

June 18, 2018

Cupertino City Council
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear Councilmembers,

The Library Commission acted at its June meeting to communicate to you its present understanding of, and position with respect to, the proposed City Council 2018 Work Plan item regarding the elimination of this commission.

We were not informed of the proposal prior to its appearance in the draft Work Plan and never have been consulted about the intended benefit to the community. Nonetheless, we have taken the proposal seriously. Following our regular procedures for developing advisory input to the City Council, we have:

- entertained public comment and testimony,
- collected input from influential community groups,
- sought information on budget and other metrics impacts from city staff,
- and extensively discussed potential outcomes in publicly attended commission meetings.

Some parameters are unresolved—such as whether the Library Commission will be combined solely with the Parks and Recreation Commission or if both the aforementioned commissions will be further combined with the Public Safety Commission. The latter outcome is the subject of one budgetary planning exercise presented to us by city staff.

Public and community comment is unanimously and vigorously opposed to the City Council's suggestion. We are unable to address any budgetary benefits. The fundamental assumptions articulated in the single estimate of budget impacts prepared for your review, as no doubt you have noted, are essentially flawed by assumptions untethered to the priorities, annual work plan goals, and operational considerations of the two or three commissions impacted.

The Library Commission reflects the library service needs of the Cupertino community to the Cupertino Library staff and the Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) leadership. Further, commissioners directly work in support of the library and its capabilities, in partnership with Cupertino Library staff, SCCLD management, and community-based organizations (Cupertino Library Foundation, Friends of the Cupertino Library). The Library Commission also liaises with comparable library-focused appointed and volunteer organizations throughout the Bay Area.

SCCLD is nationally recognized as a leading, forward-looking, and award-winning library system. The Cupertino Library, as we are well aware, benefits from the visionary leadership of SCCLD management and the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from other community libraries in the SCCLD. It also maintains unique service aspects specifically designed to serve the Cupertino community. Data show ever increasing usage and materials circulation and the library staff work towards near-saturation patron registration. The recent extension of opening hours to 72 hours/week is the highest availability across the SCCLD, and a matter of public note and celebration.

While the Library Commission has not yet proposed an expansion of its membership to better serve the community's input, we are at least reminded of the adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." By extension, we might advertise and advocate the extraordinary success of the Cupertino Library-community (and non-profit support organizations)-Library Commission-City Council nexus and share credit for this long-standing and long-nurtured success.

The commissioners are deeply interested in knowing the origins of the Work Plan proposal for commission consolidation. We are open to understanding the underlying drivers, rationale and potential benefits, budgetary and staff impacts, and—importantly—to study and discuss these matters with our sister commissions which, surely, have parallel concerns. The absence of input from the public and impacted commissions would represent a lack of due diligence and breaches of procedural regularity and responsibility.

Our collective years of experience giving service to the City Council and our community compel us to advise against unconsidered actions to achieve outcomes not transparently communicated to all affected parties—most notably your electorate. Such decisions carry risks. Conscientious evaluation of outcomes is an essential advisory function provided by Cupertino's system of commissions. We urge you to use the system you've established, not circumvent it.

Sincerely
Library Commissioners
City of Cupertino, CA 95014