

Dutt, Sangita

From: herb <herb_borock@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 6, 2022 5:52 PM
To: Council, City; Clerk, City
Subject: August 8, 2022 Council Meeting, Item #AA2: Proposed Tax Measures and Spending Guidelines

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

Herb Borock
P. O. Box 632
Palo Alto, CA 94302

August 6, 2022

Palo Alto City Council
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94302

**AUGUST 8, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING, AGENDA ITEM #AA2
PROPOSED TAX MEASURES AND SPENDING GUIDELINES**

Dear City Council:

The proposed business tax measure is a special tax masquerading as a general tax.

The business community only wants to pay taxes that benefit the business community, rather than pay general taxes that benefit the residents as well as business.

The business community would prefer the City Council continue to fund infrastructure projects by continuing to cut services to residents, but for an expensive infrastructure project like grade separation for commuters' motor vehicles for which there is not enough money available in the City budget and that businesses are unwilling to pay for up front as a mitigation for development, the business community would prefer to pay in installments that can only be accomplished by approving a tax measure that is then pledged to pay annual installments on a revenue bond.

Bicycles and pedestrians may need new grade separations, but motor vehicles do not unless you want to continue the City's current economic growth strategy that is based on over 90% of jobs being held by workers commuting into the City, and about 75% of employed residents commuting to jobs outside the City. I don't have mode of travel data for Palo Alto,

but Santa Clara County commuters include only 7% by transit, and ten times that number or 70% by single occupancy motor vehicles.

It is easy to cherry pick data for single years to argue that the recent limits placed on office construction have stopped job growth, but that is not what the most data recent shows, and that is not what the goal of business is as demonstrated by the remarks of Russell Hancock, the President and CEO of Joint Venture Silicon Valley whose board of directors includes City Manager Ed Shikada:

“In my view, it should be like canyons. It should look like Manhattan, for crying out loud, up and down El Camino Real.”

Russell Hancock, President and CEO, Joint Venture Silicon Valley

"El Camino Real: Why Silicon Valley's 'grand boulevard' still hasn't taken off"

By GRACE HASE | ghase@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: December 27, 2021 at 6:08 a.m. | UPDATED: December 28, 2021 at 6:20 a.m.

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/12/27/el-camino-real-why-silicon-valleys-grand-boulevard-still-hasnt-taken-off/>

I support a tax that would be used to restore City services that have been cut to pay for infrastructure that supports businesses that do not want to pay for City services.

The staff report for this agenda item threatens to cut services even more if the voters don't approve the proposed gas utility tax, but says nothing about cutting funds for infrastructure.

If you must include money for grade separations it should be for grade separations that are designed for only pedestrians, bicycles, and other modes of transportation that are not "motor vehicles" as defined in Section 415 of the California Vehicle Code.

You have previously been provided information on jobs and commuting patterns posted on-line on the blog "meetingthetwain" in emails from the public in your agenda packets for 2/26/2018 [prepared for 2/19/2018] from John Guislin and from Pat Marriott, and in your agenda packet for 04/01/2019 from Richard Placone.

Those emails directed you to

<http://meetingthetwain.blogspot.com/2018/01/palo-alto-work-live-commute.html>.

That reference is based on information at lehd.ces.census.gov that has a link to the online tool "OnTheMap" where you can obtain commute inflow/outflow data.

Here is a comparison of the most recent jobs and commuter information from "OnTheMap" for Palo alto.

2015	2019	% Change
------	------	----------

Jobs	106,413	116,305	+ 9.3%
Commuting In	98,415	108,822	+10.6%
Resident	7,998	7,483	-6.4%

	2015	%	2019	%
Residents	28,431	100.0%	28,936	100.0%
Commuting Out	20,433	71.9%	21,453	74.1%
Employed In	7,998	28.1%	7,483	25.9%

Providing more grade separations for motor vehicles will only facilitate a continuation of that commute pattern.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Herb Borock

Dutt, Sangita

From: Kirsten Essenmacher <kpessenmacher@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 4, 2022 12:56 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Proposed Business Tax

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kpessenmacher@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Dear Mayor Burt and members of the City Council,

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed business tax.

We were dismayed to read that you have not exempted all of the four major department stores at the Stanford Shopping Center, Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom and Nieman Marcus. Please recognize that these stores greatly enhance the quality of life for Palo Alto residents.

We were particularly upset that Macy's was not exempted from the business tax, but many very high-end boutique businesses (Hermes, Louis Vuitton, Cartier, etc) were exempted. Although Macy's does sell some higher end items, it is one of the few stores in Palo Alto that sells basic clothing and home goods for average middle-income and lower-income people and families. Furthermore, Macy's and the other department stores sell many essential and specialty items (i.e. plus-sized and petite clothing, swimsuits, winter coats, bed linens, etc.) that are difficult to find in smaller stores.

Due to the rise of online commerce, many brick and mortar department stores are struggling. Macy's has closed many locations across the United States. Nieman Marcus has filed for bankruptcy. It is unconscionable for the City Council not to be doing everything possible to retain these four anchor stores at our local mall.

Please pull the business tax measure from the consent calendar and revise the tax to include an exemption for all brick and mortar retail stores at the Stanford Shopping Center.

Thank you.

Regards,
Kirsten and Kirk Essenmacher
Palo Alto, CA