



[www.cupertinolibraryfoundation.org](http://www.cupertinolibraryfoundation.org)  
10800 Torre Avenue Cupertino CA 95014

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**Community Librarian**

Clare Varesio

July 25, 2018

Dear Mayor Paul and members of the Cupertino City Council,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Board of the Cupertino Library Foundation (CLF) regarding the commission consolidation study currently scheduled for the July 31, 2018 city council meeting.

The Cupertino Library Foundation is 501(c)(3) non-profit organization chartered to provide continuing financial support to our Cupertino Public Library. Founded in 1994, CLF continues to provide financial and creative support for multi-generational, multi-lingual educational and cultural programs in collaboration with the Cupertino Library. Since its creation, the CLF has raised over \$3 million to benefit the Cupertino Library and the Cupertino community.

The Cupertino Public Library, a part of the Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD), is a beloved institution in a community which places a high value on education. In FY 2017-2018, It hosted over 835,000 visitors with almost 2.4 million items circulated. On both an absolute and a per-capita basis, it is the most popular library in the Santa Clara County library district.

The Board of the Cupertino Library Foundation strongly opposes the proposed commission consolidation due to the following reasons:

1. The proposed cost savings from the commission consolidation is miniscule compared to the benefits that a properly resourced and directed commission brings to the Cupertino community.
2. The elimination of this commission and its passionate volunteers defeats one of the key goals of increasing civic engagement with the city.
3. Library commissioners not only advise SCCLD but also influence and take actions to fulfill our residents' needs and requests. An example is the recently announced "extended library hours", which was the top ranked request from a user survey. The Library Commission took this request to the heart and actively drove the request with SCCLD to achieve what we have now. Patrons are simply thrilled with this change and enjoying those extra hours. The Cupertino Public Library is the most used public facility in the city, and residents will not be well-served by the elimination of a dedicated Library Commission focused on library issues.



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While we appreciate the recognition of the key role that CLF plays in supporting our library during the March 6, 2018 city council meeting, we are not a forum where community members can speak freely to air grievances or make service requests. One of the Commission's most important responsibilities is the public venue it provides for community members to share concerns they have regarding any aspect of library services. We would like to see the Library Commission work more intimately with CLF, Friends of the Cupertino Library, and with our neighbor Library groups to form a more holistic ensemble to grow and extend the education, culture, and discourse in Cupertino. We also encourage a revitalized Library Commission to seek more direct community involvement with its activities.

If the City Council is dissatisfied with the current Library Commission structure or work plan, we respectfully recommend that, instead of a hurried decision to eliminate the Commission, we work in conjunction with other organizations and the community to clarify the unsatisfactory issues and redefine the charter for the Library Commission. There are complex and nuanced library issues looming in the near future which will require in-depth analysis. One issue is the expiring lease agreement for the library building, and another is the planned addition of a program room to the only library in the district which does not have a dedicated program room. CLF is willing to assist in this exploratory and mission definition process to help bring more service to the Cupertino community. Other cities in the Santa Clara County Library District have library commissions to serve their residents; our residents deserve no less.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry Liu  
Board President  
Cupertino Library Foundation  
[jliu@cupertinolibraryfoundation.org](mailto:jliu@cupertinolibraryfoundation.org)