June 15, 2018

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council,

The San José Youth Commission supports the Mayor's Budget Message for its recognition and inclusion of youth as a target audience. With youth development and support programs already included in the budget, the Youth Commission urges the city council to consider the commission's recommendations detailed within this letter.

Tasked with representing a quarter of a million youth who reside within San Jose, the Youth Commission strives to advocate for the youth's perspectives on policy matters that affect them. The Mayor's budget message details a budget plan that strategically utilizes the City's funds to prioritize crucial initiatives and thus work towards the vision of overall City sustainability. This vision aligns with the Youth Commission's own priority to create a similarly sustainable future for the youth in San Jose. On January of 2018, the Youth Commission held a Youth Advisory (YAC) Summit inviting youth from all parts of San Jose to participate in a budget simulation exercise to prioritize the youth's budget priorities. Through discussion and a final voting process, the youth along with the Youth Commission, developed a priority list that we would like the Honorable Mayor and City Council to consider as they implement the 2018/2018 city budget.

The following sections detail the top five budget priority items listed by rank as well as outlined additional considerations that the Commission believes will make these initiatives more youth-inclusive.

Priority1. PUBLIC SAFETY

Feeling safe is the most important thing for a youth and their families. Not having to worrying about crime and violence each day allows students to focus and succeed in school. Hence, the Youth Commission has placed Public Safety funding as a top priority. While in recent years the police and fire departments have grown and continue to rebuild, the Commission believes that funding of this department is of the utmost importance.

a) Fire Department

i) City-Wide Emergency Management

In the past years, San Jose has experienced intense flooding, maxing-out emergency response programs. The Youth Commission believes that as a city we should invest in the City-wide Emergency Management programs to ensure we are prepared for future disasters.

ii) Fire Prevention Program

To ensure the protection and prevention of future fires and other disasters, the Youth Commission recommends funds be added to the Fire Prevention: Fire

Development/Safety, Education, Review and Inspection division. Fire Prevention becomes increasingly important in San José due to the ever-growing density of our communities and the uprising of many building throughout our city.

b) Police Department

i) Crime Prevention

The Youth Commission feels that there should be a greater emphasis on Crime Prevention. Crime affects youth in many ways and increasing funding to this program will help our youth to both feel safer in the community and to participate in our community as productive members. Crime Prevention programs will also help intervene before our youth become involved in criminal activities by educating and creating alternative pathways in life.

ii) Family Violence Prevention and Education

The Youth Commission believes that preventing the family violence through education is the best way to keep youth safe. Therefore, funding Family Violence prevention programs is crucial to keeping youth and families safe.

Priority 2. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

There is a high number of San Jose citizens living on the streets. Homelessness is a pressing issue that must be addressed. The Youth Commission has supported the city's combative initiatives from Destination: Home and 'All the Way Home' to the many transitional housing initiatives. Still, we recognize the fight against homelessness is far from over.

With much of the city's permanent supportive housing far from completion, the City has enacted comprehensive strategies for interim housing. We would like to recommend a high priority be placed on building bridge housing. Acknowledging the banes -- the cost of not integrating the homeless into existing neighborhoods and the loss of the money that would be put into this initiative -- we still believe the tiny home initiative to be the best solution. Given the already low supply and high demand of housing in the area (even excluding the hypothetical demand of the homeless population), a master lease program or rapid re-housing program in today's times would not solve the immediate problem of home scarcity in San Jose. Subsequently, if those programs were to be enacted, it's likely only a fraction of the homeless would be benefitted -- simply because there are not enough homes to go around. Transitional or permanent, affordable homes must be built in our city. Furthermore, with permanent housing being the end goal, tiny homes would ease the homeless population in their lifestyle transition from living on the streets to living in a home.

In addition, we further recommend part of the funds be used to help homeless teenagers and young adults find vocational and educational opportunities, resource that will ensure they find their place in society. Organizations such as the Bill Wilson Center have such programs in place, but lack funding to serve more youth on a larger scale. Allotting funds for homeless youth is especially important because it is only logical to help establish a solid foundation for young and bright

individuals who still have their whole lives ahead and who may, with the right help, be a productive member in our city.

Priority 3. TRANSPORTATION

Being the third on our priority list, it is an important item for all youth. Having adequate and affordable transportation would eliminate the need to use vehicles to get to get from one place to another. Having VTA service provided in dense neighborhoods and lowering the youth fee of such services would encourage youth to use this mode of transportation.

Priority 4. PRNS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PRNS was ranked fourth on the youth priority list at our YAC summit budget simulation exercise. During discussion, youth emphasized PRNS importance in wanting to see more youth engagement with the community and city. Whether that be through volunteering or passing time at a local park. The commission and YAC members agree and support the Mayor's initiative to invest in the following is key.

a) Dumpster and Beautification days

Dumpster days and litter pickups are one of the most effective ways to expose youth to city issues, in this case safer and cleaner streets. Having youth from all parts of San Jose participate in community clean ups and local community events allow youth to build a network with the city and knowledge of how they can be more involved. With the city reaching out and asking for youth help, reveals that the city does depend on youth and youth can make an impact in our city.

b) Youth Programs

Very frequently, YAC members and commissioners have stated the significance of youth focused programs to enhance the development and leadership of San Jose's youth. With programs at various locations such as community centers, and libraries, youth will have readily available and easy access to programs that help struggling youth learn more about available resources. With more grants and funding for these programs at various city locations, the program cultivates a stronger, more aware, and engaged younger generation for our city.

c) Parks Activation Programs

We believe that parks play a large role in the development of youth's overall health and wellness. Therefore, we strongly recommend a continual funding be made to the Parks Activation Program.

d) Youth Commission

The San José Youth Commission firmly believes that the City of San José should continue its funding of the Youth Commission and even increase its funding. The Commission's goal is to increase youth engagement in public policy and to make sure that all youth have a voice in City government. We have reached more youth each year through Ad Hoc meetings, monthly Youth Advisory Council (YAC) meetings, and events, such as the annual YAC Summit, where we discuss the city budget and other city initiatives. We increased awareness of the commission

through our first ever Youth Commission Panel event. City initiatives and youth issues were discussed in full and youth were encouraged to become even more involved with their local government through the youth commission. The Commission has also sent many letters, proposals, and policy recommendations to City Council to represent youth voices, ideas, and opinions. The Youth Commission in many cases is the youth's first introduction to the real workings of local government. It allows youth to learn about real issues, and encourages youth leadership and awareness of a world not always taught in the classroom. Therefore, more funding to expand and support the commission should be a high priority in this year budget allocation.

Priority 5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Although voted last at our annual YAC summit budget exercise, protecting the environment is still an important and long-term goal of the Youth Commission. It is important because it is a topic that deeply affects youth, as it is the youth who will be next to inherit the environment we currently live in. By having a cleaner and more sustainable environment, the next generation of children and teens can have a safer and healthier place in which to grow and become global citizens.

a) Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

In the Mayor's March Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the Mayor laid out a strategy that emphasized the leveraging of external funding for the development of EV charging stations. The Youth Commission fully supports this because this will encourage more people to purchase electric vehicles, and therefore, will help the environment. However, the Youth Commission would also like to ask City Council to consider the following:

1) While San Jose does have many electric vehicle charging stations, they are mostly concentrated in the downtown area. The Youth Commission sincerely believes in expanding the installation of EV charging stations all throughout the city.
2) EV stations should be placed in community spaces to increase community engagement. Such as community center, libraries, trail heads, parks and other public spaces. Thus encouraging people to make use of these public spaces while waiting for their electric vehicles to charge.
3) The Youth Commission suggests that the Council set the goal of having at least 30% of public spaces have at least one electric vehicle charging station by 2020. If external funding does not provide enough funds to make this goal possible, we suggest that a part of the budget be allocated to provide the extra funding needed.
4) At the end, the installation of EV stations will provide a net positive profit for the city, since overtime, the additional revenue from using the EV station will offset the installation costs.

b) Climate Smart

We believe that the budget should be allocated appropriately so that the goals of Climate Smart San Jose can be met. In our world in which global warming is posing an increasingly dangerous threat, we believe that it is San Jose's duty to do its very best to slow down global warming's effects.

c) Bike Lanes near schools

The environment is something that must be preserved for future generations. It is important that we instill values of conservation and environmental sustainability in our youth. One way to do this is to encourage walking and biking to school. The Youth Commission believes that bike lanes should be added to streets near schools. Allocating a small portion of the budget to accomplish this will have positive, lasting effects.

d) Transforming police vehicles to be electrically powered

The Youth Commission advocates for the conversion of police cars to be electrically powered. It is important that the very people protecting our citizens are protecting the environment as well. This will reinforce in our citizens that San Jose is an environmentally friendly city, and this will also cast a more positive light on our police force.

In conclusion, the above mentioned budget recommendations are a collections of youth's perspective throughout the city. The Commission along with its' youth advisory council members understand the enormous responsibility our city leaders have and appreciate that our Mayor and City Council continue to keep the youth in mind while finalizing and establishing the 2018/2019 fiscal budget.

Sincerely;

San Jose Youth Commission

The San José Youth Commission
Youth Commission Fiscal Year: 2017/2018