

From: [Ruth Abbe](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tracy Jensen](#); [Trish Spencer](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#); [Debi Ryan](#); [Sarah Henry](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CASA Letter re: Support for Agenda Item 7-C General Obligation Bond Measure
Date: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 4:22:52 PM
Attachments: [CASA letter General Obligation Bond Measure.pdf](#)

Please see our letter attached regarding support for Agenda Item 7-C General Obligation Bond Measure. Best, Ruth 415-235-1356



Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda

July 2, 2024

Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Vice Mayor Tony Daysog
Councilmember Tracy Jensen
Councilmember Trish Herrera Spencer
Councilmember Malia Vella

RE: Support for Agenda Item 7-C General Obligation Bond Measure

Dear Members of the City Council:

We are writing to voice our support for the recommended actions under item 7-C:

- Adopt of Resolution of Necessity
- Introduce and Adopt of Ordinance Submitting General Obligation Bond Measure to Voters
- Adoption of Resolution Placing Measure on Ballot (wording to be approved July 16th)

Alameda is uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of sea level and ground water rise and must prepare for our future. The City has been fortunate in obtaining federal grants and earmarks to address some of our most vulnerable areas adjacent to the Oakland Estuary and on Bay Farm Island. However, funders will be looking for Alameda to place some “skin in the game” and raise revenues to address our critical infrastructure.

The City Council identified “building resilience to climate change and water level rise” as one of its five priorities for the three-year strategic plan.

Placing the General Obligation Bond Measure on the ballot allows Alameda’s voters to confirm these priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Abbe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruth Abbe, Steering Committee
Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda

From: [Dorothy Freeman](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tracy Jensen](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Lara Weisiger](#); [Manager Manager](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Alameda City Council Agenda July 2, 2024 Item 7-C
Date: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 8:33:53 AM

Alameda City Council Agenda July 2, 2024 Item 7-C

Dear Mayor Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Daysog, and Council members Vella, Spencer and Jensen,

Placing the bond issue for \$150,000,000.00 on this agenda so late in the year is a disservice to Alameda voters. Many people have gone on vacation or have little time to delve into the particulars for such a large sum of tax dollars.

The agenda is very lax on what the plans are for the funds from this bond leaving the identification of such projects to some future decision maker. The people have a right to know what these funds are to be targeted for to protect the money from being spent on projects that the citizenry doesn't really care about.

Tax funds of this large amount of \$29 per \$100K assessed value should have full scrutiny and better input from the citizens who will be paying for the bond. Since this bond has been under consideration for several years, two more years to properly communicate the intent of the bonds and their financial repercussions to Alameda property owners is absolutely necessary if you expect the bond to be passed. We all want our infrastructure to be maintained but we also want our tax dollars to be spent appropriately with full understanding of what they will be spent on. Please vote to defer this bond until the next election and develop a better plan for what the bond dollars will be dedicated to.

Respectfully,

Dorothy

Cc: City Clerk
City Manager

From: [Trish Spencer](#)
To: [Lara Weisiger](#)
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] July 2, 2024 Agenda Item 7-C - \$150m Bonds for Infrastructure Work
Date: Tuesday, July 2, 2024 12:03:16 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Gig Codiga <gigcodiga@gmail.com>

Date: Jul 1, 2024 7:56 PM

Subject: [EXTERNAL] July 2, 2024 Agenda Item 7-C - \$150m Bonds for Infrastructure Work

To: Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft <MEzzyAshcraft@alamedaca.gov>, Malia Vella

<MVella@alamedaca.gov>, Tony Daysog <TDaysog@alamedaca.gov>, Tracy Jensen

<tjensen@alamedaca.gov>, Trish Spencer <tspencer@alamedaca.gov>

Cc:

Dear All,

Though I do believe there is important infrastructure work to be performed in the City of Alameda. The questions for us all to answer and understand is: what is the total list of projects, what is the estimated capital cost for each project, what is the fiscal impact on each citizen (property owner or tenant or commercial business), what projects have priority and why, And, Why the rush to get it done after at this time given the city initially brought forth the concept in late 2020.

We do need infrastructure improvements, but...

1. Timing: the public must have enough time to assess the impact of this extreme bonding request. Choosing to do so before a holiday and even over the summer when many are on holiday doesn't allow for our neighbors time to have a voice. How about reconvening until summer is over?
2. Project Lists: for this size of a bond we all need to know and hold the city to specific projects to avoid adding more along the way as well as to validate appropriate use of the funds. Noting that emergencies happen. Where is the red book with the mission, goals, strategies, list and oversight. I believe that having this information will be key to its success or failure if not provided.
3. Polling: a poll without specifics, lacking detail is a "well maybe or well maybe not". People need to understand how it impacts them financially as well. What is the cost per property owner? How is the assessment going to be applied to the citizens of Alameda?
4. Recommendation: take the time to get it right, for all citizens to have a chance to voice their opinions, get their questions answered and avoid pushing it through too fast. Summer time and holiday presentations of this magnitude deserve a proper vetting. It feels a bit rushed.

Perhaps there should be other competent and knowledgeable elected officials such as the City Auditor and the City Treasurer, along with the Finance Director in the mix and provide their opinion before stepping forward. Just maybe, a diverse oversight team to keep track, address communications, etc if such a bond is passed.

Again, Alameda definitely should address our infrastructure issues; planning though is most important to provide clear directions and expectations.

Best Regards
Be Well

Gig Codiga
650-922-0554

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

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From: [Jay](#)
To: [Lara Weisiger](#)
Cc: [Jay](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter in Opposition to Item 7C - Infrastructure G.O. Bond - CC agenda 7-2-24
Date: Monday, July 1, 2024 6:47:38 PM
Attachments: [Letter in opposition to Item7C.docx](#)

Hello, Madam Clerk.

I would appreciate it if you would add the attached Letter in Opposition to Item7C to the Item's Correspondence File.

Thank you.

Jay Garfinkle

July 1, 2024

RE: Item 7C on July 2, 2024, City Council meeting Agenda

Honorable members of the Alameda City Council,

I have serious concerns regarding Item 7C on July 2, 2024, City Council meeting Agenda.

It appears to me that Staff has provided you and the Public insufficient information on which a reasonable person can responsibly base a decision to issue the Staff's proposed \$150,000,000 General Obligation Bond.

Staff has been aware for several years of the City's shortfall regarding funds that can be earmarked for necessary infrastructure projects. It is inconceivable to this writer that they are unable at this late date to provide the Council and the Public with specific information regarding their undefined potential projects. They did not provide specifics regarding which projects they would undertake to accomplish, nor their urgency, priority, or estimated cost.

We may eventually determine that the issuing of a General Interest Bond will be appropriate for funding infrastructure projects. But now does not appear to be that time, especially given the absence of adequate supporting information.

I would also suggest that if there are actually urgently needed projects to address, the Council would be well advised to suspend planning, contracting, and work on Staff's arguably unnecessary projects that have been or will be approved in response to the pleadings of some of the City's Special Interest groups. I refer to the throttling of traffic on Park Street, the abuse of Grand Street, and the over-planned changes Staff are pushing for Fernside Blvd. These can all be suspended, and their funding can be diverted to any more urgently needed projects that will actually benefit the majority of Alamedans rather than benefitting only a few members of politically connected Special Interest Groups. We are looking at freeing up hundreds of thousands of dollars for use on more appropriate projects.

Respectfully,

Jay Garfinkle

From: [ACT](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Tracy Jensen](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#); [City Clerk](#); [Finance](#); cpakearney@sbcglobal.net; kevin@kevinkennedyllc.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 7-C July 2 City Council Meeting Agenda (Ballot Measure-Infrastructure Bond Issue)
Date: Monday, July 1, 2024 10:54:06 AM

ACT

Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

ACT is not opposed to the issuance a General Obligation Bond to partially fund our most critical infrastructure needs. However, we strongly object to Item 7-C for the reasons stated below.

1. **The Timing for Presenting this Issue:** It is very disturbing that staff is presenting this major issue that will require a significantly increased tax burden for Alamedans two days before July 4 and present it for final approval two weeks later on July 16, with ballot arguments to be presented by the end of July, all in the middle of vacations for many Alamedans. Thus, public awareness and participation in the decision process will be minimized. Even more disturbing is that Elections Code Sec. 9222 requires that, “The election shall be held not less than 88 days after the date of the order of election.” In order to make that timeline, the ordinance would need to be adopted by August 9. The Council has no meetings scheduled after July 16 or in August. Therefore, any attempt by Council to materially amend the currently proposed ordinance would require special meetings and adherence to a very tight timeline. **It is fair to ask staff the question, “If the issue of deferred maintenance has been on the Council and staff agenda since 2020, why did you wait until the last minute in the middle of a Council and citizen vacation period to submit this proposal?”**

2. **Lack of Specificity on Projects to be Funded:** Staff asserts that the City that “*The City of Alameda (City) has identified nearly \$800 million in deferred maintenance in public infrastructure citywide and is faced with climate-related challenges such as protecting our infrastructure and facilities from natural disasters, flooding, rising sea levels, erosion, winds, and earthquakes.*” Staff asserts that the areas of the City that are especially vulnerable are in the west end near the tubes and on Bay Farm Island. Staff also provides the results of community mailers that requested residents to state their priorities for the spending of infrastructure dollars. Unfortunately, the proposed ordinance does not identify the specific projects to be addressed, nor does staff provide cost estimates for any of these high priority improvements. Instead, it leaves the identification of projects entirely at the post bond issue discretion of the City Council. These omissions become glaring when considering that the proposed bond issue will provide only 150,000.000 to fund an 800,000,000 need, making the

choice of projects to fund critical.

3. **Insufficiency of Opinion Poll:** Staff recites a “statistically relevant opinion poll” that resulted in 64% of respondents that “feel” there is great need for some infra structure funding in the city and 68% favoring or “leaning” in the direction of a funding measure. If this information is submitted to convince the City Council that there is a good chance the voters will approve the proposed bonding measure, it falls far short. As stated in the first sentence of this letter, ACT is not opposed to a funding measure. Thus, if we had been polled, we would be part of the 68%. A valid poll would have presented the essential elements of this specific proposed bond measure and may have produced drastically different results.

4. **Failure to Address Timing Of Loan:** The staff report informs us that the City Council was considering placing an infrastructure bond issue in on the November 2020 ballot, but Covid and a multitude of economic factors impacting the City, state, and country caused them to put this on hold. This demonstrates that *timing* is a critical factor in determining when to borrow money. Although the staff report has been signed by our Finance Director, she provides no opinion as to this issue. From a simple Google search, we have determined that marketable long term municipal bonds require close to a 5% return to the buyers and are rising. A 5% rate produces a \$7,500,000 dollar annual interest payment and a total of \$225,000,000 dollars in interest costs over the 30 year life of the loan. This alone speaks to the need for expert opinion on the timing issue. We strongly believe that, in addition to our Finance Director, we should seek the opinions of our City Auditor and Treasurer. While this is not part of their statutory duties, they are in the unique position of being professionally qualified to render opinions entirely independent of the City Council or staff.

Conclusion: It is unfortunate that the staff presented this proposal at the last possible minute and without the proper vetting thereof as outlined above. It is far better to direct staff to redraft the proposal to meet the objections stated above, even if it defers it to a later election, than to submit the current proposal subject to a high risk of rejection by the voters.

Sincerely,

ACT Board of Directors