



# SIERRA CLUB

## LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER

SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

Palo Alto City Hall  
250 Hamilton Ave  
Palo Alto, CA, 94301

RE: City Council 2023 Retreat

Dear Mayor Kou and Palo Alto City Councilmembers,

Humanity is experiencing two major existential threats: the rapid loss of biodiversity and an accelerating climate crisis. To protect Palo Alto residents and ecosystems, both crises must be addressed simultaneously. Fortunately, protecting nature and reducing emissions have interconnected and mutually beneficial solutions. Protecting and restoring local habitats bolsters community and ecological health and resiliency to the effects of climate change while also reducing emissions. The emissions we reduce now can limit the severity of the impacts of climate change such as flooding and sea level rise.

The Natural Environment and Climate Action were both highly prioritized by residents in the Annual Community Feedback Survey. According to the survey results, “4 in 5 residents rated it essential or very important to focus on the overall quality of the natural environment in Palo Alto”. “When asked to rate how important it is for Palo Alto to focus on reducing community greenhouse gas emissions in the coming two years, 7 in 10 residents indicated it to be essential or very important.” The voices of Palo Alto residents, ecologists, and climate activists are clear; we must protect nature and reduce emissions. We hope that Palo Alto’s priorities reflect this sentiment. Please consider the following provisions during the annual Council retreat.

### **1) Establish a City priority of “Natural Environment and Climate Change”**

Within that umbrella, please consider the following actions:

**a) Invest in the restoration of natural habitats, protection of open space and biodiversity, and expansion of parkland resources.**

**b) Allow and encourage the onsite reuse of stormwater and recycled water to enhance water supply.**

**c) Continue to support, fund, and accelerate Palo Alto’s progress towards the equitable electrification of existing buildings and reduction of emissions from transportation.**

**d) Consider public microgrids to address resilience and decarbonization as well as power disruptions and extreme weather events.**

**2) Within the “Community Health and Safety” category, please include biosafety protections to ensure that community members and local ecosystems are protected from the potential impacts of biolabs.**

We look forward to further collaboration with the City Council in support of local nature and climate action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dashiell Leeds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Dashiell Leeds  
Conservation Organizer  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter