



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Lee Wilcox

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY BUDGET
MEETINGS SUMMARY

DATE: May 25, 2018

Approved

Date

5-25-18

BACKGROUND

As in previous years, the Mayor, City Councilmembers, and the City Manager's Office coordinated Community Budget meetings. This year, five meetings were held throughout the City from May 10th through May 23rd (*Note: Meeting #3, scheduled for Monday, May 14th at the City's Environmental Innovation Center was canceled due to no attendance*). These meetings are an essential part of the City's Budget process to educate the community regarding the City's FY 2018-2019 Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets and solicit input to the Mayor, City Council Members, and City Manager's Office about spending priorities.

The community meetings were opened by each district's Councilmember, followed by budget presentations by Mayor Liccardo and City staff, and ending with a question and answer period. Meeting attendees also were encouraged to go online and participate in the Mayor's "A Balancing Act" website to attempt to balance the City's budget themselves. During the discussion periods, representatives from the City Manager's Office, Police, Housing, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Departments were available to respond to residents' specific questions and suggestions.

ANALYSIS

Though the topics of interest varied from district to district, a number of common themes emerged during the process. These included concerns about: affordable housing and homelessness, public safety, parks and community centers, beautification efforts, economic development and land use, traffic safety and parking, environmental services, and code enforcement. Participant feedback is summarized below:

Affordable Housing and Homeless (4 out of 4 meetings) – The single most asked issue mentioned was "what are the City's plans in relation to housing residents who are currently homeless or who cannot afford to live in the area?" Residents asked whether City is coordinating

with the County, other cities, and Caltrans to come up with solutions and funding to abate encampments and provide resources for homeless individuals; what the plans are for providing affordable housing, especially for veterans and teachers; what the City is doing to more evenly distribute affordable housing projects across districts; and whether the relaxation of “Granny unit” regulations is putting a burden on Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement.

Public Safety (4 out of 4 meetings) - Public safety remains a top priority for the allocation of City funding. Residents continue to ask for additional patrol officers to respond to calls as well as park rangers or an expanded Mounted Patrol Unit to help deal with the homeless encampments along trails and creeks.

Residents also asked about the operation of Fire Stations 33 and 21.

Parks, Community Centers, and Beautification Efforts (4 out of 4 meetings) - Residents asked about funding for either new parks in their district or increased maintenance of their existing parks. There were also several concerns about the delay in dealing with litter complaints made either through the MySanJose app or by calling staff for litter pick up. One resident also asked about the reuse of the Hank Lopez Center.

Economic Development and Land Use (4 out of 4 meetings) – In addition to encouraging funding for district-specific development projects, residents encouraged the City to work with Google as a part of the development around the Diridon Station area to help leverage funding to restore services.

There were several questions related to helping those who are struggling to afford the cost of living in San Jose. Suggestions included the City paying for sidewalk maintenance, training street vendors on how to limit littering, investing in building talent for high paying jobs, and a new assistance program for those whose mortgages are under water.

Traffic Safety and Parking (3 out of 4 meetings) – Residents raised concerns about traffic enforcement to reduce racing /speeding as well as road safety improvements. In addition, they also expressed frustration at the speed of response to tow cars that are parked illegally, both those that are abandoned and those that are blocking people’s driveways.

Environmental Services (2 out of 4 meetings) – Residents had several questions related to the City’s new Clean Energy Program, focusing on the staffing costs of running this program as well as how much participation from residents is required to make the program successful. One resident brought up the cost of water rates and whether the City has taken into account the rapidly increasing cost of water in the budget.

Code Enforcement (2 out of 4 meetings) - Residents noted that there was no new funding set aside for additional Code Enforcement Inspectors, who are a step towards preventing life-threatening problems like fires as well as blight problems like graffiti on private property.

San Jose residents continue to be engaged in the community budget meetings as active participants. In three of the four meetings, residents articulated interest in continued public engagement on the budget, either to learn what programs and projects are short on funding or to continue to monitor how well the City is utilizing our limited resources. Although residents in each Council district focused at times on issues specific to their areas, citywide themes also emerged that affected all residents, namely homelessness and public safety. Generally, the comments and advice given to Mayor Liccardo, Councilmembers, and City representatives were thoughtful, and participants demonstrated a clear desire to engage with the City and help work toward solutions to the issues discussed.

COORDINATION

The Mayor's Office supported the scheduling of dates, selecting locations, providing a meeting format and presentation, and flyer production. Each meeting had a Council Member 'host' based on the central location of the meeting. The Administration coordinated multiple-department participation, language assistance services for those with limited English proficiency, and on-site logistics.

/s/

LEE WILCOX
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Office of the City Manager