

From: **Chris Jackson** <capt.cjackson@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 6, 2025 at 10:34 AM

Subject: Re: issues on fire danger in Palo Alto

Dear Palo Alto City Council and City Manager,

I am a retired Fire Captain / Paramedic with the City of Palo Alto and a resident of South Palo Alto for thirty-five years. At the beginning of my career, I was stationed at Fire Station 4 (FS4) with Fire Engine 64. My crew responded to a structure fire at 823 Driftwood Drive, with an 80-year woman trapped in her back bedroom on her phone calling for help. The Eichler was fully involved with fire and flames extending to the two adjacent homes.

Upon Fire Engine 64 arrival, I pulled the hose lines to the front door to make the rescue and fight the fire. Within that short time of our arrival, the trapped woman left the safety of her bedroom and ran through flames of her home and fell into my arms at the front door. Her entire body was covered with 100% 3rd degree burns. She was still conscious and talking to me, asking me if she would be all right. I assured her that we would do everything we could to take care of her. She immediately was transported by paramedic to the burn center where she was treated for her burns.

The relevance of this story is that the short response time that the strategic positioning and staffing of FS4 enabled the prompt response, subsequent extinguishment, and life sustaining medical interventions. This would not have been possible without Fire Engine 64. Continuing on the threat of such hazards still persists to this day. A large portion of the homes surrounding are Eichler Homes. This construction is prone to explosive fire growth and large conflagrations that quickly spread to adjacent homes. Fire doubles in size every thirty seconds, demonstrating the fact that, second's count.

Palo Alto City Fire Department and all other fire departments were designed to have a fire station with a fire engine to cover fire suppression. The Insurance companies and residents expect that we will have fire protection 24 hours a day with no exceptions. It is a necessity, not an amenity.

The city of Palo Alto has been rated by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) with a fire rating of "2", indicating a high level of fire protection capabilities within the city and its fire department. Improper staffing FS4 and lack of a fire engine could contribute to a risk that this rating be downgraded. Which would result in denial of insurance coverage or an increase in insurance premiums for all Palo Alto residents and businesses.

Residents pay a high cost in property taxes and an already increased fire insurance premium every year to ensure that their homes will be covered and their families are protected. The lack of a properly staffed FS4 and no fire engine jeopardizes this for all Palo Alto residents. It is the responsibility of the Fire Chief, City Manager, and City Council to make sure that the fire service in our community is at its highest quality. The City's around Palo Alto expect our city to reciprocate this same level of service, and without it they may backout, of established mutual aid agreements leaving our city more vulnerable.

With the removal of Fire Engine 64 from South Palo Alto, the City Council is assuming the liability for both our property and families. Ultimately it presents a potentially level of negligence.

In this year's City Budget, we need to replace Fire Engine 64 that was destroyed five years ago in an auto accident on HWY 101. It needs to be staffed with a fulltime captain, operator, and firefighter/paramedic. It is extremely important not to take Fire Engine 64 out of service to cover the paramedic van. This will defeat the purpose of having a fire engine in south Palo Alto. In the past the fire engine was taken out of service to staff the paramedic Van, and Fire Engine 64 could not respond to fires.

If you want a paramedic van at station 4, take the collected patient fees from the patient hospital transports to pay for staffing.

A major problem with cross staffing fire engines and medic vans, is that it causes firefighters to burnout and quit the fire department and seek out another firefighter friendly city. It is a high economic cost for the city of Palo Alto to lose trained firefighters, it elevates excessive overtime, training, and hiring expenditures.

If you have any questions feel free to call or email.

Respectfully,

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