



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Lee Wilcox

SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOODS COMMISSION BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS **DATE:** May 18, 2018

Approved

Date

5-22-18

BACKGROUND

The City Council created the Neighborhoods Commission on September 25, 2007 as a pilot to build on the work, done by the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) and its Project Area Committee in 2002. As a part of their official duties, the Commission makes annual budget priority recommendations to the City Council. (SJMC § 2.08.3430.)

To prepare for this year's recommendations, the Commission received a presentation from City Auditor Sharon Erickson at their April 11, 2018 meeting to review the City Auditor's Annual Report (2016-2017) on City services in order to help them generate ideas to discuss with residents. They scheduled another special meeting on May 2, 2018 to allow the Budget Office to present an overview of the 2018-2019 Proposed Budget and to begin drafting their letter. The Commission finalized their letter at their regular meeting on May 9, 2018, after having time to speak again with residents about their initial ideas.

ANALYSIS

The Commission recommends that the City allocate additional funding to several areas, some of which follow their recommendations from prior years. Those that have been recommended before are:

- additional staff and services to combat illegal fireworks,
- additional funding to bring Fire Station 37 online, and
- additional police staffing of the Traffic Enforcement unit.

In addition, they made new recommendations for increased spending for:

- increased Code Enforcement staffing and technical and data tools, including investing in the My San Jose app, to assist with cracking down on violators,
- helping open new police substations in North and South San Jose, and
- more programs that encourage community engagement and the creation of new Neighborhood Associations, like Project Hope.

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They also highlight that the single most vocal complaint from community residents throughout the City continues to be the need to address homelessness in local neighborhoods.

COORDINATION

This memo was coordinated with the City Manager's Office and the City Attorney's Office.

CEQA: Not a Project, File No. PP17-010, City Organizational & Administrative Activities resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Wilcox", written in a cursive style.

LEE WILCOX

Chief of Staff, Office of the City Manager

Attachment A – Neighborhoods Commission 2018-19 Budget Priorities Letter

Mayor and City Council
City of San José
200 E Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

May 10, 2018

Dear Mayor and City Council,

Below please find the Neighborhoods Commission's annual budget letter.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Code Enforcement: The Commission recommends the City dedicate more resources to Code Enforcement, specifically:

- Increase staffing for Code Enforcement; leverage data to accelerate results
- Leverage the "My San José" app; provide public performance dashboards

Public Safety: Because residents express concerns about response times, the Commission recommends the following three areas for investment.

- **Illegal Fireworks:** Increase staff, improve reporting, upgrade web, enforce fines
- **Traffic:** Increase staffing to enforce laws; leverage data to accelerate results
- **Bring Fire Station 37 and police substations in North and South San José online**

Community Engagement: Expand Associations and Leverage "Project Hope" Learnings

- Start more Neighborhood Associations
- Leverage learnings from "Project Hope"
- Recommend directing Commission to foster and create Associations

BUDGET LETTER

It is an exciting time to live in San José. Our diverse police force is evolving with its largest class of recruits in recent history. Companies of all sizes are starting up, relocating, or planning investment in San José's downtown transit center, all without wasteful City tax incentives. San José's multi-media arts and cultural assets continue to blossom. This is San José's moment.

In spite of these groundbreaking developments, according to this year's City Auditor's report, fewer than half of City residents report San José as a great place to live for overall quality of life; for the moment, we can still be perceived as a "tired-and-tan" bedroom community. To fully realize San José's potential for all residents, the Commission is happy to partner in addressing the undertow caused by a decade of underinvestment as the City recovered from the Great Recession. Recommendations regarding three key areas follow.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, and graffiti continue to scar the face of our City. The Commission does not pretend to be expert in the intricacies of the City Code, nor in the confusing and frustrating intersection of public, private, County and State accountabilities to resolve blight. Where the City is accountable for blight, it must continue to act, and quickly. Where the City is not accountable, the Commission recommends continuing to seek common ground and to leverage non-City resources. This has recently been done with CalTrans cleanup on highways, and in ongoing discussions with railroad right of ways. The Commission recommends continued investment in the "My San José" app, leveraging data to reinvest saved labor hours in crucial faster turnaround; a public dashboard tool is required to enable community partners to address hot spots or ongoing dump/vehicle abandonment sites. Separately, the Commission will discuss requesting the City Auditor to include key performance indicators for illegal dumping and vehicle abatement in the City's audit report.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Illegal Fireworks:** This danger remains a scourge on the City, and not just on the 4th of July. The City is described by residents to Commissioners as "a war zone." The Commission strongly urges additional staffing for dispatch and data tracking, enforcing laws in real time, enforcing fines and upgrading year-round online reporting.
- **Fire & Police Stations:** Bring additional fire stations and police substations online, including Fire Station 37, and Police substations in North and South San José. The Commission is happy to research and provide further Community feedback.
- **Traffic enforcement:** Speeding remains a major safety issue. The Commission urges data-driven enforcement, starting with the select hot spots where everyone knows nothing's getting done. The Commission is happy to research and provide Community feedback.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement programs such as Beautify SJ Grants, free unlimited junk pickup, and wildly popular anti-litter efforts are true assets to a City casting off its tired past. Tens of thousands of residents, and dozens of neighborhood groups are actively engaged in these efforts. In a City of over one million, this represents only a tiny fraction of the numbers of people who could potentially be involved. To sustain resident participation in a growing City we need to increase community groups including Neighborhood Associations, and programs informed by Councilmember Jones' successful "Project Hope. The Commission remains an eager partner with the City Council to drive the creation of Neighborhood Associations.

Finally, while homelessness is out of scope for this Commission, we will not turn a blind eye to the 4,400+ of our neighbors currently living in cars, in tents, on benches or living one paycheck away from being on the streets. Homelessness, and its attendant miseries, rank as the #1 complaint from our neighbors. The Commission recommends that the City to continue to double down on its comprehensive programs to provide appropriate housing across the growing range of neighbors in need of safe shelter.

Sincerely,



Nichole Edraos, Chair

San José Neighborhoods Commission