

MXCAB Memo re November 12, 2024 Joint Meeting and Measure X Funding Process

Introduction

We appreciate the Board of Supervisors' (BOS) continued effort to include the Measure X Community Advisory Board (MXCAB) in the discussion of Measure X-funded projects and review of their performance. We are particularly grateful to have had the opportunity at the recent joint meeting to engage in a robust conversation about equity and its relevance to budgeting and programmatic decisions, and we genuinely look forward to extending it.

We believe that institutionalizing equity-based criteria into funding considerations and impact evaluation is critical to co-create a county centered on care and responsiveness. Regarding Measure X-funded initiatives, prioritizing an equity lens is particularly important for one-time allocations and those dedicated to funding infrastructure or special projects. Because these capital improvements can appear less tied to direct services for residents, elevating their human impact, particularly for the populations uplifted in the Measure X ballot language, is key.

MXCAB has also noted a lack of transparency and clarity on the overall process of Measure X funding, beginning with the routing and visibility of funding requests and extending into the uncertain timing and tenuous messaging around allocations. This has obstructed the delineation of an equitable and transparent process. In this vein, we ask that all formal requests for Measure X funds should be made public and submitted to MXCAB *in advance of Board of Supervisors meetings* to ensure meaningful and inclusive deliberation and discussion that encompasses, for example, how the proposal is related to the ballot's priority issues and populations. We believe this will help facilitate an open and robust evaluation of each proposal's merits and an opportunity for the public to learn and potentially pose questions around why a request is or is not entertained.

At the meeting on November 12, we were disappointed by what seemed like minimal substantive inquiry regarding expenditures, performance measures, unspent funds, and final allocations, particularly during the departmental presentations. While we are grateful for inclusion in the meeting, we believe there is room for improvement in both the processes leading up to it as well as its facilitation and content on the day of.

We share this memo's recommendations in the spirit of service and support and in recognition that the BOS and MXCAB are working toward the same goal—improved outcomes and more equitable services for residents. Our feedback centers MXCAB's core values and operating principles and our intent to ensure that residents see themselves and their futures reflected in the expenditure and impacts of Measure X dollars. We look forward to continuing our partnership and to serving as meaningful levers for transparency, shared decision-making, and accountability for Contra Costa residents.

Our specific recommendations are as follows:

Departmental reporting and presentation structure

We propose that all departments consider the following questions and guidelines when preparing their annual meeting presentations and corresponding materials:

- An impact statement that: (1) clearly states how the funded projects within your domain reflect both the scope and spirit of Measure X's ballot language and (2) what outcomes demonstrate direct and positive benefits for residents, particularly vulnerable populations and/or other named populations or service areas designated on the ballot.
- If you are reporting unspent funds, please explain why they have not yet been expended.
- If you are requesting a reallocation of unspent funds to a different expenditure or project, please provide a justification that includes: (1) why the funds are needed and cannot be supported through another revenue stream, (2) whether/how the reallocation will impact the original/intended funding area, and (3) how you have engaged the target population and/or relevant advisory bodies to assess whether the reallocation is warranted and/or can be otherwise spent on the intended population.
- If you are requesting funding for a capital project/improvement or infrastructure investment, please provide clarification on how this expense aligns with an equity lens.

Departmental allocation requests and funding decision-making process

MXCAB members and residents have observed a lack of clear direction from the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator's Office regarding amounts and allocation timeline for Measure X funds. To address this, we propose the following:

- Increased transparency and consistency of process so that MXCAB and residents have a clear understanding of when funding allocations will be made. A historical lack of clarity around this has impeded residents' advocacy and organization.
- All departmental Measure X funding requests should be routed through MXCAB so that our members and, more importantly, the public are apprised of them ahead of any Board of Supervisors meeting dates and can plan accordingly.
- Explicit discussion and assurance that issues and populations named in ballot measure are prioritized in funding allocations.

Process recommendations

- To foster more robust and inclusive discussion, we maintain that more time should be allotted to the agenda for the annual joint meeting. We propose a two-day span that is structured as either: (1) a first day of department report-outs, followed by allocations on the next day or (2) departmental presentations and discussion broken up over two days, with allocations made on the second day.
- MXCAB members and Supervisors should be able to pose all types of questions, both clarifying and discussion, to department heads and staff at the time of their presentation.

- During the allocations discussion, we ask that the CAO incorporate MXCAB's funding priorities into the slide deck identifying all funding requests (Department, Supervisors, Community Advisory Board).
- We ask that the joint meeting be co-chaired by BOS and MXCAB and that an explicit give and take between supervisors and MXCAB member questions is conducted.

CAO-specific recommendations

- The Innovation Fund is a unique opportunity to pilot new initiatives and support incubating and grassroots organizations to scale and sustain their work. Mapping service area coverage in the presentation would help residents see who and where innovative services are being delivered and where the gaps are.
- Specifying the allocation date would help track the expediency and efficiency of getting funds out to the community and reassure residents that their dollars are hard at work and meeting urgent needs.

Performance measures reporting

- Program/project goals and objectives should be clearly defined in the performance measures chart.
- Service coverage area should be included to inform residents of where and to what communities funds are being allocated (with the label "countywide" if services or project is delivered throughout the county).
- Qualitative data should be integrated into impact measures and reporting: Who and how are people being served and benefiting, beyond the numbers? Are we fostering a more inclusive, safe, and resilient county for **all** residents?

Next steps

We ask that a discussion item on the subject of MXCAB, and including MXCAB members, be agendaized at a Board of Supervisors meeting in the near future. Through this opportunity, we hope to:

- Discuss the feedback and recommendations provided in this memo.
- Extend the conversations around equity begun at the November 12 meeting.
- Consider how to facilitate and sustain a productive relationship with members of the Board of Supervisors.
- Better understand Supervisors' priorities related to equity and intended processes for Measure X funding deliberations so MXCAB can better support them.
- Discern when MXCAB will have the opportunity to provide input on the remaining Measure X funding allocations.