



Date: June 2, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council
City Manager Jōvan Grogan

From: Pat Nikolai, Chief of Police

Subject: Elected Chief Charter Amendment Ballot Measure

Unfortunately, I am out of the country on a pre-planned vacation, so I am unable to attend this meeting. However, I felt that it was important to provide input on this issue, so I am asking that this memorandum be included in your packet.

I am adamantly opposed to making the Chief of Police an appointed position. And the residents of Santa Clara agree with my opinion. I base that statement on the following facts:

- The voters have rejected this proposal in two previous elections.
- The last Charter Review Committee decided to not even place it on the ballot.
- A recent survey showed that the vast majority of respondents prefer having an elected Chief.

I find it ironic that the Council Pillar under which this measure is being proposed is “Enhance Community Engagement and Transparency”. Elections are the foundation of Community Engagement. How does taking the vote away from residents “enhance” their engagement.

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force also looked at this issue. They submitted a letter to the City Council stating, “...having an elected Chief of Police promotes access, accountability, and equity.” So again, I ask; How does making the Chief an appointed position “enhance transparency”.

Recent events have shown that an elected Chief is independent, and is willing to call out potential issues, putting public safety ahead of special interests. Would an appointed Chief have been willing to do the same?

I urge the City Council to focus on issues critical to the City, such as finding a long-term budget solution to our ongoing structural deficit and the critical shortage in our Capital Improvement budget.