

July 8, 2025

To: Supervisor Candace Andersen, District II, Chair
Supervisor John Gioia, District I
Supervisor Diane Burgis, District III
Supervisor Ken Carlson, District IV
Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston, District V

I want to address four points that underscore the importance of accessibility, impact, equity, and accountability in the framing, implementation, and outcomes for the public process related to American Rescue Plan (ARPA) dollars.

First, ARPA funds were intended to promote equitable recovery and address economic and health disparities through targeted and transformative investments. Equity was defined as a core pillar of successful implementation and integrated into reporting mandates. **Therefore, equity must also be the frame and foundation for the county's public process for and allocation of all remaining ARPA funds.**

I serve on evaluation panels for the California Arts Council and worked with them to develop and refine equity scorecards to guide assessment of grant applications. This rubric has undeniably allowed us to more equitably allocate a limited amount of dollars to fund new projects; strengthen capacity of smaller, grassroots arts organizations; and ultimately reach more under-served people and under-resourced areas throughout the state. At the July 8 meeting, I urge the Board to discuss how *you* will embed and elevate equity principles into *not just the outreach but the evaluation* of resident needs brought forward during public input. Doing so will ensure that ARPA's spirit and intent is suffused throughout the entirety of this critical and long-awaited process.

Second, I urge the Board to allocate an appropriate level of funding to engage residents untouched by our current channels. **Meaningful outreach and inclusive accessibility demands investment—both in time and dollars.** Some districts, particularly those with very diverse populations or transportation issues, may wish to host more than one convening, and some supervisors might offer multiple language interpretation, food, or other amenities to boost participation. Supervisors should have the latitude and capacity to create a structure that works best for their constituents and enables them to hear new voices. The County Administrator Office's (CAO) current estimate included in the Board packet for Tuesday's meeting does not adequately scale to the call for a robust public process or factor in these considerations.

Third, **all of the remaining ARPA funds were promised a public process** on April 22, 2024, and the CAO was directed "to seek community input on how to allocate available funds." (Board of Supervisors meeting minutes, April 22, 2024). This was mandated when the CAO was directed to claim \$37.5 million in remaining ARPA funds to offset a portion of the General Fund subsidy to the Hospital Enterprise Fund and to include a general fund assigned reserve designation in a like amount. In April 2025, the CAO reported \$20.9 million in allocatable funds, of which

approximately \$6 million was used to fund various items, leaving \$14.7 million in the general fund. At the June 24, 2025 meeting, the CAO reported an additional recovery of \$7.8 million, bringing the total to \$22.5 million, of which you have allocated \$5 million to the five districts, leaving \$17.5M to address countywide needs. **I am reminding you that all those dollars are and should be part of the public process** we are taking pains to construct at this time. If we are going to great lengths to structure, resource, convene, evaluate, and report on this public process, it makes absolute sense to include all available money for deliberation.

Having said that, we are all aware that countywide needs surpass the available amount, and yet this should not limit our approach to meeting as many of them as we can—*as meaningfully and equitably as we can*—with this limited-time, time-sensitive pot of money.

Supervisors, please ensure that your public processes inform residents of the full amount of remaining ARPA dollars intended to fulfill equity-based goals and deliver deep impact to structurally vulnerable and marginalized residents. Please do not limit your discussions to the \$1 million allocated to your district. Gathering input with this broader vision will enable you to account for more resident needs and share more robust and representative information with your colleagues at the final allocations meeting this fall.

Last, the snapshot of existing programs in the areas of housing and food security reported on by the CAO and included in the agenda packet are making impact, most notably by lowering our rates of homelessness in the 2025 Point in Time Count, evidencing that prevention-oriented programs and services are a best practice and critical mandate. However, it is obvious that they are not going far enough, as evidenced by the hundreds of service providers, residents, and advocates who have spoken at public meetings over the past year to inform the supervisors and its advisory bodies that these programs and levels of funding are not achieving the outcomes, meeting the needs, or addressing the service gaps or population-level disparities required to both prevent and triage this moment and crisis, which, as we also all know, is only going to worsen with the recent passage of the state budget and Congress's budget reconciliation package.

This is to say that we have had consistent articulation and diverse documentation of urgent countywide issues related to basic needs. At the same time, if we do this public process right, evidence of additional needs will surface, some of which will be just as compelling and urgent as the other asks on the table. **This is why we need to ensure that all available funds are included in our discussions and deliberations and a transparent and equity-focused framework guides decision-making.**

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Rosekind', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rachel Rosekind, PhD, MLIS