

City of Mountain View
City Clerk
Agenda 062524
P.O. Box 7540
Mountain View 94039-7540

RECEIVED

JUN 25 2024

CITY CLERK

Dear City Council Members,

The proposed utility increases are a burden on the population of Mountain View, in particular, for people who are on fixed incomes, such as the disabled and seniors. The utility increases occur every year without pause and the rate increases are higher than the CPI index. This is of particular concern in the light of the financial irregularities which occurred in 2020, 2021 and 2022, when \$23.4 million more in profits over a four year period were pulled in by Recology. This is more than the city allows in profits. The city had an agreement with Recology for 9% profits. This revelation occurs after Recology paid San Franciscans \$94.5 million to reimburse them for over charges which were uncovered as a part of the City Hall corruption scandal linked to former Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru. The agreement was that the \$23.4 million would not be paid back to customers but would be used to offset any future rate increases. (In the San Francisco Chronicle By [Mallory Moench](#), [J.D. Morris](#) Updated May 17, 2022 6:19 p.m.) Instead, we see that the City of Mountain View is proposing a Recology rate increase of 6% for the coming year.

According to the "Refuse Rate Administrative Hearing" of May 9, 2023, Recology, at that time proposed rate increases of 3.9% and 2.05% for years 2024 and 2025 respectively, substantially less than what is currently being proposed. In addition, at that Administrative Hearing Recology also proposed a 9.89% profit, over the prior agreement of 9% profit. Recology also asked for 100% adjustments. However, it was pointed out that "The structure of a balancing account can help mitigate unintended consequences, but can also create new moral hazards; Recology currently owns all waste collection permits in San Francisco, giving them an effective monopoly. Combined with a balancing account with a 100% adjustment, Recology would have little incentive to control costs. In addition, a 100% adjustments guarantees a

9.89% profit margin (91% OR). “(Source: Refuse Rate Administrative Hearing May 9, 2023)

Recology of San Francisco charges more overall , and in some cases substantially more than other cities or counties . For example, it charges far more than Marin County, Sunnyvale and San Luis Obispo County. (Source: Refuse Rate Administrative Hearing May 9, 2023)

A comparison of Trash illustrates some of the differences:

“A Commercial Rate Comparison of Monthly 1 CY Bin once a week pick up Trash Service;” (Source: Refuse Rate Administrative Hearing , City and County of San Francisco May 9, 2023)

San Francisco = \$282.63

San Mateo County = 170.18

Los Angeles \$252.66

Recology is a monopoly and therefore it is able to overcharge. I submit that greater scrutiny over its practices must occur in order to protect all Mountain View residents, but particularly those on fixed incomes who see their scarce financial resources being drained by a monopoly, Recology.

While we do need to see our Trash recycled, I submit to you that we also need a company that is honest and cost effective.

Thank you for your consideration.

Olga Bright

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olga Bright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MV resident

City of Mountain View
Clerk.

Agenda 062524

P.O. Box 7546

Mountain View, CA 94039-7546

RECEIVED

JUN 25 2024

CITY CLERK

From: Bruce England
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 12:20 PM
To: City Council; Showalter, Pat; Matichak, Lisa; Hicks, Alison; Ramirez, Lucas; Kamei, Ellen; Abe-Koga, Margaret; Ramos, Emily Ann
Cc: Bruce England
Subject: Re City Budget and Ballot Measure Amending Real Property Conveyance Tax

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Dear City Council members:

With regard to 6.3 Adoption of Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budgets, Fee Modifications, and Funding for Fiscal Year 2024-25 Capital Improvement Projects and 7.1 Call a Municipal Election for November 5, 2024, and Place a Ballot Measure Amending Real Property Conveyance Tax at your meeting this week, I'd like to share a few comments with you.

I was not entirely comfortable with the questions that were included in the revenue measure surveys, as I'm not confident they adequately capture the complexities and potential trade offs that need to be considered in just about any decision the City makes, as you certainly know.

That said, what I'm concerned about at this stage is that responses seem to reflect more a desire to fix and patch things rather than seek ways to make Mountain View the best city we can have as we head into the future. Do we need to ensure public safety and fix potholes? Sure. But we also need a thriving and healthy community, with all aspects of our environment taken into account as well. Environmental sustainability, active transportation, biodiversity and wildlife protection, and affordable housing for all, just to name a few, are essential components of the kind of community that we can be proud of and that makes sense to us.

Accordingly, I urge you to be cautious about putting too much emphasis on fixing and patching, and, instead, look for funding opportunities that lead us to a future that means more than just maintaining the status quo and rather puts focus on the aspirational. If we want the Community for All that we talk about, we need to work toward all this phrase implies.

The part of the ballot language that says "provide additional funding for services that protect local property values" could be taken to include some or all of the above, at least in spirit, so I will remain hopeful, and I look forward to seeing how projects play out in the course of future planning as a result of additional funding through the ballot measure, assuming it passes.

Thanks!
Bruce England

From: pam lehner
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2024 5:31 PM
To: City Council; Pam Lehner
Subject: Another way to tax homeowners

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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I find it interesting that the city is looking at spending so much money on pickleball courts, however appealing they may be, when they are so desperate for more money that they are planning to bring in even more taxes through a "measure". One that they openly admit will be at a lower level in order to get it passed and then they will raise again in a coming election. And, they are already planning for how they can get more money in 2026. Read for yourself and make up your own mind.

I for one, have had enough.

For context, I have put info below on the Racket Racket and the Simmering Frog analogies.

If you want to make your views known to the council, the email is in the address line.

Thank you,
Pam

[Mountain View moves forward with tax measure for November ballot](#)



Mountain View moves forward with tax measure for November ballot

Emily Margaretten

With early polling results indicating that Mountain View is headed in the right direction, the city is planning ...

Ratchet approach to introducing legislation

The ratchet approach refers to **a phenomenon where governments tend to introduce new legislation or regulations in response to crises**, which ultimately enhances their powers and makes it difficult to roll back or repeal these measures in the future. This concept was popularized by Robert Higgs in his book "Crisis and Leviathan".

Key Features of the Ratchet Approach:

- **Temporary measures:** Governments introduce temporary measures to address specific crises, such as wars, economic downturns, or natural disasters.
- **Expansion of government powers:** These temporary measures often lead to the expansion of government powers, as governments use the crisis as an opportunity to implement new policies and regulations.
- **Difficulty in rollback:** Once the crisis has passed, governments find it challenging to roll back or repeal these new measures, as they have become entrenched in the system.
- **Ratchet effect:** The ratchet effect occurs when governments use the momentum from the initial crisis to introduce further measures, which are then difficult to reverse.

Examples of the Ratchet Approach:

- **War-time measures:** Governments often introduce emergency measures during wartime, such as censorship, rationing, and conscription. These measures can become permanent even after the war has ended.
- **Economic crises:** Governments may introduce stimulus packages or bailouts during economic downturns, which can lead to the creation of new regulatory bodies or the expansion of existing ones.
- **Natural disasters:** Governments may introduce emergency measures during natural disasters, such as evacuations, curfews, or price controls. These measures can become permanent even after the disaster has passed.

Consequences of the Ratchet Approach:

- **Erosion of individual liberties:** The ratchet approach can lead to the erosion of individual liberties, as governments use crises as an opportunity to expand their powers and restrict individual freedoms.
- **Increased government spending and debt:** The ratchet approach can lead to increased government spending and debt, as governments use crises to justify the introduction of new programs and policies.
- **Inefficient allocation of resources:** The ratchet approach can lead to inefficient allocation of resources, as governments prioritize short-term solutions over long-term sustainability.

Conclusion:

The ratchet approach to introducing legislation is **a phenomenon where governments use crises as an opportunity to expand their powers and introduce new measures, which can be difficult to roll back in the future**. This approach can have significant consequences for individual liberties, government spending, and the efficient allocation of resources. It is essential for policymakers to be aware of the ratchet approach and strive to introduce legislation that balances the need for crisis management with the protection of individual liberties and the promotion of long-term sustainability.

Putting a frog in boiling water

The concept of “putting a frog in boiling water” refers to a common idiom that describes **a situation where someone or something is gradually exposed to a harmful or unpleasant situation without realizing the danger until it’s too late**. This phenomenon is often used to illustrate the idea of gradual change or incremental harm that can occur without being perceived or addressed until it reaches a critical point.

The Myth Debunked

Contrary to popular belief, the idea that a frog will not notice if it is placed in lukewarm water that is slowly heated to boiling point is a myth. In reality, frogs can sense changes in temperature and will likely jump out of the water if it becomes uncomfortable or painful.

The Real Story

The concept of the boiling frog is often used to describe the gradual and insidious nature of environmental degradation, overconsumption of resources, and other slow-moving threats. It serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of being aware of and addressing these issues before they reach a critical point.

Key Takeaways

- The concept of the boiling frog is often used to describe gradual and insidious changes that can have significant consequences.
- **The idea that a frog will not notice if it is placed in lukewarm water that is slowly heated to boiling point is a myth.**
- The boiling frog phenomenon serves as a reminder to be aware of and address slow-moving threats before they reach a critical point.

note: debunking the myth doesn't make the correlation any less.