



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CITY COUNCIL

BEATRIZ GÓMEZ MOUAKAD
WARD FIVE CITY COUNCILOR

To: Honorable Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Members of the City Council
From: Beatriz Gómez Mouakad City Councilor, Ward 5
RE: Conveying FY 2024 Budget Priorities: Improving ADA Accessibility
Requests for Architectural Access Technical Support Coordinator and a funding for Small Business Accessibility Compliance
Date: April 10, 2023

Request to Fund a ADA Technical Support Coordinator

State and Federal ADA Building Regulations are often overlooked, are not fully implemented or do not have comprehensive follow-up in the City from the planning stages through construction. Our ADA Coordinator is often supporting the needs of our community including requests for accessible parking spaces, improved access to digital media and addressing to requests of non-compliance, leaving little time for oversight of the built environment in a city that is rapidly growing. The Technical Support Coordinator will provide oversight of accessibility and compliance of the built environment throughout the City of Somerville. They would provide technical assistance and code review for all new development in Somerville from planning through construction, working closely with property owners, architects, consultants, and municipal agencies. The Technical Support Coordinator would also work with the Mobility and the Engineering Department establish design guidelines and standards for new sidewalk construction and/or repairs to create a universal and continuous experience throughout our City .

Request to fund ADA Survey and 0% Interest Loans to For Small Businesses to meet ADA Building Regulation Compliance Requirements

Many small business and landlords are not aware of the ADA requirements in the built space. Often they are in existing spaces that are not compliant or when completing renovations, they are working in older non-compliant spaces with smaller contractors who lack proper knowledge of ADA regulations. Improving access to our local business is a critical to establishing equitable and more open access to all in community. I am requesting the City fund a grant of up to \$5,000 for businesses with net profits less than \$1,000,000 to procure a survey of their spaces for ADA compliance. Businesses who complete such a grant would then have access to 0% interest loans that for repairs to remediate any non-compliant conditions found during the survey.



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To: Honorable Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Members of the City Council
From: Beatriz Gómez Mouakad City Councilor, Ward 5
RE: Conveying FY 2024 Budget Priorities:
Request from Latino Immigrant Communities

Date: April 10, 2023

Below I am sharing FY 2024 Budget Priorities requested by members of the Latino Community:

Funding for Before and After School Programming

Please see below requests asking to increase greater access for out of school programming a concern in the community that seeks to improve outcomes and allow low income and underserved students to reach their full potential. Requests include asks for academic enrichment support and transportation for programming across schools and to private programs to increase equity and before school programming. The request for before school programming comes due to a growing need to provide morning supervision for elementary school students who have working parents and guardians whose work schedules do not match academic schedules. This is particularly critical for hourly workers and essential who have early work starts and whose wages can be compromised from a late work start.

- Expand after school programming to ensure at a minimum guaranteed access to after school for low-income families.
- Fund programs with private vendors offering academic enrichment programs in reading and math for elementary students to support after school programming for low-income families and special needs students. .
- Fund transportation between schools for out of school programs offered exclusively in a school (i.e. El Sistema, Girls in Science at ESCS etc.) to increase access for underserved and low-income communities who might not have access to those programs in their schools.
- Fund transportation for out of school programs off site to increase Out of School Programing access for underserved and low-income student populations.
- Fund before school programming in schools between 7AM and 8AM to provide support for students with working families.

Childcare

Women have been particularly hard hit by job loss during the pandemic creating setbacks to go back decades. Women of color have particularly suffered the most. To help women who have lost their jobs and get back into the workforce it is critical that we increase access to childcare We also need to provide childcare to help these women access workforce development employments to help them access new job opportunities in the

market. For immigrant women this will allow opportunities to access language access an additional barrier they face when seeking employment.

- Double funding for childcare vouchers.

Food Security

Food insecurity continues to be an issue for immigrant families who often work in lower paying jobs and seasonal jobs or due to citizenship status face wage theft and work instability. There is a continued need for support for these families to bring food to their table.

- Increase funding for grocery gift cards to help address increase in food insecurity.



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To: Honorable Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Members of the City Council
From: Beatriz Gómez Mouakad City Councilor, Ward 5
RE: Conveying FY 2024 Budget Priorities:
Request for a Program Manager for Prevailing Wage, Living Wage, and Wage Theft Ordinance Oversight under a Workforce Development Department/Division.

Date: April 10, 2023

Request for a Program Manager for Prevailing Wage, Living Wage, and Wage Theft Ordinance Oversight under a Workforce Development Department/Division.

Currently Somerville lacks any department or position that has oversight over worker empowerment, labor compliance and worker protections. With the passing of the Wage Theft Ordinance the Workers Center was created via funding from the Job and Creation Trust. The role of the Worker Center is limited to: advocacy, education and organizing. It is staffed by only one full time employee and the city lacks a parallel position to support the work of the Workers Center. The Workers Center also has no oversight on the enforcement of labor laws and worker enforcement including the Wage Theft Ordinance or capacity to support oversight of labor agreements included in Community Benefit Agreements. Somerville's commercial base continues to grow creating new job opportunities which means we will soon have a larger and more diverse labor force. Amongst the new job creation industries is the hospitality industry who has had in the past a poor record regarding labor law compliance and worker exploitation. Construction activity has increased in our city creating the opportunity for further worker exploitation in an industry that has historically known for its violation of labor laws. In 2022 the Attorney General cited 100 Construction Companies for Violating State Labor Laws in Massachusetts. Reports show that the illegal theft of workers' wages has reached epidemic levels in residential construction Massachusetts.

(https://www.umass.edu/lrrc/sites/default/files/Wage_Theft_Report.pdf)

Federal immigration restrictions are exposing our immigrant populations to higher rates of exploitation due to the need to pay accrued debt when crossing the border and lack of legal status when entering the United States. Recent national reports show that this exploitation is even extending to minors. With the implementation of new local laws for labor enforcement small local businesses should be better informed of labor laws. With a growing labor force in Somerville, added construction activity and the on-going exploitation of immigrant workers, it is imperative the city of Somerville create a Program Manager for Prevailing Wage, Living Wage, and Wage Theft Ordinance Oversight under a Workforce Development Department or Division. This positions role which is being modeled from a similar position in Boston would include the following roles and responsibilities:

Support the Wage Theft Advisory Committee

- Manage the Wage Theft Advisory Committee (WTAC) and maintain a file of all relevant Wage Theft Activity
- Support the Welcome Project's Workers Center community education component of Wage Theft including the buildout of the website and the AP
- Support the Wage Theft Advisory Committee (WTAC) in the scope of its duties pursuant to the Ordinance, rules and Regulations
- Draft and develop annual report to be presented to the City Council with the oversight of the WTAC as required by the Wage Theft Ordinance.

Compliance and Enforcement

- Oversee implementation, compliance and enforcement of the Living Wage Ordinance, Wage Theft Ordinance, and other labor compliance policies.
- Oversee the development of the Wage Theft activity in the City of Somerville
- Research implementation of a Wage Theft Ordinance
- Analyze vendor and beneficiary compliance in assigned areas; monitor vendor activities and transactions; prepare reports and provide technical support to covered vendors and to procurement and project management staff
- Investigate complaints and prepare reports for the WTAC, Economic Development Department and Administration. Work closely with other City procurement and auditing personnel to facilitate processing of Living Wage and Wage Theft Ordinance documentation/contracts
- Oversee compliance and efforts in Community Benefits Agreements requiring prevailing wage requirements.
- Provide compliance monitoring and records management for covered vendors and beneficiaries under the Living Wage Ordinance
- Monitor vendor and beneficiary activity to ensure compliance with the Living Wage Ordinance through monthly reports, site visits, regular vendor and beneficiary contact, procurement and contract staff meetings, technical assistance and corrective action meetings
- Monitor cases of noncompliance; recommend corrective action
- Investigate complaints from employees or other relevant parties; conduct site visits, interview witnesses and vendors
- Analyze and research financial records to determine vendor's financial status in reference to exemptions and waivers by applying the rules and regulations of the Living Wage Ordinance and the Wage Theft Ordinance.
- Ensure accountability by monitoring contractor compliance with all Living Wage and Wage Theft Ordinance requirements.
- Ensure that contract files are complete and maintained in accordance with standards and/or funding source requirements.
- Prepare site visit reports and quarterly report reviews.
- Prepare documents and reports for enforcement hearings Conduct quarterly review meetings with City vendors.

- Conduct quarterly review meetings with City vendors.
- Assist with the development of a seamless system for integration of Living Wage, Prevailing Wage and Wage Theft

Documentation

- Oversee records and documentation for compliance of Living Wage and Wage Theft Ordinance
- Review and update Living Wage forms and Wage Theft Affidavits annually; coordinate problem resolution with the auditing department, contract and procurement staff and relevant City departments
- Work with City to update and oversee records management system and track relevant documentation for each covered vendor and beneficiaries.

Training

- Manage Prevailing Wage training for City of Somerville procurement departments and permitting departments/commissions in collaboration with the AGO's office.
- Provide training and ongoing information on annual updates/changes in Living Wage requirements

Other

- Serve as a liaison between vendor and employees to resolve wage issues
- Review on a case-by-case basis vendors seeking waivers and exemptions, and prepare documentation after reviewing the evidence to determine status of the vendors
- Provide technical assistance to vendors, beneficiaries and City procurement and contract staff regarding Living Wage ordinance requirements
- Review and make recommendations concerning exemptions and waivers
- Establish and cultivate effective working relationships with contractor representatives
- Initiate and conduct periodic site visits to observe program operations and review documentation for compliance with Living Wage Ordinance and Wage Theft Ordinance, meet contractor representatives regularly and develop/maintain relationships
- Determine monitoring and record keeping needs
- Provide evidence at hearings
- Compose and prepare correspondence between unit and contractors, state and local agencies, and others
- Review current processes; make recommendations
- May analyze legislation relating to economic issues affecting the City of Somerville and make recommendations



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To: Honorable Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Members of the City Council
From: Beatriz Gómez Mouakad City Councilor, Ward 5
RE: Conveying FY 2024 Budget Priorities: Parking - Curb Management
Request for Curb Management Program Manager in the Parking Department

Date: April 11, 2023

Fund a Curb Management Program Manager in the Parking Department

To help implement and meet the goals of the Parking and Curb Study, the study recommends the City Create a Curb Management Champion under the Parking division. Recent changes to the curb in Ball Square highlighted the need for such a champion when daylighting was implemented. Inadvertently loading zones were removed or rendered ineffective due to dimensions and configuration. A curb management program manager would help coordinate multiple uses in the curb and make sure most effective solutions are implemented and priorities at the curb are established.

The City of Somerville should identify a specific position to spearhead curb policies and projects from the planning perspective. This position would sit within the Parking Department and coordinate with planners in OSPCD, serving as an internal champion for the strategies developed in this study, leading the management and collection of curb data, and continuing to stay informed on emerging curb issues. (Page 44 - Parking and Curb Policy Study)