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For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Rhovlynn Antonio, Chief of Staff
(408) 535-4901, rhovlynn.antonio@sanjoseca.gov

Councilmember Pete Constant Releases Common-Sense Budget Proposals to Preserve Public Safety in the City of San José

SAN JOSÉ, CA – On May 25th, Councilmember Pete Constant introduced nine common-sense budget proposals to restore public safety and to provide the funding to prevent the much feared lay off of 97 police officers. These cost-saving ideas are presented in individual Budget Documents submitted to Mayor Chuck Reed to guide the Mayor’s June Budget Message which the Mayor will release on June 3rd.

With the city’s looming General Fund shortfall of \$115 million for FY2011-2012, Constant’s budget proposals require city officials and administrators to prioritize preserving public safety in the City of San José.

“Budget reform must start at the top,” explained Constant. “Given the fiscal crisis and pending public safety emergency, it is imperative that we reallocate our limited resources to protecting the public safety. Elected officials must lead the way by matching budget priorities to the priorities of the residents. It’s time we put the public interest first.”

Constant’s budget proposals could save nearly 100 police officer positions by diverting multiple funding sources that he identified. One is the acceptance of a COPS Federal Grant that will keep 53 police officers on the streets for up to three years. The grant requires the city to provide additional funding, which Constant proposes to obtain from the excess Mayor and City Council Funds and the Asset Forfeiture Fund. This proposal shines a spotlight on the Mayor and City Council excess funds, or carryovers, that are often overlooked during the city’s annual budget process.

The Mayor and City Council office re-budgets consist of unallocated and unencumbered funds that each Council Office has been allowed to carry over to the next fiscal year. Constant believes that the Mayor and City Council budgets should not be given preferential treatment and that these rollover funds should be re-budgeted to fund essential police services. Historically, millions of dollars have been unnecessarily retained for discretionary spending by elected officials.

The remaining police officer positions would be restored through changing the span of control in the San José Police Department, as recommended by the City Auditor’s report of December 2010, and by decreasing General Fund support for Arts and Cultural Development. “Many of our residents have publicly advocated for putting public safety ahead of the arts,” said Constant. “A modest reduction of 16.9% in the Arts and Cultural Development budget is critical to give our residents the basic protection that they demand.”



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Other examples of Constant's common-sense budgeting include elimination of all city Boards and Commissions not required by the City Charter. This will allow staff with already limited resources to focus on providing essential services to the residents, such as preserving public safety and maintaining critical infrastructure.

In addition, Code Enforcement positions are proposed to be reinstated to prevent the department from converting to a system where violators are mailed meager warning letters rather than receiving actual citations. This budget proposal will enable Code Inspectors to continue to perform onsite visits and audits to ensure that the San José Municipal Code is enforced. Eliminating Code Inspector positions is detrimental to safety and the quality of life in San José.

Finally, Constant proposes decreasing General Fund support to the Office of Equality Assurance in order to reinstate the Workers' Compensation Claim Adjusters who currently handle a caseload that is 2-3 times the industry average. Further position eliminations would very likely result in increased costs associated with a growing number of employee disability retirements.

Constant's common-sense budget proposals steer the city toward prioritizing the residents' welfare, preserving public safety, and upholding the quality of life that San José's citizens expect from their government. Constant has proposed similar budget reforms in prior years; however, they have been consistently left out of the council discussion and budget priorities. Members of the public are encouraged to support Constant's cost-saving measures by attending budget hearings and contacting city leaders. To read Constant's recommended budget actions, please see the links below:

Links to Councilmember Pete Constant's Common-Sense Budget Documents:

- [Accept COPS Grant for 53 Police Officer Positions \(BD#10\)](#)
- [Modify Authorized Positions in Police Department to Add Back 21 Police Officer Positions and Re-Assign 87 Officers from Supervisory/Management Positions to Patrol \(BD#11\)](#)
- [Reduce Mayor and Council Reductions to Restore Police Officer Patrol Positions \(BD#12\)](#)
- [Restore 2 Police Officer Patrol Positions \(BD#13\)](#)
- [Reinstate 6.0 Code Enforcement Inspectors \(BD#14\)](#)
- [Reinstate 2.0 Workers' Compensation Claims Adjusters – *One-time* \(BD#15\)](#)
- [Reinstate 2.0 Workers' Compensation Claims Adjusters – *Ongoing* \(BD#16\)](#)
- [Restore Waste Bags to Trails, Parks & Dog Parks \(BD#17\)](#)
- [Eliminate Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, and Advisory Commissions not required by the City Charter or other authority \(BD#18\)](#)

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