

Letter of Inquiry

March 1, 2024

To

The City of East Palo Alto
Attn: City Manager Melvin E. Gaines; Community Services Manager Maurice Baker;
Mayor Antonio López; Vice-Mayor Martha Barragan; Councilmember Lisa Gauthier;
Councilmember Ruben Abrica; Councilmember Carlos Romero
2415 University Ave
East Palo Alto CA 94303

Dear City Manager Gaines,

With the direction of the City Council and input from city staff, the East Palo Alto Community Calendar is currently linked to the main calendar page on the City of East Palo Alto website.

[VIEW FULL CALENDAR](#)

[VIEW MEETINGS CALENDAR](#)

[VIEW COMMUNITY CALENDAR](#)
EXTERNAL LINK

This proposal is to offer additional services to create three customized landing pages (with multiple subpages) to assist with easy navigation and up-to-date information on the following community offerings:

- (1) Summer Parks Programming 2024 section
- (2) East Palo Alto Community Calendar “Employment” section
- (3) East Palo Alto Community Calendar “Services” section

Our Mission & History

Since 2022, the East Palo Alto Community Calendar has showcased the creative energies, diverse activities, and abundant potential found within the people and places of East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park by gathering and promoting events, opportunities, and resources via website billboards, a monthly calendar, categorized lists, and social media posts.

Early in the pandemic, residents of East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, as well as residents of greater San Mateo County and neighboring counties, met several times per week as part of the “Elevate EPA” virtual conversations. A direct outcome of these meetings was the creation of the East Palo Alto Community Calendar project co-founded by Kalamu Chaché and Sean Ripley. Responding to the concerns of over one hundred community members who identified the long-standing need for an all-encompassing community bulletin board, the Calendar site addresses the difficulty residents have in learning about local events, opportunities, initiatives, businesses, resources, and more.



The East Palo Alto Community Calendar
PO Box 51961
East Palo Alto CA 94303
epa.community.calendar@gmail.com
www.eastpaloaltocalendar.com

For the last three years, we have been volunteering our time and skills to address this need by building a calendar to provide up-to-date, easy access to information and resources. We are committed to offering increased organization and capacity to city partners via a centralized, secure, transparent, unbiased, and ad-free source of information.

The Calendar website went live in 2022. Since launch, the site has expanded its landing page billboards, built a mobile-friendly site, added special notice sections listing emergency food resources, weather and flood alerts, and growing SamTrans transportation options, and included pages aggregating events of cultural significance. Every month, there are hundreds of site sessions showing strong engagement with the content.

The site also provides a Google Form that is actively used by many local residents and organizations to submit events and opportunities for inclusion on the page. Since its implementation, we have received requests from 31 organizations to post over 40 unique events and services. Contributors have included the City of East Palo Alto, the East Palo Alto Senior Center, the San Mateo County Office of Arts & Culture, IKEA, several Palo Alto and Stanford University theater organizations, and local churches. In calendar year 2023, the Calendar included 1,243 separate events and over 100 ongoing services and opportunities.

Our Proposal

The East Palo Alto Community Calendar team offers to provide services to present an up-to-date calendar of events and opportunities to the residents of East Palo Alto, as well as launch three dedicated web pages featuring (1) a Summer Parks Programming 2024 section; (2) an East Palo Alto Community Calendar “Employment” section; and (3) an East Palo Alto Community Calendar “Services” section.

Summer Parks Programming Guide 2024

For the past two years, the City of East Palo Alto has created a website featuring the Summer Parks Activation programming, and the East Palo Alto Community Calendar has linked to and promoted that page and the summer events. For summer 2024, the East Palo Alto Community Calendar team would like the opportunity to design, build, and host the Summer Parks Activation pages as a feature on the Calendar site. The Calendar team could (1) assist with organizing date, time, and location information, (2) drive traffic and interest via easy-to-access links to the signup pages for specific programs and activities, and (3) showcase the successes of the program by offering a collective space to celebrate the Summer Parks Activation initiative.

Local Employment Section

The East Palo Alto Community Calendar “Employment” section would aggregate and organize job openings, job posting links, job fairs, and other hiring opportunities happening in and around East Palo Alto. It would be added as a category under the existing “Opportunities” section, situated alongside the “Running a Business in EPA” and “Continuing Education & Workforce Development” sections. Financial support from the City of East Palo Alto would fund (1) the design, development, and launch of the new section and (2) the weekly maintenance of the section, including finding and updating career opportunities, reaching out to organizations with job openings for further details, and posting brief descriptions, flyers, and links.

Community Services & Assistance Programs Guide

Many services and assistance programs are already listed on the Calendar within various categories of the “Opportunities” section, but these resources are both so plentiful and essential that they should be moved to their own primary section for greater visibility and access. This dedicated listing would inform residents about services and programs offered by the City of EPA, County of San Mateo, State of California, and local and regional non-profits, with the goal of improving access to food, shelter, education, healthcare, and more. Having these resources in an easy-to-use guide would also allow for serendipitous discovery of other resources, as there is significant intersectionality among the basic and secondary needs of our residents.

Financial support from the City of East Palo Alto would fund (1) the design, development, and launch of the new section; (2) the extensive work needed to identify resources, contact providers, and organize and post information; and (3) the frequent maintenance of the section, including updating offerings, locations, and hours of operation and answering user inquiries and comments in a timely manner.

Proposed Budget

Activity	Funds	Details
Summer Parks Programming	\$5,000	For each proposed project: \$1,500 for design & implementation \$2,000 for updates & maintenance \$1,500 for outreach & promotion
Local Employment Section	\$5,000	
Community Services Section	\$5,000	
TOTAL	\$15,000	

We’re grateful for our ongoing conversations and efforts with the wonderful staff at the City of East Palo Alto. The direct link to the Calendar site that was added to the cityofepa.org landing page last year has made it easy for us to direct residents old and new to both the City of EPA site and the Calendar, and we thank you sincerely for the space.

And we truly appreciate this opportunity to share our ideas on how we can better serve the East Palo Alto community. If you have any questions, it would be our pleasure to answer them and discuss our projects further.

Sincerely,



Sean D. Ripley
 Co-founder & Website Manager