



San Mateo
County
Libraries



June 8, 2016

Amy Lyons
Executive Director
John & Marcia Goldman Foundation
101 Second Street, Suite 1625
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Ms. Lyons,

The County of San Mateo, City of East Palo Alto and San Mateo County Libraries would like to formally express our interest in a partnership between the East Palo Alto Youth Arts & Music Center and the East Palo Alto Library. We understand that the site the John & Marcia Goldman Foundation has acquired is a total of three acres and one acre may be open to another community organization for development.

The San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority is a partnership of eleven cities and the County of San Mateo. The City of East Palo Alto is a member of the Library JPA, which is a separate, independent entity with its own Governing Board. Through this unique partnership the current East Palo Alto Library operates out of a County-owned facility located at 2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto. The Library is an important educational and cultural gathering spot in the community, 62% of the population have a library card, and over 170,000 people visit the library annually; however, at 8,000 square feet, the library struggles to effectively serve all the critical needs of the community. Best practices indicate that a community of East Palo Alto's size would require a library three times the current size.

We believe that the addition of the library on the Music & Arts campus could align with the Foundation's goal of providing opportunities for underserved children, youth and their families to participate in a broad range of services and activities to inspire, inform and enhance their lives. Developed recently through a community engagement process, the vision of the Library is to ignite growth through transformative experiences, and it is our mission to strengthen our communities by creating an inclusive sense of place and an environment for learning. Our goal to build a new East Palo Alto Library would add tremendous value to the community and provide impactful shared opportunities for program and space collaborations when partnered with the Youth Music & Arts project.

Public libraries welcome all, serve as a safe haven and a place of refuge, and are a vital part of a community's presence. Libraries are catalysts in community redevelopment and offer venues distinctly suited to the necessities of civic engagement and gatherings. In response to the evolving landscape, libraries are designing spaces, programs and services to fill critical gaps in the community. As a leader in the profession, San Mateo County Libraries is focused on critical community needs such as family engagement, early learning, out of school time, food insecurity and access to technology.

The Library has secured \$2 million in funding and will start working on a community engagement process to develop a needs assessment and building program this summer. The importance of music and art in learning makes the combination of the Youth Arts & Music Center and the East Palo Alto Library an electrifying opportunity. We recognize that moving forward, there are many complexities to overcome, particularly funding and timing, but would appreciate the opportunity to further explore working with you to see if a partnership is viable and mutually beneficial.

Sincerely,



Carole Groom, Chair
San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority



Donna Rutherford, Mayor
City of East Palo Alto

Warren Slocum, President
Board of Supervisors County of San Mateo