



CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES

Regular Meeting
December 4, 2023

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Council Chambers and by virtual teleconference at 5:30 p.m.

Present In Person: Burt, Kou, Lauing, Lythcott-Haims, Stone, Tanaka, Veenker

Present Remotely:

Absent:

Call to Order

Mayor Kou called the meeting to order.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

Public Comment:

1. Aram James commented on Israel and Palestine, growing international condemnation and antisemitism. He commended Council Member Lythcott-Haims for her article on this subject. He requested adding a community conversation to the agenda on 12/11/2023 or 12/18/2023 on a resolution for a permanent ceasefire.
2. Phoebe Mota-Judges spoke as a representative of the Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition (PASCC). She urged the City Council to set a sunset date to end the flow of natural gas and to provide staff with the necessary resources to determine the date and timeline to ensure a smooth, stable transition.
3. Laura Cheunkarndee spoke on behalf of PASCC. She was interested in microplastics in the environment, their potential degradation and effects on human health. She urged the City to use publicity campaigns to promote S/CAP and make residents aware of tax credits and rebates available through the Inflation Reduction Act. She wanted the City to promote climate literacy campaigns aimed at developing climate education in PAUSD schools.

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Council Member Questions, Comments and Announcements

Council Member Veenker reported the third and final Sibling City's Town Hall was yesterday. She thanked Council Member Burt and S/CAP Chair for speaking and Director Eggleston for attending. She was delighted to have Sherry Listgarten from the Palo Alto Weekly interview Julia Zeitlin from PASCC and Debbie Mytels from 350SV Palo Alto Climate Team.

Mayor Kou thanked the Recreation Department staff for the wonderful tree lighting on December 1. Valley Water extended an invitation to their 2024 Water 101 Academy. If you are interested in this informative session, sign up on Valley Water's website.

Study Session

1. Presentation of the 2023 Annual Community Survey Results

Assistant to the City Manager Lupita Alamos addressed the Council. The survey was conducted August 11 through September 24. The survey provided insights into residents' perspectives about quality of life, local amenities and services, public trust, resident participation and other aspects of community. There was a 17% response rate in 2023 (603 surveys) compared to 12% in 2022 (398 surveys). Changes this year included conducting the survey after summer but before the holidays, more public outreach about the survey, embedded online survey in the City's website as well as translating the survey into Simplified Chinese and Spanish.

Survey Research Associate Kim Daane with the National Research Center at Polco presented the results of this year's community survey. They compared the results of 99 items to national benchmarks, 20 items rated higher, 76 rated similarly and 3 rated lower. Palo Alto as a place to work, open space, preservation of natural areas, employment opportunities, drinking water and City parks rated higher than national benchmarks. The three lower ratings were cost of living, variety of housing options and availability of affordable quality housing.

Compared to 2022 survey results, 126 items rated similarly, 24 rated more positively and 19 items rated more negatively. In 2023, Palo Alto as a place to work and retire, attracting people from diverse backgrounds, ease of travel by public transportation, the job Palo Alto government does at welcoming resident involvement and treating all residents fairly were rated more positively. Health and wellness opportunities in Palo Alto, employment opportunities, electric utility and gas utility rated more negatively this year.

More than 8 in 10 respondents rated the overall quality of life as excellent or good, similar to the national benchmark. More than three-quarters of respondents would recommend living in Palo Alto, similar to previous years and the national benchmark. About 9 in 10 rated Palo Alto and their neighborhood as an excellent or good place to live. More than 8 in 10 highly rated Palo Alto as a place to work and raise children. More than 7 in 10 gave high marks to Palo Alto

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as a place to visit, similar to previous years. More than half gave high marks to Palo Alto as a place to retire, which increased in 2023 compared to 2022.

While respondents were highly satisfied with many City services, they indicated areas for improvement with utilities. At least 9 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to fire services, open space, City parks, public library services, library facilities, ambulance or emergency medical services and the variety of library materials, similar to previous years. Open space and City parks rated higher than the national benchmark. More than 8 in 10 gave positive ratings to sewer services, drinking water, utility payment options, recreation centers or facilities, police services, recreation programs or classes and art or theater programs; similar to 2022 except recreation centers or facilities was higher, art programs and theater was lower. Drinking water, recreation centers, utility payment options, preservation of natural areas and recreation programs or classes rated higher than national benchmarks. More than 8 in 10 positively rated the reliability of utility services and utilities online customer service features, similar to previous years. Multiple utility-related items rated lower in 2023 compared to 2022, including community value received from the City owning and operating its own municipal utility services, speed of response after contacting Utilities Department staff, the value of Palo Alto Utilities' customer communications, working hard to keep utility prices competitive and affordability of utility services.

Over 7 in 10 respondents praised the City for treating residents with respect. Over half of respondents gave high marks to the City for being open and honest with the public, generally acting in the best interest of the community and overall confidence in Palo Alto government, similar to 2022 and benchmarks. Ratings increased by at least 6 percentage points compared to 2022 for the following: The job Palo Alto government does at welcoming resident involvement, the overall direction Palo Alto is taking and the value of services for the taxes paid to Palo Alto.

Issues related to affordable housing and cost of living remain a concern for respondents but other community characteristics were highly rated. Less than 1 in 10 positively rated the cost of living in Palo Alto. At least three-quarters of respondents rated highly the ease of walking in Palo Alto, recreational opportunities, ease of travel by bicycle, fitness opportunities, image or reputation of Palo Alto and overall quality of business and service establishments. Ease of walking and ease of travel by bicycle were higher than national benchmarks. Availability of paths and walking trails, travel by car and opportunities to attend cultural arts or music activities rated highly. Availability of affordable quality mental health care and ease of travel by public transportation rated higher in 2023 compared to 2022.

23% of respondents mentioned housing such as the amount, type, affordability or cost of living as the one change the City could make that would make you happier. 21% of respondents mentioned parks, open space and natural environment as the one thing the City does well and you would want maintained.

Mayor Kou inquired if other cities explored ways to increase survey participation. Survey Research Associate Daane commended Assistant to the City Manager Alamos and her team on

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their great idea of using a City website link that redirected to the Polco survey. This change helped respondents feel comfortable and confident in recognizing it was a City survey. Any outreach is helpful, such as social media, utility bill inserts, and making the survey available via QR code at City events, parks or City facilities.

Vice Mayor Stone queried if staff compared the residents views on affordability of utility services to residents in cities using PG&E. Survey Research Associate Daane replied they did pull comparisons against other Bay Area communities. Utility payment options and drinking water rated much higher. She will include comparisons against other Bay Area communities with the report. Vice Mayor Stone opined the City could do a better job at messaging to our residents how much PG&E customers are paying compared to Palo Alto.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims could not find a list of municipalities used for comparison. She wondered if some municipalities rated consistently higher than Palo Alto in certain areas. Survey Research Associate Daane thought it was 12 or 13 communities but she can provide a list of Bay Area comparisons.

Council Member Veenker noticed Palo Alto as a place to raise children went down this year by 4%. Palo Alto as a place to retire had a low rating although it increased to 53% compared to 46% last year. She thought caring for our oldest and youngest residents was something for Council to keep a close eye on. Housing was our biggest challenge. She asked how Palo Alto compared to national benchmarks on housing and government performance. Survey Research Associate Daane replied that all ratings on Slide 21 were lower than national average, cost of living at least 20 points lower than average, affordable quality housing and variety were within 10 percentage points of national average. For government performance, all ratings were similar to national benchmarks.

The report showed comparisons against area, race, ethnicity and sex. If Council was interested, Survey Research Associate Daane offered comparisons by age group with these survey results or for next year's survey.

Council Member Burt requested printed color copies to see the charts and have it as a standalone document for Council's reference throughout the year. He asked if additional granularity to the data could be provided electronically. Survey Research Associate Daane could provide the raw data of quantitative and qualitative responses.

Regarding the perception of utility value, Council Member Burt did not recall seeing bill inserts. He did not think the bulk of our community understood how CPAU compared to PG&E. Utilities needed to present to our residents a comparison of our rates versus PG&E rates. PG&E's electricity rates were increasing about twice as much as ours. Some power outages were due to Palo Alto's underinvestment in our utilities that we have corrected and last year we experienced relatively low power outages. There was data on how we compared to PG&E on power outages and we need to provide that information regardless if we are better or worse. Council Member Burt pointed out this was a survey of perception and our community may have

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higher expectations from their City government; therefore, it was not a true gauge of performance. Some items have quantitative comparisons. For example, on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), Palo Alto ranked at the top of the entire region at 83 or 84.

Council Member Tanaka remarked that in the private sector it was common to have frequent surveys, usually at the time of service. Receiving real-time feedback was useful in identifying problems and serving the public better. Assistant to the City Manager Alamos replied one of the benefits of an annual survey was to compare the same information year over year. Staff decided that using surveys immediately after providing a service would lose longevity and view of trends that they could observe with yearly surveys. Council Member Tanaka asked how long it took to complete the survey. Assistant to the City Manager Alamos estimated 10 to 12 minutes. Survey Research Associate Daane estimated 10 to 15 minutes. Council Member Tanaka suggested having a way to provide a net performance score at the time of service in the Development Center with a happy face or sad face, something simple.

Council Member Tanaka stated that Palo Alto had a \$1B budget. Utilities used money from the capital budget to build power lines or water mains. He thought Palo Alto should present the amount of capital invested in utilities.

Council Member Lauing agreed with the comments from Vice Mayor Stone and Council Member Burt. He will include them in his comments to the UAC at Wednesday night's meeting.

Mayor Kou wanted to explore holding at least six Neighborhood Town Halls per year and refine the neighborhood groupings. She would like to know if the increased rating on transportation was due to Palo Alto Link and if they provide rides to Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Entertainment options should be explored. She was surprised at the number of respondents who planned to buy a gasoline-powered car in the next two years.

Mayor Kou inquired how staff communicated the responses about Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). Assistant to the City Manager Alamos replied that the survey was posted on the City website for public access. Staff did not send copies to PAUSD but they could.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims suggested using the ingenuity of the City's Marketing Department to include comparative data with PG&E on CPAU's utility bill. She suggested the City Manager present survey results pertaining to PAUSD at the City/Schools meeting on December 14.

Public Comment:

Liz Gardner highlighted that most of the respondents' priorities were housing and cost of living. She thought an interesting data point was the number of residents that attended low or no cost activities/events last year. About 40% of Palo Alto residents were renters. She was a low-income resident. She would like to support local businesses but she does her shopping outside of the city or online to get the best deal.

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No action taken.

Consent Calendar

Council Member Veenker registered a no vote on Agenda Item Number 6.

Council Member Tanaka registered a no vote on Agenda Item Number 3.

MOTION: Vice Mayor Stone moved, seconded by Council Member Lauing to approve Agenda Item Numbers 2-8.

MOTION SPLIT FOR VOTING

MOTION PASSED ITEMS 2, 4-5, 7-8: 7-0

MOTION PASSED ITEM 3: 6-1, Tanaka no

MOTION PASSED ITEM 6: 6-1, Veenker no

Council Member Veenker commented on the reasons for her no vote on Agenda Item Number 6, extension of the AECOM Technical Services contract for Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan Development. The original contract term was three years. Staff administratively extended it by six months. AECOM's work on the Adaptation Plan was paused because of an Army Corps of Engineers' study to assess federal interest in funding shoreline levy improvements that would protect Palo Alto from sea level rise, the outcome of which was expected in late 2023. The staff report did not mention the status of that study. New State law required a Bay Area regional sea level rise plan with details expected from BCDC by the end of 2024. This motion extended AECOM's contract through June 2027 but Council Member Veenker preferred an extension through 2025 to maintain a greater sense of urgency on this critical issue.

Council Member Tanaka voted no on Agenda Item Number 3 because of his concerns about reliance on hydroelectric in a drought cycle and the significant new resource expenditures. He believed it should have been an action item instead of a consent item.

2. Approval of Minutes from November 13, 2023 Meeting
3. Finance Committee and Utilities Advisory Commission Recommend the City Council Adopt a Resolution Approving the 2023 Electric Integrated Resource Plan
4. Approve and Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Grant Agreement With the State of California Board of State and Community Corrections to Develop and Implement a Three-Year Program to Combat Organized Retail Theft with \$5.2 million in State Funds, Requiring \$0 in City Matching Funds; and Approve a FY 2024 Budget Amendment

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(Requires 2/3 approval) in the Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund; CEQA status – Not a Project

5. Approval of Professional Services Agreement Contract with TruePoint Solutions (C24181451) in an Amount Not to Exceed \$486,386 for a Period of Five Years for Electronic Document Review Software and Implementation
6. Approval of Amendment No. 2 to Contract No. C20175305A With AECOM Technical Services, Inc. to Extend the Contract three and half years through June 30, 2027 for Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan Development; CEQA – Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan EIR, approved June 5, 2023
7. Approval of Amendment Number 1 to Contract Number C23183770 with Townsend Public Affairs, Inc. to Extend Term for an Additional Year of Service (first of four (4) annual options to renew) for State and Federal Legislative Advocacy and Grant Consulting and Compliance Services - CEQA Status – Not a Project
8. Adoption of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 2.30 (Contracts and Purchasing Procedures) and Chapter 2.37 (Business Tax) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code to Correct Clerical Errors and Clarify Procedures for Administering the Business Tax. CEQA Status -- Not a project.

City Manager Comments

City Manager Ed Shikada announced the first emergency alert system test using AlertSCC would be on Thursday, December 14 at noon. Enrolled residents would receive a notification test alert. One-third of Palo Alto's residents signed up for emergency notifications through AlertSCC.

The Uplift Local holiday promotions guide is on www.UpliftLocal.org/holiday-promotions and the app. The listing has more than 30 Palo Alto businesses offering promotions and the list may grow as the City continues its outreach to businesses.

City Manager Shikada thanked the community volunteers who decorated 45 trees along California Avenue last weekend. Decorations will be up through the first week of January.

There will be a midtown scavenger hunt December 11-15 with a celebration at Mike's Diner Bar on December 16. Visit www.UpliftLocal.org for more information. Streetlight banners would be installed on Middlefield Road to reinforce the Business District identity.

Visit www.cityofpaloalto.org.news to view a full listing of events as well as volunteer and donation opportunities. City Manager Shikada thanked everyone who attended the annual tree lighting at Lytton Plaza on Friday.

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Notable tentative upcoming Council items: December 11 Middlefield Road/Ellsworth Place development-related actions as well as report to and potential action by the Council on new parking facilities and proposals for downtown housing on City lots. December 18 (last 2023 City Council meeting) Study Session on 260 Homer Avenue, action items related to the University Avenue streetscape concept plan as well as return of Council Procedures and Protocols referrals. Annual reorganization scheduled for January 8. The first Regular Council Meeting would be held on Tuesday, January 16 (no meeting on Monday due to MLK holiday).

Council took a 10-minute break.

Action Items

9. Adoption of a Resolution for Weeds to be Declared a Public Nuisance and Setting February 26, 2024 for a Public Hearing for Objections to the Proposed Weed Abatement.

City Manager Ed Shikada stated the City had an agreement with the County of Santa Clara to address weed abatement with the primary purpose of preventing fire hazards. Tonight's adoption of a resolution declaring weeds to be a public nuisance and setting a public hearing date was the first of three steps Council must take each year. Second, a public hearing to approve the list of properties subject to County weed abatement proceedings. Third, a public hearing to approve invoices for the County's abatement work. Fire Department staff was available to respond to questions.

MOTION: Council Member Lauing moved, seconded by Mayor Kou to adopt a resolution:

1. Declaring weeds to be a public nuisance;
2. Setting February 26, 2024, for a public hearing on objections to proposed weed abatement; and
3. Directing staff to publish a notice of hearing in accordance with the provisions of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

10. Adoption of an Ordinance Amending Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Section 18.42.160 (Safe Parking) to Permanently Establish the Congregation-Based Safe Parking Program and Establishing Regulations Related to Safe Parking, Including a Maximum Number of Vehicles Per Night on Each Site; and Consideration of options to explore expansion of Safe Parking

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Planning Program Management Specialist Rachel Tanner delivered a slide presentation on the Congregation-Based Safe Parking Program. The Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and staff recommend that the Council:

- A. Adopt the ordinance amending PAMC Section 18.42.160 to permanently establish the Congregation-Based Safe Parking Program.
- B. Consider incorporating into the ordinance a minimum radius (600 feet recommended) between permitted congregation-based safe parking locations.
- C. Explore expansion of the Safe Parking Program in Palo Alto, particularly at the 2000 Geng Road site.

The Safe Parking program provided parking lots where unhoused program participants dwelling in their vehicles can park, connect to services such as case management as well as have access to restrooms and handwashing, with the goal of finding stable and secure housing. Palo Alto had two types of Safe Parking Programs operated by three Safe Parking Program operators, four congregation-based sites and one 24-hour publicly owned parking lot at 2000 Geng Road.

In January 2023, volunteers counted unhoused persons and vehicles in Santa Clara County. In Palo Alto, there were 206 persons, 181 of which were in 102 vehicles (69 RVs, 15 cars, 18 vans).

In FY23, 34% of Safe Parking clients exited to permanent housing (up from 14% in FY22). Congregation-Based Safe Parking had an average of 45% positive housing placements.

The draft ordinance included the following proposed policy changes: Quiet hours from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Items such as chairs or toys used outside of vehicles must be stored during quiet hours. Gradually increase the number of vehicles allowed per site to a maximum of eight vehicles (four the first year, six the second year and eight the third year). Remove the permit trial period. Permit valid until revoked, change of congregation ownership or abandoned. Recommend to apply proposed duration to currently active permits. Preferences to students and families with children enrolled in PAUSD.

The 24-hour Safe Parking Program at 2000 Geng Road could expand to support more vehicles on adjacent land used for construction staging and a lease between a business and the City. Council may consider directing staff to evaluate options at this or other publicly owned sites in Palo Alto to assess the feasibility of expanding Safe Parking.

Council Member Veenker noted the current Safe Parking locations were not at capacity and she requested more information on outreach efforts. Community Services Manager Minka Van Der Zwaag remarked there were two full-time outreach caseworkers contracted through LifeMoves. For about the past month, the caseworkers have been developing relationships with the unhoused with outreach to RV dwellers being an important part of their work.

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Council Member Veenker pointed out the discrepancy between the 2023 count of 206 people, 181 of which were sleeping in 102 vehicles, whereas 29% identified their vehicle as the most frequent place they slept in the 2022 Vulnerability Index. Community Services Manager Van Der Zwaag explained the information came from two data sources. VI-SPDAT counted unhoused people who interacted with the County and want housing but the point-in-time (PIT) count included all unhoused. When Assistant to the City Manager Melissa McDonough asked the County for an explanation, she was told there had been a change in who conducted the count and their training.

Vice Mayor Stone wondered if Safe Parking opportunities could expand to commercial parking lots. Community Services Manager Van Der Zwaag did not know of any reason why not, if interested commercial property owners had resources and met the standards. PTC did not discuss expansion to commercial parking lots.

Vice Mayor Stone asked if staff proactively reached out to other congregations to inform them of this program. Staff replied that outreach with Move Mountain View occurred when the Safe Parking Program began. Staff could explore sending a mailer to congregations if Council was interested. Vice Mayor Stone recalled one of the primary concerns heard from residents objecting to Safe Parking was safety. He asked if staff or PAPD knew whether any calls for service occurred at a Safe Parking site involving alleged crimes perpetrated by a participant of this program. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner was not aware of any calls for service or complaints made to those sites. Vice Mayor Stone requested staff to emphasize that point in outreach to congregations who may have had safety concerns.

Council Member Burt echoed Council Member Veenker's comment about the difference between the PIT count and Vulnerability Index and suggested asking the LifeMoves outreach caseworkers for an explanation. Community Services Manager Van Der Zwaag explained that the unhoused individual had to be willing to take part in the intake process and VI-SPDAT assessment to get in the County queue for housing options.

Council Member Burt thought Project Homekey provided free offsite RV parking. Assistant to the City Manager McDonough did not think there were provisions for offsite parking. Council Member Burt recalled that was their original expressed intent, so staff needed to inform Council if that had changed and he wanted that as a follow-up in writing. RV parking was important because the willingness of participants to participate in the Homekey project was dependent on many of them not wanting to give up their RV.

Council Member Veenker noted the current use rate averaged about 20% occupancy and Geng Road about two-thirds occupancy. The Safe Parking Program coupled with the Homekey project was likely to absorb all willing participants. She asked for staff's rationale for the proposed Safe Parking expansion, if there was an identified ongoing need versus a near-term need because utilization might imply there was not a need. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner pointed out that only the Geng Road site served RVs. Staff wanted available capacity if outreach workers were successful in persuading more unhoused to participate in Safe Parking.

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Council Member Lauing wanted to know how to increase the conversion out of Geng Road, which was only 15%. Geng Road had more services (showers, laundry and a children's library). He asked if there should be a change in the services offered to motivate more participants to move to housing. Assistant to the City Manager McDonough explained that participants receive a spot on the Safe Parking waiting list determined by their Vulnerability score as mandated by the County and federal funding. She heard from Move Mountain View and others in the County that at times there was a waiting list for RVs at the Geng Road site, so there is more demand for RV sites. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner added that congregation sites require Safe Parking participants to leave in the morning and return in the evenings as well as spacing could be a challenge, which made it less desirable for RV dwellers. Michael Love with Move Mountain View agreed that leaving in the morning and returning in the evenings was a disincentive for RVs. He suggested determining on a case-by-case basis if congregations had a bigger lot to accommodate RVs.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims believed the unhoused were undercounted because she met with members of the RV dweller community who told her they were not counted. She asked for the rationale for the proposed 600-foot radius. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner replied it was not a strong recommendation but was a density issue. Planning and California state law use 600 feet because it is approximate to the length of a city block, so staff's rationale was one per block.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims asked for more details on the City receiving rent for Geng Road space. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner responded that a local business leased a portion for \$2975/month (in the staff report under Fiscal/Resource Impact). The area used for construction staging does not pay rent.

Mayor Kou asked if there was a reduction of RVs parked in neighborhoods. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner was unable to provide an answer because the City and County did not routinely count RVs parked throughout Palo Alto. Mayor Kou remarked that information was necessary to track if there was a reduction or increase.

Mayor Kou queried how much the City paid for the staging site at 4146 El Camino. Real Property Manager Sunny Tong did not have that information. City Manager Ed Shikada believed it was not a direct relationship between the contractor and the City. The contractor entered into an arrangement with the property owner for the staging of construction materials. There was a lack of suitable undeveloped spaces for staging for construction projects within the town.

Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner did not have an answer to Mayor Kou's question about the number of average nights at the congregation and Geng Road sites before a participant is in stable housing. Operations Manager Love did not have the report with him either. Some get housing quickly while most take longer. There were many steps to get housing. It was not surprising to be in the program for six or eight months because housing was scarce. Car dwellers sometimes stay the night and move on; therefore, it was harder to engage them in the case management part of the program.

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Council Member Tanaka asked if counts were performed before and after the program started to understand its efficacy. Planning Program Management Specialist Tanner did not have the information with her but offered to look it up as well as PIT count trends in other communities. Counts occur every two years. Assistant to the City Manager McDonough recalled the PIT count decreased year over year. Council Member Tanaka would like to see that information and a comparison of counts in communities with Safe Parking versus those who do not as it might increase public support for this program.

Public Comment

1. Liz Gardner suggesting performing a survey on the reasons vehicle dwellers did not take a Safe Parking spot. She mentioned there were 38,000 unhoused in the Bay Area.
2. Aram James opined this was a great opportunity to expand services. He wondered if it was possible for congregations to have a 24/7 parking program with the requirement that participants be on a list for permanent housing, looking for work and getting counseling or whatever they needed. With the \$83 million budget surplus, congregations could offer more services and the City could chip in some money. He wanted to know if caseworkers were paid sufficiently well to avoid turnover.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims commented on misperceptions of Palo Alto's unhoused and RV dweller communities, such as the impression that El Camino Real vehicle dwellers were mostly Stanford students. The City needed more data on who were the unhoused and what their needs were to develop a robust plan. She toured the Geng Road site and met the staff. She asked them what they needed and their response was obtaining the additional land under discussion tonight would maybe double their available spaces from 12 to 24. Council Member Lythcott-Haims noted a discrepancy in demand because a 64% occupancy rate was reported but Geng Road had a 180-day average wait in August.

Council Member Burt was interested in exploring the possibility of providing electrical hookups at Safe Parking lots with the City perhaps subsidizing the cost. Vehicle dwellers idle or RV dwellers may use a gas heater that could be dangerous.

Council Member Veenker lived within view of a Safe Parking site and had not experienced or heard any complaints or problems.

Years ago, Mayor Kou volunteered to perform PIT counts at 4:00 a.m. with a woman who lived in a van with her newborn baby. She had a degree and a teacher's credential but she lost her home and job because of medical issues and expenses. This experience led Mayor Kou to write a Colleagues' Memo that led to the Safe Parking program.

MOTION: Vice Mayor Stone moved, seconded by Council Member Lauing to:

- A. Adopt the attached Ordinance (Attachment A) amending PAMC Section 18.42.160 (Safe Parking). The changes permanently establish the Congregation-Based Safe Parking

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Program by allowing overnight safe parking as an ancillary use to a church's and religious institution's use in all zoning districts where churches and religious institutions are an allowed use, and to establish regulations related to Safe Parking, including a maximum number of vehicles per night on each site. This ordinance includes modifications recommended by the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC).

- B. Direct Staff to explore expansion of Safe Parking in Palo Alto, such as increasing the footprint of Safe Parking at the Geng Road site.
- C. Refer to PTC consideration of expanding Safe Parking to commercial lots throughout the City.
- D. Direct staff to amend the ordinance for second reading to state that: The terms of duration shall apply to Safe Parking permit holders with valid Safe Parking permits as of the date of ordinance adoption.
- E. Allow up to eight vehicles and direct staff to include an appeal opportunity when increasing the number of vehicles.
- F. Direct staff to explore clearer data on the population and condition of unhoused in Palo Alto.

MOTION PASSED: 6-1, Tanaka no

3. Colleagues' Memo - Adjustment to City Council Compensation

Council Member Lauing thought a higher City Council's salary might motivate more lower-income applicants or those earlier in their career to apply. It was fair to compensate council members for their work. In Senate Bill SB 329, Legislature set a new salary structure based on city size. Palo Alto's population of 60,000 matched with a salary of \$1600/month. Council members who need childcare to attend council meetings could participate in the employee childcare assistance benefit. Council Member Lauing would like the Council to consider amending the charter to allow Palo Alto to set council member compensation above SB 329 guidelines because of the size of the budget, size of the organization, the responsibilities for water treatment plants and it was expensive to live in Palo Alto.

Vice Mayor Stone pointed out that minimum wage in Palo Alto was \$17.25/hour. No City staff was paid minimum wage but there were employees in the \$20/hour range. \$1600/month was below minimum wage if council members put in 20-30 hours/week on average.

Council Member Lythcott-Haims commented that council members currently received \$1000/month. She saw the issue of increasing compensation to be about representation and equity to include the perspectives of those with moderate and low incomes to sit at our dais.

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Public Comment:

1. Liz Gardner wanted council members to do their job to produce more housing before giving themselves a raise. Many residents were struggling with low-wage jobs; living in vehicles, the streets, or in overcrowded conditions. She would like to see more results, especially in housing, social services and resources.
2. Aram James suggested allowing council members the choice to decline compensation and serve as volunteers so the City could use that money for other purposes. It takes a lot of money to run a campaign; therefore, it was not realistic to expect lower income or no-income individuals to run a campaign and become a City Council Member. He suggested Council consider hiring their own staff if the Charter allowed.

City Attorney Molly Stump stated that Council had the option to set their salary directly in the charter, create a citizen commission to determine Council compensation or peg it to another public entity or standard. Discussion ensued. In response to Council Member Veenker's query if SB 329 included a cost-of-living adjustment, City Attorney Stump replied no. Council needed to make adjustments by ordinance. The two methods the Government Code allowed were 5% or CPI not to exceed 10% but it required Council to take an action for each adjustment. Council preferred a cost-of-living adjustment rather than 5%.

MOTION: Council Member Burt moved, seconded by Council Member Lythcott-Haims to direct staff return to Council with an ordinance to be placed on Consent Calendar with an effective date of January 1, 2025 at the earliest to:

1. Raise monthly City Council Member salaries, at a minimum, to levels set by SB 329 guidelines.
2. Allow City Council Members to participate in the City's employee childcare assistance benefit as applicable.
3. Refer to the Policy & Services Committee for a recommendation regarding creation of a Citizen Advisory Committee to evaluate City Council Member compensation above SB 329 guidelines.
4. Semiannually placed on Consent Calendar a cost-of-living adjustment to the Council salary.

MOTION PASSED: 6-1, Tanaka no

3. Colleagues' Memo - Palo Alto Public Art Commission Restoration to Seven Members

Mayor Kou and Vice Mayor Stone wrote the Colleagues' Memo. The Public Art Commission had seven members but decreased to five and they asked to increase their number back to seven.

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Mayor Kou served as liaison to the Public Art Commission one year and recognized the amount of work they had to do. Their diversity and knowledge of art varied.

Vice Mayor Stone remarked that he previously served on a commission and realized commissioners had less staff resources and more obligations. The Public Art Commission had done great work. There was a growing need for public art in the community. Increasing the number of commissioners would allow them to do their job easier and more efficiently.

Public Comment:

1. Hsinya Shen, Chair of the Palo Alto Public Art Commission, supported the Colleagues' Memo to restore the Public Art Commission to seven members to promote inclusivity, diversity of views, continuity of institutional knowledge and greater representation and coverage for public art events in Palo Alto.
2. Liz Gardner was in support of increasing art in our community. She believed art was a motivator for those who are lower income and suggested public art be included in new housing developments. She would like the City to make a museum to share the history of Chinese labor in our community. She wanted more of a diverse, inclusionary element to instituting public art in our city centers, housing and parks.

Council Member Burt supported the Colleagues' Memo and believed the Art Commission does valuable work. He reviewed the charter to clarify the Commission's role. The charter says to advise the Director of Arts and Culture on the selection and commissions of artists and Council Member Burt wondered if Palo Alto had a Director of Arts and Culture job position. City Manager Ed Shikada believed it was a working title but he asked Director Kristen O'Kane to comment. Director O'Kane saw the title when she reviewed the Municipal Code. The City does not have a Director of Arts and Culture, so it was likely an old reference. Council Member Burt pointed out that the question remained as to what position the Art Commission was advising.

Council Member Burt noted the charter stated to advise the City in matters pertaining to the maintenance, placement, alteration, etc. He assumed City referred to City staff because the Art Commission was not advising the City Council but it raised the question if they should be advising Council or staff.

Council Member Burt read in the charter that Council would not exercise its independent judgment on artistic matters unless the Council requested the matter to be agendized. He was glad to see that because over the years in several circumstances staff told Council otherwise. For example, Council was not aware how to accept Heidelberg's gift of artwork from a very prominent muralist. Staff did not tell Council they could accept the gift and decide on the location even though that authority was clearly in the charter.

The first year, City Attorney Molly Stump suggested appointing the two new Public Art Commissioners for two years. The following year, appoint four Public Art Commissioners, two to full terms and two to half terms, to synchronize it properly going forward.

SUMMARY MINUTES

MOTION: Council Member Burt moved, seconded by Mayor Kou to direct staff to schedule a Consent Calendar item for City Council to restore the Public Art Commission to seven members. Refer to Policy & Services Committee to review with the Public Art Commission the respective role of the Public Art Commission staff, stakeholders, and the Council in public art decisions in relation to placement and themes of art.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.