



SPUR

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

Hon. Mayor Liccardo and City Council
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95114

Submitted Electronically

March 28, 2017

Re: Approval of the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Mayor's March Budget Message (Item 3.5 on March 28, 2017)

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers,

Last year, SPUR endorsed both June's Measure B and November's Measure G in the hope that some of these revenues will be dedicated to investing in the city's long-term future.¹ In particular, we recommend:

1. Reflect the city's recently approved priorities in the budget.

A few weeks ago, City Council voted on the city's policy priorities for the year, including updates to urban design guidelines in commercial areas. We encourage Council to allocate appropriate resources to these priorities, so that city departments can turn these priorities into actionable policy in a timely manner. We particularly support allocating funding to update San Jose's urban design guidelines, which will guide all new development in urban villages. Without updated guidelines, new development will not translate into the walkable and livable communities that San Jose wants and that support economic growth.

2. Add staff to support the city's long-term planning and policy efforts in Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, the Office of Economic Development, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Works.

The budget message directs the City Manager to prioritize filling PBCE positions that serve small business customers for needs such as tenant improvements and permits. While this is an important and unfilled need, we reiterate that additional resources are also needed to achieve the city's ambitious goals for transformation and to become future-ready.

We recommend that the city prioritize adding and backfilling long-term planning positions to PBCE, DOT, OED and Public Works first. The lack of investment in future-oriented planning and policy is like the city's deferred road maintenance problem; not investing today costs us more in

¹ Our full proposed spending framework for Measure G can be found here: [http://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/publications_pdfs/SPUR Measure G Proposed Purpose and Use of Funds-10-10-2016.pdf](http://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/publications_pdfs/SPUR%20Measure%20G%20Proposed%20Purpose%20and%20Use%20of%20Funds-10-10-2016.pdf)

the long-run. We have not invested in the future and this is starting to hurt the city in terms of its economic competitiveness and its ability to capitalize on major transportation investments like BART and high-speed rail. Transportation projects like these can be catalytic and lead to the economic transformation of our city if we plan and make the changes we need to make, such as improvements in our pedestrian infrastructure and proactively leveraging private investment. In addition, we are living in a rapidly changing environment in terms of mobility, technology, and our economy and will not be able to keep up with—let alone get ahead of—the physical and social impacts of these changes without investing in planning in a real way.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Mayor’s March Budget Message and budget deliberations. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns at talvarado@spur.org or 408-638-0091.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa Alvarado". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Teresa Alvarado
San Jose Director