



**CITY OF PALO ALTO
CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
Monday, August 19, 2024
Council Chambers & Hybrid
5:30 PM**

Agenda Item

2. Supplemental Report: Report from the Human Relations Commission Resulting from the 'Voices of our Community' Listening Sessions on Local Experiences of Islamophobia/Anti-Arab Hate and Anti-Semitism. CEQA status - not a project.



City Council Supplemental Report

CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

From: Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Director

Meeting Date: August 19, 2024

Item Number: 2

Report #:2407-3243

TITLE

Supplemental Report: Report from the Human Relations Commission Resulting from the 'Voices of our Community' Listening Sessions on Local Experiences of Islamophobia/Anti-Arab Hate and Anti-Semitism. CEQA status - not a project.

BACKGROUND

Attachment C includes additional information that was not ready at the original time of report publication. It includes correspondence sent to the Human Relations Commission (HRC) email inbox pertaining to the subject matter of this report and documents provided by members of the public at HRC meetings when the Listening Session was discussed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment C: Copies of correspondence to the HRC email inbox and information provided by the public at HRC meetings.

APPROVED BY:

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Director

ATTACHMENT C

From: [D Dorenz](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: re: Antisemitism
Date: Saturday, December 30, 2023 7:57:31 PM

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Dear Human Relations Commission members:

I have learned that you will be discussing the issue of antisemitism in the Palo alto community and beyond on Jan. 11, 2024.

I appreciate that you are taking this seriously and putting it on your agenda. Anti-semitism morphs over the decades and is always taking new forms. It is the world's oldest conspiracy theory. Now that there is a war in the middle east, those who want to rid the Middle East of any Jews, and also any western influence, are pressuring city councils, School Boards, and others to condemn Israel for fighting for its citizens' safety by eliminating Hamas.

As a Jewish resident of the East Bay, I know that hatred of Jews doesn't stay in one community. It is spread on the internet and has been strengthened by the coming together of the right wing antisemites from whom we typically expect antisemitism, and the newer version of it from the left, that include those who are protesting the war between Hamas and Israel and calling for a ceasefire with no demands on Hamas to release the hostages, to lay down their arms, and with no condemnation for their attack on Israeli citizens whatsoever. The lack of condemnation of these horrendous acts that constitutes the worst pogrom against the Jewish People since the Holocaust tells us that these acts are condoned by the very people who claim that they are victims: the Palestinians and their supporters. They come to the City council meetings with signs that say "From the River to the Sea Palestine will be free" or "Free Palestine" which actually is a call for the destruction of the Jewish state of Israel. Their goal is not just to save lives of the people who live in Gaza, but to use the situation as a propaganda tool against Israel. Criticism of Israel is free speech, but calling for the destruction of an entire state of Jewish, Arab, Christian, Druze and other ethnicities and Religious residents of Israel, is hate speech and the newest form of antisemitism. No other state in the world is being condemned in this way, not even Russia is called out for trying to destroy Ukraine, by any of these people. We recently experienced the presidents of three major universities equivocate and by refusing to say that calling for a genocide against Jews was antisemitism. (Harvard, Penn, Columbia). They answered the question by saying "It depends on the context". This is certainly a moral failure on the parts of these presidents who represent our most prestigious universities that are educating the future leaders of our country. These students are learning that its ok to call for the genocide of an entire people and still think that they are ethical human beings worthy of leading this country.

The pro-Palestinians arrive in busloads to the City Council meetings all over the Bay Area to demand resolutions calling for a ceasefire in the war. Having attended four different meetings of City Councils including Richmond, Oakland, Berkeley, and the Berkeley unified School District School Board, I have had direct experience of the hate coming from those who condemn Israel as it fights to protect Israel from further vicious, unspeakable acts of torture and murder against its civilians by Hamas terrorists, including the taking of 240 hostages.

They are holding all Jews responsible for the acts of the Israeli government, and do not condemn Hamas' attack, do not want it to be condemned in any of these resolutions, because they chose to see it as "a war of liberation" .But their liberation includes the destruction of Israel and Jews. On campuses in the Bay Area, and at Universities throughout the United States such as Harvard, Columbia, Penn, Yale, SFSU, and many other schools including highschools, Jewish students have been banned from these anti-zionist spaces on campus if they support Israel. These include many of the law students' organizations and other student organizations. They have been threatened, attacked, and have experienced vandalism. They are not being allowed free and equal access to their education on these campuses. I hope that your commission will accurately label this kind of behavior as antisemitism because then you will help people to recognize it and condemn it. This will support our pluralistic democracy. Once Jews are banned, and ostracised, attacked and discriminated against, then other minorities are also in even more danger and it marks the deterioration of a civil society as it didn in Germany. I hope that you will unequivocally condemn the verbal and physical acts against our Jewish communities so that those perpetrating these hateful attacks will understand that they cannot get away with this behavior. If a government doesn't stand up for minorities, then democracy cannot survive.

I hope that you will decide that a letter to the president or a resolution is beyond your bailiwick and I hope that you will instead attend to the important business of your city where you can have real impact on the lives of your City's residents, rather than wade into an international issue that can only bring more strife here at home and not have a positive effect on the lives of those experiencing this war.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Dorit

Dorenz

Berkeley, Ca.

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Dorothea Dorenz

From: [Lorraine Brown](#)
To: [Council, City; Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: Antisemitism in Palo Alto
Date: Sunday, January 7, 2024 11:14:32 AM

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Dear Human Relations Commission and City Council -

Thank you all for your continued leadership in our city.

First, I want to thank the HRC for their upcoming January 11 agenda item focusing on the rise of antisemitism in our community. The spike in threats is terribly disturbing, and I think it's really important for you - and all of us in Palo Alto - to hear from our residents about their experiences. With that, I hope your commission will also consider how to make Jews, Muslims, and Arabs all feel safer in Palo Alto.

Second, I understand that City Council is considering a discussion/vote on a ceasefire resolution. I adamantly oppose this idea and implore you to avoid such a discussion for two primary reasons:

- it will be terribly divisive for our community, and the debate will only sharpen and increase antisemitism in Palo Alto. This has been seen in other cities that have considered such resolutions, and would serve only to fray relations in our city - when you've all worked so hard to improve senses of belonging and inclusion.
- resolutions regarding outcomes for foreign wars is far beyond the scope of what you were elected. Your attention should be focused on Palo Alto issues - and there are plenty - rather than on outcomes for wars across the globe.

In other words, there is nothing to gain whatsoever by engaging in a debate about a ceasefire, a topic which sparks deep, emotional debate, and won't do anything to help the people of Israel or Gaza. I urge you to decline considering a ceasefire resolution.

Thank you for considering my feedback, and again, thank you for your leadership.

Lorraine Brown
Walter Hays Drive

From: [Debbie Mukamal](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: Statement
Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024 3:51:35 PM

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To the Human Relations Committee for the City of Palo Alto:

My name is Debbie Mukamal. My daughter, a 10th grader at Gunn, and I have lived in Palo Alto since 2010. I work at Stanford Law School, and we are active members of Congregation Beth Am, the Reform synagogue in Los Altos Hills. I am in my 6th year of service on Beth Am's Board of Directors, and my daughter is actively involved in teen programming there.

I want to share my experience of being at the synagogue on Friday, September 8. The temple was packed with people who had come to pray on the Sabbath and to hear from two guest speakers - Congresswoman Anna Eshoo and Jeremy Ben Ami, the President of J Street, a progressive American-Israel organization. We expected to be together for a catered reception after the service. A group of teens were there to gather for a "chill night", an opportunity to decompress from the stress of school. Just as Sabbath services were ending and people were flowing into the reception, one of our rabbis returned to the front of the sanctuary and announced that we all needed to immediately leave the building as the synagogue had received a bomb threat. The Santa Clara Sheriff's Department, represented by many officers wearing bulletproof vests and bomb-sniffing dogs, was there to evacuate the premises and to sweep the entire campus. Being on the Board, I immediately called our President to make sure she was aware of the situation. Everyone exited the building and returned to their cars quickly and orderly, even though they were nervous and concerned.

As we were driving away, my daughter, who was visibly shaken, questioned why anyone would try to blow up a bunch of people at a synagogue. She didn't understand why Jews would be targeted. I didn't have a great answer to offer her.

Fortunately the bomb threat was later confirmed to be a hoax, that was replicated in several other synagogues throughout the country. But my daughter's concern didn't end. She was rattled all weekend, worried that the Sheriff's Department officers (or dogs) could have missed a bomb, and that when she was there to work as a teacher's aide in our Sunday School, she would accidentally step on something that would explode.

Why are Jews targeted? It's a good question. Do you have an answer?

Best, Debbie Mukamal

[REDACTED]
Palo Alto, CA 94304

[REDACTED]

From: [Deborah Goldeen](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Cc: [Lythcott-Haims, Julie](#)
Subject: Anti-Semitism in Palo Alto
Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024 9:29:05 PM

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Dear Commissioners - Thank you for taking up this important topic.

To understand the nature of anti-semitic attacks that Jews have been subjected to since the Hamas attack, it's important to understand that IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HAMAS ATTACK, Free Gaza! and Stop The Genocide! are anti-semitic (Arab Muslims who live in Palestine, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, ect... all identify as Arabs who live in The Levant).

I showed up to the farmers market on Cal Ave at 10am October 22 to find the entire street - every rock, tree, news stand and pole - plastered with "Free Gaza/Stop the Genocide" posters, did I feel threatened? You bet. Even more chilling is that these posters, probably fifty all told, and all posted illegally, had been left in place - the shoppers and workers carrying on as if it was nothing. I set about taking them down and had several Jewish people come up and whisper to me as I was doing so, "thank you!" Being blond haired and blue eyed, I'm almost never identified as Jewish so I could get away with that. But they couldn't.

When the anti-semitic Zoom bombers at city council meetings interrupt proceedings again and again and again - people who are doing so anonymously while wearing face masks with their "Free Gaza/ Stop the Genocide" rants, that is an attack on Jews. To my horry Mayor Kou failed to shut them down. As soon as they start, turn them off. This is not the time and place to be polite.

At the peace vigil in front of city hall, I was standing behind a group of Arab immigrants - one from Iraq, one from Libya and one from Emirates - while they discussed plans for protesting in San Francisco the next day. They had shown up at the peace vigil for the express purpose of speaking to the assembled people about how "this war is genocide against the Palestinians" and how "the Israeli's are responsible for everything." Two of them left after hearing they wouldn't speak, but the third one stayed and explained to me that they coordinate groups like that to show up at all gatherings like this. This same person told me that "there is no rape in Muslim world." As in Muslim men don't rape so none of the Israeli hostages could have been raped.

The purpose of the Hamas attack was to provoke a response so brutal from Israel that the Arab world would rise up and obliterate Israel. Through more covert social media means, anti-semitic Arab Muslims - as differentiated from Arab Muslims who are NOT anti-semitic - are taking this effort to a world level, which means bringing it home, here to Palo Alto.

In regards to Councilmember Lythcott-Haims's well intentioned comments mentioning the distress that Arab Muslims are feeling, I was surprised by this. ShOf all people I would have expected her to understand what a false equivalency is. What is happening right now is Arab Muslims are leading the anti-semitic charge against the Jews. Jews are NOT lobbying Islamophobic attacks at Arab Muslims. It's white Americans who are persecuting the Arab Muslims. Anti-semitic attacks are coming from Asian people I know - all my woke white friends - pretty much anyone who's on a college campus. Heck, you cannot compare the two for the simple fact that there are 15 million Jews on the planet and over A BILLION Arab Muslims.

I understand the intent behind her comments, but they were extraordinarily inappropriate.

Deborah Goldeen, [REDACTED], 94306, [REDACTED]

From: [Uzma Minhas](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: Dec 6th Listening Session Follow-up
Date: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 12:29:40 PM

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Dear HRC Chair Eberle and HRC Commission.

I hope this email finds you well. Congratulations to Chair Eberle on becoming the new chair!

I wanted to express my gratitude for the Dec 6 listening session organized by the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission focusing on Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian Voices. It was a valuable opportunity to share insights and perspectives, and I appreciate the Commission's commitment to fostering an inclusive community.

I am writing to discuss the importance of incorporating anti-Palestinian racism into the Commission's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The presentation we shared during the session outlined specific asks, and I am eager to understand when and how the Commission plans to implement these recommendations. Additionally, as we approach the month of Ramadan in March, I believe it would be opportune for the HRC to sponsor events such as an "iftar" dinner and an Eid celebration at the end of the month. Additionally, with April being Arab American Heritage Month, I propose collaboration on events that amplify Arab and Palestinian voices.

Given the urgency of addressing issues related to anti-Palestinian racism, I feel compelled to highlight the unfortunate occurrence of misinformation and racism during the community meeting on Jan 11. I believe it is crucial for us to take swift action to counteract these narratives. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter further and provide additional insights on combating anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia.

In conclusion, the Human Relations Commission plays a vital role in ensuring that all voices are heard, and I am confident that Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians should not be excluded from this narrative. Your commitment to inclusivity aligns with the Commission's mission, and I look forward to collaborating on initiatives that promote understanding, respect, and unity within our community as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me know when we can meet to

discuss initiatives. Ideally, as soon as next week or even this week would work for our community.

Best regards,

Uzma

From: [Lori Meyers](#)
To: [Kaloma Smith](#); michellekraus@yahoo.com; adriana@eberlaw.com; [Human Relations Commission](#); [Van Der Zwaag, Minka](#)
Cc: [Rabbi David Booth](#); [Sarith](#)
Subject: Nazi symbol found outside of Peers Park on Sunday January 28
Date: Monday, January 29, 2024 1:17:54 PM

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Dear Members of the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission,

Thank you for all you do to keep Palo Alto a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive place.

In case you haven't yet heard, there was a [Nazi symbol found on the sidewalk near Peers Park last night](#). It is being investigated as a hate crime.

Sadly, this isn't the first. There have been multiple recent incidents of Nazi symbols locally, including the Nazi symbol outside of Starbucks on El Camino in October, as well as the man carrying a swastika outside of Palo Alto HS soon after.

Over the past three months, multiple Nazi symbols have also been found in schools in Los Altos and in cities across the Bay Area. These are all part of the nearly 400% increase in antisemitic incidents in the US just since October 7.

When the Jewish community met with you several weeks ago, we shared many specific incidents that showcase the rise in antisemitism right here in Palo Alto, and the lack of security and inclusion we feel in our own City. We also recommended next steps based on the [Mayor's Guide for Implementing the US National Strategy for Antisemitism](#). Antisemitism education for the City staff is one of the first and most important steps of beginning to combat antisemitism.

We hope that you consider this urgent need for antisemitism education - and integrating it into city DEI efforts - as you prepare for your next meeting and begin to make recommendations to the City Council.

We look forward to hearing your recommendations at the meeting next week, and to partnering with you to move forward.

Warmly,
Lori

From: [Uzma Minhas](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: Question - Agenda item for tomorrow on Ad hoc Subcommittees
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 2:24:30 PM

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Hi Palo Alto HRC,

I see that for tomorrow's meeting there is an agenda item on Subcommittees for the Listening session we had in December. Could you explain what exactly will happen tomorrow during this item? I would like to be on the subcommittee if open to the public.

Best,
Uzma

From: [Human Relations Commission](#)
To: [Uzma Minhas](#)
Cc: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: RE: Question - Agenda item for tomorrow on Ad hoc Subcommittees
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 2:56:41 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)

Hello Uzma,

The agenda item will establish two ad-hoc subcommittees to discuss the suggestions for action/education presented at the two community listening sessions regarding Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism. The only action taken on this agenda item is to establish the subcommittees, there will be no discussion of the actual topics.

The ad-hoc subcommittees will be comprised solely of HRC commissioners. The public may comment when the subcommittees reconvene for a special meeting to discuss the suggestions for action/education. The date of the special meeting is yet to be determined; we will inform the public as soon as a date is set.



Best regards,

Alayna Cruz

Human Services Management Assistant

(650) 463-4906 | alayna.cruz@cityofpaloalto.org

www.cityofpaloalto.org



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From: Uzma Minhas <uzmaminhas@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 2:24 PM
To: Human Relations Commission <hrc@cityofpaloalto.org>
Subject: Question - Agenda item for tomorrow on Ad hoc Subcommittees

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Hi Palo Alto HRC,

I see that for tomorrow's meeting there is an agenda item on Subcommittees for the Listening session we had in December. Could you explain what exactly will happen tomorrow during this item?

I would like to be on the subcommittee if open to the public.

Best,
Uzma

From: [Uzma Minhas](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Subject: Following up
Date: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 3:03:08 PM

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Hi,

I wanted to follow-up on the March 6th retreat. Is this confirmed? If it is, can you share the format of the meeting? What would be the best way for our community members to prepare?

Can we provide input to the working committees beforehand?

Best,
Uzma

From: [E.G](#)
To: [Human Relations Commission](#)
Cc: [Estee Greif](#); [Avner Greif](#)
Subject: Input on Local Experiences of Islamophobia/Anti-Arab Hate and Anti-Semitism (Israelis) .
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 9:35:09 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

I want to thank the HRC for its important work making sure that Muslim, Jewish and all communities feel safe.

I noticed that the document fails to reference **Israelis**. I hope that as we draft anti-discrimination policies and recommendations that we explicitly help protect Israelis in addition to Jews because the two communities though overlapping are different. There are Israelis like the Druze and Christians that are neither Jewish nor Muslim. Israelis are more easily targeted because they are easier to identify.

I hope the committee will facilitate in understanding how certain terminology are miss used as inflammatory and are the cause of creating hateful feelings.

I also hope that as the committee works to build police liaisons they recognize that Israelis are less likely to belong to faith communities than American Jews and may need special outreach.

Apology for the late input, hope you might still consider this input at least in vision if not on paper.

Thanks again for helping keep the city equitable.

~Estee Greif

Palo Alto Jewish Community Recommendations to the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission

Presented to the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission - February 2024

Background

On January 11, 2024, the Jewish community was deeply grateful to be invited to a listening session with the Palo Alto Human Relations Commission (HRC). Aligned with its mission of creating a “community where civility, respect, and responsible actions are the norm,” and recognizing that the Jewish community is a minority and vulnerable population, the HRC asked us to share the Jewish experience in Palo Alto and to make recommendations for improving this experience and combating the steep rise in antisemitism.

The Jewish community presented the following recommendations to the HRC during the listening session:

- Use the [U.S. National Strategy to Combat Antisemitism](#) to build an action plan for a comprehensive city-wide strategy on antisemitism, and engage the Jewish community in setting priorities based on the U.S. National Strategy.
- Convene a Day of Unity when our diverse Palo Alto can come together, celebrate our inclusivity, and be together in unity and goodwill.

These recommendations are described in detail below.

HRC Guidance that Informed the Recommendations

In developing its recommendations, the Jewish community followed the guidance provided by former HRC Chair Smith that the purview of the HRC is local, and that the focus of the recommendations should be on work that can be done locally in Palo Alto - not nationally or internationally.

The Jewish community also recognizes that the purview of the HRC and the City Council is the City, not Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). For this reason, the Jewish community intentionally did not make recommendations for school curriculum or teacher training (“teach-ins”), which would fall under the purview of PAUSD. If this is an incorrect assumption, then we ask to be informed so that we can make recommendations related to the Palo Alto Unified School District.

Jewish Community Recommendations

As mentioned above, the Jewish community made two recommendations at the January 11 HRC meeting:

- Implement the [U.S. National Strategy to Combat Antisemitism](#).
- Convene a Day of Unity for Palo Alto to come together in unity and goodwill.

Using the [U.S. National Strategy to Combat Antisemitism](#), the [Mayor's Guide to Countering Antisemitism: Implementing the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) (co-developed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors along with the American Jewish Committee), and [A Law Enforcement Guide to Countering Antisemitism: Implementing the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) as guiding documents, the Jewish community presents the following specific recommendations **as first steps** to combat antisemitism in Palo Alto.

We look forward to working in partnership with the City to implement additional recommendations going forward.

We ask that these recommendations be implemented **as soon as practicable**, and as the first steps of a funded, five-year, comprehensive action plan to address antisemitism - including a plan for measuring progress and accountability.

Recommendation #1: Adopt or endorse the IHRA definition of antisemitism. (Inclusion/Belonging & Security)

Defining antisemitism is essential in order to identify it and combat it. The [International Holocaust Remembrance Association definition of antisemitism](#) is the most widely adopted definition of antisemitism. As of January 2023, it had been adopted by over 1,000 entities, including the [U.S. State Department](#), as well as [numerous countries, US states, and cities including Los Angeles and Washington, DC.](#)

Adopting or endorsing the IHRA definition of antisemitism is of the highest priority, as defining antisemitism is foundational to combatting it.

Recommendation #2: Provide mandatory antisemitism education and training for City Council, leadership, law enforcement, and staff. (Inclusion/Belonging & Security)

Antisemitism is an old and complex hate, with many modern manifestations. Understanding antisemitism is essential in order to identify it and combat it. Antisemitism training will also help City leadership and law enforcement officials be more culturally competent in how they respond to Jewish community.

We ask that the City leadership - including but not limited to City Council, City Manager and staff, City Attorney, inclusion and Equity Manager, City Auditor, City Clerk, all Commissioners, Fire Chief, Human Resources Manager, Head Librarian, Office of Emergency Services Manager, Chief of Police and the Police Department - participate in this training.

The American Jewish Committee, an internationally respected organization, has provided this free training to municipalities across the country. Given the steep rise in antisemitism in the Bay Area, we recommend that this training be implemented as a highest priority.

Recommendation #3: Issue unequivocal condemnations of antisemitism. (Inclusion/Belonging & Security)

When antisemitism or anti-Israeli hate arises, we ask that City Council and Human Relations Commission members call it out immediately (within 24 hours) and by name.

Depending on the circumstances, this condemnation could be verbally during or after a meeting; in the media after an antisemitic incident in Palo Alto; or as a public statement on behalf of City Council. If necessary, issue proclamations or resolutions condemning antisemitism and anti-Israeli hate. Antisemitism is not a partisan issue.

Recommendation #4: Expand media literacy education to address misinformation and disinformation related to antisemitism. (Inclusion/Belonging & Security)

Media literacy education involves addressing the problem of misinformation and disinformation related to antisemitism. Media comes in many formats, including print, broadcast, digital, and social. We recommend that the library provide and promote resources and public programming on media literacy to address online misinformation and disinformation, including related to antisemitism.

Media literacy education also requires an ongoing thorough review of all content (including organizations, materials, and recommendations) promoted on City websites, including the Palo Alto Library, to ensure that they are consistent with laws and policies, as well as the values and mission of Palo Alto. These reviews should be conducted **before** any organizations, resources, or materials are recommended or posted.

Recommendation #5: Designate a central coordinator for Jewish and other faith communities. Many elected leaders have advisory groups or interfaith/ interethnic task forces. (Inclusion/Belonging & Security)

Establish a City liaison as a central point of contact to address the needs of the Jewish and other faith communities, especially as security needs arise.

In addition, many cities have a community advisory group to provide faith community perspective to elected leadership. This is valuable when enacting many of the recommendations in this document, including building public awareness around hate crime reporting and setting community calendars, as well as in developing cultural competence in responding to the needs of faith communities.

Recommendation #6: Add major holidays of all faith communities, including Jewish holidays, to community calendars (meetings, elections, etc.). Add Jewish Heritage Month to community calendars. (Inclusion/Belonging)

The Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, and Hanukkah, at a minimum, should be added to community calendars. Other significant holidays include Purim, Sukkot, and Shavuot.

We request that the City not schedule meetings or events on the following holidays, as many in the Jewish community would be excluded from attending or participating: the evening preceding Rosh Hashanah, Rosh Hashanah, the evening preceding Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur, and the evenings preceding the first and second days of Passover.

We also recommend that Jewish American Heritage Month in May be added to community calendars. The Jewish community would like to collaborate with the City on planning Jewish American Heritage Month activities, including recommended book lists with the Palo Alto Library, featured speakers, and other cultural and educational events.

Recommendation #7: Invest in Jewish community security. (Security)

The Jewish community is very grateful for the support and engagement of the Palo Alto Chief of Police and Palo Alto law enforcement.

We have several recommendations with regard to Jewish community security, in alignment with [A Law Enforcement Guide to Countering Antisemitism: Implementing the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#):

- Provide [A Law Enforcement Guide to Countering Antisemitism: Implementing the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#) to the Palo Alto Chief of Police as a valuable resource for actions that law enforcement can take to combat antisemitism.
- Connect the Palo Alto Police Department with the [Secure Community Network](#) (SCN), which is the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America. SCN is an invaluable resource for law enforcement, including providing threat and incident information to law enforcement and community partners, serving as liaison with federal law enforcement, and coordinating with state and local law enforcement. SCN also works with law enforcement to develop and implement security frameworks.
- Appoint an appropriate senior law enforcement official to be a central point of contact for local Jewish communities when a security need arises.
- Ask the Palo Alto Police Department to explore instituting a [Jewish community safety plan](#) such as the one recently adopted in Beverly Hills, CA. This plan would include developing an antisemitism and mass violence attack preparedness and training exercise, as well as assessment of existing emergency response alert systems, tools, and protocols.
- Engage with Jewish institutions about applying for [nonprofit security grants](#) from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as well as state level funds, to fund training and physical security enhancements. The nonprofit security grants require a threat, vulnerability, and risk assessment (TVRA), which institutions may ask local law enforcement to support. If able to do so, local law enforcement should offer that resource.
- Continue the work started in the 2023-24 HRC Work Plan to increase public awareness and marketing of how to report hate crimes and hate incidents.

Recommendation #8: Convene a Day of Unity when our diverse Palo Alto can come together, celebrate our inclusivity, and be together in unity and goodwill. (Inclusion/Belonging)

In alignment with the City of Palo Alto's mission to "promote and sustain a superior quality of life in Palo Alto" and the HRC's mission creating "a community where civility, respect and responsible actions are the norm," we ask that the City convene a Day of Unity. Community members and faith leaders of every religious denomination in Palo Alto should be invited.

A Day of Unity will bring our diverse community together, where we can celebrate our inclusivity, and be together in goodwill.

Recommendation #9: Ensure that all recommendations, proposals, speakers, and resources are fully reviewed by City leadership and legal counsel to ensure compliance with federal and state law, as well as city codes, and the mission of Palo Alto, (Inclusion/Belonging & Security)

We ask that all recommendations, proposals, speakers, and resources (including but not limited to: definitions, programs, events, organizations, resolutions, written statements, projects, proclamations, and honorees) be thoroughly reviewed and vetted by City officials and legal counsel **before** their inclusion on the public agenda or enactment in any way.

This pre-review and vetting process, conducted by City officials and legal counsel, is paramount to ensuring that all recommendations, proposals, speakers, and resources are free from discrimination, refrain from bestowing unlawful preferential treatment, do not advance sectarian or denominational doctrine, and uphold federal and state law, as well as city codes. Additionally, vetting is necessary to ensure that all recommendations, proposals, speakers, and resources are consistent with Palo Alto's mission and values.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of this meticulous vetting process, and are readily available to advise. It is imperative that all endeavors associated with Palo Alto adhere to federal, state, and local law, as well as our community's values. We have seen firsthand the [detrimental consequences caused when they do not](#).

It is the "Palo Alto way" to ensure the inclusion, belonging, and security of all Palo Alto residents. It is crucial that the City's work does not, directly or indirectly, compromise the inclusion, belonging, and security of anyone in Palo Alto.