

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Esparza

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** 2/3/2021

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Approved: *Maya Esparza*

Date: 2/3/2021

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**SUBJECT: WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR COMMUNITY HEALING AND  
ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR OUR CITY?**

As we plan for community healing and economic recovery following a devastating once-in-a-century pandemic, I appreciate Staff's understanding that the disparities our low-income, minority communities are facing were not created by COVID-19 but magnified throughout the pandemic. Our recovery effort should not focus on rebuilding to where we were but strive to interweave equity within every aspect of our recovery process to build back a better San José for all. **To accomplish this, we must focus on first helping those who have been hit the hardest by COVID-19 and the ensuing economic devastation:**

**Health and Safety**

1. We must target our vaccination efforts in communities with a high concentration of essential workers, particularly communities of color, as data has proven these communities are contracting COVID-19 and dying at the highest rates. Without the luxury of working remotely to protect their families, COVID-19 will continue to spread rapidly causing further devastation and delaying the healing process and economic recovery for all of San José.
2. We must continue COVID-19 testing so as we recover, our essential workers are not bearing the brunt of contracting COVID-19 risking exposure to all residents, especially the families of essential workers who have increased risk merely because of their living situation.
3. We must combat the increase in violence and gang-related activity our communities have experienced during the pandemic. This includes activating areas most impacted by violence and gang-activity with community programs aimed at providing our youth with a safe, supportive, and constructive environment.

## **Housing**

1. As stated in Housing's memo on the *Moratorium on Rent Increases for Tenants and Mobilehome Residents and Owners Financially Impacted by COVID-19*, Policy link is projecting 22,269 low-income households owe a projected \$84.3 million in back rent. If we are to heal our communities and recover economically, we must keep our communities intact and support our low-income families, families who are the foundation and backbone of San José, from the eviction timebomb. We must not continue to lose families out of San José.

This can be addressed, albeit not resolved, by providing rental assistance to these residents and aggressively building new housing at all affordability levels citywide.

## **Economic Recovery**

1. We must address the neglect and devastation experienced by our childcare providers to ensure our families have affordable and available childcare as more residents return to work. Not only will this bring back jobs lost in the childcare industry, it will allow more residents, particularly women who have exited the job market for childcare purposes, to reenter the job market. This will also address the fact that often families rely on dual incomes and affordable childcare to afford the incredible cost of living in San José. We cannot continue to lose families out of San José.
2. We must support educational activities to meet the needs of our students who have been left behind due to the incredible obstacles resulting from COVID-19. This will help our parents return to work and ensure our students - our future workforce - has the skillset required to be prosperous in their careers.
3. We must support our small retail businesses who are also facing an eviction timebomb which would result in significant job loss and an increase in vacant, blighted storefronts.
4. With a 21.7% increase in new business licenses filed in California in 2020 compared to 2019, we must support our residents who have taken the leap of faith into entrepreneurship recognizing that entrepreneurship is often the pathway for women and minorities to enter into the mainstream economy to obtain financial freedom.

In conclusion, if we are to recover as a whole, we must start with the communities that have borne the brunt of the devastation caused by the pandemic.