

Marjan Philhour

Meet the candidates, week 21: “Tell us your thoughts on the city’s budget.”

Despite a significant population decline since the pandemic, San Francisco's budget has increased dramatically over the past four years, raising concerns about spending efficiency. The city’s budget reflects our priorities and, unfortunately, current allocations fall short in key areas like public safety, small businesses, and housing affordability.

Ensuring public safety remains my top priority, and **while the public safety budget has increased this year, it still doesn’t fully meet our community’s needs**. San Francisco needs 2,200 sworn officers to tackle open-air drug markets and make residents feel safe. Last year, we saw advocacy for a \$2 million cut to the proposed police budget which would have further compromised our city's safety, especially as downtown recovery lags.

Additionally, San Francisco’s bureaucracy stifles small business growth. We need an over-the-counter permitting system to allow new businesses to open swiftly and existing ones to adapt without delays.

Furthermore, restrictive housing policies have driven up costs and limited affordable housing construction. Supporting both market-rate and affordable housing developments is crucial, including reforming the permitting process and promoting inclusionary housing. A reallocation of funds to prioritize these areas is essential for a safer, more prosperous, and affordable San Francisco.