

Placer County Budget Recommendations 2020-2021
Submitted by
Kristine Johnson
Granite Bay, CA
May 2, 2020

Our annual budget has grown beyond a billion dollars, but our services and quality of services to our citizens has been dismally shrinking, reducing the overall quality of life in our county. We need to *stop spending on things for the government* and invest more in serving the needs of our citizens.

For example, in 2015 the Board of Supervisors hired Dr. Robert Marbut of Sarasota Florida to do a study and make recommendations on solving our growing challenges with an increasing population of homeless people including children and families. The basic recommendation: Need for housing with services at the ready for the myriad of issues these people face. What has been done in 5 years? Very little, a "trust fund" has been established. In the meantime, our homeless situation has gotten far worse costing us millions in policing efforts and other public resources.

Our population is aging, we have a lot of seniors living alone who need food assistance as well as just someone to stop by regularly, but the amount of people who can be served by our county meals on wheels program is tiny, half of what El Dorado county (a less populous, less wealthy county) does: our limit is 250 people with a closed waiting list (you need to have letters from medical professionals to get on the list) with abysmal, inedible food prepared by the jail inmate program. El Dorado county has employees preparing healthy, tasty food. Our supervisors were jubilant a few years ago when they got rid of county food service workers to hire even lower paid workers through contractors.

Our aging population has also motivated the approval of thousands of assisted living home beds run by for profit organizations. These homes are staffed by minimum wage workers who travel long distances from outside our county; in older, higher emission vehicles during rush hours just to work here. We have NO AFFORDABLE HOUSING for them. In my community, we have over 500, beds already built and another 270 approved. This is approximately 5 times the national average for the over 65 community population. Residents and workers come from outside our community, away from their own families just so a handful of developers make a pile of cash when they get the rezoning needed to develop for this purpose. AND our planning department does the work for getting the approvals for these facilities and other outside developer projects.

In the meantime, the county spends millions of dollars on stuff for the government. I will give you one big wasteful example: The county spent millions on new voting machines for every precinct in the county. They had to build a warehouse to store the equipment that now arrives in locked rolling cages delivered by drayage to over 300 precincts in the county. I have worked the last couple elections as an inspector or a judge, for 17 hours on election day, plus training

beforehand, supervising 5 additional workers. The wonderful new machines the county provided were avoided by the voters (not one vote in my precinct, good thing as they had only provided 3 sheets of paper for printing those ballots). We processed about 150 ballots in each election. All that work, all that expense and now a warehouse to store it in. Why aren't we moving like other counties across the state to mail in with some drop off stations? This process is serving profiteers, not voters.

Ultimately, it needs to be a new day in Placer county, where tax dollars are spent to serve the people of our community, not our government entities. We need to analyze each department's effectiveness in delivering the services our community requires.

CFW

May 3, 2020

Chair Bonnie Gore and Members of the Placer
County Board of Supervisors:
175 Fulweiller Avenue
Auburn, Ca 95602

Dear Chair Bonnie Gore and Members of the Placer
County Board of Supervisors:

Thank you for your kind invitation to participate in the County budgeting process by affording the public an opportunity to “weigh-in on how Placer County should allocate its budget”.

In general, the County budget categories are insufficiently specific to afford transparency about expenditures and to allow the public to access information on specific allocations. Because of that, my comments and questions that follow are general in nature and do not relate to a specific line item. They do however seek to have the Budget categories organized in such a way that citizens can effectively “weigh-in”.

My comments also concern land use issues but my hope is that, in general, the Budget will provide a secure safety net for people and families who are suffering financial loss and emotional strain during this COVID emergency. We are our brother’s (and sister’s) keeper.

Will you please identify for me, where the *payback from Placer Ranch, Inc.* is indicated in the budget document? Since 2016, the County has fronted all predevelopment costs for this developer (who incidentally has a personal fortune of \$6.8 billion dollars - this is separate from his income from other business entities). County staff and a myriad of consultants have billable hours and fees that to my best knowledge exceeds \$5 million dollars; although staff is unable to ascertain which costs accrue to Placer Ranch and which to the Sunset Area Plan Update. The EIR pertained to both the Sunset Area Plan and Placer Ranch and to extricate what is billable to Placer Ranch specifically will be a challenge. Further, the cost of funds should be recaptured as it is not in the public interest for the developer to enjoy a multi-year “loan” from the public - interest-free, I understand that under the County’s Charter, that the County may not “earn a profit”, but recapturing the cost of funds and accrued interest over a five year term is good business - not profiteering. Otherwise, the use of public funds for a private purpose is a gift of public funds to a very wealthy individual. It is an unfair subsidy that with interest compounded - may amount to over \$1 million if the loan were repaid with interest today, The longer the loan is outstanding, the larger the interest due. I feel that it is important for these costs to be audited to assure the County is being made whole. I have memoranda from the Staff wherein they state that they do not know definitively what the Placer Ranch cost obligation is. Inasmuch as Placer

Ranch Inc. is going to “flip”/sell this project, I feel that it is imperative that the County settle this “loan” with full transparency before a new Placer Ranch owner comes on the scene. If a future developer will be the responsible party for outstanding costs, will you please inform the public?

You are well aware that the Placer Ranch Project is currently being litigated, Is the developer paying these litigation costs or is this a burden on Placer County taxpayers? I cannot make this determination by reviewing the Budget. I request herein, that going forward, the County’s lawsuits and the budgets related thereto be broken out by project to allow citizens to see exactly how public funds are expended when the County faces a lawsuit over a project approval. Placer County is among the most heavily litigated County’s in the State and it would be most helpful to citizens and the Board to see the total litigation budget *by project*; and to see how the failure to achieve consensus on land use matters ends-up diverting scarce public funds to defend controversial private development and away from other more public serving uses.

The Placer Ranch Development Agreement provides that Placer Ranch will pay a “fair share” not to exceed \$3 million to retrofit the landfill to mitigate up to 70% of odor - separate from cancer-causing particles. The total cost of the 70% smell remediation technology (which is untested) is estimated in the FEIR at almost \$19 million, During the Public Hearings, I recall that statements were made that the public at large would not be burdened with increased garbage rates to make up the balance of the “fair-share”- \$16 million. I do not see any allocation for the landfill retrofit in the Budget and will appreciate clarification from Staff about the source of funds for the odor project and why the item is not budgeted.

The County agreed to pay for traffic improvements in Rocklin and Roseville as a part of the Placer Ranch Project approval. It was generally understood that these cities would not challenge the County’s Project approval if these funds were paid-out. Will you please identify these pay-outs specifically in the Budget document and their total cost - which are, in essence, a subsidy to Placer Ranch.

The cost of a Section 404 Permit from the Army Corps of Engineers is \$62,166 per acre for the application plus \$16,787 per acre for impacts to waters. The Placer Ranch Project must still secure a Section 404 Permit. How many acres are subject to a Section 404 Permit? Are Placer County citizens paying for the Section 404 Permit and Application Fees or is the cost to be borne by the property owner? I do not see a line-item for these costs or the probable NEPA analysis that the Corps will require in the Budget. Will you please clarify the cost responsibility, and if it is a public cost, explain where it is in the Budget and explain if the NEPA analysis is the Community Development Agency budget and how much that NEPA analysis will be?

Prior to the approval of the Placer Ranch Project and in response to a public request, Staff stated that all costs of the Placer Ranch Project would be accounted-for in a single document so that the Board and the public could see the big cost picture - the public cost burden of the Project. To the best of my knowledge, this summation of all costs was never produced. I herein request that it be provided to the public and those items in the Capital Improvement Budget

under consideration on Tuesday that concern directly and indirectly the Placer Ranch Project be captured-segregated in one place for transparency and clarity.

Please segregate costs specific to the Hidden Falls Expansion Project from other items in the Capital Improvement and Parks Budget. I am interested to know what percentage of the County's expenditures in these two budget categories are attributable to the Hidden Falls Expansion Project. It is of interest to me to know what percentage of the total County Parks Budget will be expended at Hidden Falls as compared to other park areas in the other Supervisorial Districts.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to participate in the Budgeting process, I think the exercise is a wonderful way to encourage active citizenship and build understanding and support in the community for our government systems.

Sincerely,

Leslie Warren
Auburn, CA

From: [Bob Gilliom](#)
To: [Megan Wood](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Placer County FY20/21 Annual Budget
Date: Monday, May 4, 2020 2:31:50 PM

To: Board of Supervisors

In 1998, the Placer County Supervisors appointed a Citizen’s Committee for the “Placer Legacy Program”. After a year of stakeholder meetings and public workshops, the Committee recommended: *“a large regional park in the Garden Bar/Bear River area coupled with the conservation of oak woodland and riparian habitat.”* The answer is Hidden Falls Regional Park, hopefully soon to be combined with the proposed Hidden Falls Trail Expansion. This is and will be a Legacy project with huge public benefits. Other high-value public projects include Waddle Ranch and Cisco Grove, and other projects, like Natural Trading Company and Sundance Lakeview Farm are protecting our agricultural heritage. Placer Legacy, in short, has been a hugely successful program and it should be continued with adequate funding. I recommend that Placer Legacy be funded at \$2 million for fiscal year 2020/2021.

Robert Gilliom

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From: [Jeff Darlington](#)
To: [Megan Wood](#)
Subject: Placer County BUDGET comment: Placer Legacy
Date: Monday, May 4, 2020 4:33:52 PM

To: Placer County Board of Supervisors
c/o: Clerk of the Board Megan Wood via email (mwood@placer.ca.gov)

Re: Placer County Budget

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing on behalf of Placer Land Trust to encourage the Board of Supervisors to allocate at least \$1M to the Placer Legacy Open Space Fund for the coming fiscal year.

Placer Legacy funding is needed on a more continual basis to entice additional millions of dollars of State and other funding into Placer County to protect our quality of life. When Placer Land Trust is able to count on Placer Legacy Open Space funding conservation projects, we have been 100% successful (11 out of 11 projects over the past 16 years) in leveraging County funding to obtain out-of-county funds and completing those projects successfully. Without Placer Legacy Open Space funding, we've been less successful completing projects including having to "pass" on several great conservation opportunities.

Conservation is a truly local investment. In addition to leveraging significant out-of-county funding, Placer County's conservation funding is invested locally through willing seller transactions with local landowners, supports local jobs and stimulates the local economy, and creates lasting economic, environmental, and social benefit for local residents. With adequate support, Placer Land Trust is poised to move forward with willing sellers on several multi-benefit conservation projects in 2021 that could result in additional recreation opportunities, protected farms and ranches, and advancement of the PCCP jump-start and stay-ahead provisions.

I encourage the Board to allocate \$1M funding to the Placer Legacy Open Space Fund to continue working with Placer Land Trust and other partners to permanently protect open space as our County continues to grow.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Darlington

Executive Director
Placer Land Trust
11641 Blocker Drive, Suite 220
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 887-9222

From:
To: [Megan Wood](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2021 budget
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 8:56:44 AM

In these times the Placer Legacy program is more important than ever. I encourage the board to fund Placer Legacy at the \$1 million level or more. Protecting open space and agriculture lands are key to protecting the quality of life in Placer County.

Placer Legacy has been a great investment for the county, leveraging funds, returning much more to the county than it spends. Without it, Placer Land Trust and others will be less likely to be able to qualify for grants that leverage these funds.

Thanks,

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Jim Haagen-Smit

May 5. 2020
Feedback on proposed 2020-2021 budget

Supervisors, CEO, Auditor/Controller,

This is an extraordinary time which requires immediate and bold measures by government. Placer residents' health & safety, and small business recovery should be the County's top priorities (as there are unknown costs and impacts with the Covid-19 pandemic and 95% of businesses in Placer are small businesses). If it isn't related to one these then it should not be a priority. Placer's focus should be on "**Essential Business**", risks need to be quantified, and contingency plans put in place. The words Supplemental Requests in the proposed budget should be replaced with Reduction wherever possible.

It is clear from looking at the proposed budget that the current risks to resident's health and safety needs have not been adequately planned for, the economic risks have not been adequately measured, the immediacy of action required has not even been considered, and the priorities are not focused on essentials.

Minor references throughout the report with a "watch and see" regarding Covid-19 health and business risks and impacts are underplaying the data in front of you. This past week California unemployment was reported at 4.1 million (this is approximately 10% with known challenges getting through to the EDD system and are expected to be as high as 20%). In looking at the WARN Act data already available for Placer County and surrounding Sacramento region one can already see the businesses laying off locally. Healthcare which is one of the largest employers in the area responsible for economic growth is suffering horribly. There are also multiple sources indicating a worsening of the already bad affordable housing shortage and a potential housing crash. Universities are also suffering, with the Sunset Area plan/Placer Ranch holding this up to be a key driver for jobs.

Stop business as usual: 1. Enforce accountability, 2. Expose areas of funding that are non-essential or wasteful and 3. focus on health, safety and recovery activities

1. For Accountability an independent audit is needed

- Need accountability & reporting on all projects (what revenue is coming from all of the approved projects?. Is the spending Planning is doing is actually making any money? Are projects like affordable housing actually delivering housing (it is a rhetorical question, they are not).
 - **Policies for all in lieu fees need to be examined.**
 - **Mitigation fees for all projects need to be tracked and reported by project**

- Costs for programs that never get delivered or deliver the bare minimum (Affordable housing, sustainability, transportation plan update).
- Tracking of multi-year projects that get renegotiated. What are the losses to the County?
- Taxes are collected for roads, sewer, schools, fire but the reality is they seem to always need bond measures to deliver the services, which means raised taxes.
- Costly surveys that do not accomplish work and whose results are often ignored are non-essential.
- Outreach /advertising for road tax measure for ballot is non-essential
- Six year developer extensions means lost dollars for county, i.e., waste.
- Examine all in lieu fees collected.
 - Stop Affordable Housing in lieu fees -how much given away in actual affordable homes?
 - Tree preservation funds are unaccounted for. The county has received expert opinion that they are charging several times less than other counties for protected trees. Requests for data have gone unanswered.
- Costs for ordinance updates. A non essential activity. Thousands of pages of expensive consultant delivered documentation that no one wants (examples are the Zoning Text Amendment, Winery & Brewery ordinance)
- Time to deliver Affordable Housing has been excessive and after many significant plans have been put in place. The most essential plan for affordable housing should have been delivered prior to any of the specific plans. Priorities need to be audited.
- User satisfaction needs to be included as success criteria.

2. Expose areas of funding that are non-essential or wasteful

Workforce is 1/3 of Placer County budget.

- The lions share of the budget is in California Development Resource Agency.
 - CDRA planning staff is huge,
 - the avg pay for Placer Planning is very high for CA,
 - bonuses are received,
 - CDRA Planning is currently working on non essential projects, hence many workers could be deemed non essential.
 - Housing is expected to fall, so usually planning department is cut during recessions.
 - CDRA organization is top heavy with directors and principal & Senior planners. In addition, the planning folks don't actually do much of the work, they hire expensive consultants.
- Calpers is in jeopardy. A recent editorial in the Sacramento Bee titled Pension Spiking showdown at the California Supreme Court- Stating justices should end abusive public retirement practice and reconsider decades of misguided legal doctrine. There is currently a large unfunded liability and we are entering a recession.

- Wasteful raise practices such as 8% compaction where managers got salaries bumped to make more than their staff, not for performance
- Several managers receiving 10% yearly raises, where it is reported that employees receive 2-5% a year. Bonuses and promotions are handed out mid year in addition.
- Corporate America is laying off workers and reducing spending, the County needs to take immediate action for this budget. Large cuts in staff, repurposing workers to essential activities, furloughs, cuts in pay, and no new consultant contracts unless critical infrastructure

3. Focus on health, safety and recovery activities

What do we need want for Covid related essentials and small business recovery?

- A single line item in the proposed budget on CTO's proposal for evaluating the needs for recovery. Why hasn't this been started and have a list of items that need to be targeted and investigated for **essential activities**?
- Compare this to the almost dozen pages of CDRA requested budget (complete big picture planning efforts, remove impediments to development - of which many projects are in litigation, technology improvements, upgrades, improve efficiencies, professional services, begin study of a potential update...all buzzwords for **non-essential activities**)
- What is the percentage of funds actually is planned to be spent on services for residents services?
- What trailers, housing, services are being spent to house infected individuals? What money is being spent on homeless- at risk for the virus?
- What is the County forecasting spending on protective gear for medical personnel?
- Has the need for additional law enforcement been evaluated with a recession looming? Is crime expected to rise?
- Has the need for additional law enforcement been evaluated with more visible protests and non-compliance with government orders?
- Outreach to identify community needs should be done prior to establishing the budget for Health and Human Services.
- What are the contingency plans/budget for rolling back shelter in place if needed?

The time for a call to action is now. Please stop business as usual in these times that are desperate for many. Focus on the needs of the community. Focus on essential activities, cut where needed. Tough and immediate decisions are required.

Thank you for consideration of my input.

Cheryl Berkema
Placer County Resident

From:
To: [Megan Wood; Placer County Board of Supervisors](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Placer County 2020 budget concerns - public comment
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 11:25:20 AM
Attachments: [PC pay data.pdf](#)

Dear Supervisors,

Today as you review the 2020 department head budgets I ask that you consider the long term impacts your budget decisions have on this county and its residents. The attached chart shows the continually increase in the number of and compensation levels for county employees with median compensation levels and total county employees since 2011 rising 20% and 11% respectively . Relative to this fact, over the past few years I have observed a continuous stream of extremely generous raises and promotions to Community Resource Development Agency and other Placer County staff including but not limited to Dan Dottai, E.J. Ivaldi, Ryan Ronco, Karin Schwab and Steve Pedreitti. The salaries of these individuals are above the state averages for their positions and these raises add to the increasing retirement payout burden of the county which is leading us towards a precarious time when our budget will be dominated by fiscal impacts of CalPERS distributions.

In addition, there has been a disturbing trend within the county of using taxpayer funds to pay for development costs including environmental review and analysis (see Sunset development costs). This is especially concerning in light of the disturbing trend identified above. In this time of loom fiscal crisis due to the state mandated closures of many of our businesses, it is your duty to show restraint and work to reduce the budget expenditures presented to you today.

Respectfully,

Scott Vaughan

Concerned Homeowner and Taxpayer