

From: [J Steach](#)
To: [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Lieber, Sally](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Ramirez, Lucas](#); [Showalter, Pat](#)
Cc: [City Council](#)
Subject: Downtown Precise Plan; tonight's
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 4:30:20 PM

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Ladies and gentleman of the Mountain View City Council:

After moving to Old Mountain View more than 30 years ago, I quickly developed a deep appreciation for the city's downtown -- notably its historically significant buildings that wisely have been preserved, and to this day provide character, a sense of place, and enduring, tangible links to our city's heritage. These are distinctive, still well functioning structures that countless cities across the country no doubt would envy for their own downtowns.

I've written articles for the Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association's newsletter, as well as for the Mountain View Historic Association's newsletter, on many downtown building's that date back a century or more, highlighting their various roles in the city's rich history. In the process, I've gained much greater understanding of them and come to realize how profoundly fortunate we are to have among us these true architectural treasures.

To both honor Mountain View's history and foster continued vibrancy and character of the downtown, these treasures absolutely deserve and must be granted the protection that can be ensured by the City Council affecting a thorough, lasting mandate to do so.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Jerry Steach

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From: [Office, Superintendent's](#)
To: [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Ramirez, Lucas](#); [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Lieber, Sally](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Showalter, Pat](#); [City Council](#); [City Manager](#); [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [Nellie Meyer](#); [Iona](#) [REDACTED]; [Catherine Vonneque](#); [Sanjay Dave](#); [Phil Faillace](#); [Debbie Torok](#)
Subject: Letter Pertaining to Item 7.2 on the June 8, 2021, City Council Meeting Agenda
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 3:26:13 PM
Attachments: [June 8 2021 Letter to the Mountain View City Council in Support of SRO Program.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon,

The attached letter from Mountain View Los Altos High School District pertains to Item 7.2: Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Recommended Budget, on the June 8, 2021, City Council meeting agenda. Please record this letter as public comment.

Sincerely,

Debbie Maher
Executive Assistant
Office of the Superintendent
Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District
1299 Bryant Avenue
Mountain View, CA 94040
(650) 940-4669
superintendent.office@mvla.net



Serving the communities of Mountain View,
Los Altos and Los Altos Hills

MOUNTAIN VIEW LOS ALTOS HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sanjay Dave
Phil Faillace, Ph.D.
Debbie Torok
Catherine Vonnegut
Fiona Walter

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Nellie Meyer

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Ellen Kamei
Mayor of Mountain View
Mountain View City Hall
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

CC: The Honorable Lucas Ramirez, Vice Mayor
The Honorable Margaret Abe-Koga, Councilmember
The Honorable Alison Hicks, Councilmember
The Honorable Sally Lieber, Councilmember
The Honorable Lisa Matichak, Councilmember
The Honorable Pat Showalter, Councilmember

Dear Mayor Kamei and Members of the City Council:

We, the administration of the MVLA District and the members of the district’s Governing Board, thank you for your contributions to the long history of effective collaboration between the city and its school districts.

We respectfully ask and strongly urge that you continue what has been the most important component of that collaboration, the longstanding and highly acclaimed Youth Services Unit (“YSU”) of the Mountain View Police Department (“MVPD”), including especially its provision of School Resource Officers (“SROs”) on the campus of Mountain View High School (“MVHS”). It is not mere happenstance that the Mountain View/Los Altos/Los Altos Hills Challenge Team’s annual Adult Champion for Youth award has gone to several YSU SROs over the twenty-five years that SROs have served our community.

The four member YSU operates under the supervision of a fifth person, Sergeant Scott Thomas. That team of five represents MV’s ethnic diversity and consists mainly of people of color. At least two of its officers have spoken candidly of their own anxieties as teenagers dealing with police. MVLA educators with decades of experience in working with the YSU and its SROs report that all of them have consistently shown natural empathy, deep emotional investment, and obvious delight in working respectfully with young people to build mutually beneficial trust.

Collaborating closely with MVLA’s educators, SROs keep youngsters, whose brains are still maturing, from slipping into trouble by helping them learn the skills of making good decisions when dealing with the incessant stresses of modern life. The YSU team brings to this core concept of MVLA’s social emotional learning (“SEL”) an essential, unique perspective that only police in a democracy that prizes civil liberties for all can have. When students understand what good police work demands in protecting everyone’s civil liberties and rights, they develop an intuitive appreciation for the desirability of respecting the rights of others.

Only SROs have police insight, through confidential police activity outside of schools, into the recruitment processes of gangs. The SROs use this insight on campus to divert potential targets of gang recruitment into programs that save students from the school to prison pipeline. Only SROs can extend their reach outside of schools and into the community to deal with cyberbullying and sexting, with its attendant risks of child pornography. Only SROs can use the relationships they have cultivated

on campus with at-risk students to give them a second chance when there is probable cause for arresting them, and thereby save them from that pipeline. Only SROs can repair the damage to youngsters' perception of police that bad police work has caused. Only SROs can cite their experience from working with students on campus to advocate within MVPD for reform of police procedures.

We understand that some persons of color who are students and former students, as well as some staff members, have described instances of local police mistreatment of persons of color. It appears that very few, if any, of those instances have been about SROs who serve MVHS. Nevertheless, the anxiety born of such mistreatment, amplified by depictions of black persons unjustifiably killed by police elsewhere in the country, inevitably engenders anxiety in persons who have experienced mistreatment by police locally, either directly or vicariously. Consequently, simply seeing someone in a police uniform can evoke the anxiety.

Some would have you believe that the only way to deal with this anxiety is to throw away a well functioning program that took decades of close collaboration between the YSU and Mountain View's schools to develop, and invent new ways of performing its highly valuable services that do not involve police. Informed as we are by our educators' deep and broad experience with the community's teenagers, we respectfully, but most emphatically, disagree.

Proponents of abolishing SROs suggest spending more on social-emotional learning and mental health. The district already takes two million dollars and instructional time away from academic programs that it is chartered to conduct and spends them on social-emotional learning and mental health. Even if it could afford to spend more, it could not perform the vital services that only police can, and none of those vital services involve disciplinary measures for students' misbehavior, which already are not assigned to SROs, but to administrators, as they should be.

Rather than allowing such anxiety to fester and grow by abandoning a very good public safety program focused on making school a safe place for all by helping young persons achieve success, we believe it is far better to take proactive measures now to improve relationships between MV police and those MVHS students of color made anxious by police presence. Let's use the strong working relationship forged over the years between SROs and MVHS educators to improve the already very good SRO program by implementing certain reforms suggested by constructive criticisms of police activities.

Also, it has come to our attention that a Public Safety Advisory Board has been newly formed, and that the SRO program is among the topics it is to consider. Since safety on school campuses requires the expertise of school personnel and police, we would expect MVLA and MVPD to have seats on that board. We look forward to engaging in its discussions to provide our school district's perspective on safety at school and in school activities off campus.

Finally, we close with a plea: **please continue to fund fully the YSU and the SROs.** MVPD, like MVLA and other very good public institutions, neither is nor claims to be perfect. Like MVLA, it strives for continuous improvement. Please let us improve each other.

Gratefully,

Fiona Walter, President
for the Governing Board

Nellie Meyer, Superintendent
for the Administration