

From: [Drew Dara-Abrams](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Tracy Jensen](#); [Malia Vella](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 7C: Infrastructure Funding
Date: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:04:14 AM

Dear Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Daysog, and Councilmembers,

I'm pleased to see that City Council is considering a funding measure to repair and improve Alameda's infrastructure.

I'm writing in as an individual who lives in Alameda and also co-owns an Alameda-based small business. Both residents and businesses will strongly benefit from a locally-controlled means of addressing the city's backlog of maintenance and handling newer challenges, including:

- rising bay levels and also groundwater due to climate change
- smoke and public safety power shutoffs due to wildfire
- traffic hazards due to unsafe driving of vehicles that are ever increasing in horsepower and hood height
- unaffordable and limited housing due to chronic underbuilding relative to our highly performing regional economy

For all these important reasons, please do move ahead with polling and with strategizing for a successful infrastructure funding measure.

If I may also add a couple thoughts for your consideration:

1. Timing relative to other funding and funding-related measures: The city's consultant already mentions that ACA 1 will be on the ballot in November 2024. Also consider that MTC and ABAG are currently working to put on the November 2024 ballot a measure to fund affordable housing throughout the Bay Area. Alameda Unified is considering options to consider how to best extend support through parcel taxes for our local schools (in 2025?). MTC is working toward a potential 2026 measure to fund transportation throughout the Bay Area. All of these efforts to support public services and infrastructure complement each other - - ideally the city will make strategic choices of how to schedule its own infrastructure measure relative to other local, regional, and state measures.

2. Fund both "hard" and "soft" infrastructure: The audience has been large and excited at City Council meetings regarding the Emma Hood swim complex and the new city-owned swim complex. It's not just the physical infrastructure that energizes folks — it's the activities and the lessons and the competitions that people can imagine and look forward to. Similarly City Council's meetings regarding Dignity Village and other supportive housing projects draw large and engaged crowds who care about the care and help to be provided within those facilities. When thinking of what is in-scope for this infrastructure funding measure, don't be limited by what is "infrastructure" in the literal concrete sense — also consider how the list of proposed projects can strengthen the services and programs that the city provides to residents, businesses, and visitors. Infrastructure projects that are both "hard" and "soft" can help to make Alameda not only more physically resilient but also more livable, inclusive, and equitable.

3. Leverage and maximize county, state, and federal funds: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2021 is investing \$1.2 trillion dollars toward infrastructure throughout the US. Much of this is being awarded on a competitive basis to local governments. The City should design its infrastructure funding measure to emphasize how local funds will further enable Alameda to compete and win these federal funds. This isn't a zero-sum competition — Alameda already collaborates with neighboring cities and with the county. By having flexible funds under local control, Alameda could be even better equipped to lead on complicated infrastructure efforts that require multiple phases of planning, design, and grant applications. For example, the systematic changes that may be required to guard Alameda, San Leandro, and Oakland from rising bay and ground water levels. This is a message worth sharing repeatedly with voters and taxpayers: local funding will be put toward effective and efficient use by the city to pursue further matching funds from county, state, and federal sources.

Thanks for your time,
Drew Dara-Abrams