

Hillview CC Task Commentary

My name is Frank Martin. Thank you for volunteering for this task force and allowing for my public input!

I am speaking for myself because of what I learned after serving as a volunteer to save Grant Park and the Grant Park Pilot Senior Center Program and as Chair of the previous Senior Commission. Some people ask me why I bother to continue to advocate for seniors and I say why not.

For far too long Los Altos has ignored our senior population and green space needs; but we now have the opportunity to make both a priority for our awesome community center.

With only 3 minutes I wish to point out that the advice you received for 3,000 sq ft of dedicated space is invalid and not supported by any facts my commission and myself have gathered!

Furthermore, your site visits do not include the most successful senior centers in our area or multiple visits to understand the views of leaders, volunteers, and users Why?

Have you included the architects for the magnificent senior centers or community centers to learn what they would do for us and why?

And, most importantly, what if anything has changed since the CC adopted my commission grand compromise that significantly reduced the dedicated senior space to a minimum of 10,000 sq ft?

Let the record show that I have submitted 12 documents including a 5 minute video that I am now handing out that I hope provides adequate institutional learning that is available so we can reach a common view of senior needs, programming, and space.

The included cover letter ties everything together and offers a few suggestions that I wish to pass on to help you succeed!

3 minutes is not enough time to explain how we convinced the city council to provide a minimum of 10,000 sq ft of dedicated senior space that is still valid and identified unmet senior needs not addressed by staff inputs recently provided to you by staff.

Therefore, I ask for a one hour meeting to have a 2 way conversation about senior needs in terms of needs, space, and programs.

Our seniors deserve nothing less!

HILLVIEW TASK FORCE

Submitted @ Los Altos City Council Meeting

7/25/17

DATE



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Other Voices: Planning community resources

When we talk about allocating community funding for recreational facilities, we often talk about dividing up a pie. But in Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, we have a different problem. As someone noted a few weeks ago at a community meeting regarding the Hillview Community Center project, "Los Altos always seems to do things piecemeal." Our problem is that we seem to plan separately for one piece of the funding pie at a time.

Currently, a large number of different advocacy groups have expressed needs for better facilities in the civic center and better use of city property in the downtown triangle. For example, the library needs more shelf space, a larger computer room and space for preschool reading programs and teen study and group projects. Teens would like a place to hang out near the library (the Los Altos Youth Center is often used for other activities). Los Altos Stage Company would like professional performance space to replace its make-do facilities. Seniors want to keep their Hillview lounge and game room. Parents of preschool children don't want to lose those programs. Residents want better facilities for fitness, discussion and art classes. And we haven't even mentioned groups wanting gymnasium space for youth basketball and a new aquatic center.

Every one of these requests is reasonable, but there are limits on available city funds, even over a 10-year horizon. We need a completely different approach to expand the community funding resources pie and allocate it more efficiently. Consider the following.

- We could start by establishing communication among the groups representing all who use facilities in the civic center to achieve collaborative planning.
- We could expand the spaces under consideration to include the civic center, the downtown triangle and other city properties and plan in a holistic manner to include each group's needs and desires.
- We could consider how facilities, such as a computer center, meeting spaces and performing spaces, might be shared among groups.
- We could plan longer term rather than one year at a time, but review and update the plan annually. If we focused on flexibility, facilities could be repurposed as demographics and community needs change. Some groups might have to wait a few years, but at least they would have the assurance that their needs would be addressed.
- We could think creatively about how groups might work together to develop new facilities. For example, could the city, individual community groups and private investors together plan downtown development that would serve future public and private needs? Other cities even combine needs and resources with their school districts for mutual benefit.

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- We could consider all possible sources of funding, including city funds, revenue bonds, loans, private contributions and in-lieu funds generated in real estate development. Good ideas often generate their own investment sources to supplement public funding.

But where do we start? Why not start by talking about resources and needs as a communitywide challenge. Perhaps the Downtown Vision and Hillview project teams could reach out to one another. By trying a collaborative approach, maybe we can make our pie bigger to serve the long-term needs of our entire community.

Gary Anderson is a member of Community Insights Group, a small volunteer group of Los Altos residents with expertise in urban consulting, change management and professional planning. For more information, visit insightsgroup.org.