From: Joe Curnow
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 10:03 AM
To: CLK-CityClerks
Subject: Re: Rescheduled Executive Policy Committee Budget Delegation Meeting

Millennium library installed racist, classist, security screening. Library management has announced publicly that this is a failed policy. There has been a 30% drop in attendance- In September, Millennium for All provided PCSP with ample evidence a 60+ page report that gives you the evidence you need on community-led librarianship. On Sept 9 PCSP voted to support funding for Elders in residence, crisis workers, and de-escalation and antiracism training. And yet despite the fact that 3 PCSP members are on the EPC plus 2 working group, calls to city managers have confirmed for us that there is no funding included from this referral. While the money for the community hub space is important, it is clear from the research that it is inadequate.

What has become clear is that rather than investing in libraries as life sustaining services, beautiful spaces that create community. Cuts to library hours and access, a refusal to invest in the system will not do. You have talked about safety and security, but these are investments in community led librarianship that make people safer in real ways, not theatre of the screening. We need you to advance amendments to this budget to reinstate the funding for alternatives to screening

I want to be clear that this funding shouldn't happen at the expense of other social programs. Take it from policing, take it from roads. But we should be funding all of the social services that 3 of you have advanced- things like leisure guide programming, trees, transit- and Upass in particular. These programs are what make communities safer, and there is SO much research that shows that investment in community services leads to far better outcomes, especially in contrast to criminalization and policing.

I am also here in my capacity as a professor- my PhD is in community development and antiracism, and I want to say that this process has been appalling. In my 20 years as a cd worker, and 10 years of studying this- this is truly the worst process I have ever seen of community consultation. Mayor Bowman has talked a big game about this being transparent and has welcomed community outrage as Budget for All members ran around in swimsuits in the lobby, or held hockey games, did tree poses. But what I find shocking is the continued invitation to community members to take their days of work to sit here, to speak passionately about the impacts of the cuts. 50 people packed the gallery in Sept when PCSP voted on the Millennium Library alternative security funding. And yet, it seems to have no impact on decision making at all. The last 4 days of committees have listened to people spend 12 hours of testimony, evidence based research, and had it make NO DIFFERNCE. I saw you do this in November, and now again in March. This is a shame and it hurts democracy. This is particularly egregious in the context of a public health crisis, where you are demanding people risk their health to participate in what is appearing to be a complete farce of public engagement.

I teach civic engagement and I would honestly like to now how I might be expected to go into class and tell my students that they should be civically engaged, that they should teach their K-12 students that participating in the life of this city is worth it, that writing letters is meaningful. That speaking to council has any chance of impacting the future of the city to make it more equitable and more livable. There has been no evidence through this process of you listening to or meaningfully responding to delegations, community outrage, letters, petitions, or any other forms of public participation.

I am asking you to listen to what we are saying. To actually listen. And to make our civic engagement matter. We are asking you to fund library alternative security measures, to reinstate library hours, to fully fund leisure guides, to invest in trees fully, to fund the arts, to defend the UPass. We need you to take this out of the backroom wheeling and dealing and actually listen, actually make a public stand for community services.