

Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits

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To: FGO Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

SVCN Comments related to FGO Agenda Item 17-Management Audit of Senior Nutrition Program

From: Patricia Gardner, Executive Director-Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits.

The Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (SVCN) is pleased to see a public and transparent review of the funding of senior services with public government funding. Key funders such as the County and Sourcewise are the custodians of millions of public government funding that support services to help our frail elderly, disabled and senior populations. SVCN has a larger number of senior serving agencies and we are closely watching the increased transparency by the County related to government funds for seniors.

We applaud the County of Santa Clara for conducting a Management Audit of the Senior Nutrition Program. This audit provided a great overview and accounting of the federal funding that is provided to Sourcewise as Santa Clara County's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) as our County compares with other AAA programs in the state. We were disappointed to read in the report that Sourcewise has chosen not to respond or participate in the audit findings, ensure the correctness of information nor engage in greater transparency of governmental funds flowing into our community.

This management audit has brought to light the complicated federal contracting process for senior programs and requirements in the distribution of Older American Act funding. We believe greater transparency, accountability and funding coordination is important between Sourcewise and the County related to gaining a greater understand of government funding for senior services. In particular, we were curious to note that other AAA seem to have greater community participate in the Area Plan on Aging.

Sourcewise as the Triple A is the receiver of millions of federal Older Americans Act funding that is provided for our community benefit of our seniors. The County ability to provide greater transparency on this government funded program enables our community to have greater input, participation and involvement in the expenditures of millions of government funding.

The 6 recommendations outlined by the Rose Audit are worthy of Board of Supervisor consideration producing greater transparency of federal government funding of OAA funding into Santa Clara.

SVCN has recommended the following in the past and we want to rearticulate these recommendations:

Develop a plan for joint funding for community programs serving seniors between the County and Sourcewise with governmental funds.

SVCN would like the County to pursue with Sourcewise a more public and transparent funding process as currently exists related to funding senior services. Federal governmental AAA funds that pass through Sourcewise, should have greater accountability and transparency as with the County General Funds.

We believe service nutrition and service funds used by Sourcewise should be pooled with the County in a joint procurement process. The total funding OAA funding Sourcewise receives for Senior Nutrition and Senior Support Services funding seems too unclear but over \$5 Million may be a good estimate. According to the Harvey Rose Audit, Sourcewise has traditionally provided 30% of this for Senior Nutrition. In addition, Sourcewise funds in voluntary spending for senior supportive services. Both the County and Sourcewise provides funding for similar services which are desperately needed in our community. These supportive programs are critical to providing the senior safety net for older adults and greatly benefit our senior community. However, having a joint funding process that is similar to Senior Nutrition would allow for one application and one transparent funding process as currently exists with Senior Nutrition. 71% of the nonprofits are funded by both Sourcewise and the County.

The Board of Supervisors request a stronger and joint planning process for the County Area Plan that provides a framework for the provision of senior services including public hearings in each Supervisor District

Sourcewise produces the County Area Plan which is the “Go To” needs assessment on seniors in our community .These reports are well done and provides data that should guide funding decisions and identify gaps in services. The report provides an in depth review by income, ethnicity and other key factors that portrays the issues of particularly low income and vulnerable seniors.

According to the Harvey Rose Audit our County has one of the lowest community participation rates in this plan. SVCN believes, due the diversity, size and scope of Santa Clara County we should be leading in community participate and input into the Area Plan.

We request the Board of Supervisor ask Sourcewise for 5 public hearings one for each Supervisor District to ensure our entire County can participate in the Area Plan. Including a report on data and information by region that identifies any gaps in services or specific needs due to the geography and diversity of our region be included in the County Area Plan.

According to the Rose Audit, Sourcewise only had 37 attendees at their public hearing on the Area Plan. SVCN is hosting a hearing with VTA on Envision Transportation needs and currently over 75 seniors or senior advocates have RSVP'd to this meeting demonstrating that when good outreach is conducted our community will participate, which why SVCN cannot attend the FGOC meeting today.

Good stewardship along with an open transparent public process of public funding is a key to good government. Joint prioritization of services, funding and needs assessments is a goal to strive for as we move forward from this audit review. The lack of participation by Sourcewise in the audit of all governmental funding for the purposes of serving seniors in Santa Clara County demonstrates a veil of secrecy that is disheartening for our community.