



City of Sierra Madre

Office of the City Clerk

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Sierra Madre, CA

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THE BROWN ACT PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PUBLIC COMMENTS AT ANY PUBLIC MEETING.

THE FOLLOWING WRITTEN COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING AND WILL BE POSTED ONTO THE CITY'S WEBSITE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY.

THE COMMENTS ATTACHED ARE SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. THE CITY DOES NOT CONFIRM THE VERACITY OF THE STATEMENTS PROVIDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

November 8, 2024

Council Member Kristine Lowe
City of Sierra Madre
Via email

Dear Council Member Lowe,

As I have watched the current debate about Measure PS, and studied the City's finances, it became clear to me that we have a fundamental problem that must be addressed more holistically. As an economist, I know that one basic tenet is that we should plan to make expenses and revenues balance – maybe not in the short term, but certainly over time. Our City faces rising expenses as a result of the same factors that impact every household – like inflation, rising wage rates, and general market conditions. But in Sierra Madre, our ability to increase revenues is severely constrained by the lack of revenue sources that many of our neighboring cities enjoy (e.g., malls, racetracks, hotels, big box stores, etc.). And, ultimately, expenses will overrun revenues - and I sincerely doubt that any amount of cost-cutting will be able to prevent that from happening. We will still need to provide basic services like police, fire and public works to support our infrastructure – and selling a building, cutting out services or hiring a few less people in the City's administration (or any other suggestions that I've read) will only provide short-term solutions. Ultimately, we must 'pay the piper'.

It seems to me that the City needs an energetic working group, given advisory-only authority from the Council, to seriously examine **revenue enhancement** ideas that would be compatible with the City's historic character but effective in keeping revenues and expenses balanced into the future. Many folks I've spoken to have intriguing ideas (everything from 'small box' stores, to an In-N-Out Burger, to a luxury wellness spa to...you name it), but all of them require careful investigation and a deep knowledge of where our revenues come from today and how much impact any of these ideas would actually have.

I would respectfully ask that the Council consider formation of such an advisory group, staffed by citizens, with a Council liaison assigned to work with it. I would certainly volunteer to help, and I suspect that many others (often with great experience in business, real estate, technology, government, etc.) would be inclined to join in.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Jim Kelly