

Citizens for Vallejo (CfV) endorses "Save PB Vallejo" -- 5/23/14

Citizens for Vallejo Press Release

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CfV supports petition to save Participatory Budgeting Vallejo from more budget cuts!

VALLEJO, CA (May 22, 2014) — Citizens for Vallejo (CfV) endorses the "Save PB Vallejo" campaign to continue Participatory Budgeting (PB) as unanimously approved and recommended by the City Council in June 2013.

"Participatory Budgeting engages the community like no other process, allowing average citizens to make the tough trade-off choices about how scarce resources are used. It's both innovative and extremely practical. It also puts Vallejo on the map for something positive. For a small investment, Vallejo gets a huge return. It's one of the best things we've ever done," exclaimed Anne Carr, CfV Board Member.

On April 22, 2014, Dan Keen, the Vallejo City Manager, recommended to the City Council to "skip a year" of PB and not allocate any monies to PB in Fiscal Year 2014/2015. In addition, he recommended continuing PB in Fiscal Year 2015/2016 BUT reducing the total allocation for PB projects to \$1 million.

"The city has made so much progress to rebuild its trust and confidence in government and PB is a big part of that! Why would we ever want to go back to business as usual? PB Vallejo should be a permanent part of the city's annual budgetary cycle," said Karol Heppe, Board President, Citizens for Vallejo.

In contrast to the City Manager's current proposal, on June 25, 2013, the Vallejo City Council unanimously recommended to future city councils to allocate a portion of Measure B monies (1% sales tax) to Participatory Budgeting every year until Measure B expires in 2022. Specifically, the 2013 City Council recommended the following allocations for PB per Fiscal Year starting with 2014/2015 until 2022: \$1,516,600; \$1,584,864; \$1,657,899; \$1,732,815; \$1,810,727; \$1,891,756; \$1,976,027; and \$1,547,751.

"In 2012, I became a PB delegate only weeks after moving to Vallejo from San Francisco. PB gave me the best opportunity to understand the specific concerns and priorities of my new community. It also allowed me to do something about it as opposed to simply watching others do the work. Today, many of the people I met through PB are some of my closest new friends in town. As a result, we've also begun to work on other non-PB projects to improve the city," said Hernan Iduena Segre, PB Budget Delegate and new Vallejo resident.

In April 2012, the Vallejo City Council authorized the first city-wide Participatory Budgeting process in North America. Since then, the City has been a PB trailblazer recognized nationally for its pioneering efforts including in President Obama's second Action Plan in Open Government released in November 2013 and participating in a roundtable discussion at the White House to help develop a national agenda for spreading PB throughout the United States. In addition, the City recently applied for the League of California Cities Helen Putnam award for its 2012 PB process.

"Participatory Budgeting is spreading around the world and across the United States. Vallejo took a huge step forward when it adopted PB and became the first city-wide process in North America. To discontinue PB Vallejo and our strong leadership role in this world-wide movement would be taking several steps backward at a time when we are making so much forward progress," stated Jane Ferrier, CfV Board Member and second year PB Vallejo volunteer.

For more information about "Save PB Vallejo" and its petition, visit www.facebook.com/savepbvallejo.