

Dear Mayor Batey, Council President Massey, Councilors Stavenjord, Khosroabadi, Abma; and City Manager Ober

April 2, Regular Session, City Council - Agenda 5, Community Comment

Re: City Budget, priorities, and constraints.

I don't have to tell you ... that the City has pressing needs for basic government services such as safer and higher quality roads.... but that at the same time the people of Milwaukie are being stressed by the heightened costs of essentials, such as food, insurance, medical, utilities, other.

This is why I have been railing against the City's Climate Goal since the year 2016. The City has employed staff and consultants in numerous climate studies at a cost, I gather, that probably exceeds one million dollars.

The Climate Goal is in large part something a City might do if budgets were flush and the City had accomplished such basics as a good quality, safe transportation network. And this is especially so when, as now, City residents are stressed by the cost of living.

My hope is that, with the upcoming City Budget, you will dial back the Climate goal so that there is less need for raising fees and asking for tax increases.

I know dialing back the Climate goal will not look good to those viewing Milwaukie from the outside, at least given the present environmental lens that dominates Oregon's governance. And this is why the City might retain certain lower cost items of the Climate Goal such as tree planting programs so as to retain some Climate profile.

If the City were to dial back its Climate goal and thus create some savings for its other pressing needs such as transportation, then some moderate increases in like the SAFE fee and natural gas and electric utility license fees might be the best compromise for residents of the City.

I will end by saying that former Mayor Gamba talked of the City's Climate Goal as being about Milwaukie doing its share to combat climate change. I take this as an admission that the Climate Goal is not so much about achieving a certain material change to the benefit of Milwaukie residents.

But at a time when residents are being materially impacted by poor road quality, a long list of transportation infrastructure improvements, and ever higher costs of living – it seems rather obvious that the far-reaching ambitions of the Climate Goal should be dialed back.

Sincerely,
Elvis Clark
resident of the City of Milwaukie