to everyone.

Thank you so much for reading this long email! Again, I hope you all are well, and I hope you consider keeping this theatre open. In my opinion, it is one of Palo Alto’s most-loved places.

Sincerely,
Amann Mahajan
Good Afternoon City Council,

I am sorry that I am no longer a citizen of the fine city of Palo Alto, however I grew up there and am a graduate of Paly, class of 1987.

Currently I am employed at Portland State University and so I live in Oregon.

It has come to my attention, because of a group that I keep in contact with, that the City of Palo Alto (like all local, state, and federal governments right now) are facing budget issues and that funding for the next two years of the Palo Alto Children’s Theater is in jeopardy.

While I can certainly understand that the theater is not as important as other aspects within the community I write to simply let you know my thoughts on the theater and its impact on my life.

As a youth I was not a popular nor outgoing child and I suffered from some early childhood trauma with no real outlet to figure my way into the adult world. I have wonderful parents, my mother Victoria Bosch worked for the City of Palo Alto for over 20 years prior to her retirement. And I am well educated from the outstanding schools in Palo Alto. But on a social level I felt like an outcast.

When I made my way into the Children's Theater, I found peers, I found fun, but most importantly I found my self esteem. As an accomplished seamstress, I helped in the costume shop. As a person with leadership potential I was quickly put into a position of managing the people who volunteered to usher, and after going through all of the summer classes I worked my way up to becoming a Stage Manager.

I am aware that with Covid-19 it is not realistic for you to open your doors and have productions run. However, if you terminate funding for two years that means that programming, classes, and the teen arts council would also be shuttered during this time.

While I would gladly pitch in and offer to help out with a personal donation to the theater, I doubt that my personal contribution alone could do much. I do think that my story is far from unique. I still count among my friends a couple dozen people who I connected to during my six years until I graduated from Children's Theater and began to work with Theaterworks.

If anything can be done to partially fund this important organization over the next two years it would be much appreciated, and I am sure the children in the community would benefit from this choice.

Yours sincerely,
Carith Wiseman (formerly Cary Seigel in my Children's Theater days)
Please consider **donating** to the COE Student Emergency Fund to support students experiencing urgent financial hardship.

**Important notification! Due to Covid-19 I am currently working from home and will respond to your email within 2 business days. Additionally, my full time working hours resume on March 23rd and times are listed below, I will be flexing around twice weekly physical therapy appointments from now until at least the end of April. Thank you

**Hours:**
Monday - Friday 8:00am-5:00pm**

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Carith Michelle Wiseman  
Development Administrator, Office of the Dean  
College of Education  
Portland State University  
503-725-4635  
carith@pdx.edu  
pdx.edu/education
Dear City Council Members,

As a long term Palo Alto resident, I write to express concern about cutting funding to children's fine arts programs, and especially to the Children's Theater.

I grew up in Palo Alto, and the theater was an integral part of my childhood, and perhaps more importantly, adolescence. It was where I learned to be a leader, even though I was very shy and didn't always want to lead, and to make my voice heard, both on and off of the stage. It was a second home to many of us, a place to be ourselves and be safe, even when facing difficulties in school and life. The sense of community, of belonging, and of acceptance of diverse groups and recognizing all different kinds of talent with no questions asked, while still maintaining high levels of hard work and accountability to your team, is unparalleled. The theater undoubtedly supported my success in school and work over time in profound ways.

Having moved back to Palo Alto, I now have one daughter in love with the theater, and another who was hoping to get involved soon. I see that, at the theater, the sense of community and safety, while also insisting on the best possible work out of each child, have all remained under the current leadership team. It continues to be a magical, life-altering place for all of the children involved, and sitting in the audience, it is magical and extraordinary for much of the community as well.

The fact that the theater allows all children to participate, regardless of availability to pay, is also an important feature, since so many of the children's activities in this area have price-tags that make them for the very wealthy only. This commitment to diversity and inclusion is an important part of what makes this theater so special.

While I certainly appreciate that budgets must be balanced, doing so at the cost of programs that support the well-being and education of our youth, and our community as a whole, seems short-sighted.

Best,

Clea Sarnquist
To whom it may concern:

I am writing to urge you to accept the Friends of Palo Alto Children's Theatre's proposal which would help fund the Theatre through community fundraising and donations.

As the longest-running children's theatre in the country Palo Alto Children's Theatre is so vital to the community. I know our family has benefited from PACT's programs and shows providing our children a creative outlet and a place where they have found "their people." Our 13-year-old twins have been involved with various PACT productions and performances acting and working as crew members. They have also taken summer camp and various classes offered through PACT. The staff at PACT is a second family to us, people who know our children and have watched them grow up providing them a safe place to learn and grow.

Given the uncertainty of these days, and the anxieties and stresses our children are experiencing I think it is more important than ever to provide them with an outlet for their creative energies, a safe place where they can grow and learn while enjoying the arts.

Please do not eliminate funding for Palo Alto Children's Theatre. We need it more than ever before!

Best,
Patricia P. Zahedani
I am writing in favor of the FOPAL agreement to continue the funding for the Children’s Theater and the many programs it supports. My Family has been a long time supporter for three generations, and my siblings, cousins, nieces, and nephews have been so fortunate to partake in children’s theater at such a wonderful place. Palo Alto could never fully recover this treasure if it is lost. A unique, historic, and beautiful place with deeply dedicated staff. People like Richard Curtis and Judge Lucky save lives as surely as anyone. Keep Children’s Theater!
Dear City Council.

The mental health of teens in our community has not been healthy for many years. Now with COVID these kids are in an even more dyer situation. Without the stability of daily school, with the majority of their time now spent ALONE, in online classes, without the in person interaction with trusted adults and peers in their lives outside of their homes, we've got a compounded problem. Teens in Palo Alto must be supported during this unprecedented time. Cutting all teen programs as is being discussed, is shocking being that Palo Alto is full of professionals who have been imploring our school community to PUT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST. For our city to put teen programs on the chopping block is misguided.

I have read that the City plans to cancel all performances for the Children's Theater for two years. Making a decision to close anything for two years at this point is odd. It's too soon to know what things will look like even 6 months from now. What's more is if the City closes the doors of the theater for 2 years we will lose the staff that make that place what it is-its not easy to rebuild that and the current staff there is ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL and MUST be maintained. We can't lose those leaders of our community.

Cancelling performances through January 2021 makes sense. Cancel through Jan 2021 and make sure the theater is poised, nimble, funded and ready to go as SOON as the county deems theater programs to be safe. Between now and January a robust, creative offering of classes/distance experiences can generate connection and income.

I’m hoping you will look deeply at the program and consider alternative ways to keep the theater open for performances beginning Feb 2021 should the safety situation change. Maybe the fees need to go up, maybe they need more volunteer involvement, but what we need to be SURE of is that we keep the LEADERS of the theater in place.

Making a blanket cut to all teen programs and to shut the doors of the theater for TWO YEARS which is THE critical hub for our children and teen’s who want something in their lives outside of school and tech is cruel. The focus of our community needs to be on children and teens. The Children's Theater is a resource like non-other and if the City decides to shut its doors for 2 years, you will have ripped away a key component to the structure of Palo Alto children’s lives. Its not a nicer to have, its a must have for the health of our city's youth.

Sincerely,

Amy Kacher
It's a fun way to meet with friends and learn about theatre. Please don't close the Children's theatre. I learn a lot about being on a team and lighting and stage crew.

Lucas Irulegui
Age 12
JLS
Dear City Council,

This theater has been such a precious gift to my family. It is something unique and special to Palo Alto.

As I think about how much pressure our kids are under, I am so grateful that the theater and the community that surrounds it provides a safe and loving place for all of PA's quirky kids. It is one of the few places where kids of all ages come together and support each other.

I was heartbroken to hear that the theater may be closing for two years. Is there nothing we can do to try and raise funds from the community before we decide to close the theater for so long? Could we move to a model where the kids in the plays are contributing for the opportunity to participate in plays (I know that isn't the model but perhaps this could be temporary)?

Thanks so much for taking the time to read this.
Elizabeth Kim
  Redacted
Palo Alto, CA
Dear members of the City Council,

I would like to urge you to keep funding for Children's Theater productions in the city budget for next year and after. I have taken my daughter, now almost 11, to Children's Theater productions since she was a toddler and they have been an essential educational tool for her to experience the arts. If you attend one of their productions, you can witness the exuberance of children watching plays and musicals. The theater is an essential community resource that makes this city unique. As you may know, Palo Alto has one of the oldest children's theater in the US and I don't believe they have ever taken a break in production. We should not begin now.

Last year, my daughter also had an opportunity to perform in a production of The Phantom Tollbooth. I cannot say enough good things about the wonderful staff, from the director to the costumers to the front office staff who run the theater. The kids have an opportunity to learn about theater from dedicated professionals, another rare experience.

The tickets to the theater are priced very modestly. Although I would not like to see the price jump as the reasonable prices make it possible for more families to attend, a small increase in ticket price (perhaps with some lower-cost performances) would probably not suppress attendance and might help round out the budget. There is probably also an opportunity for additional fundraising.

Shutting down Children's Theater productions would be a sad loss for both performers and attendees. We have five library branches but only one children's theater. Please do not let it happen.

Sincerely,
Sarah Curtis
Palo Alto resident
Dear Council Members,

I understand that you are proposing cutting all funding to Children’s Theater for two years. Before you lock that in I wanted to ask you to reconsider and ask what makes Palo Alto what it is - our children’s theater, the children’s library, the junior museum and other kid friendly infrastructure is what drew a lot of families with young kids to Palo Alto in spite of its high real estate costs and property taxes. To rob Palo Alto of these core assets is to rip the very heart of what it means to live in Palo Alto. It is what a lot of us pay through our nose to live here for - to make sure our children have a rich growing experience.

I would ask you to find other things to cut rather than those that impact the youngest of our citizens simply because they do not have their own voice around your table.

-Schwark Satyavolu
Dear City Council,

My name is Simone Lev, I am 12 years old and I have been part of The Palo Alto Children's Theatre for 3 years. The Children's Theatre has been a really great place for me and I would be very sad to see it go. Over the years, I have made so many friends there. It is a place where I can be myself and connect with other people, who I wouldn't normally get to see. There are so many friend and experiences that I would hate for people to miss. Many kids have grown up watching these shows, and it would be very sad to all of the kids who enjoy watching, or have waited until the day they are old enough to audition. As well as being a place where I can make new friends, it is a place where I am able to express myself. I love being in the productions they put on there. Having the Children's Theatre makes me able to pursue my passions while also being able to spend time with my friends and family as well as being close to home. It really makes me feel like I am part of a family who cares a lot about me. One of the things I like the most about the Children's Theatre that I can't find in a lot of other places is the level of professionalism that the productions have. I really care a lot about the Palo Alto Children's Theater and I would be, like so many others, devastated if it closed.

-Simone Lev, Redacted
To the Palo Alto City Council,

Hello, my name is Sofia and I have acted in many productions at the Palo Alto Children's Theatre. As a young child, I used to come to see countless shows with my family. The Children's Theatre has always been a part of my life, and it is even one of the reasons that my parents decided to move to Palo Alto 10 years ago. The Children's Theatre is an important and vital center of our community here in Palo Alto. Taking away the funding will have a massive effect on residents of Palo Alto and beyond. As a young child, coming to see the performances have always been happy memories. The quality and what this community resource means to us makes Palo Alto special. I have learned and grown so much from being a part of the shows and taking away the funding will take away the opportunity for others in our community to have those wonderful experiences. Please take this into consideration.

Best Regards,
Sofia W.
Freshman at Palo Alto High School
Dear City Council:

I write again to voice my concerns regarding the College Terrace Library.

I ask that it please remain open. It is an asset to the entire Terrace and a place that one can walk to.

It’s absence would be greatly missed and greatly mourned.

Thank you for your attention and for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,
Doris Roberts

Redacted
Palo Alto
94306-1321

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,

I want to send this email in support for The Palo Alto Children's Theatre. I understand that these are challenging times and as a result The Palo Alto Children's Theatre is in danger of losing a great deal of its funding and may close indefinitely or a period of time.

The Palo Alto Children's Theatre is one of the nationally recognized pillars that make the community of Palo Alto so special. Through its many programs not only brings performing arts to children and teens in our community as well as children in disadvantaged communities an opportunity to experience as well.

I have seen first hand how these performances connect with children of all ages from the youngest (with Playhouse) to the oldest teenagers (main stage performances, camp counselors, Teen events).

All three of my children have either performed or have volunteered for the Children's Theatre in the past and have greatly enjoyed their experiences there. My daughter, Sofia (14), in particular, has performed in several main stage productions (School House Rock, Beat Bugs) as well as numerous Playhouse productions for younger children. Since my daughter is shy, fearful, and introverted, the opportunity Children's Theatre really gives her the outlet to open up, perform, and express herself. I have personally seen how transformative these experiences these experiences have on her confidence, discipline and commitment.

Sofia and her youngest brother, Oliver (9), were most recently chosen to participate in the upcoming production of Cinderella, until Covid-19/SIP delayed these performances indefinitely.

As you're are making these hard decisions, please consider the huge impact that the PA Children's Theatre has on our children and community at large.

Respectfully,

Stanley Wong

Redacted, Palo Alto, CA
Dear Members of Council,

I understand the stresses placed on you with budget shortfalls and can't presume to know the priorities you are weighing. However, it may be helpful to know the role that the Palo Alto Children's Theater and their programs have had on the mental health of my children. Our 12-year-old son in particular wasn't in a good place last year. The staff and community of PACT played a huge role in helping his emotional state and self-worth. I imagine they've played a big role in other children's lives in a similar way, and I hope that funding their important work will be a priority as make your budget decisions.

The evidence for the link between the performing arts and positive mental health is clear - a much needed balm for times like this.

Thank you for your consideration,
Aparna Ramanathan
Dear Council members,

We are parents of a 6th grader who has been part of PACT for the last 3 years ever since we have been part of the Palo Alto community. PACT has supported our son to integrate into the local community by picking up cultural nuances and new skills that he never had experienced before outside of US. This is the only activity that he is extremely passionate about outside of going to school and not having 2 years of further participation will really impact his confidence and growth as an international kid who is blending into the local fabric.

In our son’s own words on what he will miss if he does not get to be a part of the theater:
1. The feeling he gets from the appreciation of the audience
2. The fact that he gets to be a bit silly on the stage and gets an outlet for his imagination and creativity
3. The co-actors that help him improve his own acting skills and become more confident as a rising teen
4. The choreographers/directors who put the effort in teaching him skills and give him opportunities to get better roles

We most humbly request you to consider keeping the PACT going and helping our son and many other kids for whom closing down PACT will have a big adverse impact.

With kind regards,
Gunjan and Mayank
(parents of Ruddhra Gupta)
Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to voice my alarm at learning that the Palo Alto Children’s Theater programs may be cut for the next two years. Our family has enjoyed the PACT productions, camps and classes since 2012. My 12-year old daughter — a true theater kid — found deep connections with friends at the Theatre that she did not experience elsewhere. Through my own volunteer work with Friends of the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre, I have found a personally rewarding way to give back to the community and have also deepened my connection with the City. The Theatre is an important part of our lives and, for us, a primary benefit of living in Palo Alto.

I would also like to mention that the Theatre’s online virtual classes have been extremely helpful while sheltering in place. After a few weeks of being totally disconnected from the Theater, I was able to enroll my daughter in a weekly improv class with one of her favorite teachers. Now, each week she spends an hour with peers and a mentor who share her passion for exuberant creative expression. It is a vital connection to “normalcy” for her. I hope the Theatre will continue to offer virtual classes like this to help creative children connect with each other and the Theatre, at least in some way.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like any more details or information about my family’s experience with the Children’s Theater, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Lisa Trovato
Charleston Meadows
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

I know the world has stopped and you need to rectify the budget shortfalls. But defunding the Children's Theater is not the way to do that. Think about all of the art that we are consuming right now. The TV, movies, comedy, music — all of that was created by theater kids. If you didn't have an iPad full of content to distract you and your family from this insane virus, what would you do?

Art instruction helps children develop motor, language, and social skills. Putting on a play drives all manner of decision-making, risk-taking, and inventiveness. It may look like a basic after school activity, but it is a community of like-minded people. Theater literally saves lives. It saved mine. My mom died when I was 15 and theater was my refuge. PACT was my family when my blood family was broken.

Creative arts are the lifeblood of any society. Palo Alto is too important of a city to be without art. If you defund the children's theater, you'll be cutting a crucial thread in the fabric of our beautiful town. Please, please reconsider robbing the theater of its funding. Instead of fixing a problem, you'll be creating a far bigger one for the future of the city and the children who live there.

Thank you,

Julie Gordon
Active PACT member for 8 years
Thank you so much for rethinking the closing of neighborhood libraries. We live close to College Terrace Library and patronize it many times a month. I adore it since it is small, quiet, and friendly. If they don’t have the book I need, I can have the book sent to College Terrace where I can walk over and pick it up.

The library is used by many families - a number of whom have small children. The small venue at College Terrace is much more appropriate than the big children’s section at Mitchell Park.

One more thing to consider. The College Terrace library has been used by three generations of my family members. Part of keeping small, older venues like College Terrace and Children’s libraries is the historical perspective. It is so important for my granddaughter (and the grandchildren of other patrons) to know that their father and their grandparents used those libraries.

Joan Phelan, Evergreen Park
I have had my kids, their friends and now my grandchild participate in the Children’s theatre for the past 30 years. My husband was a volunteer there. How can you even think of closing the theatre? The programs and shows they run are fantastic. They do an outreach in all of the local schools where everyone can participate. They have also started running programs for kids with special needs. Palo Alto city barely recognizes that there are kids with special needs here. Look at our only swimming pool! No special needs kid can use it.

How much did you spend on that bike overpass, the stupid street calming all around Ross Road? None of that was essential but the Children’s Theatre is part of the backbone of our community.

Please rethink what you are doing. The Children’s Theatre has been part of our community for so long.

Thank you

Alison McNall
There's still time to cut the big-ticket capital expenditure items before you finalize the budget. Please do so.

Please read the sensible Guest Opinion https://www.paloaltoonline.com/square/2020/05/22/guest-opinion-a-better-way-to-save-vital-city-services as well as the comments.

As some of you know. I can't believe you spent the time urgently needed for high-priority budget discussions working on ways to deprive adults of their legal rights to flavored pipe tobacco and vaping supplies because a few teenagers illegally bought vape products. Prohibition never works and PA residents -- both adults and teens -- are certainly smart enough to know how to shop online and in nearby communities.

We need sensible, smart cost-effective government that adjusts to the times, not virtue-signalling ineffective nanny-bans.

Most sincerely,
Jo Ann Mandinach
Palo Alto, CA 94301

PS: I don't smoke flavored pipe tobacco or vape
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre. This theatre as been part of the Palo Alto community for a very long time. As a Gunn High School graduate of 1990, I was part of several productions at the Children’s Theatre many years ago. When my daughter, Abby, showed interest in theatre, I knew exactly where to take her, the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre.

She has since been in two Summer Hot Dog Shows and three Main Stage Productions before the shutdown. This year, she was casted in the Cabaret Fundraiser and Cinderella, before they were cancelled this year due to the pandemic. I can tell you all about how much she enjoys being on the stage, learning new things and meeting new people, however it is so much more than that. She has grown so much as a person.

The independence, responsibility, maturity and accountability she has learned is insurmountable. She has learned how to manage her time between school, choir, ice skating and her production rehearsals. She is more confident in herself and her public speaking. All this is from the Children’s Theatre. The theatre is where she can be herself along with other kids with the same interests, without a parent holding her hand and telling her what to do. The is something all her own that she gets to show us on opening night. Seeing that show makes all the late evening pickups, dinner in the car, long days and schedule balancing so worth it to a parent.

The quality of the shows are hands down AMAZING! The sets, costumes and special effects are at such a professional level. From the Playhouse Series where the audience is part of the show, to the dinnertime Hot Dog Shows over the summer with our family picnic. Then of course the Main Stage Productions where, as a young child, you think you are seeing a Broadway style show. My youngest is looking forward to being on the stage just like his big sister at the Children’s Theatre.

The level of professionalism at the Children’s Theatre is wonderful. From the production staff, costume designers, and the executive director, they all have a way of getting the best out of the kids. Not only teaching them the ways of the theatre but lifelong skills as well. Whether they are in only one show or many shows, each child learns something with the theater experience.

We now find ourselves in times of uncertainty. Families are quarantined at home without schools, friends or activities. We find ourselves more reliant on “screen time” or solo activities. We need to find a way to bring this creative outlet to our kids into our new “normal”. While life at the Children’s Theatre will not be the same as it was before the pandemic, taking away this outlet for kids like Abby is not the answer. We need to find a way to continue the Children’s Theatre Programs, maybe not quite to the scale as before, but to a least give these kids a chance at something “normal”.

Baumb, Nelly

From: Jennifer Lang <jenniferlang08@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 12:48 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Palo Alto Children’s Theatre

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.
Please take into consideration all the kids that may not have any place to be themselves, the amazing staff and all the wonderful programs offered at the Children’s Theatre. Shutting it down for a few years will be detrimental to the program. We will lose staff, kids will be forgotten and the wonderful program as we know it will be gone forever. Please don’t let this happen.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lang
Children’s Theatre Parent
Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

My name is Ibby Day, and I was a 2017 Paly alum. During my time in high school, I took part in a club called YCS-Interact for all four years. As a freshman, I was timid and didn't have many reliable friends I felt I could relate to. YCS is what changed that, and now my future, quite literally. I found a second home within the club and grew to be a confident leader. I eventually took part in Paly's ASB (Student Body) in my senior year because YCS empowered me to develop the skills to apply for a role. But those skills have transferred even past high school. In fact, I am now my college's student body president!

High school was also a very isolating time, and to be honest I was quite mentally unstable, but being in YCS made me feel less alone and helped me navigate all the stress of high school by providing service opportunities and a network of kind people. I am still in touch with many of my colleagues over the years because this organization truly gave me more than just transferable skills. I heard recently from one of them that due to COVID-19, PACC is considering cutting the YCS program. I would strongly like to advocate that you keep it because YCS is not only what got me through high school, but impacted what I am doing now. I am a designer, but I have minors in social innovation and business. I'm hoping to design for social issues and be a leader in my field. I wouldn't be in this field or be doing the work I am today without YCS. I would hope that PACC would want to keep a program that taught the next generation of leaders!

Best,

Ibby

--

Ibby Day (she/her)
ArtCenter Student Government President
Hello City of Palo Alto Council, my name is Abby Lang and I'm 12 years old. I have been involved with the Palo Alto Children's Theatre for about four years. It has been my home away from home ever since. We may just be a group of kids who talk loud and like to sing, but there's more than that. There is a group of people that accept you. There is a level of professionalism that many other theatres don't meet. They teach us everything we need to know, but we work hard. Theatre allows us to express ourselves, to be known. It is a place where everyone has the same passion for music and acting that others just don't understand. The feeling of being on the stage, under the lights. The pride we take in our productions.

But there's more. The community. The laughs. We are kids from all different ages, schools, situations at home, but we come together for something we are passionate about. These people, who put their heart and soul into their productions, the ones we rehearse with and laugh with and get in trouble for talking backstage with. We may joke around a lot, but we all take the show seriously. And when it's over, we cry. That's the best way to put it. We cry because it is over, because we will never have a cast with the same dynamic as that one. We may not see some of these people again, but you have the memories. And those memories, the experience, the community, is what makes us come back, again, and again. The shows are put on almost completely by us, the kids. We are the tech, the stage managers, the leads, the ensemble, the hair and makeup.

But there is another group of people who nothing could happen without. The costume designers who make the most amazing costumes that make us feel the part more than any line or solo could. The directors, choreographers, music directors, who get to know us and remember our strengths and weaknesses when we audition again. All of them have taught me pretty much everything I know about theatre.

Before my first show, I had about as much knowledge regarding theatre as you would expect an eight-year-old to. But after six shows, I now know so much more about not only how to sing or say lines, but other lessons about hard work, independence, and responsibility. It takes a lot of those to put on a show, let me tell you, but it is always worth it in the end.

And PACT does so much more than just shows. They have classes for everyone, vocal lessons and choirs, improv groups and acting classes, camps and dance classes, teen groups, tech classes, and more. They even go into the Elementary Schools and show them a glimpse of the magic of theatre. They let us dig deeper into our passions, and discover new ones.

All of the other theatres in the area ask parents to provide costumes, help make sets, be the backstage crew. They are classes that meet once a week, with the parents’ presence allowed. Then it is no longer teaching the kids to be responsible and independent, it is no longer our thing that we take enjoyment in as something we did by ourselves and get to show to our parents.

That is one of the things I love most about PACT, being able to be independent, away from my parents, and being treated like a capable and independent human being who doesn't need their hand held. And all they ask for are donations and for the parents to help run concessions, and even that is optional. I know it will change, but so has everything else in this pandemic. But please don’t cut the funding. I don’t know where else I would go without PACT, but I will always end up comparing other theatres to them, and nowhere else meets the bar that the Children’s Theatre sets. So please, do not take away my home from me, or from every other kid who loves the theatre as much as I do.

Sincerely,
-Abby Lang
It is very wrong that the free City shuttles have been cut from the budget! This is a necessity for many people, those who don’t drive, seniors, disabled people, poor people, students. How are they to get around town? How are students going to get to schools once the schools are back open?

Completely cutting the lease with the school district at Cubberley is unacceptable. Not only should we support the school district but also the art community which will be displaced with nowhere to go.

I urge the Council to reconsider these cuts.

Natalie Fisher
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all.

Walking into MakeX during open hours will never cease to amaze you; on any given day you might find a slew of makers from middle schoolers to adults all working together in this shared space. You will witness people helping each other with an infinite variety of creative projects. You will see artists painting murals on the walls side by side with teen rocket scientists realizing their newest invention. And you will be amazed as teen leaders foster this community safely and responsibly through peer guidance and support. This kind of interdisciplinary program is truly one-of-a-kind, building up our youth community not only as better engineers and artists, but as creatives, problem solvers, learners, educators, and leaders. Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides itself on supporting.

MakeX has always been there for us. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,
Corbin Platti
Dear Mayor Fine, Vice-Mayor DuBois, and Council Members Cormack, Filseth, Kniss, Kou and Tanaka,

When there is a prolonged police standoff in a Palo Alto neighborhood, when a school goes into lockdown, when a bank is robbed, when a senior citizen goes missing and countless other events in our community we seek information that is official and as close to real-time as possible. This is the first essential role that Janine De la Vega has provided. This is done in the form of posts on Twitter, Nextdoor, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and more social media sources, PDF documents produced within a short time frame of an event, as well as always making herself available to answer media requests.

Given the global impact that certain events can have within the epicenter of Silicon Valley her role is vital. Transparency and interaction are key to a working police force.

The management of the Citizen's Police Academy is another role that Janine handles. Why is this important to the community? Well, as a graduate, I can attest that this program allows for trust and transparency between the police and the community.

Janine also manages the Advanced Police Academy, outreach events such as National Night Out, the Police Chief's Advisory Committee and many more day to day aspects of communication.

In conclusion, Janine is a caring person, full of passion for her work. It is my hope that should the tragic mistake be made to cut her position due to a lack of understanding as to the global, social outreach role she holds, that an appeal will be heard and that she may be re-instated.

Sincerely,
Ardan Michael Blum

Dear City Council,

I’m writing to request that you do not cut funding to teen activities such as MakeX. I am an adult Palo Alto resident who has used MakeX many times, and in addition to being a resource for me, I have been continually amazed by the projects being built by teens and younger, sometimes much younger. Robotics, aviation, machining, etc. These kids not only used 3D printers, in at least one case I saw a youngster building one of his own design. These are tools I could not have dreamt of having access to at their age. It’s one of the things that gives Palo Alto’s children a leg up in the world. I encourage you to keep or increase funding to these unique city resources.

Best regards,

Andy Daniel
Dear Palo Alto City Councilmembers,

I was very disappointed to hear that the Palo Alto City Council is proposing to drastically cut or eliminate the majority of community programs that serve our City’s children and teens. I recognize that cuts must be made and should be made across all City cost centers. But I don’t think it is okay to cut all funding for some community programs without making meaningful reductions to the salaries of our City’s highest earning employees or deferring some of the most expensive capital improvement projects.

I am asking the Council to try harder to preserve more funding for the programs that serve our youth through entities such as the Teen Center and Teen Councils, YCS, MakeX, the libraries, the Art Center and the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre, among others.

The Palo Alto Children’s Theatre, in particular, has been a part of my life since I was a child growing up in Palo Alto in the 70’s and 80’s. I participated in several shows during my elementary and middle school years and continued to attend shows that my high school peers were in. Now, I have a teenaged son who has been acting in shows since he was eight years old and has volunteered as an intern for multiple camps. PACT has been such a positive force in his development, as it has been for the thousands of other kids who have participated in or attended shows, that the thought of all that just going away for two years is devastating. I ask the Council to build in some funds that will allow the theatre to resume productions as soon as it is safe.

I was glad to read that salary reductions from the top managers have been offered, and I hope the unions will be willing to negotiate some reductions for their highest earners as well. That seems like one way to free up funds for community services. Or how about postponing some of the large cap ex projects? When the Council decides to move ahead with expensive new buildings, while cutting the theatre, arts, libraries and community programs, it does not paint a pretty picture.

I hope that the Council will reconsider its approach to rebalancing the budget. There are many adjustments that can be made that do not threaten the developmental, social and emotional health of our City’s youngest members.

Thank you,
Sherry Heller
Sent from my iPad
Dear Council Members,

My name is Brandon Thacker and I have been a participant at PACT for over 8 years now. I am now headed into my senior year in high school, which is the last year I will be able to participate in productions there. Personal reasons aside, there are many other reasons that I believe PACT should continue to receive funding. First off, the staff at PACT currently are some of the most dedicated workers I have ever seen. I have gotten an opportunity to know all of them very well, and they all care greatly about the children involved in the theater, the general community, and the quality of productions that are produced. They make the theater feel like a professional establishment with very high production quality, despite some of the cast members being only 8 years old. Secondly, the theater is and can continue to provide valuable service to the community during the pandemic. I recently had the privilege of participating in a workshop to test the feasibility of creating shorter, online productions adapted from the playhouse series, which I believe was quite a large success. I believe that the theater could continue to improve the quality of these productions and put them out for the entertainment of the general public. Additionally, myself and a few of my peers are working with the theater to have zoom meetings with the participants every few weeks, in which we play theater games, organize script writing challenges, and provide many of the younger children with much needed human connection outside their families. The final reason I believe it is imperative the theater remain funded is the profound impact it has on the children who participate in its myriad programs. When I auditioned for my first show back in 2012 I was a very socially inept 4th grader who lacked any sense of confidence, stage presence, or public speaking ability. Through participating at PACT I have grown into a very socially confident Junior who can give presentations at school with ease and stand up for himself in tough situations. These abilities and skills are beyond important for success in life, and I don't believe I would be nearly as well versed in them as I am today were it not for this theater nurturing me and helping me to overcome my fears and struggles. That journey was not only made possible through the theater as an institution, but also because of the amazing community of staff and performers that the theater currently has. To conclude, while we may not have the chance to put on many shows next year, it is imperative that the theatre continues to operate with this talented staff and stellar community as it did before this pandemic began, so that other kids can also have their lives transformed by this truly wonderful establishment that I almost see as my second home.

Regards,

Brandon
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

As I understand it, Palo Alto is considering cutting funds for teen service programs which would include the MakeX program. As an educator in the maker community I’ve been seriously impressed by the self-driven curiosity of the kids at MakeX because they don’t just ask questions, they get their hands dirty in trying to figure out the answer by building collaborative projects.

The world needs doers, makers, and collaborators - not more consumers. Enabling these kids with voracious minds to create content and resources to provide knowledge and new experiences is worthwhile to create more independent thinkers. These are the minds that drive our country forward - let them innovate and we all benefit.

As an educator I have found that although I have plenty to teach, I have much more to learn and I look forward to learning from what comes out of the MakeX program.

Best,
Nicole Borgaard
Educator, Maker Nexus, a Silicon Valley Makerspace
Dear Palo Alto City Council, Palo Alto Human Relations Commissioners, and Palo Alto School Board,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Magical Bridge Foundation to plead with city leadership to reconsider cuts to vital services during this unprecedented time. While we understand and appreciate that many cuts to the budget need to happen, we want to underscore the urgent need of our most vulnerable living in Palo Alto and highlight the ways in which our disabled community in Palo Alto is not being served.

Even prior to the pandemic, children and adults living with visible and invisible disabilities have been receiving virtually no programs and inadequate support from our city. Children and teens with significant disabilities have not had any thoughtful educational options provided to them since the stay-home ordinance took place. And, regarding community options, Palo Alto's ENJOY catalog has yet to offer any meaningful recreational options for those living in our town with disabilities. As a result, families with children and teens who pay property taxes to live in a community that views “inclusion” are actually living in the reality of being excluded.

After the Magical Bridge playground opened in 2015, Magical Bridge Foundation was formed in 2016 so that families had a place that welcomed their whole family, especially if that included a disabled child. Thanks to generous donors, we are proud to have been able to serve every “body” through our on-site play space, intergenerational programming teen activities. With the ongoing media interest and generous coverage about our playground and companion programs, the City of Palo Alto has enjoyed recognition as a city that values all its families. While we want to continue shining a light on Palo Alto’s spirit of generosity, we need the City to join our efforts to finance and provide recreational programming to include the various abilities that make up our community.

Inclusion and innovation is part of our organizational DNA, and our response to COVID-19 has been no different. Since the pandemic erupted mid-March, Magical Bridge Foundation immediately responded by offering a consistent activity that our community desperately needed. Since March 21st, Magical Bridge has been hosting daily FREE, family-friendly, sensory-friendly virtual concerts on our Facebook Page. This has been happening every single day, and most virtual concerts average 500+ views (some have even reached over 4k viewers). With no funding or support from the city (we were declined from the Emerging Needs Fund), we identified a private donor who sponsored the concerts through May 31, 2020. Sadly, these concerts are coming to an end because we can no longer pay our performers, who have also lost their livelihood due to the pandemic. We were proud to have been able to offer these intergenerational concerts, and financial compensation to our local performers, every day, for almost 3 months.

Earlier in the year, several city staff members who appreciated the impact of our Teen Kindness Ambassador program encouraged our many teens to apply for the Think Fund grant. We mobilized quickly, partnered with key Palo Alto nonprofits on the front line during the pandemic -- and thoughtfully applied for grants that would profoundly benefit those in most need. These grants would empower our Palo Alto teens and future leaders to mobilize the community and help local nonprofits during these challenging times.

We supported these applications with the encouragement of city leaders, and asked our teens to create and identify projects, and complete the application, which they did. Despite this early encouragement, we have no idea where these projects stand. Our teen volunteers are now left in limbo with little to no communication from
the Think Fund grant -- and the inability to move their leadership projects forward without the small funding needed. Our Kindness Ambassadors include over 50 middle school and high school local students (most, from Palo Alto) who come together in a collaborative way to connect and serve this community. Many of our teen volunteers have disabilities and being in a place where they truly belong as valued members of this community is real “magic.”

Specifically, our Palo Alto teens applied for a grant to:

- **Support**
  - **Life Moves.** Our teens would collect toiletries from neighbors and the community, which would be used at the homeless shelter (showers) at the Opportunity Center. This would include shampoo, soap, wipes, toothpaste and essential items needed by our homeless population.

- **Support**
  - **Palo Alto Jewish and Family and Children’s Services (JFCS) Food Pantry.** Our teens would be working to collect canned food that would be delivered to Seniors in need of these essential items.

- **Support**
  - **Palo Alto’s Abilities United/Gatepath disabled artists and preschool students.** Our teens would work to collect paints, brushes, canvases for the disabled artists who are no longer able to use the studio --- and collect books and toys for low income, disabled preschool families who are falling further behind because they are not in school.

- **Train Kindness**
  - **Ambassadors in an innovative new learning program, called “Active Learning”** as a way to serve the most marginalized population in our community. Since never PAUSD nor the City of Palo Alto have provided thoughtful solutions for Palo Alto teens on the lowest developmental levels, several state-certified therapists prepared a specific program for our teens to understand the principles of Active Learning so that once safe, these teens will apply their training to work with several families who are eager to work with us.

We understand that these are unprecedented times that require difficult and sometimes painful decisions for every city government. We also know you value protecting our most vulnerable citizens. We sincerely hope that at the very minimum, you will continue to fund Think Fund grant and our four projects, which will make a positive impact on those who are in need in our beloved community.

Warm regards,

Magical Bridge Foundation
Jill Asher, Olenka Villarreal, Maria Hassid

---

Jill Asher
Executive Director
650-520-8512
My TEDx Talk about Magical Bridge

Connect with Magical Bridge on:
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/magicalbridge
Twitter: https://twitter.com/magicalbridge
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all.

Walking into MakeX during open hours will never cease to amaze you; on any given day you might find a slew of makers from middle schoolers to adults all working together in this shared space. You will witness people helping each other with an infinite variety of creative projects. You will see artists painting murals on the walls side by side with teen rocket scientists realizing their newest invention. And you will be amazed as teen leaders foster this community safely and responsibly through peer guidance and support. This kind of interdisciplinary program is truly one-of-a-kind, building up our youth community not only as better engineers and artists, but as creatives, problem solvers, learners, educators, and leaders. Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides itself on supporting.

MakeX has always been there for us. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,
Isabella, MakeX Mentor
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I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,
Sophia Lu
Dear City Council Member,

As a proud parent of two Palo Alto Children’s Theatre (PACT) participants, I was very shocked and disappointed to hear that the City of Palo Alto has proposed cancelling all performances at the Children’s Theatre for two years. In addition, City of Palo Alto has proposed cutting teen programs as well as other PACT programs.

PACT has provided a creative outlet for my two children to grow and build their self-confidence. They have learned how to collaborate with others, improve upon their communication and self-discipline skills. The teen programs are very important to keep. Teenagers need these programs to develop their performing art skills with their peers such as with “Open Mic”. Teenagers are already very vulnerable living in the academic pressure cooker of high school and this one of the few outlets that they get. Please do not take this away from them.

The audience will also suffer. PACT provided a form of entertainment that pulls the kids away out of the virtual world and brings them back into the physical world. We cannot take this away.

I understand that the pandemic has impacted us all. When the ”shelter in place” is lifted, the PACT will find a way to provided live performances and “in person” programs that are delivered in a safe manner for both the participants and the audience.

Please keep this continuously active 83 year old institution going. You have the power to do so.

Thank you,

Patrick More
Dear City Council,

I have heard of the plan to cut spending for teen services in favor of a new library, and I would like to urge you to reconsider.

As a high schooler in the district, I know what these services mean. For better or for worse, the educational system in this area is demanding and stressful, and these services are critical in both supporting us teens and allowing us to give back.

Furthermore, we already have a wonderfully strong library system in the city, and we don't need to sacrifice our unique teen services to add yet another branch.

Thanks,
Kabir Bhatia, Paly '22
Dear City Council Members:

Pat Burt's and Pat Markevitch's opinion piece in the Palo Alto Weekly outlines measures that can be used by the CC to reevaluate budget cuts. The authors are right that it does not make sense to prioritize capitol improvements over vital services. They are right that "The city and council staff need to transparently lay out their economic assumptions and the fiscal implications of budget changes they're proposing."

Thank you for your voluntary 15% pay cut. Having taken that step puts you in a good position to negotiate with unions and workers to save as many jobs as possible.

Please take the time necessary to get the budget right. Delaying cuts while you reevaluate the situation may be costly, but going down the wrong path will be even more costly and painful.

Sincerely yours,

Kathy Early
Palo Verde, Palo Alto
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Good evening,

My name is Roger Gordon. I’m now 35 years old and serving as an Army Chaplain on active duty in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I love my job, I love doing ministry and serving my country at the same time. But long before now, I was a star on the stages of the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre. I grew up at PACT and had lead roles in countless plays and musicals and summer conservatory and Wingspread shows. It was the absolute best part of my childhood and teen years. Nothing else came close. I loved school too, and was a very good student. But I truly believe the reason I did so well in school was because of the PACT. We know how much the arts nurture and strengthen youth development. They undoubtedly play a vital, often unrecognized, and majorly undervalued role in developing confident, resilient, courageous, intelligent, empathetic human beings and citizens. Although I (sadly) no longer have the opportunity to act or participate in theatre, I am 150% convinced that I would not be able to be a successful Army Chaplain were it not for all that the PACT gave me. Kids who participate in the PACT not only make great actors and artists, they also make great ministers, lawyers, teachers, politicians, and all around engaged and informed public citizens. The PACT is no doubt a treasured service to society that keeps on giving. In at least my case and I know others as well, it is literally a service to our country.

Clearly, I am writing asking you to look again at your budget to find ways to save funding for the PACT. I am not just asking, I am begging. Losing funding for the PACT for two years would likely spell the permanent closing of the theatre. That would be devastating and a major disservice to the next generation and to our country.

I don’t envy the job you have to do. I can’t imagine how incredibly difficult it must be to balance a budget in light of what is almost certainly going to be another Great Depression. I can imagine it must seem like cutting funds for the PACT is a necessary evil to balance the budget. Yet I ask you to consider that the PACT is just as vital, just as necessary, as so many other public services. I doubt you are eliminating funding for police or firefighters, and I would argue we need the PACT just as much.

I could understand making cuts to the PACT, maybe even short term significant ones. Sadly, it’s likely the PACT may not be able to put on any productions for awhile anyway, possibly not even until 2021. Of course, that is a question for the PACT staff and the public health authorities. Regardless, some cuts probably, sadly, do make sense. But complete elimination of all funds for two years is a draconian and harsh measure that would be beyond tragic.

I ask you to look again at the budget. Look at where else you might be able to trim funding. The people of Palo Alto love the PACT. I would imagine the vast majority of people who live there would much rather see greater shared sacrifice than the total loss of what is, frankly, a national treasure.

I know you must be facing a very difficult decision. I pray for you all to have the patience, wisdom, and compassion to come to a good answer for the city. Thank you for all you do for the city of Palo Alto.

Blessings and peace,
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all.

I was a coach for one of the SciOly team at Greene Middle school. Our project can't be done without the great help from the kids at MakeX. They are truly handy and passionate to help! Please continue their funding, we need MakeX!

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,

Dan Shi
Dear City Council members,

I believe you have thought of proceeding to take budget cuts from some local establishments. One of them just happens to be Palo Alto Children’s Theatre. There are many reasons why placing these cuts for the theatre’s employees is unreasonable and unwelcome by those in cast, crew, audiences, and the employees themselves. It is an amazing experience, the feeling of the spotlight on your shoulders, the eyes on you on your brilliant costume, as I have experienced this very feeling. A feeling of belonging and joy. There are not many theatres just for children around in Palo Alto and being a part of something special, for instance, theatrical productions, is wonderfully delightful. Making friends, sharing lines, singing your heart out and doing what you love are only some of the things that cast and crew members at the Children’s Theatre encounter, leaving a smile on their face, and a previously empty space in their heart filled to the brim with joy.

Besides the Children’s Theatre there aren’t many other Theatres dedicated to children in Palo Alto. Besides Peninsula Youth Theatre (PYT) kids would have to ride in stuffy cars all the way to Sunnyvale to be a part in an all Child Production.

Not only have I attended these performances from a very young age (2 years old, to be exact) and enjoyed them greatly, I have also been cast in them and therefore my love for the Children’s Theatre grows stronger by the minute. I wish to be an author and professional actress when I grow up. The Children’s Theatre is one of the first steps to achieving my lifelong goal. I’m sure others feel the same way.

Thirdly, audiences rely on theatrical assemblies, especially those of the children. There aren’t many other theatres besides the ones I’ve already mentioned. There are movie theatres, school musicals and plays, but no other public theatrical productions. Making budget cuts to the staff, and cancelling performances would just make others even unhappier than they already are. I know times are hard, I agree, but cast hearts and crew hearts will break when audition day comes and goes without the ability to try out for the various productions the Children’s Theatre has. Please, take consideration into your minds. There are many things to consider, and I’m sure that the Children’s Theatre is not currently the biggest worry on your minds, but it is on mine. I’m not the only one. We are relying on you, City Council, to help Palo Alto even if that means scratching the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre off your list of places to place cuts. Please. Please.

Sincerely,

A disconsolate Palo Alto student,
Julia Curtis, age 11
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all.

Walking into MakeX during open hours will never cease to amaze you; on any given day you might find a slew of makers from middle schoolers to adults all working together in this shared space. You will witness people helping each other with an infinite variety of creative projects. You will see artists painting murals on the walls side by side with teen rocket scientists realizing their newest invention. And you will be amazed as teen leaders foster this community safely and responsibly through peer guidance and support. This kind of interdisciplinary program is truly one-of-a-kind, building up our youth community not only as better engineers and artists, but as creatives, problem solvers, learners, educators, and leaders. Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides itself on supporting.

MakeX has always been there for us. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

All the Best,
Lucas Davidson
Email: hmills@paloaltou.edu
Hello,

My name is Christina O'Konski. I am currently a freshman at the University of Oregon, but I have lived in Palo Alto my entire life. I attended Addison Elementary School, Greene Middle School, and Palo Alto Senior High School. I recently read over the City of Palo Alto's proposed funding cuts and I wanted to urge you not to cut funding to the Palo Alto Children's Theatre.

I have so many positive memories associated with the Children's Theatre. When I was younger I attended their summer camps and watched countless Hot Dog Suppertime and mainstage shows. The Children's Theatre outreach program came to Addison when I was in elementary school, and I can still remember acting in the Wizard of Oz and Alice in Wonderland. Those programs introduced me to theater, which became a major part of my social and creative identity throughout middle and high school.

In high school, I was a counselor at their summer camps and participated in the Playhouse program, which puts on short interactive fairytale plays for young children and their families. I've attached a few photos from Playhouse to this email to try and convey how fantastic that specific program is. I also wrote a short play which was featured in Playpalooza at the Children's Theatre, which was very encouraging and rewarding to me creatively. In other words, I can safely say that the Children’s Theatre is an incredibly unique and wonderful place that brings joy to so many people.

Though I was not as involved in the Children's Theatre as much as some of my friends, I understand how much it meant to them. The Children’s Theatre is a place where kids learn to express themselves creatively; a place where they feel free to make mistakes and grow both as individuals and as artists. The Children's Theatre gives students interested in technical theater opportunities to learn about and design those aspects of shows, such as lights, sets, and costumes, something many elementary and middle schools lack.

Most importantly, the Children's Theatre is a vital hub of community--a space where children feel safe to be themselves, where they can make friends they would otherwise never meet, and where there are adults and older peers that the children trust and look up to immensely. And, it almost goes without saying, but the shows at the Children's Theatre are a fantastic bonding and community event for families of all ages. Plus, they introduce little kids, such as myself many years ago, to the idea of theater, thus growing and perpetuating the programs.

If you cut all programs at the Children's Theatre for two years, you are going to kill all of this completely. So many kids are not even going to be able to say goodbye to the people they have bonded with over the years. The kids who will age out of programs within the next two years are going to miss out on the bigger roles and increased responsibility and leadership that their time at the Children's Theatre has been building to.

Most importantly, the adults who work at the Children's Theatre will have to find other jobs and may not return once the Children's Theatre reopens. This would irreparably destroy the community of the Children's Theatre that so many children rely on as a place where they feel valued and comfortable.
Cut some programs entirely. If you have to, cut everything for a few months. But any more than that and this incredible hub for children interested in the theater arts is going to be destroyed. Please, please do not cut this program for two years. It is so important creatively, socially, and psychologically for so many children.

Thank you,
Christina O'Konski
Hello,

My name is Christina O'Konski. I am currently a freshman at the University of Oregon, but I have lived in Palo Alto my entire life. I attended Addison Elementary School, Greene Middle School, and Palo Alto Senior High School. I recently read over the City of Palo Alto's proposed funding cuts to "all teen programs" in Palo Alto, and I wanted to urge you not to cut funding to the Teen Arts Council.

I was never a member of TAC, but many of my friends were. I was lucky enough to hear about TAC from them, and attended and performed at Open Mic Nights, Point B Poetry Slams, and Buoyancy Festivals throughout high school. The environment at all of these events was incredible—everyone, no matter their age or what school they attended, was so supportive, encouraging, and respectful of everyone else.

I've had the privilege to hear deeply personal and vulnerable poetry, music and raps from close friends and strangers alike. I performed with improv groups, did original stand-up comedy, and even rapped "Alphabet Aerobics" by Blackalicious at various Open Mics. I felt that not only the people I knew, but every single person there was encouraging and supporting me every single time.

If you cut funding to all teen programs, these monthly gatherings of supportive and creative teens will vanish. Even if you can't financially support the TAC to the extent you have in the past, I urge you to continue supporting them in other ways. If you can't give them a budget, at least continue to help them organize and plan free events. If you can't afford to give them use of the community rooms at Mitchell Park, officially cordon off areas of public parks and let them perform outside, or promote them online as they do virtual events.

In other words, I implore you to let this by teens, for teens program continue to exist. It is not only a beautiful and unique program, but vital to the mental health of teens here in Palo Alto, especially with everything that's been going on.

I have attached a photo from an Open Mic Night, to try to convey the environment of these events.

Thank you,
Christina O'Konski
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all.

Walking into MakeX during open hours will never cease to amaze you; on any given day you might find a slew of makers from middle schoolers to adults all working together in this shared space. You will witness people helping each other with an infinite variety of creative projects. You will see artists painting murals on the walls side by side with teen rocket scientists realizing their newest invention. And you will be amazed as teen leaders foster this community safely and responsibly through peer guidance and support. This kind of interdisciplinary program is truly one-of-a-kind, building up our youth community not only as better engineers and artists, but as creatives, problem solvers, learners, educators, and leaders. Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides itself on supporting.

MakeX has always been there for us. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,
Tata
Dear City Council

There are essential services that must be a priority, I understand that as you tackle a budget shortfall. But the next near essential service is for those programs that go to the heart of our community, and that is exactly where Childrens Theater lives. It engages an important segment of our city as well as the joy it brings to many who come watch. If at all possible it seems we should do anything that we can to allow for the Childrens Theater to receive funding.

A concerned theater family

Steve Young
Dear City Council Members,

We just wanted to send a plea for you to consider continued funding of Palo Alto’s teen and children’s programs.

My husband grew up in Palo Alto, and we moved back here in large part because of the city’s embrace of family programs, strong libraries and wonderful schools. Our kids have been dedicated users of the library (we ran over to Rinconada as soon as we heard the libraries were closing from SIP) since they were tiny. Both our kids have been involved in or attended the children’s theatre events and classes. And our daughter took art classes with her grandmother, which they both loved.

Now, with SIP, our kids are missing out on friends, school and ordinary life. Our daughter is at Duveneck, our son is at Paly. Our hearts hurt seeing them yearn to connect with friends.

One bright spot for our son was being a YCS mentor. He made dreamcatchers, planned family walks around our neighborhood, worked on posters. Every Friday, he looked forward to seeing other mentors and mentees. He was a CIT at Foothills last summer and was hoping to do that again this summer, and being a YCS mentor was an activity he chose on his own out of the catalog of opportunities.

Our daughter, on the other hand, keeps asking when the library will reopen. All her camps have clearly been canceled, we both work full time, and she basically watches a screen all day for school.

Please, please, please keep kids’ funding, for both teen programs and children’s programs. And please keep our libraries funded and fully open. These are not “optional” activities. They are the lifeblood of our community, gathering spots and programs for teens (who otherwise either bury their heads in academics and get overstressed, or just play video games and text), fun places for younger kids to discover talents and passions — and reading! — and ways for kids to get together with grandparents.

We’re being robbed of so much right now. Health, lives, jobs, small everyday pleasures like hugging friends. Please don’t take more away from our kids. Give them something to look forward to!

Thank you,
Amara Holstein and Mark Deggeller
Dear PA City Council,

Thank you for all the work you do to serve our community. I am writing to appeal to you about the status of the Palo Alto Children’s Theater. We have heard that the theater may be closed for two years due to budget constraints.

This is very dismaying news. This theater is the beating heart of our children's community.

Both my children are active in the theatre--my son was cast in a play, to his delight, just before lockdown, and is anxiously looking forward to restarting rehearsals when public health permits that. The theater has been part of our life since my older one (age 14) was 2 or 3. The staff there are a source of warmth and friendship and mentorship to my kids. The community is welcoming and nurturing. It is a different kind of teamwork for kids who may not thrive in team sports (like my younger one). He loves to act and do tech. My older one acts and writes scripts. They love their theater friends, who they don’t get to meet at school. They love Mr. Lucky and all the directors and Mr. Richard at the desk. Please don’t take away this essential resource for kids to act, design, produce, and, most importantly, watch theater.

Surely, we can find ways to supplement the budget and keep the theater open? Theater tickets and refreshment sales and donations can be enhanced, perhaps?

The PACT’s reach extends well beyond Palo Alto, it is a regional treasure. Please, let’s do what's needed to keep this jewel shining at its best.

Please, please, please, don’t break children’s hearts--they’ve lost so much this year.

Thank you for considering this request,

Very best,

Priya Satia

--

Priya Satia
Raymond A. Spruance Professor of International History Department of History Stanford University Stanford, CA 94305-2024
Email: psatia@stanford.edu
Web: http://history.stanford.edu/people/priya-satia
To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Daniella and I am an incoming junior at Gunn High School. It has come to my attention that funding for teen services may be cut, and I would like to inform you how awful that decision is. Cutting funding for teen services, even if it’s for only 2 years, will be the end to most of these programs. Being student run, they hardly get funding, so cutting it would make it almost impossible to reopen the program once it resets funding. I am especially concerned about MakeX and the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre, for I have been apart of these programs for some time now. I have been at the theatre since 5th grade and it is a community unlike anything else. Both these programs are places that allow students to express themselves in ways they can’t anywhere else. School systems are allows worried about students’ mental health, and as a student who deals with anxiety pretty regularly, I can tell you how much these programs help de-stress and create an outlet for teens to be creative. Teens now a days are always told to get off their phone and stop watching tv and go do something. So we did. We joined these amazing programs that help us, mentally and academically, and now the city just wants the cut them off. The school board can implement all the classes they want, such as SELF and other classes in the hope that it will help students mental health. But it doesn’t. These programs are what’s helping students get by. They are the things that make us happy. We can sit in a classroom all day and learn about mental health, and having an open mind set, but it’s all stuff we know and heard before a million times. These programs, our programs, the places we feel safe and happy. The places we express ourselves, where our communities are, these are the programs that are helping teens in Palo Alto. I can’t speak for all teens, but I know many of them feel this way. Cutting funding for these programs will be a grave mistake.

Thank you for your consideration,
Daniella Maor
I understand you are assessing cost cutting measures to help cope with the impacts of COVID-19 on the city financials. It is a must-do action and we all as residents of the city appreciate it.

I did want to weigh in on the importance of Teen Services and the value of supporting them in the city. Palo Alto is unique in a large way as a place that is good to live in. The high investment in services in the city balances The high cost of living here. Investment in Teen Services is among the highest impact ones - arguably the highest value-for-money investment you make!

A few years ago, I discovered a few dozen 2” nails have been beaten into the window edge of my teenage son. When I asked him about it he answered that he was stressed and needed a way to relive that stress. I offered to buy more nails, but also suggested him to bike to the MakeX workshop and do woodwork there. Fast forward two years and MakeX has become (for him and a number of his friends) the go-to place to cool down. The ability to be in a teen-only place AND work with power tools and machines has been invaluable to them. Not to mention, the opportunity to mentor and coach other (elementary school and middle school Kids as well as high schools and even occasional adults visiting) is inspiring to watch!

And since MakeX is run by teens and most of the Equipment and materials are donated, the financial requirement by the city is so minimal it will be a mistake to stop it.

Thank you for your consideration!

Boaz

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Boaz Maor
+1-415-867-6393
Hi,

My kids are grown, and it’s been a while since I’ve used the College Terrace Library. But it’s a wonderful place for the community, so I would be very sad if it closes.

Best,
Brian White
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Restore the funds for the fire department, please.

Ambulances coming from out of town take longer to arrive and will cost lives.

What were you thinking!

Natalie Fisher
Palo Alto
Hello Palo Alto City Council,
I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all.

Walking into MakeX during open hours will never cease to amaze you; on any given day you might find a slew of makers from middle schoolers to adults all working together in this shared space. You will witness people helping each other with an infinite variety of creative projects. You will see artists painting murals on the walls side by side with teen rocket scientists realizing their newest invention. And you will be amazed as teen leaders foster this community safely and responsibly through peer guidance and support. This kind of interdisciplinary program is truly one-of-a-kind, building up our youth community not only as better engineers and artists, but as creatives, problem solvers, learners, educators, and leaders. Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides itself on supporting.

MakeX has always been there for us. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,
Kevin Dee
Former MakeX Volunteer Mentor
Gunn ’18
Dear Palo Alto City Council members,

I have been watching shows at The Palo Alto Children's theater for as long as I can remember. It has become like a second home to me, and I have now acted in three shows. Last year, I injured my knee, so I was unable to play sports for 9 months. During that period of time, I was cast in two plays at the Children's Theater, and while I could not play sports, I was able to do something else that I love - participate in a theater performance. The theater is a diverse group of people with great fellow cast members, amazing costume designers, wardrobe managers, lighting specialists, directors, and many more people who make the experience of acting in and watching a performance so special.

The Palo Alto Children's Theater is a vital part of my life and many others', and to close it down would negatively affect countless people in the Palo Alto community.

Sincerely,
Mihir Agrawal
5th Grader
Palo Alto Resident

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Mayor Fine, Vice Mayor Tom DuBois, and Council Members Liz Kniss, Alison Cormack, Eric Filseth, Linda Kou, Greg Tanaka,

Joe and I are writing in support of the Palo Alto Museum and their efforts to turn the historic Roth Building into a museum that will be a resource for students, researchers, and people of all ages. Many will travel here to explore the museum and its archives who are interested in the history of Palo Alto, the Stanford connection, and the innovation that eventually created Silicon Valley. We feel the Palo Alto Museum will be an important asset for all our community.

Sincerely,
Hon. Joe Huber and Nancy Huber
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA  94301
Dear Council Members,

I am writing to implore you to keep the funding of College Terrace Library in the City's revised budget. Department stores measure their success by sales per square foot. If College Terrace Library measured its success by the number of individuals using the library's range of services per square foot of building space, I believe that College Terrace would have one of the highest, if not the highest, per square foot user rate of any of the city's libraries. In addition, it is a treasured neighborhood hub, used by all generations from graduate student families and students from two nearby elementary schools to middle aged residents and retirees. It serves not only the neighborhoods of College Terrace but all the residents of Stanford's faculty and staff residential campus homes. Because of its proximity to Stanford it is probably the most multicultural library in town.

The library's proposed budget cut of $167,000 per year is a 'drop in the bucket' compared to many of the proposed 'big ticket' capital improvement expenditures being considered. I agree with the budget priorities suggested by former Palo Alto mayor Pat Burt and Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Committee member Pat Markevitch in the Guest Opinion they authored in the Palo Alto Weekly 5/22/20 which emphasizes maintaining public services over Capital Improvements that can easily be postponed. Even the proposed $200,000 budget for renovating Cameron Park seems a far less significant service to College
Terrace residents than preserving the four days per week that our College Terrace Library is open.

I realize that aligning the City's budget with the new expected tax revenue decreases is a very difficult task. Everyone who writes has their own priority. However the unusually high number of letters you have received that advocate for continuing the funding of College Terrace Library to my mind indicates that this is a small instance in which a large number of tax paying residents have all agreed that the College Terrace Library is for them one of the City's most important services. I have used and treasured that library for 45 years.

Respectfully submitted, Meredith Einaudi
Dear City Council,

We have been in the community over 10 years and have valued Palo Alto children’s theater very much. It is the only community theater in our area and it supports the local schools. These days with the music and arts programs being cut in public schools here, there is very little art for children left in the area and we do not want to see the Children’s theater cut this year. This is a Palo Alto long time iconic institution.

Additionally this is likely not a high budget item so cutting it would not yield a lot of savings for the city compared to other cuts that could yield more significant savings.

Thank you for your consideration.
Lisa Hwong
415-699-2691
Sent from my iPhone
Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to you in reference to the proposed closure of the Children’s Theatre’s performances for 2 years as well as cutting of teens programs.

The Children’s Theatre is a great resource for our community, it offers access to arts for children and whole families and I strongly urge you to do all possible to keep its funding and activities going, with respect of health measures necessary due to current pandemic.

The arts and ways for people to find connection within our community are more important than ever and I hope you will do everything in your powers to preserve this great Palo Alto institution.

Thank you for your consideration
Federica Armstrong
Old Palo Alto resident
Dear city council,

I write to you to urge you to keep funding the Children's Theater. Their wonderful programs and productions are essential to the Palo Alto community. Since we moved to this area 5 years ago we have been enjoying their productions, weekly classes and summer camps. We have been extremely impressed about the dedication and professionalism of the staff.

Please continue to fund their work as it is essential for keeping the Palo Alto community together!

Best Regards,

Hanna Vuornos
Dear Council Members,

The Palo Alto Children's Theatre is what makes Palo Alto a special place to live and bring up children. Our children must come first when deciding which cuts to make in the city budget. There are plenty of places to cut the budget without doing damage to the programs the city provides for our children. Firstly, a 15% cut over the board for city employees which are the highest on the peninsula.

Sincerely,
Caroleann Eittreim
Redacted
Palo Alto, Ca 94303
650-856-6977
Palo Alto City council,

Teen Services are important And especially in our city that has seen more chalk aged with our teens. While economy is challenging, teens challenges will grow - learning from home, far from friends ...

Please take any suggestion to reduce teen services off the table. Please negotiate with all vendors reduced fees.

Ronen Schwartz
Redacted
Palo Alto

Sent from my iPhone
Dear City Council of Palo Alto

I have been an active member of the Ceramics studio at the Palo Alto art center for years. I probably don’t have to tell you that the studio is one of a kind. It’s such a resource for the entire Bay Area. I understand that art is at the bottom of the totem pole during a crisis of the dimensions that we are experiencing right now, but I am appealing to you to save the art center. Closing it would make it almost impossible to re-create it the way it was once we get out of this crisis.

Thank you so much.

Sunai Raillard, Ph.D.
Dr. sc. nat. ETH Zuerich
Dear Council,

I think the decision about College Terrace library is pending. I really hope this valuable community resource stays open. I do have a question which I hope you have considered:

What will happen to the building if it is no longer a library? Will all the electronics and books be removed, or will it sit there fully equipped as a mausoleum to a once special place?
If it is emptied, can it be repurposed in the interim as a community meeting place, activity center of some sort?
If not emptied, or in fact if emptied, how will the building be preserved for future use? Will it be protected from vandalism and other unfortunate ‘occupations’? What is the cost of maintaining a sadly empty building?

Thanks for all your consideration of priorities, money and people at this time.

Anne Schmitt
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because The Adult Studio provides incredible opportunities for me to make art and be a part of a creative community. I also volunteer there as an aid for the adult studio ceramics classes. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

Sincerely,
Darren Karopczyc
Palo Alto City Council,

I hope you can take the time and read this email. I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed again and again the amazing things that have come out of the program.

Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides of. It will also eliminate an important stress relief to so many Palo Alto students who come weekly to work at the shop in a very supportive teen environment.

MakeX has always been there for our kids and community. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our kids communities through these difficult times.

Thank you for your consideration,

Vered Semel
Dear City Council,

Our family loves the art center! My children take art classes there, I take Saturday morning ceramics classes, my kids go on field trips there and participate in the art shows.

The art center has done a great job of growing a great, supportive community. It is a vital creative space for all of us.

I urge you to continue funding the art center in full.

Respectfully yours,

Yara Sellin
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because The Adult Studio provides incredible opportunities for me to make art and be a part of a creative community. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

Sincerely,

Tina Semba
Dear City Council Members

I am writing you to support funding for the art center. I personally find this the most valuable and enriching facility and service the city offers. It is a community that distinguishes and enriches Palo Alto. It is unique and valuable to residents of all ages.

I know this will be a difficult period for the City budget, but please preserve as much funding for the art center as possible.

Thank you

Robert Gamburd, M.D.
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Please make sure you don’t let the Palo Alto Art Center Die a Covid Death. Project Look brings art to our school children. The Center has art programs and rich educational programs for children of all ages, as well as extraordinary exhibitions. More than ever we need to maintain this valuable educational resource.

Nancy

Nancy Mueller
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650-804-5345
To All Palo Alto City Council Members:

In addition to providing excellent classes and work spaces for adults and children in several media—painting, drawing, ceramics, jewelry-making, collage, and more—the Art Center also serves a very important community center at which people meet and build lasting personal relationships!

It is these kinds of relationships that help enable communities to thrive and to survive crises of many kinds!

Therefore the Art Center should be viewed as an essential service to Palo Alto residents!

Without such strong social infrastructure, cities lose their vibrancy and viability.

As you do your important work of reviewing budget priorities, please focus on the important role of the Palo Alto Art Center, the Palo Alto Public Libraries, and other such institutions, in keeping the people of Palo Alto healthy physically and mentally!

Thank you,

-Edward L Klinenberg

Redacted

Palo Alto 94306

(Long-time ceramic art student and artist)
Baumb, Nelly

From: Andib <andib41942@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2020 11:17 AM
To: Council, City
Subject: Palo Alto Art Center

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____________________________________________________________________

I have been taking classes at the Art Center from wonderful teachers for the past 8 years. This has been an incredible opportunity to keep my sanity, learn, and build a delightful group of friends from my associates. I have seen the children’s faces light up when they see a piece they made come out of a firing! I have seen the deepened bond between grandparent and grandchild as they share a class.

Making art and seeing art (the gallery exhibits are always museum quality) is one of the special opportunities in Palo Alto. Please, now especially is a time the community needs art to deal with this virus. And our unknown future!

Please!!! Reopen the center and the school with adequate funding to keep art alive in our city!!! Thank you!!!

Andrea Boehmer, member and student
650-380-3837

Sent from my iPhone
Dear City Council members,

I know you sit with a budget that is far from what you would want.

I’m writing to ask you to please avoid making budget cuts to teen wellness programs, including mental health programs and programs like Children’s Theatre that allow troubled teens to find their tribe.

We’ve experienced too many bad outcomes when teens have no mental health support.

Many thanks.

________________

Holly Brady
Publishing Strategist &
Former Director, Stanford Publishing Courses
Palo Alto, CA
www.hollybrady.com
We should try the approach in this article [https://nyti.ms/2Xpeey3](https://nyti.ms/2Xpeey3) Pay Cuts Become a Tool for Some Companies to Avoid Layoffs

The percentage cut should be uniform or get smaller for lower paid workers, and it should be across the board.

Also,  
* we should (make every effort to) roll back recent raises since they were predicated on revenues that now do not exist  
* we should postpone (delay the start of) all capital projects not currently under construction. We should borrow some of those funds from ourselves to cover SOME (not all) of the deficit. See Pat Burt opinion in the Weekly.
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I moved to Palo Alto four years ago because my husband was starting a new job here with a high tech start up. As you imagine he was working quite a bit leaving me a loose ends. I initially signed up for a drawing class at PAAC then found the ceramic studio-my people! The environment is so friendly and energetic. I'm there most days when the studio is open and love the whole environment. Since I've gotten so much from the studio, I've been volunteering at the studio-giving back.

I support the Art Center because The Adult Studio provides incredible opportunities for me to make art and be a part of a creative community. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I urge you to restore the funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs.

Sincerely,

Karen Barone
Dear City Council,

I am writing you to urge you not to cut the budget for Children’s Theater. I understand the proposal is not to have any productions for two years. I believe the PA Children’s Theater is the oldest children’s theater in California and a local treasure. In addition to enriching the lives of the children who perform in the plays, thousands of other children see the productions every year. Our son, Xander, was in five productions over the last 7 years and it was invaluable experience for him and helped his social confidence and public speaking ability.

I realize that Palo Alto is under budget pressure because of COVID-19 but here are some other options you could consider:

1. Raise ticket prices for adults (but not for kids)
2. Raise ticket prices for the adult plays in the Lucie Stern Theater to subsidize the Children’s Theater
3. Host a Gofundme page to raise money
4. Offer to change the name of the theater if someone like Mark Zuckerberg or Maureen Jobs could donate a lot of money

So I realize these are tough choices but the theater survived World War II, the Vietnam War, 9/11, the Tech Bust, the Great Recession so it should be able to survive one year of Covid-19.

Best,
Eric Dorsey
   Redacted
Palo Alto
Dear City Council Members,

I am delighted you have not decided (as yet) to close College Terrace Library. I also appreciate that you are considering doing the right thing for the greater good and decreasing your salaries. As you know many of us are furloughed indefinitely and most others had their pay lowered by 20%. Thank you for noticing this.

I specifically bought my house in college terrace to use this neighborhood library. While we were looking for a place to live we fell in love with the neighborhood mostly because of this library. We lived in an apartment until we were able to get into College Terrace our dream location.

PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE THIS LIBRARY.

I fear vandals and poor maintenance. You already have bugs infiltrating the roses behind the library. This could become another place for homeless hangout. The neighborhood already has many homeless on our corners as you know.

My final suggestion is that if you have to save costs KEEP IT OPEN AND MAYBE JUST 3 DAYS PER WEEK.

Most college terrace homes do not have AC and we spend many hours sitting in this nice cool space reading.

Thank you for your consideration in this very important matter.

A hopeful citizen of Palo Alto.

Carolyn Sledge
Dear City Council Member,

The Palo Alto Art Center creates community participation, understanding and support that spreads across the entire city of Palo Alto. The classes for adults as well as for kids bring diverse people together, providing broader ties than those that might exist in a single neighborhood or school grouping.

The PAAC is a tremendous asset for the entire community by building a wider net of personal connections and offering eye opening insights to broader ideas.

We all need PAAC.

Sincerely,

Doris Fischer-Colbrie
d.fischercolbrie@gmail.com
Hello City Council Members. My name is Rosine Ferber, I have lived in Palo Alto since 1983. I am an Art Psychotherapist, and I have worked with Karen Kienzle to try and develop an Art Therapy program at PAAC. I am also very involved with the ceramic studio, and have taken classes at PAAC through the years. In my opinion, the Art Center is crucial in our community, because of its healing, connective, educational, and Psychotherapeutic qualities. After this very difficult and traumatic period of our lives, when people feel more disconnected, lonely, anxious and depressed than ever before, there is going to be a great need for our Art Center to help bring our community together around the healing and transformational aspects of art-making. From a personal and professional standpoint, I asked you to consider NOT cutting the funding from the Art Center and to reopen it safely, as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Rosine Ferber, LMFT, ph.D., LMFT, ATR-BC
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear
Dear Council Members

Thank you for your hard work during these tough budgetary times. I want to repeat my support for the College Terrace Library. I would much rather see cuts in extravagant projects like the pedestrian bridge over 101 than closing our neighborhood library.

Thank you
William Heaton
Bowdoin Street

Sent from my iPad
Dear City Council,

Hello, my name is Emma Grant-Bier and I am a student at Gunn high school. I’m writing in response to the funding cuts that may be made to teen services. Cutting funding for teen services, even if it’s for only 2 years, will be the end of most of these programs. Being teen run, they hardly get funding, so cutting it would make it almost impossible to reopen the programs. Teen services are places where teens are able to express themselves and be creative while doing the things they love. As much as our schools try to help with students' mental health by implementing classes, and bringing in people to talk to us about how to deal with anxiety and how to keep an open mind, it’s no help. We’ve heard these things before. Being told how to deal with these things over and over again won’t help, but being a part of a community, and being able to express yourself does help. This doesn’t apply to everyone, but these programs are helping teens deal with obstacles by giving them a creative outlet to de-stress. Taking away these programs will have a tragic impact on the youth of palo alto.

Thank you,
Emma Grant-Bier
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because The Adult Studio provides incredible opportunities for me to make art and be a part of a creative community. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I hope to see funding for the Art Center's beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

The Art Center space, community and classes are something I enjoy on a regular basis. My life hasn’t been the same since SIP. As an educator, I know the arts play a critical role in our emotional wellbeing - it’s something we need more than ever. A place to connect, be mindful, and be creative. Please tell me there is a way to continue funding the Art Center and all the wonderful things if provides Palo Alto and its surrounding cities.

Sincerely,

Cathy Chen
Dear City Council,

Thank you for restoring SOME funding for city teen services.

I request you fully fund the YCS Youth Connectedness Initiative, rather than the staff recommendation for a 50% budget cut from $50,000 to $25,000. Now, more than ever, with our teens facing the uncertainties driven by Covid19, they need these YCS critical, life-saving teen services.

According to YCS, this 50% cut means two terrible alternatives:

- YCS would only run the mental health program for one semester, not two. This makes no sense, in a community where - prior to Covid10 - our teens are trying to take their lives, or
- YCS could engage 10 peer leaders, not the current 20 from Gunn, Paly and Castilleja to share mental health information and connect with isolated, anxious, suicidal students.

An additional $25,000 WILL save teen lives. Plus - the $25,000 brings another $25,000, with the county matching funds.

You can find that $25,000 several places:

- the senior city managers’ 15% pay cut
- the unions deferring their pay raises
- deferring capital projects.

Please prioritize the mental well-being of our youth - our leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for reading my thoughts.

Nancy
Barron Park resident
Dear Council Member,
I have been coming to the art center for the past 30 years. It’s my home away from home! I am a long term volunteer in the Ceramic adult studio, a member of the association for clay and glass artists and regularly exhibit at the yearly sale. For several years I have been an instructor in the children's clay studio. The art center is a life line for so many people. Please allow us to reopen soon - so we can resume our programs that mean so much to the community.
Many thanks for reading my appeal.
With kind regards,
Corinna
Hi,

I am writing out of concern about your proposed drastic cuts to Youth Community Center, Palo Alto Children's Theatre and other teen programs. We have a chronic public health problem in Palo Alto with our teens, and we need to provide alternatives for them to find a place to thrive.

I agree with Pat Burt's editorial in Friday's Palo Alto Weekly that we should find ways to scale back and delay large capital improvements to avoid making such large cuts to critical city services.

Going two years longer without new buildings makes little difference in the long run, while going two years without a supportive community outlet can literally make a life or death difference to a teenager.

Please think very carefully before closing or severely scaling back these programs,

Thank you,

Patricia Kinney
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Please find a way to provide funding for the Palo Alto Art Center to continue its mission and programming. I have lived in Palo Alto for 37 years, and have used its services and facilities since soon after moving here, for me, for my children, with guests who come to town - on and on. It is a community center with a vibrant purpose and I have always thought it is one of the reasons that the city of Palo Alto is so special. I look forward to the day when I can return there, taking classes, interacting with so many people who love art and our city, seeing wonderful exhibitions. I know that there are so many competing interests that need to be funded, but this one is key to Palo Alto and its vibrancy.

Thank you for your consideration,
Denise Savoie
Miramonte Ave
Dear City Council,

I am very heartened to hear Staff has now proposed keeping all of the library branches open, in exchange for having reduced hours at each.

Keeping the CTL open, even with reduced hours, will have a much more beneficial impact than applying those same hours to one of the other libraries.

Council: please preserve library access for people of all demographics! Vote to keep the College Terrace Library open!

Thank you!
Kristen Anderson
Dear Palo Alto City Council:

I am writing to ask you to please maintain adequate funding for the Palo Alto Art Center. As residents of Palo Alto for almost thirty years, our family considers the Art Center as important an asset to our city as our schools, our parks, and our libraries.

It's unfortunate that the arts are often seen as luxuries and not essential elements of a community. So, when times get hard, the arts are one of the first things to be cut. But that is exactly the time when the arts can be the most beneficial. Visiting the Art Center is always an inspiring, thought-provoking, and uplifting experience.

I appreciate the difficulty you face balancing the city budget. But I hope you will approach that task creatively and fairly, keeping an eye on maintaining the best the city has to offer – like the Art Center – while making sure the necessary belt-tightening is shared by all, not just a few.

Sincerely,

Tom Scarpino
Redacted
Palo Alto

MIXED MEDIA
Redacted
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.321.0956

www.mixedmediaonline.com
tom@mixedmediaonline.com
Dear City Council members,

As a father of 3 boys who participated in a very long list of performances by the Palo Alto Children's Theatre, I cannot begin to tell you how disappointed I am in the proposal to put on hold the theatre's performances for 2 years. These performances have been, hands down, the best youth program my kids have participated in, and not only in Palo Alto. It provides great skills and values to its participants, along with endless life long friendships. My youngest son, who still participates in these performances, would give up any other activity in order to participate in another theatre performance. I have seen many theatre programs for children around the country and abroad, and I must say that I've never seen any program at this level, with so much dedication by both students and staff.

We are fortunate to have a very strong parent community in the theatre, and I'm sure most parents will be more than willing to up their donation to the theatre in order to keep it going.

I understand that the budget constraints and the social distancing limitations, make it much harder to put together shows at the rate we were used to, but I would urge the council to consider looking into putting together, perhaps a more limited version of these shows. The theatre staff and the parents are more than willing to come up with proposals of how to make it work.

Please, please, please, keep this program alive. There is no better investment in our children than this program, and I'm sure we can keep it going on a much lower budget.

Thanks,
Dror.
Please continue to support the Palo Alto Children's Theatre; it is a National Treasure that offers experiences not duplicated elsewhere.

--
*LFC from lina*
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

Our family has lived in Palo Alto for 11 years. We have two daughters: a 9th grader at Gunn and a 4th grader at Fairmeadow.

I am writing to urge the City not to cut funding for its teen programs. While I am relieved that the latest proposal restores half of the $400,000 in funding that was cut in the original proposal, I hope that you will consider completely restoring funding for the programs.

Sadly, our city has attracted national media attention as place where teens suffer from extremely high levels of stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. We have all read the numerous news articles that have appeared about this, and like me, I'm sure you are tired of seeing them.

Palo Alto's excellent teen programs provide our middle school and high school students with opportunities to meet peers with similar interests in a non-academic setting, to develop leadership skills and pursue their interests, and most importantly, to have fun. With these programs, the City is making an important contribution to the well-being of our youth. Given the acute problems surrounding teen mental health in Palo Alto, is cutting funding for these programs a wise thing to do?

My older daughter has actively participated in many of the teen programs at the Art Center, and it has been a fun, rewarding experience for her and the many other teens in the program. What kind of message would the City be sending to her and the other kids by making these severe budget cuts? And if you do make these cuts, how long before another national journalist rolls into town and cooks up a headline like, "Palo Alto Teens Are Hurting (and the City of Palo Alto is Gutting the Programs Meant to Help Them)?"

I hope you consider restoring all of the funding for the teen programs. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Raymond Lin
Grove Avenue
Hello City Council Members -

While I realize that you have an extremely difficult task with the projected budget shortfall, I'm hoping you might revisit the cutting of all Children's Theater performances and teen programs for the next two years. Art will be even more of a necessary outlet once our community can ease up on Shelter-in-Place, and I know that the Children's Theatre has provided a halcyon for many a child during the pre-covid time. Post SiP, the need for the community there, the creative outlet, and some semblance of 'normal' could be even greater.

I realize that I do not know anything about the budget, but is there any way that the Theatre could begin functioning again post SiP? Does the staff have input for ideas of how to keep going?

Please allow some creative wiggle room for both theater funding and for theatre-prone kids.

Thank you for both your time as Council members and for your consideration,
Lara Sox-Harris
To the City Council,

Please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because I appreciate the Cultural Kaleidoscope program in using visual art to build bridges between Palo Alto and East Palo Alto. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

Sincerely,

John Antoun
Old Palo Alto
Dear Councilman and Mayor Fine,

I am a life long Palo Alto resident. My parents moved here in 1968 from the East Coast. They still live in the same house in Green Acres 1.

My daughter Katie Brown has been actively participating in the Palo Alto Children's Theatre since she was in third grade. She grew up in the Theatre. It became a home for her. The staff are her second family.

The Theatre nurtured her natural talent for performing. She also came to love all areas of the theatre and has learned how to do costuming, stage makeup, stage management and sound design.

As Katie grew older she also volunteered at the Theatre in all areas. She has given 500 hours of volunteer hours, all done at the Children's Theatre. She received the Presidential Gold award for her community service.

When Katie started her involvement with PACT, I followed her. I have been an extremely active volunteer at the Theatre. I have served on the Board and then transitioned into a more active role as a Friend of the Theatre volunteer. Our small group of 5 women help raise funds for the theatre through concessions sales and other fundraising events. We also coordinate all of the parent volunteers and solicit donations for participation in the productions. We spend many hours devoted to our work at the theatre. We all work full-time jobs yet still go directly to the Theatre after work to help during a show. We are passionate about how important the Children's Theatre is to our children and all of the children in our community.

These skills Katie learned at The Children's Theatre helped Katie succeed in Theatre at Gunn High School. She developed what she learned at PACT and became a mature, hard working member of the Gunn Theatre program.

Katie is a senior at Gunn. She will be pursuing Performing Arts in college. She auditioned and was admitted to a very selective Theatre BA program at Pace University in New York. She credits PACT for helping her get there.

Yes, for now the doors are shut, but they are continuing to provide programming, classes, teen arts council events, etc., and they plan to expand upon those. The Council is deliberating a two year closure of the Theatre. The funds eliminated would be VERY hard to reinstate, and the longest running Children's Theatre in the country would likely never be the same.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Brown 
Redacted
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because I appreciate the free-admission, engaging and inspiring exhibitions. I’ve supported the Art Center with service on the PAAC Foundation, fund raising and planning and working on the Art Center’s significant anniversaries. With current Foundation board members I am working on a celebration for the Art Center's 50th anniversary. We have so much to celebrate and be proud of - important educational programs such as Project Look and Cultural Kaliedescope which introduce children to the arts and creativity while expanding their sense of community.

The arts reflect current culture as well as the vision for what can be - we now need this more than ever.

I hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

Sincerely,

Marcia Pugsley
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because I appreciate the free-admission, engaging and inspiring exhibitions. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

Sincerely,

Lisa Voge-Levin
Pat Burt and Pat Markevitch proposed in last Friday's Palo Alto Weekly that capital spending for next year and the following year be significantly reduced. I think their proposal is compelling. Please consider it.

I hope you will find ways to prevent major cuts to funding for the Palo Alto Children's Theater and the Youth Community Services organizations. Both groups have helped many young citizens of Palo Alto find meaning and inspiration during their difficult teenage years.

Though I do not mind reduced hours for libraries, I think it would be wise to keep libraries open during at least a couple of evenings each week. Perhaps on Tuesdays and Thursday the libraries could be open from noon until 8:00pm, and on other days they would be open from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

I also would not mind if you close all libraries but Rinconada and Mitchell Park for a year or two.

James P. Marks
Hi,

I’m Katie Brown and I’m a senior at Gunn High School. I have been a participant at the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre for eight years. The Palo Alto Children’s Theatre means so much to me and to so many others in the community. I’m writing you today to advocate for continued funding and support for PACT.

I created a video that I would really like you to watch before making the decision and before the City Council Meeting tomorrow (5/26) I am also hoping to speak tomorrow when the floor is open.

I wanted to make sure that the actual participants and children of the theatre were able to advocate and voice their opinions. I made this video along with the help of over 40 participants of the video.

This video was made to help advocate for continued funding for the Palo Alto Children's Theatre. I wanted to make a video voicing the actual participants and children of the theatre. I wanted to share our points of views and how the Palo Alto Children's Theatre has affected us. PACT means so much to so many different people and it would greatly affect our community if PACT would have to change. It has supported our community through so many years and we should do the same.

Here is the video:
https://youtu.be/LECzgNNz4WE

I hope you will be able to take the time to watch this before the meeting tomorrow.

Thank you so much for your time,

Katie Brown
650-248-5943
Dear Palo Alto City Council members,

Our family has been part of the Palo Alto Children’s Theater community since we moved to Palo Alto almost nine years ago. Our older two children, now 11.5 and almost 9 yrs old have been enthusiastic audience members since they were toddlers, and each of them couldn’t wait to turn 8, so that they could finally be cast in the theater productions that the PACT puts on every year.

Our eldest has now performed in three shows and our 8 year old performed in her first show this past Fall. The PACT is an incredible community. It brings together kids from so many schools in the area who are all taught by the most wonderful group of adults. Directors like Mr. Luckey and Ms. Gaboury, and the other adults involved in the PACT have invested so much in our children over the past few years. Our children have befriended kids who they would never have otherwise known and we have been impressed by the older kids who serve as role models for the younger children during all of the productions.

When our son was in fourth grade, he suffered a knee injury and was unable to play any sports for nine months. This was very hard for him because he couldn’t do any of the activities that most of his friends were involved in. With our encouragement, he auditioned for and was cast in two PACT performances. During this time, the Children’s theater became a second home to him – it gave him a sense of purpose to perform in two plays, he made new friends, became part of a new community, and had wonderful, supportive adults who taught him and looked out for him. He has learned many new skills and become a much more confident public speaker. We are so grateful for all the support that PACT gave him during this time.

We hope you are able to find a way to keep the PACT open and put on some of its performances during this hard time. As you can see, it is a vital part of the Palo Alto community and an important and unique resource for our children.

Sincerely,
Asawari RaoRane Agrawal
Palo Alto Resident

From my daughter, Aanya (age 8)

Dear Palo Alto City Council members,

I have watched many shows at the Palo Alto Children’s Theater and I have enjoyed every single one of them. Ever since my brother was cast in his first show, I knew I wanted to act in shows too. In November of 2019, I finally was cast in The Phantom Tollbooth - my first show.

The Children's Theater community is very warm, welcoming, and pushes you to do your best. The theater has taught me to try my hardest and if I don't succeed the first time, try harder the next time.

If the Palo Alto Children's Theater were to close down, a big group of kids and adults would lose out on doing something that they love: theater.

Sincerely,
Aanya Agrawal
3rd grader
Palo Alto resident
Dear Members of the Palo Alto City Council,

We are writing to you to express our sadness in knowing that the Palo Alto Children's Theater may be closed for 2 years due to budget constraints. The Theater is an important part of the community in Palo Alto, and my children (a 2nd grader and Kindergartner at Duveneck) have watched plays, met friends and shared the joy of their performances numerous times. We have always been amazed with the spirit, confidence and joy with which children train and participate in the Theater. While I understand this is a time for difficult choices, and no choice is easy, I would urge you to reconsider options to keep the Theater open during this time - even if it is not with the same vigor as before.

Thanks
Sidd and Anjali
Redacte, Palo Alto, CA 94301.
To whom this may concern,

Hope you and your family are doing well and staying safe! My name is Alvin Hom, I’m currently a student at the University of Michigan and I have lived in Palo Alto since 2002. I heard on Facebook there was an important City Council meeting tomorrow regarding funding, and I wanted to express my support for the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre.

Right off the bat, I know you guys have a lot of factors to consider and that I do not know all the details. However, growing up I loved two things: student government and acting. I know firsthand that it can be difficult to make these decisions and please everyone, but I trust that in the end you all will make a decision that is best for our community.

Now, what I can speak to is how special of a place the Palo Alto Children's Theatre is and how important it was for me. The first show I did was in third grade, and the theatre opened me up to a new world. Through acting in shows at Palo Alto Children's Theatre, like many other people, I was able to learn about creative expression and art, but it wasn't until a few years ago that I realized the Palo Alto Children's Theatre has made me who I am.

As an Asian-American growing up in Silicon Valley, I spent the first 10 years of my life thinking that if I wanted to be successful in the future, I had to study computer science. While I am not pursuing acting in college, it is the reason I did student government and the reason I'm passionate about politics now. Performing on stage showed me how much I enjoyed making other people laugh and smile. It taught me the importance of enjoying life and made me want to find other ways to spread happiness in my community.

Times are undoubtedly tough. Hard decisions will need to be made, but I really hope it is not at the expense of the Friends of the Palo Alto Children's Theatre. With all the negativity in the world, kids need a place to learn about art and express themselves now more than ever. Thank you so much for reading this email, and for making the tough decisions that make our community a better place.

Best Regards,
Alvin Hom

---

Alvin Hom
University of Michigan Class of 2022
Dual Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and Organizational Studies
alvinhom@umich.edu  |  (650) 868-2729  |  LinkedIn
Dear Council Members,
Attached are recommendations on your city budget considerations.
Sincerely,

Peter Drekmeyer                  Penny Ellson
Lanie Wheeler                    Jennifer Chang Hetterly
Pat Burt                         Dan Garber
David Bower                      Vicki Veenker
Pat Markevitch                   Arthur Keller
Sheri Furman                     Nadia Naik
Becky Sanders                    Sally Bemus
Keith Reckdahl                   Winter Dellenbach
Ed Lauing                        Becky Beacom
Greer Stone                      Neilson Buchanan
Subject: Item 1, May 26, 2020  
Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

Dear City Council,

The COVID emergency is forcing the most difficult budget challenges the city has faced in decades. Services that we value and which define our community, and the people who fulfill them, are proposed to be cut severely; our police and fire departments, parks and open space, libraries, community centers, transportation, and youth services.

**By modestly reducing the historically high investments in big capital projects, re-bidding projects, and curtailing salaries and raises, we can eliminate the most severe cuts to employees and our critical, highly valued services.** At the same time, the city can ensure it has an adequate reserve fund to be able to meet essential needs if the economy worsens more in the coming months. Please consider:

1) agreeing to guiding principles for decision-making,
2) adjusting long-term capital investments and recent increases in employee compensation,
3) strengthening the Budget Stabilization Reserve based on the high economic uncertainty.

**Guiding Principles**

Tough, complex decisions are best made when based on clear principles, facts, and thoughtful deliberations. The staff needs to transparently lay out for the council and community its economic assumptions and the fiscal implications of budget changes being proposed. For example, which cuts are for vacant positions and which are for services that can’t be provided currently due to COVID restrictions? What modifications to the city’s labor contracts are available? And, the current emergency should not be used to push through, without adequate public processes and deliberations, policy changes not directly related to the fiscal emergency.

**Capital Investments**

*The current budget proposes record capital funding for this year.*

Ten years ago, the council appointed an Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Committee (IBRC) to recommend solutions to our decades-long problem of inadequate infrastructure investments. The council soon addressed the first two of their substantial recommendations: “keeping up” and “catching up” on infrastructure maintenance. The third bucket covered overdue big facility projects like a new police building, new garages, two new fire stations, restoring our Municipal Services Center, and other projects. The challenge was how to fund these needs while continuing to provide our most valued services. In the next several years, the council developed and implemented a funding plan, primarily through zoning incentives and marketing to grow significantly our number of hotels and increase our hotel tax (TOT) revenue.

*The plan was to provide for these new capital projects while maintaining our important services. It was never intended that these projects would be built at the expense of the services we value and need.* But despite the recent crash in TOT income, the proposed budget prioritizes paying for new
facilities and other long-term capital projects at the expense of vital public safety and community services.

The investments meet important long-term needs, but many are not critical over the near term allowing the spending curve to be flattened over the next two years. Critical city services can be retained by only moderately reducing the rate of capital investments.

Also, the capital projects are budgeted according to estimates made during the recently booming economy, but costs are very likely to drop over the next 1-2 years, which happened during the Great Recession, when projects that had been consistently coming in at or overestimates instead received bids at far lower costs, resulting in significant savings.

The City also needs to avoid getting locked into big, new, obligations in the coming months to retain its latitude to respond if the downturn deepens. Whichever capital projects are ultimately budgeted for this fiscal year, staff should be directed to not enter into any major non-essential project contracts until after a mid-year budget review.

Employee Compensation

Nearly every resident and business are experiencing financial hardships from the COVID emergency. Our senior city managers have just volunteered to reduce their salaries by 15% during the city’s fiscal crisis. Shortly before the current economic crash, the city completed negotiations with its employee unions for significant raises in response to what was then the rising cost of living in a booming economy. To avoid lay-offs while retaining community support for city employees, the city should partner with unionized city workers who could forego previously agreed upon raises to save jobs.

Budget Stabilization Reserve:
We are in the midst of the greatest economic uncertainty in decades. Consequently, **the City should ensure that its Budget Stabilization Reserve is adequate to respond to the changing needs from an economy that may deteriorate further.** The BSR was drastically reduced from ~$45M to ~$25M in the current fiscal quarter alone because the city chose to support workers during the current final quarter of FY20 by keeping all staff on at full payroll. As such, savings from labor agreements should be allocated to retaining an adequate financial reserve to contend with fiscal uncertainties.

*By reducing the rate of long-term Capital Fund expenditures, re-bidding projects, and curtailing salaries and raises, we can eliminate the most severe cuts to our staff and the critical, highly valued services they provide the community.*

This is a difficult time with tough decisions for you, our city leaders. Please take the time to make smart, well-informed choices. We can respond to the crisis without severely cutting the services that make Palo Alto such a safe and wonderful place to live. Now more than ever, we need a sense of community – working together, we can get through this.

Sincerely (as individuals),

Peter Drekmeier    Penny Ellson  
Lanie Wheeler    Jennifer Chang Hetterly  
Pat Burt    Dan Garber  
David Bower    Vicki Veenker  
Pat Markevitch    Arthur Keller  
Sheri Furman    Nadia Naik  
Becky Sanders    Sally Bemus  
Keith Reckdahl    Winter Dellenbach  
Ed Lauing    Becky Beacom  
Greer Stone    Neilson Buchanan
Dear Council members,

I hope you all have had a restful Memorial Day weekend.

On behalf of the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation Board of Directors, I want to share with you the collective voices of the Foundation members in our plea to the Council to restore adequate funding in the city budget to the Palo Alto Art Center. We recognize that the pandemic has brought tremendous economic uncertainty, and we understand that drastic cut is necessary. We do ask that you please listen to your Palo Alto constituents, and take into consideration the impact various Art Center programs have on residents of all ages. For those of you who have visited the Art Center, you know our high caliber exhibitions have garnered prestigious funding support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Institute for Museum and Library Services, and the California Arts Council. This is an honor for the City of Palo Alto that one should not disregard. For those of you with school-age children and grandchildren in Palo Alto, chances are they have enjoyed the Project Look school tours and hands-on activities, and participated in our Cultural Kaleidoscope program with their peers in the Ravenswood City School District.

I urge you to read through the comments shared by our members and your constituents. And please vote in support of restoring funding to the Art Center’s exhibition and school programs.

Sincerely,
Tom Brinck
Co-President, Palo Alto Art Center Foundation Board of Directors
Palo Alto Resident
We understand the need to address the City of Palo Alto’s budget crisis. We also know that the community needs art now more than ever and therefore hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

I support the Palo Alto Art Center because

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<td>Eliza</td>
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<td>I appreciate the Cultural Kaleidoscope program in using visual art to build bridges between Palo Alto and East Palo Alto.</td>
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<td>Kathy</td>
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<td>Kerny</td>
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<td>I support Project Look school tours, which have introduced thousands of children to art and museums for more than three decades.</td>
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<td>Jacob</td>
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<td>Oakland</td>
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<td>Susan Anderson</td>
<td>Portola Valley</td>
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<td>Jeanne McGinnis</td>
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<td>Jan Schachter</td>
<td>Portola Valley</td>
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<td>Cathy Chen</td>
<td>Redwood City</td>
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<td>DARREN KAROPCZYC</td>
<td>Redwood City</td>
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<td>Nicole Daignault</td>
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<td>Bette Linderman</td>
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<td>Valerie Evans</td>
<td>San Mateo</td>
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<td>Barbara Carman</td>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
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<td>Yara Sellin</td>
<td>Stanford</td>
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<td>Ann Reidy</td>
<td>Sunnyvale</td>
<td>The Adult Studio provides incredible opportunities for me to make art and be a part of a creative community.</td>
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<td>Christina Solove</td>
<td>Sunnyvale</td>
<td>I enjoy volunteering at the Palo Alto Art Center and giving back to my community.</td>
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<td>Bret Bailey</td>
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<td>The Adult Studio provides incredible opportunities for me to make art and be a part of a creative community.</td>
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<td>Derek Bodkin</td>
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<td>Heather Cowans</td>
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<td>Bridget Haworth</td>
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<td>Michael Pegram</td>
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<td>John Roach</td>
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<td>Sandra Yu</td>
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Dear Mayor Fine, Vice Mayor DuBois and Council Members Filseth, Kniss, Kou and Tanaka;

My wife Verna M. Graham and I are long-term supporters of and donors to the Palo Alto Historical Museum. I have been an advocate of the museum since Gary Fazzino and others starting talking about the need for it back in the 1980s and 90s.

I was a member of the Board of the Palo alto Historical Association (PAHA) for nine years and and President for three years, following Dick Rosenbaum in that position. As an amateur historian, I have specialized in the history of Barron Park and associated areas of southwest Palo Alto. I have been researching and writing articles on Barron Park history since 1986, with more than 100 published in the Barron Park Association Newsletter since then. The Guy Miller archive has been the essential core of the historical resources which have enabled me to bring our past alive for my neighbors. The archive is of major importance to anyone who is interested in Palo Alto's Palo Alto past and its usefulness would be greatly enhanced by being housed in the historic Roth Building.

You have the opportunity now to make a crucial difference in the future of the museum by assisting the citizens who have worked so long and given so much to make the museum a reality. I am confident that you, who have also worked hard to make our city a better place, will seize this opportunity. Please help fund the restoration of the building and make possible a new burst of public enthusiasm for the history of our beloved town.

Thank you,
--
Douglas L. Graham
Barron Park Historian
dgrahampaca@gmail.com
650-493-0689
Dear Palo Alto City Council,

I recently learned that, due to the need for drastic budget cuts, you are considering cutting the Palo Alto Children’s Theatre (PACT) budget drastically and that, as a result, performances may not resume for as long as two years after the shelter in place restrictions have been lifted. Our family is incredibly distraught to hear this news. We are enormous PACT supporters and fans, as we ardently believe that it is one of the city’s greatest treasures.

We have attended a range of PACT performances over the past decade, and our middle-school child has been an active participant for the past five. During that time, our child has been in several productions as well as benefitted from the reasonably priced, first-rate classes. Perhaps most importantly, our child has been warmly welcomed into the PACT community, which is one that values creativity, innovation, collaboration, and kindness. The PACT community rallies around a shared sense of purpose: to provide equitable access to high-quality arts education and performances for youth throughout the community. Because of PACT’s welcoming nature, our child has served as an usher for performances even when not selected in the audition, and marched with the PACT group in Palo Alto’s May Day parade, even when other options were available. PACT feels like an inclusive home not only to our child, but to many—and these are signs of a true community institution.

Moreover, we have been incredibly impressed by the theatre’s exemplary staff over the years. They are concurrently kind, while also maintaining high standards for the performers. They model professionalism, community-mindedness, and compassion. They are exceptionally skilled at providing just enough structure to ensure excellent children’s theatre performances (not an easy feat!), while also fostering joy and enthusiasm, which keeps the kids returning year after year.

The theatre has made a tremendously positive impact not only for our child, but for our whole family. As someone who cares deeply about building and strengthening community, I can attest that PACT is a gem that must be preserved for the greater good. Especially in these precarious, challenging times, PACT’s unifying, uplifting presence is needed now more than ever.

Thank you for your kind consideration,
Nicole Ardoin
Stanford Campus
Palo Alto Children’s Theatre Parent and Supporter
I am writing to urge you to accept the FOPACT proposal to fund the Palo Alto Children's Theatre. I raised my family here (my children are now 44 and 40), and came to treasure the Theatre. When my children were little, there was nothing like seeing a performance there. We loved watching the young actors perform in costumes and with sets that were simple but brilliant. The actors were well rehearsed and clearly took the work seriously. They were funny and touching and moving. This made for exciting afternoons or evenings as well as excellent discussions afterward.

When my daughter began to participate in the Children's Theatre, I learned why it is so good. Under the tutelage of Pat Briggs and Michael Litfin, she learned stagecraft and acting while learning to work hard, discipline herself, appreciate the array of skills and talents around her, set herself to a variety of tasks, and accept and work through difficult patches. As she learned, she took great pride in her accomplishments.

I also came to see that Pat and Michael, while keeping a watchful eye on the operation, encouraged and allowed the children to work independently, without relying on adults to direct their every move or tell them what to do next when a task was completed. I think this approach fostered the sense of pride in accomplishment that the children of the theatre experienced.

My career was in educational publishing. I volunteered in Palo Alto schools from kindergarten through high school. Some of my children's teachers became lifelong friends of the family. I value education, highly. I believe my daughter had her most valuable educational experiences through her years at the Children's Theatre. I know I am not the only parent who appreciates this gift to our children.

Pat and Michael created something of immense value for Palo Alto. Their spirit continues to be expressed in today's Children's Theatre. Please give your support to this remarkable, uniquely valuable institution in our city.

Thank you,
Nancy Tune
Redacted
Baumb, Nelly

From: bondel-comcast <bondel@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 8:43 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Budget

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

________________________________

Dear Mayor Fine and City Council Members;

I am writing to ask that in your budget deliberations, you put as much money as possible into items that serve the community and as little as possible into Capital Improvement Projects. It was quite poignant to me that every speaker at last Monday’s Oral Communication, without exception, asked that funding for the arts not be cut, whether that funding was designated for the Children’s Theatre or the Teen Arts Council. The fact that so many of the speakers mentioned having had meaningful experiences with the Children’s Theatre and/or the Teen Arts Council and took the time to speak about this before Council is quite noteworthy. Many spoke about how these experiences changed their lives, how they went from being shy, reserved individuals to becoming self confident people who could express themselves in public and found friendship groups in these milieus. I would hope that the comments of these speakers would indicate to you that investment in human capital pays off with inspirational stories such as those we heard last Monday night. A bike bridge or improvements to El Camino can wait. Enhancing the lives of the youth of Palo Alto has a ghmore infinite time limit.

Sincerely,

Beth Rosenthal, Ph.D.
Dear City Council, I know that you are facing deep financial cuts and looking for ways to save money. I am writing to plead with you to save what you can of the Palo Alto Children’s Theater. This is an invaluable resource that serves our community in ways that will be irreparably damaged if the theater must close for two years.

My 18-year-old daughter’s love of theater begin by seeing Playhouse productions, and it was a dream come true for her to work with Chris Luciani and her fellow teens in producing those same Playhouse shows while she was a student at Palo Alto high school.

Her involvement not only in Playhouse, but in writing for Play Palooza, acting as a counselor for the summer camps, and attending numerous theater camps shaped her childhood.

After the suicides rocked our city to the very core, I was thrilled that the city began to support teen programs with open mic nights, open Art Center evenings, the Teen Arts Council, and the Buoyancy festival. These are very very important programs. I have raised three children in PaloAlto, and only with my last child was an importance placed on the well-being and mental health of teens.

I fear that closing the Theatre will damage the program forever. Please do what you can to save it and its programs.

Sincerely,

Susan P Meade

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

We recently became aware that the Palo Alto Children's Theatre is at risk of losing its funding from the city and closing its doors for the next two years. We find this decision very disturbing and we urge the City Council to reconsider.

Our daughter, a rising junior in high school, has been participating in PACT programs since she was 10 years old. On a personal level, the PACT has been a place of growth, happiness and friendship for our daughter. She has developed as an artist and a performer, but more importantly she has built lasting relationships with both fellow cast and crew, as well as with the incredible staff of the PACT.

On the community level, the PACT has been a beloved institution and source of civic pride within Palo Alto for nearly 90 years. It serves as a safe space for children of all types to build friendships and gain exposure to the arts in an inclusive environment. We have witnessed the children who participate in PACT programs develop self-confidence and public speaking skills while learning how to work as a creative team. Unlike sports, for which there are many public and private options for participation, the PACT is one of the very few programs available for children to explore the arts. Because the PACT does not charge children to participate, the PACT is open to all children in the community, regardless of their economic circumstances. In a time when many families are struggling financially, this benefit cannot be overstated. Finally, beyond those participating in the shows, we have seen many people from the parts of the community, young and old, delight in attending the PACT performances and watching the children of our community shine.

In this time of great stress, it is our long-standing traditions and institutions that sustain us. We understand that shows and gatherings will need to be curtailed during the ongoing public health crisis, but we urge you to offer hope to the children of this area that their beloved theatre might return as soon as it can do so safely. We ask that funding be restored as soon as possible to allow operations to resume once it is safe to do so. We encourage you to look for private or other funding options as well. The Palo Alto Children’s Theatre is a jewel in this community and maintaining it through this difficult time should be a priority for the City Counsel.

Best regards,
Josh and Linda Mills
Dear City Council Members,

It's come to my attention that the Children's Theatre is under consideration for potential budget cuts. As a community member, parent of children who have participated in Children's theater classes and productions, and Cubberley Artist Studio Program artist, I'm deeply concerned about this.

Of course we are all facing difficult decisions right now. With a projected budget shortfall, your job can't be as easy one. However, the Children's Theatre is not the place to make cuts for a few reasons:

1. Palo Alto children are suffering from being disconnected from friends and the greater community. Parents are struggling to occupy their children with creative problem solving experiences, while also working. Children's Theatre is filling this gap by continuing to offer virtual classes and opportunities for our children to sing, dance, perform, and design costumes. What a saving grace in this difficult time! Arts programs from the Children's Theatre is helping families who are desperate to fill empty hours with constructive activities like voice lessons or acting classes.

2. We're incredibly lucky to have Judge Luckey and his team of professionals to lead this program. If we were to cut funding for two years, we would likely lose them, along with a reputable history of programming that's unique to our town. Instead of cutting them through budget cuts, let's empower them to create virtual programming that families desperately need.

3. Palo Alto prides itself as the first city in the United States to have a tax supported children's theatre, and has since served as a model to other theaters around the country. Instead of shutting our theater down by removing funding, we can look to the Children's Theatre as a model to other cities during this crisis. The arts are much needed by families not just in our town, but around the country, and we can set the bar for other towns to follow.

Thank you for your consideration,
Rachelle Doorley
Stanford Campus
Cubberley Artist in Residence, parent, community member
Dear Mayor Fine, Vice-Mayor DuBois, Council Members Filseth, Kniss, Kou, Cormack, and Tanaka,

This is confirming the consistent financial and active support of my husband, William Beall, and myself for the restoration of the Historic Roth Building in preparation for the installation of the Palo Alto History Museum.

As President of the Friends of the Palo Alto Parks, I think the Roth Building and Museum will be a significant addition to the Heritage Park Park experience. The FOPAP worked with the City of Palo Alto and sponsored the Heritage Park Playground LLC to develop Palo Alto's newest park and Children's Play Area. Restoration of the Roth Building will include an attached and accessible restroom for the Park, a constant request from the citizens of Palo Alto for their parks. Due to the convenient location of the Museum, it will also be easily reached by walking and biking. There is no better use for the restoration of the Roth Building than to house an important History Museum, City Archives, and Community center. This combination and location as part of Heritage Park would contribute greatly to providing a core of the city and promoting more vitality to the whole community.

Finally, the City's Financial Contribution to this restoration of a significant City owned building is an opportunity that cannot be lost. It would be short-sighted not to take advantage of this opportunity to work with the PAHM Board and hundreds of our donors to make a History Museum a reality and a pride of our citizens and the world.

Thank you,

Susan Beall
Redacted
Palo Alto 94301
Dear Council Members,

Pdf letter from our daughter Saachi is attached in this email.

We heard about budget discussions and possibility of having performances cancelled at PACT for 2 years. We are really disheartened by this discussion to cancel performances. Our kids regularly participate in all wonderful and creative activities and plays at PACT. Our daughter Saachi (9 year old) is regularly participating in plays and has really grown more confident and artistic only due to all wonderful people at PACT. Just last week when we were discussing in family what everyone wants to do first when this pandemic is over, Saachi replied that the first thing she wants to do is audition for the first available play at PACT. She is really missing PACT.

It's not only kids who enjoy PACT but we adults too equally enjoy PACT and we regularly volunteer in all activities. To lessen the burden of current economic situation, we are willing to donate more, volunteer more and even ask our companies to consider sponsoring PACT activities. This pandemic has already robbed kids of lot of their activities, please let them have a sense of normality once this pandemic is over. Please don't close PACT for 2 years.

Sincerely,

Nitin & Trupti Nangare.
I love pact!

I love alto children's theater
Dear PACT, please don't close. PACT is so important to me. Before I began acting at PACT, I kept asking my dad, "When will I audition for a play?" My first play ever was Honk. It was amazing. Honk was one of my favorite shows and still is. In that play, everyone did an awesome job because of the amazing director, Mr. Luckey, and because of Ms. Patricia, the music director. They have both taught me so many things. Some include acting and getting way better at singing. Now, acting and singing are some of my most favorite hobbies. The choreographers and costumes designers were very awesome too. Without them, everyone would be bumping into each other and would be wearing plain clothes during the play! I have also acted in Beat Bugs, a outdoor Hotdog summer production. Mr. Luckey and Ms. Patricia were also directing that production. I had a lot of fun. It was great to act in a play outdoors for a summer treat. The last play I did till now was Phantom Tollbooth. I liked this play a lot too. This time, the director was Marieke and the whole cast and her had a lot of fun. We used to play games as a warm up. As you can see, I have had so many new experiences and have had so much fun. I have made so many new friends. (About 50!) I just want to say, I love PACT so please don't close...
Dear City Council,

I am writing in support of funding for the Palo Alto Children's Theatre.

There are many places in the budget that could be cut to fund the Children's Theatre which is vital to the mental and emotional health of the children in our community. In normal times, our children need the theatre and in this stressful time, they need it even more. There are serious consequences to ignoring the needs of our children. (We saw this during the period of the teen suicides. The Children's Theatre formed the Teen Arts Council at that time.) We must not leave our children behind.

The items that could be postponed or cut right now in favor of the theatre are:
- new graphics for the utility bill
- solar calculator on the website
- PR people
- number of people in the city manager's office
- refurbishing the council chambers
- raises this year

Thank you for maintaining an iconic, vital institution of Palo Alto.

Betsy Franco
Dear City Council Members

I understand you must make some difficult budget decisions to balance the budget of the city. I am writing to ask you to please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center.

I have always known the great work of the Art Center but during this time of Covid 19 it has become crystal clear to me that while sheltering in place the importance of Art and Music in our lives is critical to our well being.

I urge you to think long term to the quality of life in your city and the impact your decisions on budget allocations has on your community- especially the countless young children the Art Center serves.

I have been a member of the Art Center for over 20 years and a volunteer in Project Look for school groups. I also am a volunteer at the Stanford University Art Museums.

Sincerely,
Dr. Nancy Canter
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

I have been made aware that you were considering cutting funding to the Palo Alto Children’s Theater and I am writing to urge you not to do that.

I participated in that theater as a child, and worked there as a young adult just out of college. I have been a private voice and acting teacher in Palo Alto for 41 years, and it has been my pleasure to work with generations of kids who participated in the Palo Alto Children’s Theater. That theater has meant so much to so many. The experiences and life lessons children learn there are invaluable. For many, it is a second family, a home away from home. Not only do kids learn about the arts, they learn skills that will last them a lifetime - cooperation, compromise, working toward a goal, problem-solving, and many more. To cut funding would be a huge loss to the city and to future generations of children. I urge you to reconsider and to continue to fund the Palo Alto Children’s Theater.

*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~
Julie Valentine
www.valentinestudio.com
jv@valentinestudio.com
Dear Council Members,

Thank you for working hard on finding ways to reducing expenses as you are working on a revised budget. Cutting down salaries, reducing workforce, and reassessing under-used services are steps in the right direction.

The latest budget proposal has restored some funding for teen services. I support this 100%. Palo Alto needs to offer activities and services for teenagers. Most of the activities offered tailor to younger children, up to middle schoolers. High school students are the most vulnerable emotionally and need places to go and "hang out" safely (once the virus is under control). Programs like MakeX are valuable, and others should be developed. My 17 year old teen often complains Palo Alto does not have anything for teenagers his age, like Redwood City.

In addition, cutting essential services, such as emergency response and public safety, is not what should be done. In a time of increased stress and uncertainty, with everyone at home, families losing their income, children stuck at home 24/7, we need to keep police officers and fire fighters. Think about the anxiety individuals and families are experiencing right now, leading to possible emotional disturbances, domestic violence, troubled teens, etc. There has been a surge of thefts (ex catalytic converters, bikes, packages). We also need to have people enforcing the Covid related regulations.

I know you will make the right choices for the Palo Ato residents.

Best regards,
Katie Renati
Janice Way
Palo Alto resident since 1988

--

Katie

Stay SAFE, be happy NOW, and be KIND to yourself and others.
Many of us in the neighborhood rely on the College Terrace Library.

People who do not own computers use computers.

Those of us who are elderly cannot drive to other libraries in Palo Alto.

The cost of keeping the library open is a very small amount in your budget.

Deborah Plumley
Redacted
College Terrace
Palo Alto
Dear City Council,

As someone who has enjoyed PACT productions over the past decades and is well aware of its uniqueness in the Bay Area (we have friends and colleagues up and down the bay who value the PACT and are envious of it) and having experienced first-hand the incredible sense of community it creates in Palo Alto I would strongly urge you to reconsider defunding PACT. Please listen to the voice of the community!

Arajit

--

Aprajit Mahajan
Redacted
Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics,
UC Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720-3310
Web: http://are.berkeley.edu/~aprajit
Phone: 650-308-8137
Hello, I would just like to say that I have many classmates and friends in the Palo Alto theater program and I have seen firsthand how it has changed their lives and the impact it has put on them. Please reconsider the choices to cut the program. Thank you!
Dear Palo Alto City Council:

I understand this is an incredibly difficult time, and you have to make some cuts, but I am writing to ask that you please maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

I support the Art Center because I appreciate the free-admission to the engaging and inspiring exhibitions. In addition, their programs for youth of all ages is exceptional. Of course, the classes for adults are extraordinary. Our community needs art now more than ever, therefore, I hope to see funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs restored.

Sincerely,

Jan Schachter
Dear Mayor Adrian Fine and Palo Alto City Council,

My name is Emily, I am 16 and a sophomore at Palo Alto High School. This year I am a peer leader for the Youth Connectedness Initiative (YCI).

Thank you for your consideration of YCI in your budget. I strongly urge the city council to include the full $50,000 funding for YCI and to not approve the 50% cut suggested by staff. Although it has been placed in the teen services section, the budget for YCI is in the Human Services contract.

As peer leaders, we work to connect isolated students in the community and help all with mental health and issues such as depression and anxiety. The full funding is necessary, especially in today’s uncertain times, to bring mental health information to as many students as possible. YCS staff share background training with peer leaders based on suicide prevention research from the Centers for Disease Control and Search Institute.

Throughout the year, we’ve planned and hosted several community events and programs thanks to this. A few examples include an open mic in the Stanford Community, a movie night that promoted LGBTQ+ awareness, a collaboration video with Dr. Shashank Joshi on mental health, and more. Many students from different grades in the community attend these events and come together and connect over common issues and struggles.

Please consider renewing full funding for our program, and thank you for your support during these hard times.

Best,

Emily Yao

Redacted, Palo Alto CA 94303
Dear City Council,

I am writing to encourage you to maintain funding for the Palo Alto Art Center. The Center makes Palo Alto unique. It provides unparalleled opportunities for youth and adults to enrich their lives and build community.

The connections I have forged there through classes have helped me through this crisis. I look forward to the day when we can safely return.

Thank you,
Jeanne McGinnis
Dear Mayor Adrian Fine and Palo Alto City Council,

My name is Mona Pillai, I’m 15 and a sophomore at Henry M. Gunn High School. This year I am a peer leader for the Youth Connectedness Initiative (YCI). Thank you for your consideration of YCI in your budget, I wanted to urge the city council to include the full $50,000 funding for YCI and to not approve the 50% cut suggested by staff. Although it’s been placed in the teen services section, the budget for YCI is in the Human Services contract. As peer leaders, we work to connect isolated students in the community and help them with issues such as mental health and depression. The full funding is necessary, especially in today’s uncertain times, to bring mental health information to as many students as possible. YCS staff share background training with Peer Leaders based on suicide prevention research from the Centers for Disease Control and Search Institute.

YCI has helped me take action in my community. Throughout the year, we’ve planned and hosted several community events and projects thanks to this program. A few examples include an open mic in the Stanford Community, a movie night that promoted LGBTQ+ awareness, a collaboration video about mental health with Dr. Shashank Joshi, and more. Many students from different grades in the community attend these events and all come together and connect over common issues and struggles. Please consider renewing full funding for our program, and thank you for your support during these hard times.

Best,
Mona
Dear City Council,

I am writing to ask the City Council to maintain adequate funding to the Palo Alto Art Center!

One of the few reasons we chose to live in Palo Alto to raise our young family was the Art Center. Over the years the Art Center has enriched our lives with many of its programs - Art classes for the young and the adults.

I consider the Art Center and the Adult Studio one of the greatest assets that the City of Palo Alto has.
It enriches the lives of a diverse community of children and adult Palo Altans with excellent classes and work space.
As an adult “artist”, It provides me with an incredible opportunity to make art and be a part of a creative community.
If our community is gone, then my purpose of being in Palo Alto is gone.

Please remember the important role the Art Center plays in the lives of the Palo Altans when reviewing the city’s budget priorities.
I urge you to keep the funding for the Art Center’s beloved exhibition and educational programs.

Sincerely,

Leda Krakirian
Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

I am writing to strongly encourage you to maintain PACT’s budget in the coming years. PACT is a gem, an astounding and truly life-altering resource for children in the Palo Alto community. We have attended countless PACT productions when my daughters were little, and I credit PACT with inspiring my oldest daughter’s interest in acting. She has since performed in two PACT productions (one at the main theater, the other at her school, Nixon Elementary), and in both cases, it was a tremendously empowering experience. Acting gives students confidence, helps with public speaking, and enriches the cultural life of the community. It also builds an amazing community among the actors: PACT’s Zoom mtgs have been the only Zooms that my daughter looks forward to during the COVID-19 confinement.

Even children who do not perform in PACT productions benefit from its existence. There are the many who attend the performances, whether at the theater or in school. For many students, this might be the first — and the one — chance they have to see a play performed. Even the experience of auditioning and not getting a part (which also happened to my daughter) is important. Disappointment is part of life, and learning to take it in stride is one of the most important lessons for a child to learn.

No other municipality in the Bay Area has a Children’s theater like PACT. It has both historic and ongoing value. Please don’t sacrifice the arts at this time. If anything, the arts are more important than ever.

With thanks,

Dan Edelstein (father of Anaïs Edelstein)
Dan Edelstein
William H. Bonsall Professor of French, and Professor of History (by courtesy)
Faculty Director, Stanford Introductory Studies, VPUE
W. Warren Shelden University Fellow in Undergraduate Education

Stanford University
Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages
Stanford, CA 94305-2010

Office:
Pigott Hall (building 260), room 107
Tel.: (650) 724-9881
Dear City Council,

I am very concerned about your proposal for the City of Palo Alto’s “New” Budget for 2020-2021. Your concerns need to be re-evaluated and make bolder decisions to cut expensive projects like a new police or fire station. With so many businesses nationwide and worldwide evaluating if they will reopen, how they will reopen, do they need all employees to work from one building or will the work force be split into several groups; Palo Alto needs to do the same. In addition, all compensation needs to be reduced so no one is let go. Many large corporations with offices worldwide have reduced salaries across the board by 20%, so no one is let go.

Please read and use the suggestions from the article published in the Palo Alto Weekly to revise your current proposed budget immediately. It is obvious from several reader’s remarks that the new budget proposal falls short of the taxpayer’s approval. I agree with the comments and suggestions by the authors and with many of the reader’s remarks. Please be wise and take bold steps to make Palo Alto a better place to live and work for everyone during this historical time.


Best,
Heidi Schwenk
Palo Alto resident since 1990

Sent from my iPhone
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Best,
Heidi Schwenk
Palo Alto resident since 1990

Sent from my iPhone
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Hello, just wanted to say that we love MakeX! It's part of what makes living in Silicon Valley special. Please find a way to maintain funding or joint fund-raising.

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Joshua Feira
josh.feira@gmail.com
I am writing to express my agreement with the proposal, “A better way to save vital city services”, by Pat Burt and Pat Markevitch, in the May 22nd Palo Alto Weekly. The key ideas were summarized as:

“By reducing the rate of long-term Capital Fund expenditures, re-bidding projects and curtailing salaries and raises, we can eliminate the most severe cuts to employees and critical, highly valued services.”

This is exactly the approach the city needs to take. The article explains in greater detail how and why. Please consider carefully the arguments presented. The city needs to defer immediately new project starts, needs to reduce the rate of capital investments over the next two years, and needs to preserve our vital city services.

-Hugh LaMaster (40-year resident)
Dear Esteemed City Council Members:

Not every child living a suburban community is into team sports. The typical soccer, baseball, flag football cookie cutter image alienated all three of my children from the moment they went to preschool. Sure, they tried soccer, laying down in the middle of the fields while the other kids kicked the ball. The uniforms were fun because they were like costumes. But sports weren’t who they were. They were artistically motivated children, who loved music, drawing, and performance.

When they were small children, we lived near the railroad crossing where the suicides occurred; it was terrifying. They saw too much. I kept wondering, “what has happened to my hometown? What can be done to help these teenagers?” Once Palo Alto started talking about sustainable, healthy action steps to improve the mental health of teenagers in this town, I was heartened. Teen Arts Council is one of the many excellent initiatives that came out of the suicide crisis.

Artistically minded children and teens have a difficult time in Palo Alto. I say this because I have seen it. Palo Alto Children’s Theater is a huge bright spot for teenagers and kids who don’t play team sports. Watching other creative kids perform lightens up the life of a creative preschooler: possibilities emerge for what it looks like to grow up. Getting involved and being part of productions, whether in a technical role, or a side part, creates community. Being mentored by staff—from music directors to costumers, to artistic directors—creates a whole community of truly caring witnesses to a child’s development. The Children’s Theater of Palo Alto is so much more than a theater for children. It is a community!

In addition, the Children’s Theater is a safe home for the Teen Arts Council. Both my teens have been active participants under the kind, observant and skillful leadership of the Children’s Theater staff. The teen arts council is one-of-a-kind. I challenge you to find any program of its caliber and efficiency anywhere in the United States. The teens lead themselves—running concession sales at Children’s Theater Young Playhouse plays, using those funds to hold music, open-mic, film, and literary events, to mention only a few. Their events are created by creative, artistic teens, for their peers, under the safe, instructive guidance of Children’s Theater Staff. The posters they make to advertise their events are astoundingly beautiful—evidence of the graphics arts talent in the group. The film festival they hold is shows the depth of their thinking, emotions, and quite frankly, mind-blowing talents. Not to mention the music festival, the open mics, the comedy nights, the improv nights, the visual art festivals: I cannot imagine my teenagers being the successful people they are now without the Children’s Theater being part of their lives.

On behalf of all the parents of quirky, creative, talented, unique Palo Alto kids, I say this: you must keep the Children’s Theater open. It is a lifeline for vulnerable teens in a land of jocks. It is a lifeline for the very teens whose mental health we must pay attention to.

Please keep the Children’s Theater alive!
Sincerely,

Mary Akatiff Cudahy
Dear Mayor Fine & Council Members,

As you examine the policy put before you Tuesday regarding the budget cuts for libraries, I ask that you keep in mind future needs. The compromise to not dissolve the College Terrace library and instead have all branch libraries have the same three-day schedule is a compromise. In the future when the coffers are replenished I ask that you then return our branch libraries to a regular schedule. The three-day schedule is fine for now. I fear that the city could try to justify further chipping away to dissolve this important branch system.

There are capital improvement projects that could be shelved until the funding returns to help the city during this crisis. Please carefully examine the capital improvement projects and put on hold those projects that do not involve safety. If you act responsibly then these essential services including fire can be restored.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Ann Lafargue Balin
College Terrace
Hello Palo Alto City Council,

I am writing in response to the proposal to cut funding to teen service programs for the coming years. As a member of the MakeX community I have witnessed the amazing things that have come out of the program and wanted to share them with you all. Both my teens have used this space and I have recommended it to many people. It’s a tremendous resource and inspiration.

Walking into MakeX during open hours will never cease to amaze you; on any given day you might find a slew of makers from middle schoolers to adults all working together in this shared space. You will witness people helping each other with an infinite variety of creative projects. You will see artists painting murals on the walls side by side with teen rocket scientists realizing their newest invention. And you will be amazed as teen leaders foster this community safely and responsibly through peer guidance and support. This kind of interdisciplinary program is truly one-of-a-kind, building up our youth community not only as better engineers and artists, but as creatives, problem solvers, learners, educators, and leaders. Cutting MakeX would leave a deep and permanent scar on many of the communities Palo Alto prides itself on supporting.

MakeX has always been there for us. During regular programming MakeX has provided us with a creative outlet and a healthy community, and has worked with our schools to encourage project-based education. Today, MakeX is working with hospitals and other maker organizations to make and distribute much-needed PPE, being part of an initiative that has distributed over 30,000 face shields to local healthcare providers. In these difficult times, I ask that you be there for MakeX in return.

I speak for the entire community in wishing you remain happy and healthy, and know you will make the right decision in supporting our communities through these difficult times.

Best,
Mel Day
PA City Council,

We are all facing really challenging financial decisions. In continuation of the email sent below, I would very much like to express my concern about Youth program cuts. Programs where children are engaged and sharing experiences seem to be the best mental health supports at this time. The Children’s Theater is one of those places. Please be very thoughtful about cutting programs for PACT. Theater kids don’t always have the easiest of time. There aren’t a lot of outlets for that creativity and expression.

Thanks,
Elizabeth May

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Elizabeth May <elizabethmay@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 13, 2020 at 10:57 AM
Subject: Mental Health for Children
To: <board@pausd.org>, City Council <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>

PAUSD Board and Palo Alto City Council,

In this challenging climate, as you face the reality of making decisions about cutting programs, please keep the mental health and wellbeing of children as paramount importance. The isolation, the drain of virtual living and the depressing prognosis is tremendously challenging for an adult, but I am finding it is overwhelming to my children. And once overwhelmed, the struggle to engage and continue participating is even greater hurdle.

Our children are flexible and being incredibly resilient. They are being asked to adapt and evolve with haste. Do not discount the need to support this change and give them the space to recover.

As the District and the City are often partners on many programs for youth, please make these decisions together and continue to support, where possible, the existing organizations that have demonstrated they can help our children.

Thanks,
Elizabeth May
Dear City Council:

I am in full agreement with the opinions expressed by Pat Burt and Pat Markevitch in the Guest Opinion page of the Weekly. PLEASE prioritize services over capital fund expenditures, like the new police building, parking garages, fire stations and other projects. As the writers said, it was never intended that these projects be built at the expense of basic city services. Residents want to be safe above all. That means maintaining our police and fire services. We choose to live here because of basic community services. Maintain these. I can't think of anyone I know who will protest a hold on the capital fund projects ...and I suspect we will be able to negotiate lower building costs if we revisit these projects in the future when the economy is recovering over the next couple of years.

Listen to what residents are saying.

Sincerely,

Micheline Horstmeyer

Redacted
Dear City Council,

It’s really shocking to me when the news came that the city is considering to cut the budget of Children’s Theatre and no performance will on stage in the next two years!

To my daughter who is 9 years old and currently in Nixon elementary school, Children’s theatrs is the place she loves most in Palo Alto since we moved here two years ago. She attended some performances, and she enjoyed the shows as well.

Please support Children’s theatre as used to be, and save a place for the kids to dream, to love and share happiness.

Thanks

Joanna Zheng Xiaozhou

(Nixon Elementary parents   650-441-6397 )
Dear Mayor Fine, Vice-Mayor DuBois, and Council Members Cormack, Filseth, Kniss, Kou and Tanaka,

When there is a prolonged police standoff in a Palo Alto neighborhood, when a school goes into lockdown, when a bank is robbed, when a senior citizen goes missing and countless other events in our community we seek information that is official and as close to real-time as possible. This is the first essential role that Janine De la Vega has provided. This is done in the form of posts on Twitter, Nextdoor, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and more social media sources, PDF documents produced within a short time frame of an event, as well as always making herself available to answer media requests.

Given the global impact that certain events can have within the epicenter of Silicon Valley her role is vital. Transparency and interaction are key to a working police force.

The management of the Citizen's Police Academy is another role that Janine handles. Why is this important to the community? Well, as a graduate, I can attest that this program allows for trust and transparency between the police and the community.

Janine also manages the Advanced Police Academy, outreach events such as National Night Out, the Police Chief's Advisory Committee and many more day to day aspects of communication.

In conclusion, Janine is a caring person, full of passion for her work. It would be a loss to our community to remove her from her position due to a lack of understanding and appreciation of her remarkable global and social outreach.

Sincerely,

Ardan Michael Blum

Updated, final version is now online at:
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Updated, final version is now online at: https://www.iterate.live/post/budget-cuts-in-palo-alto-why-keeping-janine-de-la-vega-as-public-affairs-manager-is-important

Sincerely,
Dear Mayor Adrian Fine and Palo Alto City Council

My name is Harin Kim, I’m 16 years old and a sophomore at Palo Alto High School. This year I am a peer leader for the Youth Connectedness Initiative (YCI). Thank you for your consideration of YCI in your budget, I wanted to urge the city council to include the full $50,000 funding for YCI and to not approve the 50% cut suggested by staff. Although it’s been placed in the teen services section, the budget for YCI is in the Human Services contract. As peer leaders, we work to connect isolated students in the community and help them with issues such as mental health and depression. Our events help bring community in the city of Palo Alto and many use our resources. The full funding is necessary, especially in today’s uncertain times, to bring mental health information to as many students as possible. YCS staff share background training with Peer Leaders based on suicide prevention research from the Centers for Disease Control and Search Institute. Throughout the year, we’ve planned and hosted several community events and projects thanks to this program. A few examples include an open mic in the Stanford Community, a movie night that promoted LGBTQ+ awareness, a collaboration video about mental health with Dr. Shashank Joshi, and more. Many students from different grades in the community attend these events and all come together and connect over common issues and struggles. Please consider renewing full funding for our program, and thank you for your support during these hard times.

Best,
Harin Kim