
From: Jennifer Keystone <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, March 6, 2021 3:27 PM
To: Clerk
Cc: _BudgetTaskForce
Subject: Public comments

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear San Leandro Budget Task Force,

I just heard that you were meeting today and I wasn't able to be at the Town Hall meeting, but I'm hoping you will include my comments:

I've been a proud resident of San Leandro for over 20 years and my children went through San Leandro public schools. I think we have a wonderful city - but I think it can be infinitely better if we are willing to reimagine how we approach policing and community safety.

I strongly believe that our whole community would be safer and healthier if we took some of the city's general funds that are currently budgeted for the Police Department and reallocated them to social and human services. I am not advocating for doing away with our Police Department - I'm advocating for a more balanced, holistic, practical and effective approach to protecting our community.

Because the Police Department receives more of the General Fund than ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS COMBINED, excluding the Fire Department, every other department suffers a lack of funding (and San Leandro residents suffer a lack of services). And statistically, this overinvestment in the Police Department doesn't pay off - a 66% increase in police-related spending over the past 9 years only resulted in a 13% decrease in overall crime. That's not a very productive investment.

Also, police just aren't trained to deal with every type of situation we're currently relying on them for - and as has become horrifyingly clear, the larger racial issues in our country play out every day in police discrimination against and brutality of black and brown people.

I imagine a San Leandro in which all community members have a roof over their heads, access to equitable education and health care, as well as skills, knowledge and access to jobs. I imagine a San Leandro in which police walk neighborhood beats again and have personal relationships with the residents living there, and when necessary, they protect us from violence and property crime. And I imagine a San Leandro in which we have a reliable corps of trained social workers and other professionals who have the resources they need to respond to mental health-related crises, so they can deescalate tense situations and get the people involved the help they need to be healthy, productive members of our community.

But the only way we can move toward this healthier, safer, more equitable vision of San Leandro is to place it as THE guiding principle in all of our personal and governmental decisions. We must put our General Fund dollars where our values are: Reallocate funds so that all of our currently anemic departments, like the Social and Human Services Departments, can do the important work necessary to help transform our community

from one of fearing one another and over-relying on police to one in which each one of us has ample opportunities and resources to make a living wage and live healthily and in harmony with one another.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jennifer Keystone

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From: Stephen Michael Tow <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, March 7, 2021 12:20 AM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; Clerk
Cc: Cutter, Pauline; Ballew, Pete; Azevedo, Bryan; Aguilar Jr, Victor; Simon, Fred; Lopez, Corina; Richard Pio Roda; Torres, Luis; Robustelli, Fran; Engelbart, Eric; Liao, Thomas; Cooke, Keith; Perry, Jessica; Bowman, Katie; Sargent, Maryann; Mogensen, Andrew; Hsieh, Susan; Warmerdam, Liz; Sanftner, Paul; Batalla, Tony; Sherwood, Bill; Pollart, Debbie; Dong, Jeanette; Mallon, Theresa; Gonzales, Erwin; Criswell, Susan; Irodriguez@sanleandro.org; morgan@downtownsanleandro.com; Levenson, Susan; kim@bgcsl.org; Knox, Jamie
Subject: Public Comments: Community Advisory Budget Task Force Townhall
Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Evening Community Advisory Budget Task Force Members,

This email is being sent as promised to provide you with copies of my prepared comments that were discussed at the townhall event on Saturday, March 6, 2021. For the convenience and reference of city staff who were present and/or involved in your work, I have CC'd them on this email, as well as our City Council members.

Please ensure my written comments are added to the record along with any notes of my verbal comments from the townhall. I know that in some cases I covered a lot of ground relatively quickly and I want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take more time reviewing them. They are ordered in the same sequence as they appeared on the agenda posted at San Leandro Meeting Central.

If you have any follow up questions or would like more specific information, please feel free to reach out to me. Otherwise, thank you again for your time, attention, consideration, and most of all for your service on this task force.

Community Priorities

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. When I think of community priorities, I inevitably think of what are our shared values, what are our shared goals, what are our shared hopes? These are mine:

Equity in the allocation of our public resources and public services that particularly address historically marginalized groups and historically unfunded or underfunded social programs in order to ensure a fair and just San Leandro. Equity is the heart of how we create a vibrant, flourishing community because equitable systems of government are the only cure to bias, prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry.

Transparency in the conduct of the people's business that proactively provides our residents with a jargon-free plain language understanding of actions taken or planned (including contract and salary negotiations), the various resources that are available for those in need, ongoing civic outreach and education on the workings of our local government using a multifaceted distribution network, as well as the removal of accessibility barriers that allow for the full participation and engagement in city business.

Accountability that holds our elected officials, government agencies, and public employees responsible for their

behavior within their professional capacity. This must include both truth and justice, for neither can exist without the other. But to be successful, there must be consequences when a violation occurs. Further, we must avoid even the appearance of impropriety by rebuilding a robust system of checks and balances that impedes any individual from taking the opportunity to shirk their legal, ethical, or moral obligations.

Sustainability that supports environmental conservation and climate-friendly infrastructure while considering both our short-term needs and long-term issues. Inherent in this must be reimagining public safety that does not rely predominantly on violence; reducing homelessness, hunger, and poverty through targeted aid, living wages, promoting entrepreneurship, creating affordable housing, and other mechanisms; as well as addressing mental and physical health disparities, including domestic violence and substance addiction.

Effective efficiency that uses data-driven decision-making, evidence-based practices, and factual findings. We must find a way to do the right things and do them in the right ways. By necessity this will require leveraging technological advances and combining them with lived experience in order to craft creative innovative solutions to the problems plaguing our city. This also means discarding shibboleths of yearning for how things used to be, conducting business as usual that favors a wasteful status quo, and so-called silent majorities represented by privileged individuals.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Budget Balancing Strategies

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here are my budget balancing strategies:

We need a dedicated team of research analysts that use best practices in data science to evaluate department workloads tied to our funding mechanisms. If findings do not show successful meetings of objective goals despite increased fiscal and logistical support over a probationary period, then that department will face budget cuts.

We also need a dedicated team of grant specialists whose expertise is in finding and securing alternative sources of funding for local governments. There is so much cash available for pilot projects, promising programs, and municipalities in need. Without this, we will inevitably leave money on the table that would otherwise go to supporting necessary community improvements because our existing staff are not trained in this specific kind of work and cannot be expected to be either.

We need to restructure our local taxes so that they are progressive, as well as reasonably distributed given our region's exorbitant cost-of-living and increasing income inequality. We cannot expect to balance our budget on the backs of those barely scraping by, living paycheck to paycheck. Rather, we need to ensure that those benefiting the most from the economic and leisure opportunities in our city are paying their fair share to our community that makes those opportunities possible. There are a number of mechanisms for establishing a progressive tax system that will protect us from the volatility of a predominantly sales tax funding base, utilize creative ways of getting more out of property taxes without inhibiting affordable housing or middle-class home ownership, as well as allow more money to stay in San Leandro. I highly recommend reading this policy paper from 2015 by the National Municipal Policy Network at https://localprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Municipal-Revenue_CPD_040815.pdf.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Reallocation of the \$1.7 Million

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here is what I advocate we do with the \$1.7 million dollars. Before I get into that however, I want to make it clear that this money was not a reduction of our police budget. It was a decision not to increase it beyond the approximately \$42 million they already receive. Here is my proposal for the use of this money: use it to pay for the navigation center that

we desperately need to help our residents suffering from homelessness, mental illness, and substance addiction. Indeed, if SLPD intends on following through with its threat to cut off support for the Homeless Compact to spite our city for not giving them more than the 1/3rd of our general fund revenues they receive already, then let's use that money to pick up the slack they're leaving us with.

As shown by city staff presentations and work done by a coalition of residents, we could fully fund the most ambitious proposal for a navigation center. This would connect people to resources such as housing, healthcare, and jobs that will reduce crime and blight. This would reduce the need for expensive overpolicing while simultaneously freeing up even more funding for even more social services that will address services gaps for youth, seniors, LGBTQ+ individuals, BIPOC, and minimum wage workers.

Let's take this chance to invest in our values as a city by putting this money to immediate use on proven solutions to the immediate problems we're facing.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Strategies for Long Term Fiscal Stability

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here are my strategies for creating long term fiscal stability:

We need to get a handle on our pension liabilities. This is a problem that has existed for decades, growing into a cost that consumes our budget nearly entirely. However, budget policy experts have already told us how to resolve this issue. It starts with gradually increasing contribution rates for both the city and city employees while simultaneously reducing SLPD salaries, which account for about 50% of our entire payroll budget, until they reach parity with other city departments. This would be followed by making careful changes to restrict or end double-dipping and spiking practices for those who are reaching retirement. After that we need to moderately scale back some benefits for city employees in the highest cost positions, such as our C-suite and department heads, without cutting salaries or defined-pension plans in order to retain a highly-skilled workforce.

Lastly, we need to begin using long-term financial plans similar to those used in San Francisco, San Jose, and San Diego. I'm quoting Pew Charitable Trusts, a leader in nonpartisan, evidence-based analysis for modern challenges like those facing our city budget. "Creating such a plan and making it public gives residents, businesses, the municipal bond market, the state, and other branches of city government the opportunity to understand and respond to local budget-makers' expectations. Short-sighted solutions that may go unnoticed in a one-year budget may be exposed in the later years of a multiyear plan ... A multiyear plan does not guarantee that a city will cope with every eventuality. But the aim is not so much to predict the future as to position cities to deal with challenges as they arise. Budgeting experts advise that a regularly updated, transparent, and comprehensive process can help cities address problems before they become critical." [For instance, climate change, wildfires, recessions, etc.] You can find more information on the concrete steps to implement this by reading their article, "How Philadelphia and Other Cities Work to Achieve Fiscal Stability. Budget monitoring and long-term planning are key to financial health" from their ISSUE BRIEF dated November 18, 2020.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Community Engagement / Public Participation in Budget Process

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here are my suggestions on generating productive community engagement and public participation in the budget process:

We need to proactively provide our residents with a jargon-free plain language understanding of all aspects of our financial information, including contract and salary negotiations; substantive discussion of the various revenue and expenditure streams, including non-discretionary ones we rely on; ongoing civic outreach and education on our city's

budget process using a multifaceted distribution network and multimedia materials, particularly data visualizations for number heavy information; as well as the removal of accessibility barriers that allow for the full participation and engagement in city business, such as offering more meetings, townhalls, and direct democracy events.

We also need to adopt a permanent participatory budgeting process that has full discretionary authority over a limited percentage of our discretionary general funds. As we've seen with the CABTF, there are a multitude of benefits from this. I'm quoting the Participatory Budgeting Project located in Oakland.

"Increased civic engagement. Folks learn democracy by doing it. PB is a gateway to more civic engagement that creates paths to lifelong civic engagement. Participants see the tangible results of investing in their community, often inspiring them to become more involved. PB increases engagement in elections, making people at least 7% more likely to vote.

Stronger relationships between residents, government, and community organizations. PB leads to more collaboration between people and government. Participants meet and work directly with elected officials, agency and institution staff, other parts of city government.

Broader political participation, especially from historically marginalized communities. PB is open and accessible to people who have faced historical barriers to participation and voting. This includes young people, formerly incarcerated people, recent immigrants, and others. PBP's model of PB includes adequate resources to reach deeply into communities to ensure that everyone is able to participate.

New community leaders. There are many opportunities for leadership in PB, from joining the Steering Committee to being a facilitator or Budget Delegate. Participants gain valuable skills including public speaking, negotiation, facilitation, (etc). Youth participants especially gain confidence, communication skills, and leadership.

More equitable and effective spending. Public funding is more responsive to expressed public needs. Decision-making is directly by residents, rather than by a small number of officials or "squeaky wheels". Residents offer innovative spending ideas that we would not get otherwise. Often ideas proposed for PB (that don't get funded) are cues for officials that there is a need there, and often some of these projects get funded outside of PB."

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Stephen Michael Tow, (pronouns he/him)

Curriculum vitae at 

We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in the oppression of any person and a denial of their humanity and their right to exist. — paraphrase of Robert James Jr.

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work but neither are you free to abandon it. — Talmud

When facts are reported, they deny the value of the evidence; when the evidence is produced they declare it inconclusive. — City of God, by Saint Augustine of Hippo

Sifting through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way. — Charles Bukowski

From: [Jenna Hewitt King](#)
To: [CityClerk](#); [Cutter, Pauline](#); [Cox, Deborah](#); [Aguilar Jr, Victor](#); [Lopez, Corina](#); [Ballew, Pete](#); [Simon, Fred](#); [Azevedo, Bryan](#); [Warmerdam, Liz](#); [BudgetTaskForce](#)
Cc: justiceforsteventaylor@googlegroups.com
Subject: Public Comment to be Read Aloud at Budget Task Force Meeting 3/10
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:03:11 PM

Please read the below comment on my behalf at the 5:30pm Budget Task Force meeting tonight, March 10th:

Good evening. My name is Jenna Hewitt King and I am commenting this evening to ask that the budget task force consider setting aside funding for the creation and implementation of a mental health/crisis response program in San Leandro. When the city created this task force, the community ask was not to increase the police budget by over \$1 million, but rather to allocate those funds to other community resources that are in need. Along with police oversight, the creation of a crisis response program that is not connected to the police should be a top priority. Unlike other cities, San Leandro does not have mental or behavioral health services that are city regulated or funded. Rather, we rely on county services and the police. We all watched as our city failed Steven Taylor on April 18, 2020 by murdering him within 40 seconds in the midst of a mental health crisis. A community based crisis response program that removes armed officers from mental health and other crises could be transformative for San Leandro, and we need funding to make it happen. I strongly urge the task force to commit to setting aside some of the money taken from the police for the implementation of a crisis response program in San Leandro. Thank you for your time.

--

Jenna Hewitt King, M.Ed
Educator and Yoga Teacher

"If you are free, you need to free somebody else" -Toni Morrison

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From: [Shayda Shahfari](#)
To: [BudgetTaskForce](#); [Warmerdam, Liz](#)
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment to Be Read Aloud During Budget Taskforce Meeting on 3/10
Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 5:11:12 PM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Shayda Shahfari <[REDACTED]>
Date: March 9, 2021 at 5:07:18 PM PST
To: cityclerk@sanleandro.org, pcutter@sanleandro.org, dcox@sanleandro.org, vaguilar@sanleandro.org, clopez@sanleandro.org, pballew@sanleandro.org, fsimon@sanleandro.org, bazevedo@sanleandro.org,
Subject: Public Comment to Be Read Aloud During Budget Taskforce Meeting on 3/10

Hello, my name is Shayda Shahfari. I would like to encourage the task force to set aside money that could go towards a crisis response program for the city of San Leandro. As we have seen with the tragic murder of Steven Taylor, this community cannot trust police to be the primary responders to situations involving mental health crises. This could save so many lives. I ask that you consider this request and take into account the members of your community asking for the implementation of a program like this.

Thank you.

Shayda

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From: [Whitney Walker](#)
To: [BudgetTaskForce](#)
Cc: [Clerk; Warmerdam, Liz](#)
Subject: Public Comment to be Read Aloud at Budget Task Force Meeting
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:23:27 PM

My name is Whitney Walker and I'm a 20 year resident of district 5. As a parent of two teenagers on the autism spectrum who are becoming young adults in the middle of a global pandemic, I worry about mental health all the time and I know that I would not feel safe calling the police if they needed help. We hear too many stories of police responding to these delicate situations with guns drawn, as they did with Steven Taylor, who was suffering from a mental health crisis when he was murdered in a San Leandro Walmart by SLPD Officer Jason Fletcher on April 18, 2020. We know that [people with untreated mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed by police](#). We also know that [African Americans are 2.5 times more likely](#) to be killed by police than white people. So I'd like to amend my previous comments from the town hall meeting on 3/6 for the meeting on 3/10.

It is vitally important that this city moves forward with a plan to support people in crises in our community without the police present. I want to ask this task force to set aside some of the money that was reallocated away from the proposed increase to the police budget and instead use it to implement a crisis response program in San Leandro. I previously stated that I felt that money should go to the new Steven Taylor navigation center, and I still think it should, but I also see this proposal as equally worthy. I hope that the task force will be transparent with these decisions and that you will continue to engage the community in this process.

Thank you,
Whitney

Whitney Walker
pronouns: she/her/hers

On Sat, Mar 6, 2021 at 11:02 AM Whitney Walker <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Yes please. Thank you.

Whitney Walker
(She/her/hers)
Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 6, 2021, at 10:37 AM, Warmerdam, Liz
<LWarmerdam@sanleandro.org> wrote:

Also, we can read your comments this coming Wednesday at the Budget

From: Stephen Michael Tow [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:39 PM
To: Clerk
Cc: Cutter, Pauline; Ballew, Pete; Azevedo, Bryan; Aguilar Jr, Victor; Simon, Fred; Lopez, Corina; Richard Pío Roda; Torres, Luis; Robustelli, Fran; Cox, Deborah; _BudgetTaskForce
Subject: FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: ITEMS 2, 4.A, 4.B, 5.A, and 5.B

Good afternoon,

Below you will find my public comments regarding agenda items 2, 4.A, 4.B, 5.A, and 5.B to be read aloud during the Community Advisory Budget Task Force's meeting on March 10, 2021.

Agenda Item 2

My name is Stephen Michael Tow, a resident of District 1, and I have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. I would like to use this brief time to express my admiration and appreciation towards the members of this task force for their work in the recent townhall. Speaking only for myself, it was a uniquely wonderful experience that provided a chance to feel not only involved in the work of our budget process, but to feel heard about what our city should be investing in. I hope to see many more events like this in the future as part of a regular process of civic engagement with our city council, city departments, boards, commissions, and similar groups serving our community.

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments.

Agenda Item 4.A

My name is Stephen Michael Tow, a resident of District 1, and I have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. I want to highlight something important when you discuss the comments received during the townhall. Participation decreased sharply after the first session, leaving only a few prominent voices left at the end. While this allowed for a deeper dive into each remaining participant's comments, it did not capture as wide a breadth of the community. I believe that barriers of accessibility should be considered before drawing conclusions whether given speakers represent or do not represent a majority of the community. Instead, keep your focus on the substance of what was said and what facts, best practices, or other things may support or not support them. Further, I believe the task force received written comments about continuing our overinvestment in policing that will be formulaic and fear-based without any specific rationale supported by concrete evidence. I urge you to give them little weight as they only serve to show how resistant a subset of our city's residents are to the changing nature of San Leandro into a modern municipality amongst a major metropolitan region.

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments.

Agenda Item 4.B

My name is Stephen Michael Tow, a resident of District 1, and I have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. I strongly support the ongoing use of a participatory budgeting process and urge the task force to request that this become a feature of our city government as well as our city budgeting process. While there are a multitude of benefits you may have experienced personally in your time serving on this task force, I would like to briefly quote the Participatory Budgeting Project located nextdoor in Oakland: "Increased civic engagement. Stronger relationships between residents, government, and community organizations. Broader political participation, especially from historically marginalized

communities. New community leaders. More equitable and effective spending." Notably, these benefits will increase as we continue to use participatory budgeting until it has become completely normalized in our city and a system has been created that provides the ongoing civic education and outreach we need for our residents.

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments.

Agenda Item 5.A

My name is Stephen Michael Tow, a resident of District 1, and I have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Among the recommendations that the task force considers, I urge you to include a mechanism for funding the creation and implementation of a mental health/crisis response program in San Leandro. When the city created this task force, the community asked that we not increase the police budget any further, but rather allocate some of their budget to other community resources that police are not qualified to provide and that we desperately need.

The creation of this type of program must be a top priority. Unlike most other cities, particularly in our region, San Leandro does not have mental or behavioral health services that are city regulated or funded. Rather, we rely on county services and the police. Unfortunately, we have all witnessed the failures of our expectations when we rely solely on them. The most tragic was when we watched our city fail Steven Taylor on April 18, 2020, when he was murdered within 40 seconds of an SLPD response to a mental health crisis he was experiencing.

A community based crisis response program that removes armed officers from mental health and other crises would be transformative, innovative, and cost-effective, as we have seen in Eugene, Denver, BART, and now recently in Oakland. We just need funding to make it happen.

I ask that the task force commit to reallocating some of the resources used on policing and putting them towards the implementation of a similarly structured crisis response team in San Leandro, so that we no longer need to rely on the CATT program's flawed process of retaining police as the first point of contact for incidents they should not and are not qualified to handle. This program would be in addition to the existing plans for the building of a navigation center in Steven Taylor's name.

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments.

Agenda Item 5.B

My name is Stephen Michael Tow, a resident of District 1, and I have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Regarding the issue of community engagement, I believe that the lessons learned from this task force should serve as a model for the implementation of ongoing civic education and outreach in our city. Specifically, we need to proactively provide our residents with a jargon-free plain language understanding of all aspects of our financial information, including contract and salary negotiations; substantive discussion of the various revenue and expenditure streams, including non-discretionary ones we rely on; ongoing civic engagement on our city's budget and related governmental processes using a multifaceted distribution network and multimedia materials, particularly data visualizations for number heavy information; as well as the removal of accessibility barriers that allow for the full and fair participation in city business, including offering more meetings, townhalls, and other direct democracy events.

Regarding the issue of revenue enhancement measures, we need to take a sobering look at the volatility of relying on a predominantly sales tax based economy. As we learned from the pandemic, our city budget can be virtually wiped out in the event of a natural disaster (such as earthquakes and wildfires), recessions, and/or depressions. We need to cultivate more diverse revenue streams, including progressive taxes, particularly on real estate. We need to increase the in lieu fees charged to developers who do not offer affordable housing. We need to increase the share of taxes and fees charged to large businesses that do not pay their employees enough money to be able to live and work in San Leandro. We need to create a dedicated grant office that specializes in securing alternative funding sources from the state, the federal government, non-profits, and other organizations. We need to rely on data-driven decision making using

evidence-based practices that include workload measurements and objective goals which are tied directly to funding decisions, particularly for our city departments, salaries for executive staff, as well as contract negotiations with police and fire.

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments.

Stephen Michael Tow, (pronouns he/him)

Curriculum vitae at [REDACTED]

We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in the oppression of any person and a denial of their humanity and their right to exist. — paraphrase of Robert James Jr.

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work but neither are you free to abandon it. — Talmud

When facts are reported, they deny the value of the evidence; when the evidence is produced they declare it inconclusive. — City of God, by Saint Augustine of Hippo

Sifting through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way. — Charles Bukowski

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From: Nora Trentacoste [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:37 PM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; _CityClerk
Subject: Public Comment to be Read Aloud at Budget Task Force Meeting.

I'm glad to know that the Budget Task Force is meeting in San Leandro.

It is time for the residents to have a voice in how our tax dollars are being used for the betterment of the community.

When buying a home in this community 10 years ago, I took our higher taxes into account, but was not deterred, as I hoped this would be felt in greater support for community services.

I was delighted to be able to go to the library on Sundays.

I am less delighted to see a very large portion of the city budget going to San Leandro PD with limited oversight and accountability.

The formation of a Police Review body is an immediate need that should be addressed in terms of police activity.

The other immediate need is allocating that \$1.7 million where it will have the most impact.

The world, the nation, and our community are feeling the impact not just of the COVID crisis, but of the accompanying economic situation.

One way that this is felt is in much greater need for services by our community members.

Other residents have mentioned non-police models for crisis intervention such as the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, OR.

That \$1.7 million can be used to create some non police community services for people in crisis.

Why do we have no trained social workers in this city?

Why do we have very limited volunteer only resources for unsheltered and mentally ill residents?

Regardless of the question, the \$1.7 million can be part of the answer.

We don't need to reinvent the wheel.

I strongly urge the budget task force to look at economically feasible models for crisis intervention that are making a difference in other cities.

Let's take social work off the list of duties for SLPD and make choices about bringing qualified professionals to attend to unsheltered and mentally ill residents in crisis.

The models in other cities show this is a wise path of action with concrete benefits.

Rarely do we have as clear cut of a choice to do something that will not only save money, but save lives.

Now is the chance to make a concrete change that will actually make San Leandro into a city where kindness matters.

Nora Trentacoste

she/her

From: Minky Lew <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:55 PM
To: _CityClerk
Cc: _BudgetTaskForce
Subject: Public Comment to be Read Aloud at Budget Task Force Meeting

My name is Minky Lew and I am a San Leandro Resident, Tax Payer and Property Tax Payer.

As a resident of San Leandro and Queer Person of Color, I demand San Leandro implement a program to respond to and support people in crisis, without police presenece. Police are not properly trained and should not be the ones to call during a mental health crisis. Response should be non-punitive and should not criminalize those suffering from a mental lapse. Steven Taylor and Angelo Quinto, like so many others, would still be alive with the proper assessment, intervention and de-escalation from a mental health professional. Family members, especially those of color, desperately need someone to call in a time of crisis and not feel like they will be killing their son, or daughter, or brother by making that call for help. We demand a humane alternative to criminalizing people in need of mental health care. Our community members who suffer from mental illness deserve protection too.

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[REDACTED]

From: Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:17 PM
To: Reside, Rachel; Hsieh, Susan; Miguel, Leticia
Subject: FW: Task Force Meeting - Please Read Out Loud

Kelly

Deputy City Clerk | CITY OF SAN LEANDRO 
Ph: 510-577-3366

From: SL Resident <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 11:34 AM
To: Clerk <clerk@sanleandro.org>
Subject: Task Force Meeting - Please Read Out Loud

Hello task force members,

First I would like to thank you all for your work on this task force. I want to voice my opposition for cutting the police budget. These men and women protect our community every single day. The police budget only represents 22% of the \$190 million dollar city budget.

It is my understanding that police budgets are the largest chunks of most cities' budgets, and I do not see why it should be different here. \$1.7 million was already cut from the police budget last summer which is approximately a 4% cut. Do we really need to cut more?

If departments have to make cuts, let's make it fair and cut other departments by 4% first.

Thank you,

Kim

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[REDACTED]

From: Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:15 PM
To: Reside, Rachel
Cc: Miguel, Leticia; Hsieh, Susan
Subject: FW: Budget task force.

Kelly

Deputy City Clerk | CITY OF SAN LEANDRO 
Ph: 510-577-3366

From: Addie Kitchen <addie.livingbread@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 09, 2021 4:55 PM
To: Clerk <clerk@sanleandro.org>
Subject: Budget task force.

Please read aloud during public comments. Goodeve ing. My name is Addie Kitchen. The grandmother of Steven Taylor murdered by Jason Fletcher a San Leandro police officer during a mental health crises,40 seconds thats how long it took for Fletcher to murder him. There was no help afforded him in this crises. He isn't the first to be murdered by SLPD during a crises. Anthony Gomez was in a mental health crises when he was.murdered, with no one to help him How many more have to die at the hands of law enforcement for the city to do something? Oakland has a Mental Health First program,the city should at least look into. Take some of that 1.7mil. invest into a program that would work without law enforcement. I believe it could and would work. Lets not have another Steven Taylor or Anthony Gomez,I know there are others to many to name before something is done. Thank you. Addie Kitchen [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:18 PM
To: Reside, Rachel
Cc: Hsieh, Susan; Miguel, Leticia
Subject: FW: Budget Taskforce please read out loud

Kelly
Deputy City Clerk | CITY OF SAN LEANDRO
Ph: 510-577-3366

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Thompson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:00 PM
To: Clerk <clerk@sanleandro.org>
Subject: Budget Taskforce please read out loud

Good evening,

I am a 20 year resident of district 2. I am concerned after listening to the recordings of previous meetings the direction many of the task force members are heading.

As an outsider it appears there is an axe to grind with San Leandro Pd. To me it appears cutting their budget to fund other services is taking a priority over actually resolving budget issues.

Social programs are great, but all cost money. The city has an \$8.5 million dollar deficit. I mostly hear adding new services, but do not hear revenue generating ideas, very few in fact.

We can not find everything on the backs of the police department. Cuts will affect services, as evident in Oakland cutting it's Sideshow task force. For different sideshows in one night in Oakland? Is that what we have to look forward to in San Leandro?

Mike Thompson

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[REDACTED]

From: Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:16 PM
To: Reside, Rachel; Hsieh, Susan; Miguel, Leticia
Subject: FW: Public comment for budget task force meeting tonight. Please read aloud

Kelly
Deputy City Clerk | CITY OF SAN LEANDRO
Ph: 510-577-3366

-----Original Message-----

From: Debbie Town <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 11:10 AM
To: Clerk <clerk@sanleandro.org>
Subject: Public comment for budget task force meeting tonight. Please read aloud

To Whom it May Concern:

I am extremely concerned about the current push to further defund the police by many activists that sit on the budget task force. While I believe that changes need to be made in our police department, taking more funds from the police budget is not the way to do it. I believe that by further defunding the police, the task force will be crippling our police department rather than making the department better. I am also concerned that the activists sitting on this task force are just pushing their own agendas instead of doing what is best for the entire community. There is an increase in crime throughout San Leandro and we need MORE qualified police officers on duty, not less. Every member of this task force was picked to represent their district, not to just represent themselves alone. Please speak for all of us and make good decisions for our city.

Thank you
Concerned Citizen

Sent from my iPhone

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From: Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:18 PM
To: Reside, Rachel
Cc: Hsieh, Susan; Miguel, Leticia
Subject: FW: BTF-Please read aloud

Kelly

Deputy City Clerk | CITY OF SAN LEANDRO 
Ph: 510-577-3366

From: Lawrence Andrews <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 2:37 PM
To: Clerk <clerk@sanleandro.org>
Subject: BTF-Please read aloud

Good evening Budget Task Force Members,

I am writing tonight to ask you to consider if cutting the police budget to fund social programs or services is the right move.

I agree that we do need to address issues facing our city, and there is a need to provide services, but to what extent? At what point should the burden be the responsibility of the County, State, and Federal government, all of which have larger coffers than our city.

We are now in a soft launch with the CATTs program, which many called for all summer long at city council meetings, funded mainly by the county. Yet that isn't good enough? We now want to explore building our own program?

A USA Today poll last week showed that less than 1 in 5 people polled support Defunding or Budget Cuts to police. Now I am sure this poll will be discounted by some task force members, just like social media polls, the fact that we have had more emails against defunding than supporting it, city surveys, polling by independent third-party companies prior to ballot measures, and even voter data from actual elections like measure HH, either because it does not fit your narrative, or because you feel that since you were appointed you represent the community as stated by a task force member in a prior meeting.

Last weekend's public town hall yielded only a few dozen residents, so that can hardly be indicative of the desires of the community with over 88,000 residents in San Leandro. I urge you to consider your actions as you move forward with your recommendations. History shows that

crime increases during a recession, data shows that crime is regional, people will not shop in a city where they do not feel safe, and businesses will not move into a city with crime issues, resulting in less revenue for our city.

While you may not like the data you have available against defunding, there is not any data available at this time more overwhelming supporting defunding. Follow your owns statements about data, and let the data be your guide.

Thank you for your time.

Lawrence Andrews

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[REDACTED]

From: Katie Woodruff [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:09 PM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; _CityClerk
Subject: Public comment to be read aloud at budget task force mtg tonight

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear budget task force members,

Thank you for your service to our city by serving on this budget task force. I know that a budget reflects our values, and I appreciate all that you are doing to consider public input as you strive to fund the areas our community most values. I am sorry that I can't attend this meeting in person but wanted to express my views.

I have been a homeowner in San Leandro since 2005. I love our community and our family has been eager users of all our wonderful public services like the library, recreation programs and summer camps, and our parks. I very much want our city to continue to invest in these programs, as well as affordable housing, great public schools, and supporting unique small businesses, so San Leandro can continue to grow as a wonderful city in which to live and work.

In recent years I have been increasingly concerned about the expense of our police force compared to the little return we appear to be getting for this investment. The incidents of people killed or hurt at the hands of San Leandro police officers in the last year have only strengthened this concern. I strongly support the idea of shifting funds from the police budget to invest in other community services instead.

In particular I very much support the establishment of a crisis response team to help people in mental health or substance use crisis, without police present. It is clear to me that if we had such a team operating, Stephen Tyler would still be alive. I want San Leandro to be, and to be known as, a city that works to address its shortcomings and invests in the success of all its community members.

Thank you,
Katie Woodruff
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: Pam Wool <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 5:25 PM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; _CityClerk
Subject: Public Comment to be Read Aloud at Budget Task Force Meeting

Dear Budget Task Force,

My name is Pam Wool and I have been a resident of San Leandro for over 20 years and have raised my two daughters here. I love living here and I know we can do better in spending our money in a manner that values all of our community members, especially those who have not felt safe in San Leandro.

I want to say thank you for the Town Hall on March 6th. I really appreciate your time and effort in creating that opportunity for community members to speak with you and share our ideas.

I am writing to urge the Task Force to include in its recommendations funds for the creation of a city mental health/crisis response program in San Leandro. Our reliance on the CATT program is not sufficient, as the first responders are still armed police officers. We need a system that is not part of SLPD to respond to these calls. Police are not social workers or therapists and should not be put in the position to respond to situations for which they are not trained. As we have seen with Steven Taylor's murder, the results can be tragic. I urge you to take this opportunity to show true leadership and create real and lasting change for our city.

I also urge you to recommend a system for community input in the budget process to be ongoing and does not end when this Task Force submits its recommendations to the City Council.

Thank you.

--

Pamela Wool (she/her)

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From: [Holly Hayes](#)
To: [_BudgetTaskForce](#); [_CityClerk](#)
Subject: Budget Task Force
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 9:31:44 PM

I want to state my support for reallocation of funds and mission from SLPD to new organizations whose missions are dealing with homelessness, mental health, and domestic abuse. I think these issues are better addressed by trained social workers, crisis intervention, and other mental health professionals.

I also think that more funds need to be allocated toward de-escalation training. Police seem to draw their weapon well before there is an imminent threat to life. This was certainly true from my viewing of the Stephen Taylor murder and has been also viewed across the country in the numerous shootings of black bodies. I don't know how to untrain racial profiling, but I'm sure someone does. This should be a priority educational focus for police officers.

I value the police to protect the safety of the community focusing on criminality and particularly violent crimes and criminal networks.

I have always had very positive interactions with the police. I want for people of all colors to have as positive an experience as I have had as a white woman.

Thank you, Holly Hayes

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To: [_BudgetTaskForce](#); [_CityClerk](#)
Subject: Budget Task Force
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From: Jennifer Keystone <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, March 6, 2021 3:27 PM
To: Clerk
Cc: _BudgetTaskForce
Subject: Public comments

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear San Leandro Budget Task Force,

I just heard that you were meeting today and I wasn't able to be at the Town Hall meeting, but I'm hoping you will include my comments:

I've been a proud resident of San Leandro for over 20 years and my children went through San Leandro public schools. I think we have a wonderful city - but I think it can be infinitely better if we are willing to reimagine how we approach policing and community safety.

I strongly believe that our whole community would be safer and healthier if we took some of the city's general funds that are currently budgeted for the Police Department and reallocated them to social and human services. I am not advocating for doing away with our Police Department - I'm advocating for a more balanced, holistic, practical and effective approach to protecting our community.

Because the Police Department receives more of the General Fund than ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS COMBINED, excluding the Fire Department, every other department suffers a lack of funding (and San Leandro residents suffer a lack of services). And statistically, this overinvestment in the Police Department doesn't pay off - a 66% increase in police-related spending over the past 9 years only resulted in a 13% decrease in overall crime. That's not a very productive investment.

Also, police just aren't trained to deal with every type of situation we're currently relying on them for - and as has become horrifyingly clear, the larger racial issues in our country play out every day in police discrimination against and brutality of black and brown people.

I imagine a San Leandro in which all community members have a roof over their heads, access to equitable education and health care, as well as skills, knowledge and access to jobs. I imagine a San Leandro in which police walk neighborhood beats again and have personal relationships with the residents living there, and when necessary, they protect us from violence and property crime. And I imagine a San Leandro in which we have a reliable corps of trained social workers and other professionals who have the resources they need to respond to mental health-related crises, so they can deescalate tense situations and get the people involved the help they need to be healthy, productive members of our community.

But the only way we can move toward this healthier, safer, more equitable vision of San Leandro is to place it as THE guiding principle in all of our personal and governmental decisions. We must put our General Fund dollars where our values are: Reallocate funds so that all of our currently anemic departments, like the Social and Human Services Departments, can do the important work necessary to help transform our community

from one of fearing one another and over-relying on police to one in which each one of us has ample opportunities and resources to make a living wage and live healthily and in harmony with one another.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jennifer Keystone

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From: Stephen Michael Tow <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, March 7, 2021 12:20 AM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; Clerk
Cc: Cutter, Pauline; Ballew, Pete; Azevedo, Bryan; Aguilar Jr, Victor; Simon, Fred; Lopez, Corina; Richard Pío Roda; Torres, Luis; Robustelli, Fran; Engelbart, Eric; Liao, Thomas; Cooke, Keith; Perry, Jessica; Bowman, Katie; Sargent, Maryann; Mogensen, Andrew; Hsieh, Susan; Warmerdam, Liz; Sanftner, Paul; Batalla, Tony; Sherwood, Bill; Pollart, Debbie; Dong, Jeanette; Mallon, Theresa; Gonzales, Erwin; Criswell, Susan; Irodriguez@sanleandro.org; morgan@downtownsanleandro.com; Levenson, Susan; kim@bgcsl.org; Knox, Jamie
Subject: Public Comments: Community Advisory Budget Task Force Townhall
Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Evening Community Advisory Budget Task Force Members,

This email is being sent as promised to provide you with copies of my prepared comments that were discussed at the townhall event on Saturday, March 6, 2021. For the convenience and reference of city staff who were present and/or involved in your work, I have CC'd them on this email, as well as our City Council members.

Please ensure my written comments are added to the record along with any notes of my verbal comments from the townhall. I know that in some cases I covered a lot of ground relatively quickly and I want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take more time reviewing them. They are ordered in the same sequence as they appeared on the agenda posted at San Leandro Meeting Central.

If you have any follow up questions or would like more specific information, please feel free to reach out to me. Otherwise, thank you again for your time, attention, consideration, and most of all for your service on this task force.

Community Priorities

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. When I think of community priorities, I inevitably think of what are our shared values, what are our shared goals, what are our shared hopes? These are mine:

Equity in the allocation of our public resources and public services that particularly address historically marginalized groups and historically unfunded or underfunded social programs in order to ensure a fair and just San Leandro. Equity is the heart of how we create a vibrant, flourishing community because equitable systems of government are the only cure to bias, prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry.

Transparency in the conduct of the people's business that proactively provides our residents with a jargon-free plain language understanding of actions taken or planned (including contract and salary negotiations), the various resources that are available for those in need, ongoing civic outreach and education on the workings of our local government using a multifaceted distribution network, as well as the removal of accessibility barriers that allow for the full participation and engagement in city business.

Accountability that holds our elected officials, government agencies, and public employees responsible for their

behavior within their professional capacity. This must include both truth and justice, for neither can exist without the other. But to be successful, there must be consequences when a violation occurs. Further, we must avoid even the appearance of impropriety by rebuilding a robust system of checks and balances that impedes any individual from taking the opportunity to shirk their legal, ethical, or moral obligations.

Sustainability that supports environmental conservation and climate-friendly infrastructure while considering both our short-term needs and long-term issues. Inherent in this must be reimagining public safety that does not rely predominantly on violence; reducing homelessness, hunger, and poverty through targeted aid, living wages, promoting entrepreneurship, creating affordable housing, and other mechanisms; as well as addressing mental and physical health disparities, including domestic violence and substance addiction.

Effective efficiency that uses data-driven decision-making, evidence-based practices, and factual findings. We must find a way to do the right things and do them in the right ways. By necessity this will require leveraging technological advances and combining them with lived experience in order to craft creative innovative solutions to the problems plaguing our city. This also means discarding shibboleths of yearning for how things used to be, conducting business as usual that favors a wasteful status quo, and so-called silent majorities represented by privileged individuals.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Budget Balancing Strategies

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here are my budget balancing strategies:

We need a dedicated team of research analysts that use best practices in data science to evaluate department workloads tied to our funding mechanisms. If findings do not show successful meetings of objective goals despite increased fiscal and logistical support over a probationary period, then that department will face budget cuts.

We also need a dedicated team of grant specialists whose expertise is in finding and securing alternative sources of funding for local governments. There is so much cash available for pilot projects, promising programs, and municipalities in need. Without this, we will inevitably leave money on the table that would otherwise go to supporting necessary community improvements because our existing staff are not trained in this specific kind of work and cannot be expected to be either.

We need to restructure our local taxes so that they are progressive, as well as reasonably distributed given our region's exorbitant cost-of-living and increasing income inequality. We cannot expect to balance our budget on the backs of those barely scraping by, living paycheck to paycheck. Rather, we need to ensure that those benefiting the most from the economic and leisure opportunities in our city are paying their fair share to our community that makes those opportunities possible. There are a number of mechanisms for establishing a progressive tax system that will protect us from the volatility of a predominantly sales tax funding base, utilize creative ways of getting more out of property taxes without inhibiting affordable housing or middle-class home ownership, as well as allow more money to stay in San Leandro. I highly recommend reading this policy paper from 2015 by the National Municipal Policy Network at https://localprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Municipal-Revenue_CPD_040815.pdf.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Reallocation of the \$1.7 Million

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here is what I advocate we do with the \$1.7 million dollars. Before I get into that however, I want to make it clear that this money was not a reduction of our police budget. It was a decision not to increase it beyond the approximately \$42 million they already receive. Here is my proposal for the use of this money: use it to pay for the navigation center that

we desperately need to help our residents suffering from homelessness, mental illness, and substance addiction. Indeed, if SLPD intends on following through with its threat to cut off support for the Homeless Compact to spite our city for not giving them more than the 1/3rd of our general fund revenues they receive already, then let's use that money to pick up the slack they're leaving us with.

As shown by city staff presentations and work done by a coalition of residents, we could fully fund the most ambitious proposal for a navigation center. This would connect people to resources such as housing, healthcare, and jobs that will reduce crime and blight. This would reduce the need for expensive overpolicing while simultaneously freeing up even more funding for even more social services that will address services gaps for youth, seniors, LGBTQ+ individuals, BIPOC, and minimum wage workers.

Let's take this chance to invest in our values as a city by putting this money to immediate use on proven solutions to the immediate problems we're facing.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Strategies for Long Term Fiscal Stability

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here are my strategies for creating long term fiscal stability:

We need to get a handle on our pension liabilities. This is a problem that has existed for decades, growing into a cost that consumes our budget nearly entirely. However, budget policy experts have already told us how to resolve this issue. It starts with gradually increasing contribution rates for both the city and city employees while simultaneously reducing SLPD salaries, which account for about 50% of our entire payroll budget, until they reach parity with other city departments. This would be followed by making careful changes to restrict or end double-dipping and spiking practices for those who are reaching retirement. After that we need to moderately scale back some benefits for city employees in the highest cost positions, such as our C-suite and department heads, without cutting salaries or defined-pension plans in order to retain a highly-skilled workforce.

Lastly, we need to begin using long-term financial plans similar to those used in San Francisco, San Jose, and San Diego. I'm quoting Pew Charitable Trusts, a leader in nonpartisan, evidence-based analysis for modern challenges like those facing our city budget. "Creating such a plan and making it public gives residents, businesses, the municipal bond market, the state, and other branches of city government the opportunity to understand and respond to local budget-makers' expectations. Short-sighted solutions that may go unnoticed in a one-year budget may be exposed in the later years of a multiyear plan ... A multiyear plan does not guarantee that a city will cope with every eventuality. But the aim is not so much to predict the future as to position cities to deal with challenges as they arise. Budgeting experts advise that a regularly updated, transparent, and comprehensive process can help cities address problems before they become critical." [For instance, climate change, wildfires, recessions, etc.] You can find more information on the concrete steps to implement this by reading their article, "How Philadelphia and Other Cities Work to Achieve Fiscal Stability. Budget monitoring and long-term planning are key to financial health" from their ISSUE BRIEF dated November 18, 2020.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Community Engagement / Public Participation in Budget Process

My name is Stephen Michael Tow. I am a resident of District 1 and have lived in San Leandro for almost 6 years. Here are my suggestions on generating productive community engagement and public participation in the budget process:

We need to proactively provide our residents with a jargon-free plain language understanding of all aspects of our financial information, including contract and salary negotiations; substantive discussion of the various revenue and expenditure streams, including non-discretionary ones we rely on; ongoing civic outreach and education on our city's

budget process using a multifaceted distribution network and multimedia materials, particularly data visualizations for number heavy information; as well as the removal of accessibility barriers that allow for the full participation and engagement in city business, such as offering more meetings, townhalls, and direct democracy events.

We also need to adopt a permanent participatory budgeting process that has full discretionary authority over a limited percentage of our discretionary general funds. As we've seen with the CABTF, there are a multitude of benefits from this. I'm quoting the Participatory Budgeting Project located in Oakland.

"Increased civic engagement. Folks learn democracy by doing it. PB is a gateway to more civic engagement that creates paths to lifelong civic engagement. Participants see the tangible results of investing in their community, often inspiring them to become more involved. PB increases engagement in elections, making people at least 7% more likely to vote.

Stronger relationships between residents, government, and community organizations. PB leads to more collaboration between people and government. Participants meet and work directly with elected officials, agency and institution staff, other parts of city government.

Broader political participation, especially from historically marginalized communities. PB is open and accessible to people who have faced historical barriers to participation and voting. This includes young people, formerly incarcerated people, recent immigrants, and others. PBP's model of PB includes adequate resources to reach deeply into communities to ensure that everyone is able to participate.

New community leaders. There are many opportunities for leadership in PB, from joining the Steering Committee to being a facilitator or Budget Delegate. Participants gain valuable skills including public speaking, negotiation, facilitation, (etc). Youth participants especially gain confidence, communication skills, and leadership.

More equitable and effective spending. Public funding is more responsive to expressed public needs. Decision-making is directly by residents, rather than by a small number of officials or "squeaky wheels". Residents offer innovative spending ideas that we would not get otherwise. Often ideas proposed for PB (that don't get funded) are cues for officials that there is a need there, and often some of these projects get funded outside of PB."

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Stephen Michael Tow, (pronouns he/him)

Curriculum vitae at 

We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in the oppression of any person and a denial of their humanity and their right to exist. — paraphrase of Robert James Jr.

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work but neither are you free to abandon it. — Talmud

When facts are reported, they deny the value of the evidence; when the evidence is produced they declare it inconclusive. — City of God, by Saint Augustine of Hippo

Sifting through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way. — Charles Bukowski

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[REDACTED]

From: Pam Wool <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 5:25 PM
To: _BudgetTaskForce; _CityClerk
Subject: Public Comment to be Read Aloud at Budget Task Force Meeting

Dear Budget Task Force,

My name is Pam Wool and I have been a resident of San Leandro for over 20 years and have raised my two daughters here. I love living here and I know we can do better in spending our money in a manner that values all of our community members, especially those who have not felt safe in San Leandro.

I want to say thank you for the Town Hall on March 6th. I really appreciate your time and effort in creating that opportunity for community members to speak with you and share our ideas.

I am writing to urge the Task Force to include in its recommendations funds for the creation of a city mental health/crisis response program in San Leandro. Our reliance on the CATT program is not sufficient, as the first responders are still armed police officers. We need a system that is not part of SLPD to respond to these calls. Police are not social workers or therapists and should not be put in the position to respond to situations for which they are not trained. As we have seen with Steven Taylor's murder, the results can be tragic. I urge you to take this opportunity to show true leadership and create real and lasting change for our city.

I also urge you to recommend a system for community input in the budget process to be ongoing and does not end when this Task Force submits its recommendations to the City Council.

Thank you.

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Pamela Wool (she/her)

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