

FY2024 Budget Priorities

Lance Davis, Ward Six City Councilor

At the request of the City Clerk and the Chair of the Committee on Finance I am presenting my FY2024 Budget Priorities in memorandum form rather than as individual items. The substantive issue(s) underpinning each of these concerns have been discussed at length many times over many years and yet they remain in need of meaningful additional investment by the city. Each is important in its own right and I implore the administration to take each as important to the community and worthy of additional investment.

In my view, as I expressed during the City Council's budget prioritization process last year, the exercise of identifying some small number of consensus items is ill-advised as it diminishes the importance of every item that is not identified in that small list. This is particularly true of items that are relevant to a specific Ward as those, appropriately, are not going to make it to a short list of top items yet they are no less important to the people in that Ward.

- That the FY 2024 budget include funding for a public process for a re-engineering of Elm St. in Davis Square to enable it to be pedestrian only, including planning to address questions of accessibility, deliveries, parking, and traffic flow.
- That the FY 2024 budget include funding for a public process to create, possibly through a public-private partnership, a four-season public market hall at the Day and Herbert Street parking lot.
- That the FY 2024 budget include funding for a public process to determine the development of 45 College Ave.
- That the FY 2024 budget include increased funding for new social workers and other mental health professionals to expand capacity within Health and Human Services generally as well as specifically as it relates to responding to emergency calls involving mental health and substance use issues.
- That the FY 2024 budget include increased funding to support community partner organizations working in the areas of housing, mental health, and substance use services
- That the FY 2024 budget include funding to create, either directly or through community partners, two or more 24-hour engagement centers to provide basic facilities, heating and cooling, as well as additional services for unhoused members of our community.
- That the FY 2024 budget include funding to open one or more overdose prevention facilities before the end of calendar year 2023.
- That the FY 2024 budget include increased funding to acquire and create new affordable housing.

- That the FY 2024 budget include funding to create a robust, fully fare-free bus program.
- That the FY 2024 budget include increased funding for Parks and Recreation programs, including significantly expanding full-day summer programming.
- That the FY 2024 budget include increased funding to expand capacity in, and access to, after school programs such that anyone wishing to utilize the programs is able to do so.
- That the FY 2024 budget include increased funding for both quick build and permanent improvements at critical locations consistent with the Vision Zero Action Plan.
- That the FY 2024 budget include funding to create and maintain a program to quickly and fully clear snow from sidewalks, curb cuts, and crossings along a network of principal pedestrian routes to and from schools and squares.
- That the FY 2024 budget include funding for additional inspector positions to increase capacity within Inspectional Services generally and specifically to enforce existing ordinances such as the vacant property ordinance and compliance with building permits/development plans.
- That the FY 2024 budget include additional funding to expand staff to support City Council committees.