

Esteemed City Councilmembers, City Manager & City Staff,

My name is Jerome Rasberry Jr.. I am a City of Merced Resident from District 2, an executive board member of the NAACP, a community leader, and most importantly, a community **member**. I would like to show my support for the approval of the recommendation made to Council by the Parks & Recreation Commission, and add that more money than \$40,000 be set aside to fund projects.

I had the opportunity to participate in the first and second cycle of the Participatory Budgeting process (also known as PB) for Merced County District 2. During my tenure in the PB process, I saw community members come together in the Steering Committee to name our project which was called, The People's Budget. I volunteered to collect ideas, and I saw kids as young as 14 enthusiastically submit ideas with the hopes of having it be one of the final funded projects. In those two years, I witnessed over 20 community members work with department staff and partner with nonprofits to develop those same ideas into feasible, sustainable, and equitable proposals. I saw the power of democracy in action as people voted for proposals that they hoped would get funded. All of this I saw then. Now, I see the ownership and pride community members have over funded projects. We need more of that sense of ownership and pride. More than ever we need to bring community members together for the overall wellbeing of the City of Merced. As a community resident and alumni of the first PB process conducted at a county level, I urge you to support the recommendation put forth by the Parks & Recreation Commission, and I ask that you increase the amount dedicated to projects from \$40,000 to \$100,000. Thank you for your time and consideration.

In community,

Jerome Rasberry Jr.
District 2 Resident