

SENT TO COUNCIL:

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City Manager's Office

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Tom Manheim

SUBJECT: PEW RESEARCH CENTER
CITES SAN JOSE TRANSPARENCY

DATE: March 3, 2011

Approved

Deena Schu

Date

3/3/11

INFORMATION

The City recently received a very positive mention from the Pew Research Center that is worth calling to your attention. The Center released a report on March 1 entitled "How the Public Perceives Community Information Systems" which examines the attitude of residents in three cities (San Jose, Philadelphia, and Macon, GA) about their government, and how accessible information is in those three cities. The report noted four key findings:

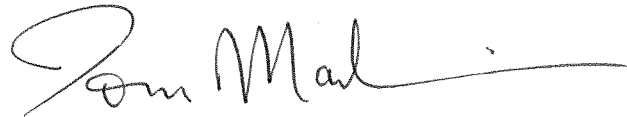
- Those who think local government does well in sharing information are also more likely to be satisfied with other parts of civic life such as the overall quality of their community and the performance of government and other institutions, as well as the ability of the entire information environment in their community to give them the information that matters.
- Broadband users are sometimes less satisfied than others with community life. That raises the possibility that upgrades in a local information system might produce more critical, activist citizens.
- Social media like Facebook and Twitter are emerging as key parts of the civic landscape and mobile connectivity is beginning to affect people's interactions with civic life. Some 32% of the internet users across the three communities get local news from social networking site; 19% from blogs; 7% from Twitter. And 32% post updates and local news on their social networking sites.
- If citizens feel empowered, communities get benefits in both directions. Those who believe they can impact their community are more likely to be engaged in civic activities and are more likely to be satisfied with their towns.

The report ends with a paragraph highlighting San Jose:

...our first examination of these communities shows that San Jose might provide particularly interesting evidence. The town stands apart in several ways among the three communities. San Jose residents expressed the highest level of overall satisfaction with their town. They are the most wired. They are the most likely to connect to the internet by cell phone. They are the most praising of their local institutions, including fire, police, schools, city government, libraries, local cultural organizations, and local nonprofits that help the poor. Further, they are more content with their government's willingness to share information. They give higher grades to the local newspaper. They are heavier patrons of libraries. They are more aware of the local government's web operations. They are more

likely to say that the internet is a preferred source of information on local topics and more likely to say the internet presents a diverse range of points of view. And they are more likely to say they are getting more information now compared with five years ago."

This reflects well on the extraordinary efforts the City of San Jose has undertaken over the past few years to increase transparency. It also reflects well on the community we all serve. The data in this report is a powerful reminder of how important the Internet has become to citizens connecting with, trusting, and feeling satisfied with the quality of their government.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Manheim". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

TOM MANHEIM
Communications Director

