

June 16, 2020

Honorable Sam Liccardo and Members of the City Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: This Budget Fails to Measure Up to This Moment

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Council Members:

As leaders of 25 community-based organizations, we firmly stand with the tens of thousands of San José residents using their voice to demand change. The Black Lives Matter movement has transformed and uplifted the calls for bold action on a legacy of injustice in our City. The City's proposed budget does not begin to respond to the cries of pain and frustration from your community in this moment. It does not acknowledge the very simple thing that is being said: the system is broken. It does not work for so many of this community, especially Black residents and other residents of color who have been shut out of decisions, services, benefits, and investments for generations.

This budget fails to measure up to this moment.

Measuring up to the moment means this budget must reinvest in communities that have historically been underserved and harmed by systemic racism.

Measuring up to this moment means you must depart from the inequitable budget priorities of the past to reimagine and reallocate resources to advance racial justice.

Measuring up to this moment means redirecting part of the police budget to interventions and partners that specialize in issues like mental health, substance abuse, homelessness, education, and more.

Measuring up to this moment means beginning the hard work of building community trust not with words but with action, with community voices at the table, with transformative solutions, with significant resources.

Measuring up to this moment starts with a real investment in planning for a different future for our City.

While Council referrals and the Mayor's Budget Message speak to the importance of equity, the proposed allocations tell a different story. The Mayor and Council need to throw their full weight and financial support behind creating an Office of Race Equity. The City needs a strong team to provide analysis, training, and capacity to listen to those communities long left out of the process. In building this capacity, the City can lead a meaningful process to redirect policing resources to more effective community-based responses that can uproot the systemic failures of the status quo.

The City must:

- 1) Create and fund an Office of Race Equity (ORE) with adequate staffing, expertise, and authority, commensurate for a city with a \$3 billion budget;
- 2) Devote meaningful time and resources to Government Alliance for Race & Equity (GARE). The City must make a commitment to having all senior City management participate *this* year in the GARE process and expand the capacity for citywide training of staff and elected leaders in the tools derived from that process;
- 3) Develop and conduct robust racial equity analyses of all policy, budgetary, and land use decisions that would include factors like racial and disproportionate impacts of the actions on communities of color, and how the voice of communities impacted by decisions were centered; This process should be completed in time to inform the Mayor's March Budget Messages;
- 4) Empower ORE to work with all City departments to explore, build, and implement meaningful models of centering the voices and experiences of residents of color. The City must engage and share power with those most directly impacted by systemic racism (especially the Black community and those most impacted by COVID-19), by regularly engaging and meeting residents where they are at;
- 5) Equip ORE with funding and tools to support the collection, reporting, and analysis of race data to assist all departments in developing policies, allocating resources, and measuring efficacy of efforts to tackle racial disparities and their root causes at system levels; and
- 6) Develop a process to redirect resources away from policing toward other community-based solutions. This effort needs to incorporate and center the voices of individuals traditionally left out of our decision making, in partnership with diverse community-based organizations that have long served and represented the voices of those community members harmed by systemic racism.

The legitimate pain that is felt in the cries of our community call on all of us to rethink what could a community look like if we all lived up to this moment to reimagine our City as an equitable one that was no longer confined by the history and structures of racism.

Sincerely,

Alison Brunner, CEO
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

Dolores Alvarado, CEO
Community Health Partnership

Tamara Alvarado
Community Leader

Milan R. Balinton, Executive Director
African American Community Service Agency

Shiloh Ballard, President & Executive Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Poncho Guevara, Executive Director
Sacred Heart Community Service

Richard Konda, Executive Director
Asian Law Alliance

Michele Lew, CEO
The Health Trust

Jennifer Loving, CEO
Destination: Home

David K. Mineta, President & CEO
Momentum for Mental Health

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Asian Americans for Community Involvement

Leslie Bacho, CEO
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley

Gloria Baxter, Executive Director
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Mindy Berkowitz, Executive Director
Jewish Family Services

Rhonda Berry, President & CEO
Our City Forest

Zahra Billoo, Executive Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations

Sheri Burns, Executive Director
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center

Gisela Bushey, CEO
Loaves & Fishes

Louis Chicoine, Executive Director
Abode Services

AnnaLisa M. Chung, CEO
Dependency Advocacy Center

Kathy Córdova, Executive Director
Recovery Café San Jose

Derecka Mehrens, Executive Director
Working Partnerships USA

Tom Myers, Executive Director
Community Services Agency

Jessica Paz-Cedillos, Executive Director
School of Arts and Culture
Mexican Heritage Plaza

Esther Peralez-Dieckmann, Executive Director
Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence

Saul Ramos, Deputy Director
SOMOS Mayfair

E. Christopher Wilder, CEO
Valley Medical Center Foundation

Kevin Zwick, CEO
Housing Trust Silicon Valley

Dontae Lartigue, CEO
Razing the Bar

Beth Leary, Executive Director
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Maritza Maldonado, Founder & Executive Director
Amigos de Guadalupe

Ann Marquart, Executive Director
Project Sentinel

Michele Mashburn, Director
San Jose Peace and Justice Center

Jennifer Masuda, Executive Director
Yu-Ai Kai

Yvonne Maxwell, Jegna (Executive Director)
Ujima Adult and Family Services, Inc.

Rev. Ray F. Montgomery, Executive Director
People Acting in Community Together

Dorsey Moore, Executive Director/CEO
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Rose Mukhar, Executive Director
Justice at Last

David Cox, Executive Director
St. Joseph's Family Center

Bitia Daryabari, Executive Director
Pars Equality Center

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Latinas Contra Cancer

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All Good Work Foundation

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San Jose Jazz

Larissa Robideaux, Executive Director
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Phillip Rodriguez, CEO & Founder
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