

East Palo Alto City Council – December 2, 2025 Meeting Summary

The East Palo Alto City Council convened on December 2, 2025, to review the 2026 meeting calendar, hear extensive community feedback, receive major departmental updates, and take action on public safety and business regulation items. The Council also reconvened as the East Palo Alto Sanitary District (EPASD) Board for routine approvals.

Consent Calendar

Council approved the Consent Calendar, with **Item 3.3 pulled for discussion**. Approved items included:

- Adoption of the **2025 Cross-Connection Control Plan**
- Approval of **Human Resources Support Services contracts**
- **November 18 meeting minutes**
- **Proclamation honoring Officer Paul Norris** for 38 years of service
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Item 3.3 – 2026 City Council Meeting Schedule

Council discussed multiple adjustments to the proposed calendar:

Key Outcomes

- The **Reorganization Meeting** will be moved from **December 17** to **December 8, 2026**, replacing the originally scheduled study session.
- Council discussed concerns about holding study sessions near holidays and clarified the purpose of the June 30 study session tied to the budget deadline.
- Councilmembers debated changing the start time for regular meetings from **6:30 PM to 5:30 PM**, with mixed public and Council support.
- Meeting times will return as a **separately agendized item** at a future session.

The modified 2026 calendar was approved.

Public Comment

Public comment was broad and deeply engaged, highlighting several major community themes:

Youth Aviation Pathways

Dozens of students, instructors, and parents from **Bay Area Urban Eagles** spoke about the transformative impacts aviation training has had on EPA youth—describing new career pathways, mentorship opportunities, and pilot license achievements.

Quality of Life & Parking Enforcement

Residents expressed concerns about:

- Vehicles parked beyond 72-hour limits
- Commercial vehicles and car resellers using public streets for storage
- Abandoned vehicles reducing pedestrian and parking access
- Increased traffic congestion and blocked visibility in neighborhoods

Inclusionary Housing

Speakers emphasized the importance of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, describing it as a tool for:

- Preventing segregation
- Strengthening equity across neighborhoods
- Ensuring fair access to parks and community amenities

Public Safety & Police Responsiveness

Several residents raised concerns about:

- Violent incidents and firearm-related threats
- Perceived delays in police response
- The need for stronger accountability and communication

The Mayor directed the City Manager and Police Chief to meet with residents after the meeting.

Meeting Start Times

Speakers raised pros and cons of moving meetings earlier, highlighting:

- Better accessibility for some families
- Scheduling conflicts for working parents and commuters

EPASD Board Meeting

The Council adjourned to convene as the EPASD Board and approved the Consent Calendar, including:

- On-call engineering services contracts
- October 2025 cash disbursement report

Council then reconvened the regular meeting.

Informational Reports

9.1 – 2025 Summer Park Activation Program

Staff presented results from the most successful season to date:

- **1,700+ participants**
- **1,100+ program hours**
- **11 program partners/vendors**
- **324 survey responses**, a statistically valid sample
- **A-level ratings** across safety, satisfaction, and program quality
- **Zero negative impacts reported** across health and wellness categories

Council praised the program and requested improved data normalization and deeper qualitative analysis for future years.

9.2 – Street Sweeping Signage Audit Project

Public Works presented a citywide signage audit, identifying:

- Missing, faded, bent, or inaccurate signs
- Signs blocked by vegetation
- Streets lacking curb and gutter

Completed corrective actions include:

- Updated sweeping maps
- Sign replacements

- Vegetation trimming
- Coordination between Code Enforcement, Engineering, and Maintenance

Council discussed enforcement, the 72-hour rule, and the upcoming **parking enforcement RFP** scheduled for December 16.

Public Hearing

11.1 – Introduction of Chapter 5.76: Sidewalk Vendors Ordinance

Summary:

The Council discussed the proposed Sidewalk Vendors Ordinance, which would create a permitting process and establish safety and accessibility standards for sidewalk vending in East Palo Alto. Councilmembers agreed that having some type of regulation is important to help legitimize sidewalk vendors as small businesses and ensure community safety.

Council also expressed concerns that certain requirements, such as permit fees and insurance, could create financial barriers for vendors. To ensure the ordinance is fair and feasible, the City Council directed staff to bring back another introduction of the ordinance with an example of the ability-to-pay process, permit application, and fee resolution, at a future meeting.

The City is encouraging all sidewalk vendors and community members interested in shaping the city's sidewalk vending policies to attend the next Council meeting to share their experiences and perspectives before the ordinance moves forward. More information and meeting details will be shared as soon as they are available.

Why This Matters:

The ordinance modernizes local business regulation, supports lawful vending, protects pedestrian access, ensures ADA compliance, and aligns EPA rules with California's statewide standards.

Policy & Action Items

12.1 – Continued Use of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Systems

Summary:

Council approved a continuation of services with **Flock Safety** but held an extensive discussion about the length and oversight of the contract.

Key Discussion Points

- One councilmember supported the technology but pushed to reduce the contract from **five years to three**, citing the need for periodic evaluation, community trust, and the ability to respond to changes in political climate or technology.
- Concerns included:
 - Ensuring **data privacy**
 - Avoiding **government overreach**
 - Maintaining **local control** and accountability
- Staff clarified that the five-year amount was derived from **projected annual costs**, and shortening the term could result in **higher future expenses**.
- Council discussed that EPA can terminate the contract at any time if issues arise, and quarterly reporting already provides regular oversight.

Outcome

Council supported moving forward with the **three-year agreement**, allowing the City to discontinue the contract if concerns emerge.

Why This Matters:

ALPR systems assist police in recovering stolen vehicles, identifying suspects, and improving response times. The revised contract structure balances public safety with appropriate checks on surveillance technology and data use.

Why This Matters – Overall Themes

1. Community Safety & Oversight

The meeting underscored community concerns about violence, policing, and the responsible use of technology to support investigations.

2. Youth Investment & Opportunity

Aviation program testimonials highlight the importance of expanding pathways that inspire and equip EPA youth for future careers.

3. Housing Equity

Speakers emphasized how the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance remains a critical safeguard against segregation and inequitable development.

4. Cleaner, Safer Streets

The signage audit and renewed focus on parking enforcement support better street sweeping, stormwater compliance, and neighborhood livability.

5. Transparent & Accessible Governance

Council's willingness to revisit meeting start times and restructure its annual calendar demonstrates continued efforts to increase public participation.

6. Data-Driven Recreation Programming

Summer Park Activation success data helps guide future investments in recreation and community wellness.