

San José Small Business Advisory Task Force

Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Council
City Hall, City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95112

June 29, 2020

RE: Agenda Item 3.10 Potential Ballot Measure to Amend the City Charter

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council:

In the interest of reflecting and serving the diverse small businesses of San José, we, the members of the Small Business Advisory Task Force, support the ballot measure to amend the city charter as proposed by Vice Mayor Jones and Council Member Jimenez on 06/23/20.

San José is the tenth largest city in the United States yet it continues to be governed similarly to smaller cities that are led by part-time mayors and council members and have to rely on a full-time city administrator or manager to lead and direct all departments. The kind of leadership that is needed to govern a large, dynamic city is drastically different than what is needed to govern a small town. The City of San José is in need of an accountable leader who will be able to act swiftly and help our city recover during such a critical time in history. While we continue to overcome and address the issues involving COVID-19, racial equity, police brutality, and a struggling economy, we need a mayor who is accountable, responsive and able to provide direction in the community's best interest.

The City of San José has over 55,000 small businesses, which make up 96.6% of all businesses that exist within San José. Oftentimes, these small businesses feel that they have no voice, are not prioritized, or simply not aware of who to reach out to when dealing with issues and concerns. As the Small Business Advisory Task Force, our priority is to work alongside the City to facilitate feedback and provide recommendations to help shape policies and programs that affect small businesses.

It's been well documented that presidential elections draw more people out to vote than non presidential elections. Moving the election for mayor, our one local all city-wide office, to coincide with the election for U.S. presidents will be more broad-based, more inclusive and more democratic than otherwise. Voting is more than an aspect of democracy. Voting is how the consent of the governed is expressed and exercised. Voting is a delineation of acceptance; a civic line drawn between insiders and outsiders, between community members and those judged unfit, unworthy, or unwelcome. Now more than ever we need to welcome all of our people to the decision-making processes that impact them.

Last, we request that the proposed Blue Ribbon Commission, tasked with evaluating outcomes and improved efficiencies of the changes should the ballot measure pass, be made up of a wide cross-section of representative stakeholders. It should include representatives of women-owned and minority-owned small businesses as this will ensure that the voices of such businesses that contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of our community are at the table and heard. We are confident that the proposed charter amendment by Vice Mayor Jones and Council Member Jimenez will lead to inclusive government reforms and allow our community to thrive as it should for all of its people.

Sincerely,



Dennis King
Vice Chair, Small Business Advisory Task Force
Executive Director, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Silicon Valley

Members of the San Jose Small Business Advisory Task Force:
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Silicon Valley
FilAm Chamber of Commerce
Rainbow Chamber of Commerce
Silicon Valley Black Chamber of Commerce
Silicon Valley Chinese Technology & Business Association
Silicon Valley Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce
The Silicon Valley Organization
Winchester Business Association
Taiwanese American Chamber of Commerce
Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce