

SONJA K. BERNDT  
Pasadena, CA 91107

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2021 AUG 16 AM 9:02

CITY CLERK  
CITY OF PASADENA

August 13, 2021

Mayor Victor Gordo  
Members of the Pasadena City Council  
Pasadena, CA  
(By email to [correspondence@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:correspondence@cityofpasadena.net))

Re: City Council Meeting 8/16/2021 – Agenda Item #18: Staff Recommendations for American Rescue Plan Act Appropriations

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the Pasadena City Council:

**I. Introduction**

Our City has received a lifeline from the federal government in extraordinary funds pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) -- \$26 million this year and \$26 million next year. Last June 14<sup>th</sup>, the Council requested staff to come back with a comprehensive scheme for expending these funds. Mayor Gordo requested a “workshop-type” meeting so that the Council **and the public** could have input on proposed uses of these funds.

The staff report setting forth staff’s recommendations for expending the remaining \$25 million was made publicly available late yesterday, 4 days before the Council would discuss these imprudent and inequitable recommendations. Respectfully, this does not give most community members sufficient time to review and analyze the report before Monday’s meeting. Moreover, allowing 2-3 minutes for community members to provide input is not a fair opportunity to be heard on how these funds should be spent to lift up the marginalized in our community and those who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic.

At the June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, many community members submitted correspondence and public comments recommending that the Council use the ARPA funds in an impactful way to bring about positive change such as funding effective, evidence-based, affordable, Public Health programs like Advance Peace and CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets). The ARPA highly encourages the use of funds in this manner, which promotes racial and socioeconomic equity.

Please reject the staff recommendations discussed below and direct staff to conduct a community forum so that the public and experts can weigh in on how the City can best use these funds to help our residents and to promote community equity.

## **II. Background – Eligible Uses of ARPA Funds**

The Interim Final Rule (“IFR”) is the Treasury Department’s guidance for allocating the ARPA funding provided to state and local governments. It discusses numerous eligible uses for the ARPA funds, many of which would provide critical programs that our most vulnerable and marginalized residents need to move forward from the pandemic. The ARPA funds must be spent within the four eligible uses identified in the statute—“(1) to respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts, (2) to provide premium pay to essential workers, (3) to provide government services to the extent of eligible governments’ revenue losses, and (4) to make necessary water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure investments.” (IFR, pp. 78-79.) Significantly, at the outset, the IFR states that “[t]he ARPA provides a substantial infusion of resources to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild a stronger, **more equitable economy** as the country recovers.” (IFR, p. 8, emphasis added.)

ARPA funds may be used to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including for one or more of the following purposes:

### **1. COVID-19 Response and Prevention**

Funds may be used for “COVID-19 related expenses in congregate living facilities, including skilled nursing facilities, long-term care facilities, incarceration settings, homeless shelters, residential foster care facilities . . . and other group living facilities.” (IFR, p. 138, *see also* p. 18.) The funds may also be used for COVID-19 related mental health treatment and other behavioral services. (IFR, p. 140.)

### **2. Assistance to Households**

Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19 is also an eligible use. This includes food assistance; rent or mortgage assistance; legal aid to prevent eviction or homelessness; cash assistance; and job training. (IFR, p. 33.)

### **3. Uses to Address Disproportionately Impacted Communities**

The IFR goes into great detail about the disproportionate public health and economic impacts of the pandemic on communities disadvantaged before it began.

“Low-income communities, people of color, and Tribal communities have faced higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death, as well as higher rates of unemployment and lack of basic necessities like food and housing.” (IFR, p. 5.) To address these impacts and the role of pre-existing social vulnerabilities in driving these disparate outcomes, the IFR “identifies a broader range of services and programs that will be presumed to be responding to the public health emergency when provided in a Qualified Census Tract (QCT) [or] to families living in QCTs. . . .”<sup>1</sup> (IFR, pp. 21-22.) These include:

(i) Programs or services that facilitate access to health and social services such as assistance applying for public benefits; housing services to support healthy living environments conducive to mental and physical wellness; and “evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic.” (IFR, pp. 22-23, 141-142.)

(ii) Programs or services that address housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness where the economic impacts of COVID-19 have likely been most acute, such as supportive housing or other programs or services to improve access to stable, affordable housing among individuals who are homeless; development of affordable housing to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units; and housing vouchers, residential counseling or housing navigation assistance. (IFR, pp. 39, 142.)

(iii) Programs or services that address or mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on education, such as new or expanded early learning services; assistance to high-poverty school districts to advance equitable funding across districts and geographies; and educational and evidence-based services to address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. (IFR, p. 142.)

(iv) Programs or services that address or mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on childhood health or welfare, such as new or expanded childcare; programs to provide home visits by health professionals and social service professionals to individuals with young children to provide education and assistance for economic support, health needs, or child development; and services for child welfare-involved families and foster youth to provide support and education on child

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<sup>1</sup> Recipients may also provide these services to other populations/geographic areas disproportionately impacted by the pandemic if they can show that the pandemic resulted in disproportionate public health or economic outcomes to the specific populations/geographic areas to be served. (IFR, p. 22.)

development, positive parenting, coping skills, or recovery for mental health and substance use. (IFR, pp. 142-143.)

III. Staff's Imprudent and Inequitable Recommendations for Expending the Remaining \$25 million in ARPA Funds Received this Year

A. \$9.8 Million to the General Fund

Staff recommends that the General Fund receive a huge portion of ARPA funds to “backfill revenue losses, maintain essential services, and eliminate the projected operating deficit for FY22.” (Staff Report, p. 3.) Since our Housing Department receives miniscule General Fund appropriations (\$1.475 million for FY 2022) and our Public Health Department receives none, our vulnerable and marginalized communities will see little benefit from this recommended appropriation.

Sections 602(c)(1)(C) and 603(c)(1)(C) of the ARPA does allow local government to use ARPA funds to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to COVID-19 and to avoid cuts in government services. (IFR, pp. 51-53.) “These budget shortfalls are particularly problematic in the current environment, as State, local, and Tribal governments work to mitigate and contain the COVID-19 pandemic and help citizens weather the economic downturn.” (IFR, p. 52, emphasis added.) Such “government services” include critical infrastructure, health services, education services and public safety programs. There is a detailed 10-page explanation of this eligible use in the IFR, but there is no discussion included in the staff report. Staff should be directed to explain how this huge reimbursement is “helping citizens weather the economic downturn.”

Moreover, while staff says this General Fund appropriation is to “maintain essential services” and staff predicts a FY22 operating loss of \$9.77 million, staff clearly needs to explain the references in Attachment A that the FY22 forecast includes over \$21 million in “Debt Service,” \$10 million of which is a “contribution to RBOC to cover Debt Service and Amerifest.” This is because “expenses associated with obligations under instruments evidencing financial indebtedness for borrowed money would not be considered the provision of government services, as these financing expenses do not directly provide services or aid to citizens. Specifically, government services would not include interest or principal on any outstanding debt instrument. . . .” (IFR, p. 60, emphasis added.) Unless staff can adequately explain how this recommendation qualifies as an eligible use under the IFR, and how it can include \$21 million in “debt service” to



justify recommending this appropriation as an eligible use, it does not appear to be an eligible use.

B. \$8.539 Million to the Capital Improvement Program Budget

Staff recommends another huge appropriation of the ARPA funds for sidewalk improvements, bridge enhancements, traffic signals, etc. Are these enhancements and improvements **necessary** at a time when we are still suffering the economic effects of the pandemic? We are left to speculate because there is no discussion in the staff report about the urgency of any of these improvements.

Further, are these improvements more important than sheltering our nearly 300 unsheltered persons or providing assistance to housing-insecure persons? Instead, the City should create more interim housing and supportive housing and services for our unhoused, more affordable housing for our low-income residents, and more community programs that address health and mental health issues and violence prevention, particularly in our underserved communities.

C. \$2.4 million to Remodel Fire Station #38 and for Seismic Upgrade of Fire Station 37

With regard to staff's recommendation to appropriate \$400,000 of the ARPA funds for seismic work for Fire Station 37, this may be reasonable provided staff demonstrates that this work is urgent and cannot be included in the \$1.5 million already budgeted for this fire station's improvements.

As for the \$2 million appropriation to remodel Fire Station 38, staff asserts the improvements (remodeling the kitchen and dining and living areas, etc.) are "necessary to maintain operational standards of the facility," but provides no showing to support that assertion. This Council has already approved \$1 million for FY22 to remodel the Police Department building to provide "an open floor plan," furniture, etc. This continuing effort to prioritize buildings over people even during a pandemic needs to stop. We have nearly 300 unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness and thousands who are housing insecure who are more deserving of assistance.

D. \$550,000 to Support the Second Pasadena Outreach Response Team ("PORT") in FY23 and FY24

Recently, the Council approved using some of the Police Department's excess operating budget funds to create a second PORT. Staff now recommends using

\$550,000 of the ARPA funds to support the second PORT **for FY 23 and FY24**. Staff needs to explain to Council and the public: “What is the rush?” According to a PORT PowerPoint produced in response to my Public Records Act request to the Public Health Department, in addition to case management, “PORT 2” will respond to calls for service in place of an armed police officer. **For many months**, the community has asked the City to explore a mobile crisis intervention unit like CAHOOTS **that would be available 24-7** to handle non-life-threatening calls for service for persons experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis. PORT clearly is not that, as its work hours are Monday through Thursday and every other Friday 8-5 pm.

While PORT does good **outreach work** with persons experiencing homelessness in our City, there has never been a discussion of the best and most cost-efficient way **to respond to situations involving persons suffering from a mental illness or a substance use disorder crisis.**<sup>2</sup> I do not oppose funding a second PORT unit, but not at the expense of creating a CAHOOTS-model, 24-7 crisis response in our City. Funding must be included for a 24-7 response for all non-life-threatening situations involving persons suffering from a mental illness and/or substance use disorder crisis. Because (1) there has been no discussion of a CAHOOTS-model program, (2) there is no explanation of any urgency for this appropriation for FY23 and FY24, and (3) there are much greater needs for immediate action to fund programs for our unhoused, housing insecure and persons disproportionately affected by policing this recommendation should be rejected.

E. **\$630,000 to the Housing Department’s FY22 Operating Budget**

The \$400,000 appropriation staff recommends for bridge housing for PCC students is far too small to address the need of our nearly 300 unsheltered residents. Moreover, per the 2020 Homeless Count, 87% of our homeless population was age 25 and over, older than most PCC students. While I support the \$400,000 if needed to provide services to PCC students, that has to be a starting point. The City needs to become serious about meeting the urgent unmet needs of our unhoused residents.

As for the recommendation of \$150,000 “to fund additional eviction prevention legal services,” I do not oppose that recommendation, but request the Council to

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<sup>2</sup> In the PORT PowerPoint, costs for PORT #1 are listed as over \$314,000 (for an undefined period), so it is not clear that the \$275,000 per year appropriation staff requests would be sufficient to cover PORT 2’s expenses.

inquire of staff how it arrived at that figure and if that will be sufficient to provide legal services for all who will need them.

The \$80,000 recommended appropriation for the addition of a second HOPE Team case manager from Union Station is problematic. Many community members have already vociferously argued for a crisis intervention response that does not include a uniformed officer for non-life-threatening situations. This would avoid needless altercations involving persons suffering from mental illness and a waste of taxpayer funds resulting from arresting these persons for assaulting a police officer who should not have been deployed in the first place. Community members were promised that CAHOOTS would be agendized at the Public Safety Committee and are still waiting.<sup>3</sup> This recommendation should be rejected until CAHOOTS is agendized, discussed, and the public and experts have a chance to weigh in on what is the most beneficial and cost-effective crisis intervention model for our persons suffering from mental illness and/or a substance use disorder.

F. \$200,000 to Support Continued Efforts to Reduce Community Violence

Staff recommends a \$200,000 appropriation to the General Fund, City Manager's Office budget, to support continued efforts to prevent/reduce community violence. Ricky Pickens and his associates gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Public Safety Committee on July 21<sup>st</sup>. The program appears to be a good investment in the community. But the \$200,000 appropriation seems to be far short of what is needed to sustain this program. Staff should be directed to provide a detailed explanation of the funds needed to make a significant community impact for a sustained period of time.

IV. Conclusion

For all of the stated reasons, the staff's recommendations discussed herein should be rejected. Staff should be directed to conduct a community forum so that experts and the public can provide input on how the City can best use these funds to assist our residents and to promote community equity. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Cc: Local Media

Sonja K. Berndt, Esq. (retired)

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<sup>3</sup> On June 7, 2021, the Council promised the community that a CAHOOTS-model crisis intervention response for our City would be agendized in the Public Safety Committee. Mayor Gordo has not done that. Even PPD Commander Clawson has said that CAHOOTS for our City should be discussed.

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Suzanne Bruins < >  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 14, 2021 5:02 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** ARPA Funds

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Mayor Victor Gordo  
Members of the Pasadena City Council

My name is Suzanne Bruins. I am a longtime member of Pasadena Presbyterian Church and a retired PUSD school teacher. I would encourage you to direct the staff to reconsider their recommendations for the dispersal of the ARPA funds. Hold some community meetings, workshops, reach out to the people of Pasadena to see what will benefit the people. I just don't think the Rose Bowl is more important than the people of this city. Please consider spending a much larger percentage on the people by expanding public health facilities, instituting a program like CAHOOTS and so on. This money is a wonderful opportunity for the leaders of Pasadena to truly work to promote racial and socio-economic equality in their community.

Suzanne Bruins  
1200 E Palm St  
Altadena, CA 91001

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**Martinez, Ruben**

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**From:** Jane Vasquez <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 15, 2021 11:41 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Cc:** Sullivan, Noreen  
**Subject:** American Rescue Plan for Pasadena

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Mayor Victor Gordo

Dear Mayor Gordo,

You are urged to use some of the money coming to Pasadena through the American Rescue Plan to assist non-profit organizations like churches in the construction of affordable housing. Many churches in Pasadena have large properties which they are eager to use as sites for affordable housing. You can facilitate the development of this type of housing in the following ways:

1. Zone church properties to allow for affordable housing.
2. Work with non-profits to plan good affordable housing.
3. Allow the churches to build housing which meets all design, density, etc guidelines **by right**. This saves a lot of time and money in the process of moving ideas into actual housing. Without that stipulation there is little likelihood that the churches which are now eager to proceed with building will be able to do so.

Please help our neighbors, especially the teachers, nurses, police, fireman and retail managers who want to live close to where they work. Make the development of affordable housing a beneficiary of the American Rescue Plan in Pasadena.

Jane Atkins Vásquez

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Pasadena, CA 91108

08/16/2021  
Item 18

**Martinez, Ruben**

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**From:** Kenichi Yoshida ·  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 15, 2021 7:03 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Agenda item #18

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To Members of City Council,

My name is Kenichi Yoshida, a Japanese immigrant residing in District 4, a family man, Higher Ed administrator and a faith leader.

We, Pasadenans have been made aware that the City Council's plans is to spend the remaining \$25 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars granted by the Federal Government on building remodels, repairing sidewalks, traffic lights, and helping to bail out the Rose Bowl Operating Company *instead* of community programs to help the poor, marginalized and those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

This is egregious!

We demand the City Council that the funds be used for community programs that lift up the marginalized in our community and promote social equity just as Congress intended!

As well, we demand that the community be given a voice in the how our (the city's) money is spent!

Thank you.

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Best regards,  
Kenichi

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## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Margie L. Homer ·  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 8:25 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** proper use of ARPA funds

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Good afternoon Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers. My name is Margie Homer and I am a Pasadena resident writing to urge Pasadena to follow the intent of the Federal Govt and give Pasadena residents a voice in how the \$26 Million ARPA funds are spent. Congress made it very clear that these funds are intended to be used to provide:

- "1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.
2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, such as:
  - Programs that facilitate access to health and social services;
  - Programs that address housing insecurity and lack of affordable housing;
  - Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health;
  - Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic."

Using Federal ARPA funds for building remodels, repairing sidewalks, traffic lights, and helping to bail out the Rose Bowl Operating Company, would be an unacceptable misappropriation that goes contrary to the stated intentions of Congress and would ignore the many, much more urgent needs of the Community in these difficult times. We urge the City to hold a public discussion allowing Community Members to tell the City what they need.

Thank you,  
Margie Homer

--  
Margie L. Homer, Ph.D.  
PUSD parent since 2012  
pronouns: she/her/hers

08/16/2021  
Item 18



## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Wendy Roskin <[redacted]>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 8:29 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Agenda #18

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Good Morning Mayor Gordo and City Council members!

I have heard that the City Council is considering and determining where the funds given to Pasadena under the Recovery Act are going to be spent. Those funds were earmarked for those in need during this time of Covid and not for ANY OTHER PURPOSE!

How the city could redirect those funds to pet projects or to other self-serving efforts is unconscionable.

Our government is elected to assist all of it's citizens in a just and fair manner. It's time to do what's right.

Wendy Roskin

08/16/2021  
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## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Sarah Cole <  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 9:38 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Comment on Agenda Item #18

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My name is Sarah Cole and I am a mother of 2, a social worker and a proud resident of Pasadena writing to urge the Council to give Pasadena residents a voice in how the \$26 Million ARPA funds are spent. Congress made it very clear that these funds are intended to be used to provide:

“1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.

2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, such as:

- Programs that facilitate access to health and social services;
- Programs that address housing insecurity and lack of affordable housing;
- Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health;
- Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic.”

Using Federal ARPA funds for building remodels, repairing sidewalks, traffic lights, and helping to bail out the Rose Bowl Operating Company, would be an unacceptable misappropriation that goes contrary to the stated intentions of Congress and would ignore the many, much more urgent needs of the Community in these difficult times. We urge the City to hold a public discussion allowing Community Members to tell the City what they need.

Thank you,  
Sarah

--  
Sarah Cole, MSW, ASW  
Associate Clinical Social Worker  
ACSW# 96078  
pronouns: she/her  
i (cell)

Suite 204  
Pasadena, California 91107

08/16/2021  
Item 18

**Martinez, Ruben**

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**From:** Liz Schiller  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 10:49 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** ARPA funds, agenda item #18

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers,

I am a Pasadena resident. I urge you to have an inclusive process and follow federal intent regarding spending ARPA pandemic relief funds.

The funds are meant to provide assistance to households for food, rent, and job training and placement, and to help those disproportionately affected by the COVID pandemic, which is those with fewer resources, less money, and Black and brown Pasadena residents.

It would be unconscionable to spend these funds for building renovations, traffic lights, or the Rose Bowl Operating Company.

Ask Pasadena residents what they need. Allocate the funds where the need is greatest.

Sincerely,  
Liz Schiller

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## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Ferne Hayes  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 11:01 AM  
**To:** Wilson, Andy; PublicComment-AutoResponse; Williams, Felicia; Masuda, Gene; Rivas, Jessica; Kennedy, John J.; Madison, Steve; Hampton, Tyron; Gordo, Victor  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 18, 8/16/21

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of City Council,

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides \$26 million to Pasadena this year to aid in economic recovery following the pandemic and to specifically address the "systemic public health and economic challenges that may have contributed to more severe impacts of the pandemic among low-income communities and people of color."

The current City staff recommendations include less than \$800,000 for specific programs for poor and marginalized residents. Unfortunately return of revenue to the General Fund does little to help this group as Housing and Public Health Departments can claim only a small share of General Funds. And while public buildings and roads may be used by all, the pandemic wrought more urgent needs for those without shelter or newly facing housing and food insecurity.

Please reassess, say 'no' today, and seek input from more community voices as to how the ARPA funds should be used more equitably to meet the goal of aiding the most vulnerable casualties of the pandemic.

Thank you

Ferne Hayes  
District 7

08/16/2021  
Item 18

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Julie Hoy  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 11:06 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Agenda Item #18

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers,

Please use the \$26 Million ARPA funds for:

1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.
2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, such as:
  - Programs that facilitate access to health and social services;
  - Programs that address housing insecurity and lack of affordable housing;
  - Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health;
  - Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic.”

Using Federal ARPA funds for building remodels, repairing sidewalks, traffic lights, and helping to bail out the Rose Bowl Operating Company, would be an unacceptable misappropriation that would ignore more urgent needs in the Community in these difficult times.

Thank you,

Julie Hoy, PhD  
Faculty  
California Institute of Technology

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2021 AUG 16 PM 12: 56

August 16, 2021

CITY CLERK  
CITY OF PASADENA

Re: American Rescue Plan Act Appropriations

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

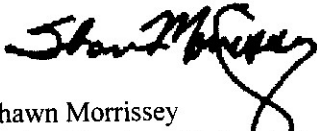
Union Station Homeless Services (USHS) is the San Gabriel Valley's largest social service agency assisting homeless and very low-income adults and families. USHS has been working in Pasadena and the surrounding community for almost 50 years.

USHS applauds the City's intention to direct funds from the American Rescue Plan to address the critical issue of homelessness. We commend the staff's recommendations to fund the Housing Department to create a bridge housing program for PCC students, hire an additional Care Coordinator for the HOPE Team, and grow the Housing Right Center's capacity to support tenants in Pasadena.

Pasadena continues to lead the way in housing and service solutions for our unhoused neighbors and we mustn't stop now. Many of our housed and unhoused neighbors will continue to face housing insecurity due to the pandemic and we must continue to work together to prevent and solve homelessness. We look to the second installment of ARPA funding to continue this commitment to housing and homeless service solutions. .

The City of Pasadena has an established track record of ongoing commitment to proven and innovative solutions to homelessness. We look forward to our continued partnership with the City of Pasadena to create more of the crucially needed bridge housing with the long-term goal of permanently housing every single unhoused individual in the city.

Sincerely,



Shawn Morrissey  
Senior Director of Advocacy  
Union Station Homeless Services

825 E. Orange Grove Blvd.  
Pasadena, CA 91104  
P 626.240.4550  
F 626.798.1640  
[www.unionstationhs.org](http://www.unionstationhs.org)

**PROGRAMS**

Coordinated Entry System  
Family Solutions  
Holly Street Housing  
Adult Center  
Family Center  
Euclid Villa  
Centennial Place  
Sources  
DHS Programs

08/16/2021  
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**Martinez, Ruben**

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**From:** -  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 1:32 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Comment on Agenda Item #18 on August 16, 2021 City Council Agenda

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August 16, 2021  
Mayor Victor Gordo  
Members of the Pasadena City Council  
Pasadena, CA  
(By email to [correspondence@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:correspondence@cityofpasadena.net))

Re: City Council Meeting 8/16/2021 - Agenda Item #18: Staff Recommendations for American Rescue Plan Act Appropriations

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the Pasadena City Council:

Affordable Housing Services (AHS), a nonprofit organization that houses and advocates on behalf of very low and homeless households and individuals, submits these comments and recommendations concerning the staff recommendations related to Agenda Item #18, the American Rescue Plan Act Appropriations item. Our Executive Director is a resident of District #5, where our apartment complex is located. Another AHS facility is located in District #1. AHS is also an avid supporter of tenant rights and opposes policies and practices that result in displacement of low income renters and do not address the conditions of persons who are unhoused.

AHS endorses the comment letter submitted by Sonja K. Berndt and thanks for her diligent efforts. To those comments, AHS notes the following.

**The Staff recommendations do little to address the need of the City's renters who have lost their incomes or have been otherwise negatively impacted by COVID 19.**

**Current Situation**

The Eviction Defense Network (EDN) estimates that 500,000 Los Angeles County tenants are behind their rent. The staff has no estimate of how many Pasadena renters are behind and therefore soon to be subject to eviction, for the federal and State moratoria are again about to expire. The Pasadena Tenant Union, which provides assistance to renters, has had an up tick in



landlord harassment and attempts to illegally evict tenants. 90% of Landlords are represented by counsel, while only 10% of tenants have access to such representation. The City funds the Housing Rights Center, which provides fair housing and some limited tenant counseling, but does not provide Neighborhood Legal Services or EDN - legal services providers with expertise in landlord tenant matters - to represent renters in unlawful detainer (eviction) matters. As a result, it is estimated that Pasadena's tenants presently lose 90% of their eviction cases. As a result of these evictions, there has been a disparate displacement of persons of color out of Pasadena. Displacement is very likely to increase. *The staff's Housing Element response to the situation is to monitor the situation rather than utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address this concern.*

Renters continue to dissipate their savings and resort to pay day loans and credit card advances to meet their immediate rent obligations, *i.e.*, a minimum of 25% of their rent. These renters will soon be required to pay the remaining 75% of rent owed or face eviction. *The staff's response is to allow these tenants to be evicted rather than utilize ARPA to eliminate this debt.*

This crisis is in way the fault of tenants. AHS' renters are low wage workers, the majority of whom lost their jobs because the closure of their work places. They do not have jobs that allow them to work from home and the WiFi infrastructure in low income areas is severely wanting. Typical of our renters is a young father who was laid off from his \$15/hour Pasadena restaurant job and who was lucky to find two out of town construction jobs; he leaves at 4:00 A.M. and returns home well after dark. His household is behind in rent; the likelihood is that his household will never to be able to catch up. *The Staff's response does not prioritize upgrading infrastructure in low income areas or to address the rental debt of low income renters.*

The City staff noted in its Housing Element analysis that it had no plans to deal with the COVID 19 impacts because federal government funding would not be available to address the issue. In fact, there is \$26 million in federal monies available to address the critical issues of the renters who have lost their housing, but staff proposes instead to sink a large amount of into the General Fund, *i.e.*, the Police Department which already get more than its fair share. *The staff's proposal prioritizes the City's routine General Fund obligations over the critical needs of its most vulnerable citizenry.*

### **AHS Recommendations**

AHS urges that City Council:

- I. Instruct the Planning and Housing Departments to provide an estimate how many Pasadena tenants are behind in rent as a result of the COVID crisis;
- I. Set aside funds for legal representation of tenants facing eviction;
- II. Set aside funds to assist Pasadena tenants who are behind in rent because of COVID;
- III. Prioritize expenditures for WiFi infrastructure enhancements in low income areas; and
- IV. Prioritize expenditures designed to stabilize tenants and prevent displacements that have disparate impacts on the bases of race, ethnicity and/or low income status households.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michelle White*

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Elizabeth Elder  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 1:35 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FOR PASADENA COVID RELIEF FUNDS!!!

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Good afternoon Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers. My name is Beth Elder and I am a Pasadena resident, District 4. I am writing to urge Pasadena to follow the intent of the Federal Govt and give Pasadena residents a voice in how the \$25 Million ARPA funds are spent for Covid Relief.

Congress made it very clear that these funds are intended to be used to provide:

1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.
2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, such as:
  - Programs that facilitate access to health and social services;
  - Programs that address housing insecurity and lack of affordable housing;
  - Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health;
  - Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic."

Using Federal ARPA funds for building remodels, repairing sidewalks, traffic lights, and helping to bail out the Rose Bowl Operating Company, would be an unacceptable misappropriation that goes contrary to the stated intentions of Congress and would ignore the many, much more urgent needs of the Community in these difficult times. We urge the City to hold a public discussion allowing Community Members to tell the City what they need.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Elder  
91107

Sent from my iPad

**08/16/2021**  
**Item 18**

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Elisia Ligons Farmer <eli2ia@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 1:44 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** ARPA

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Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the City Council:

Our City received \$26 million this year through the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”). The Treasury Department’s guidance sets forth numerous eligible uses for these funds and specifically states “these resources lay the foundation for a strong, equitable economic recovery, not only by providing immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, but also by addressing the systemic public health and economic challenges that may have contributed to more severe impacts of the pandemic among low-income communities and people of color.” Eligible uses include

1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.
2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, who faced higher rates of infection, hospitalization, death, and unemployment, such as
  - Programs that facilitate access to health and social services;
  - Programs that address housing insecurity and lack of affordable housing;
  - Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health; and
  - Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic.

The City Council directed staff to prepare a comprehensive strategy for spending the remaining \$25 million of these funds. Instead of prioritizing funds for programs to benefit the marginalized and those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, staff’s recommendations include

- \$9.8 Million: to the General Fund to backfill revenue losses and to facilitate the continued bailing out of the Rose Bowl Operating Company (“RBOC”) (which received \$22.5 million from the General Fund reserves for FY 21 and FY22). Giving this money back to the General Fund does little for social programs. The Housing and Public Health Departments receive very little from the General Fund;
- \$8.539 million: for sidewalk improvements, traffic signals, bridge enhancements and other capital improvements; and
- \$2 million: to remodel Fire Station 38.

In contrast, City staff’s recommendations for our poor and marginalized residents comprise only 7.8% of the remaining \$25 million. They include

- Only \$400,000 for bridge housing (limited to students of Pasadena City College experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity);
- A mere \$150,000 for eviction prevention legal services; and
- Only \$200,000 for community violence prevention/intervention efforts.

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Staff's recommendations are grossly unfair, unwise, and completely disregard Congress' intent that these funds be used for programs that lift up our poor and marginalized residents. Please

- Reject staff's recommendations
- Please advise City staff to organize a forum where community members and experts can provide valuable input on how these funds should be used to ensure a strong, equitable recovery.

Thank you.

Elisia Farmer  
Pasadena 91103

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Akina Cox <[akina@pasadena.net](mailto:akina@pasadena.net)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 3:31 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 18

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Good afternoon Mayor Gordo and Councilmembers. My name is Akina Cox and I am a Pasadena resident writing to urge Pasadena to follow the intent of the Federal Govt and give Pasadena residents a voice in how the \$26 Million ARPA funds are spent. Congress made it very clear that these funds are intended to be used to provide:

- "1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.*
- 2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, such as:*
  - Programs that facilitate access to health and social services;*
  - Programs that address housing insecurity and lack of affordable housing;*
  - Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health;*
  - Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic."*

Using Federal ARPA funds for building remodels, repairing sidewalks, traffic lights, and helping to bail out the Rose Bowl Operating Company, would be an unacceptable misappropriation that goes contrary to the stated intentions of Congress and would ignore the many, much more urgent needs of the Community in these difficult times. We urge the City to hold a public discussion allowing Community Members to tell the City what **they need**.

Thank you,  
Akina Cox

--  
[ht](#)

**08/16/2021**  
**Item 18**

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Lena Kennedy <[Lena Kennedy](#)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 3:52 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** American Rescue Plan Act Appropriations - Agenda item #18

**CAUTION:** This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you **know** the content is safe. Report phish using the Phish Alert Button. [Learn more...](#)

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the City Council:

I am asking you to please not accept the Staff's recommendations regarding the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") \$26 million received. Staff's recommendations are grossly unfair, unwise, and completely disregard Congress' intent that these funds be used for programs that lift up our poor and marginalized residents. PLEASE

- Reject staff's recommendations
- Tell City staff to organize a forum where community members and experts can provide valuable input on how these funds should be used to ensure a strong, equitable recovery.

Our City received \$26 million this year through the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA"). The Treasury Department's guidance sets forth numerous eligible uses for these funds and specifically states "these resources lay the foundation for a strong, equitable economic recovery, not only by providing immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, but also by addressing the systemic public health and economic challenges that may have contributed to more severe impacts of the pandemic among low-income communities and people of color."

Eligible uses include

1. Assistance to households facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including food assistance, rent/mortgage assistance, and job training.
2. Uses that address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on low-income communities and people of color, who faced higher rates of infection, hospitalization, death, and unemployment, such as
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  - Programs that address the impacts of COVID-19 on education and child health; and
  - Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic.

The City Council directed staff to prepare a comprehensive strategy for spending the remaining \$25 million of these funds. Instead of prioritizing funds for programs to benefit the marginalized and those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, staff's recommendations include

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Fund does little for social programs. The Housing and Public Health Departments receive very little from the General Fund;

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- Only \$400,000 for bridge housing (limited to students of Pasadena City College experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity);
- A mere \$150,000 for eviction prevention legal services; and
- Only \$200,000 for community violence prevention/intervention efforts.

Thank you.

Lena Louise Kennedy | Pronouns: She/her/hers  
Community Women Vital Voices

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**"You shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters...and whatsoever you do shall prosper." Psalms 1:3**