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DEPARTMENT OF  
FINANCE

CITY OF SACRAMENTO  
CALIFORNIA

CITY HALL  
ROOM 14  
915 I STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CA  
95814-2696

BUDGET DIVISION

March 28, 1991

916-449-5845

Budget and Finance Committee and  
Transportation and Community Development Committee  
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members In Session:

**SUBJECT:** League of Women Voters - "People's Budget"

**SUMMARY:**

The League of Women Voters of Sacramento is sponsoring a program titled "People's Budget". The attached letter addressed to Councilmembers outlines the program. A presentation will be given by representatives of the League of Women Voters explaining the program.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This report is for Committee information only.

Sincerely,

KEN NISHIMOTO  
Budget Manager

Attachment

APPROVED FOR COMMITTEE INFORMATION

  
JACK R. CRIST  
Deputy City Manager

CONTACT PERSON: KEN NISHIMOTO  
(916) 449-5736

April 2, 1991  
All Districts



# The League of Women Voters of Sacramento

1507 21ST STREET, SUITE 303, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814 (916) 443-3678

March 27, 1991

Hon. Mayor and Members of the City Council  
City Hall  
915 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council, Budget and Finance Committee:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters and the participants in our new leadership development program focusing on the City budget, this letter expresses our appreciation for your support and interest and for the cooperation of the City Manager and budget staff. We commend the City for this outreach. Also we invite and encourage members of the Budget and Finance Committee to attend the April 6 negotiation workshop that will culminate the first phase of this program.

The goal of this program is to enhance citizen participation in development of the City's priorities and to empower citizens to participate effectively in shaping those priorities as they are reflected in its budget. We hope by this new approach not only to maximize common interests but to avoid the usual pitfalls of citizen input: (1) lack of understanding of budget basics; (2) unrealistic expectations reflected in wish lists that the City cannot fund; (3) divisive competition based on private agendas rather than common goals; (4) confrontation politics.

With your help we have assembled a diverse cross section of informed citizens representing varied interests and neighborhoods that historically have shared common goals but have diminished their shared interests by competing with each other for scarce dollars - usually late in the hearing process - if they have participated at all.

Sal Streett of Organizational Dimensions has worked with us to develop a training program and select participants. Over three Saturdays in March Mr. Streett has trained the program participants in interest bargaining and has facilitated their identification of common interests and goals. Councilmember Kim Mueller, City Manager Walter Slipe and budget staff including Ken Nishimoto and Betty Masuoka have generously provided basic background information about how the budget is assembled and the constraints upon City revenues and spending.

April 6 will be an all day workshop--9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Community Center Nevada Room. The two groups will meet as one for the first time and conclude their negotiation training in the morning. In the afternoon they will negotiate a consensus summary of issues generated from their diverse communities. This statement of priorities will be presented by the group to the City Council early in the budget hearing process. You are invited to attend either or both sessions of the April 6 workshop.

Interest bargaining is an approach to consensus building developed by the Harvard Negotiating Institute and has been used locally with success by the San Juan and Sacramento City School Districts. Mr. Streett has trained teachers in this technique in 5 Pacific coast states including California - his contribution to Sacramento's project represents over \$12,000 in time value.

Although communities across the country have used this method to resolve such disputes as the siting of low income housing, we know of no community that has employed this training and approach to budgeting.

Some of the benefits we anticipate for the City include:

- broader based citizen participation in the budget process
- identification and empowerment of new community leadership
- opportunities for a broader range of stakeholders to participate more meaningfully in the democratic process
- potential surfacing of issues and needs not formerly identified
- potential new approaches to evaluating the success of City programs in setting and achieving their stated goals
- recognition that the City Council has affirmatively reached out to residents who might not otherwise participate in the budget process
- potential to serve as a model for other group decision-making efforts

At the end of this first phase, the value of this approach to resolution of other community issues -- for example, redistricting -- should be evident. We hope it's just a beginning. We welcome your insights into evaluating this pilot project and future opportunities.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the status of this project. We look forward to the group's product and to discussing it with you during the course of the budget hearings this Spring. If you will attend on April 6 please RSVP to Sal Streett (971-3761).

Very truly yours,



Charity Kenyon  
League of Women Voters of Sacramento  
Project Director

on behalf of the Project Committee: Judy Hoefling, President of LWVS; Eric Vega, Executive Director Human Rights/Fair Housing Commission; Vincent Harris, Executive Director Women's Civic Improvement Center; Velma Hall, Black Women for Parity; Kim Mueller, City Councilmember

cc: Walter Slipe, Ken Nishimoto, Betty Masuoka