



JUSTIN TSENG
City Councilor

City of Medford

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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To: City Clerk Adam Hurtubise
From: Councilor Justin Tseng
Re: **Preliminary Budget Requests for FY2026**

Dear Clerk Hurtubise,

I am submitting a list of preliminary budget recommendations.

First, I am grateful to our residents for voting Yes to invest in Medford's school, streets, and sidewalks last fall. This stabilization is crucial to retain critical school resources that so many Medford families rely on, improve education access and opportunity, and fix our streets and sidewalks. At the same time, our city government and our residents now face new challenges on the horizon arising from rising costs and the federal government.

The prospect of diminished freedoms and opportunities haunts Medford residents. To not only protect our residents but also continue building a Medford that is more inclusive and accessible, the City Council has been working hard to empower our residents by creating more seats at the table. Over the last year, the Council has been working with city staff and community members on reforming the Human Rights Commission and creating a Youth Commission. These two projects have been in the works for years. Through detailed discussions, we've determined that we should budget around **\$15,000 for the Human Rights Commission** (including stipends for members, research, and community events). We've also determined that we should spend about **\$20,000 on the Youth Commission** (including stipends for members, a stipend for a lead organizer/secretary, and funds for a youth summit). Community discourse has shed light on how crucial stipends are for ensuring a balanced representation on these bodies. Without them, we may not attract enough candidates to fill these seats.

We also cannot talk about youth and inclusion without drawing attention to increasing accessibility. That means listening to Medford parents who say we need **a therapeutic recreation specialist and the office manager for Medford Recreation** to improve our offerings.

Finding small dollar ways to improve our standard of living and safety, I would also recommend **increasing line-item spending for road signage/markings**. Lack of

funds for the necessary signage, marking, and striping to comply with our Safe Streets Policy often means that we cannot pave streets in a timely fashion. Even a modest investment would help us repave streets faster and ensure that these streets are safer for multi-modal transport. Recent tragic incidents on Medford roads also make clear that it is past time to **take action on the Bicycle Advisory Commission's priorities for safety improvements.**

We must also preserve funding for important programs that have and will drastically improve quality of life and the responsiveness of government here in Medford. Such examples include **maintaining our investments in our public schools, the Community Liaisons Program** (and seeking additional funding for an AAPI community liaison, be it from grants or the general fund), **translation services, rodent prevention, and the Affordable Housing Trust.**

Budget time is also a time for the City Council to raise attention to needed long-term finances. We should ask for concrete plans to **improve childcare access, update our city's financial software, increase financial and assessing staff** in light of potential tax reforms, **ensure Human Resources can complete their work in a more timely manner** (a matter which affects staff), and **raise the salaries of vacant positions to meet regional pay standards.** I thank the Council and the Administration for their consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Tseng', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Justin Tseng, Medford City Councilor