



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jennifer Schembri

**SUBJECT:** 2017-2018 EMPLOYEE  
SUGGESTION PROGRAM  
WINNERS

**DATE:** November 5, 2019

Approved

Date

11-6-19

## INFORMATION

### BACKGROUND

The City of San José created the Employee Suggestion Program to enlist employees to submit ideas that could help improve current programs or processes, generate cost savings, improve safety, reduce waste, or add value in any number of other areas. In addition, the program recognizes those ideas which improve City operations through financial and other incentives. Suggestions are submitted through the Employee Suggestion Committee SharePoint website. These suggestions are then reviewed once per year by the Employee Suggestion Program Committee. After review by the Committee, winning employee/team ideas could be eligible to win up to \$5,000.

In 2018, the Committee selected three ideas to move forward to pilot for one year. In June 2019, the Committee convened again to follow up on the results. One of the three teams were successful in fully implementing and piloting their idea. This idea was submitted by Jennifer Provedor, Senior Supervisor, Administration and Jennifer Piozet, Planner IV both from Planning, Building and Code Enforcement. The Committee voted to approve the implementation of their suggestion and deemed the suggestion a success because it resulted in cost savings and improvement to the operations of the City of San José.

### UPDATE

The Employee Suggestion Committee is excited to share the recent successful contributions of the winning Employee Suggestion Program team for Fiscal Year 2017-2018, *Planning Division Public Outreach Using Postcards*, who provided an innovative suggestion that resulted in significant cost savings to the City.



Jennifer Provedor, Senior Supervisor, Administration, and Jennifer Piozet, Planner IV both from the Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department (Department), submitted an idea to help improve operations and generate cost savings. Ms. Provedor and Ms. Piozet identified that the Department was mailing 16,000 notices a month to the public. These letters were often being overlooked because the letters were lengthy in content, resulting in key information being lost in the communication. Because of this, the Planning Call Center received many calls from the public with questions of concern over the state of their neighborhood or home because the format and length of the letters did not help their understanding of the content.

The Planning team would also spend many hours of labor printing out the notices, then would run the printed documents through a separate machine for stuffing the documents into envelopes, and finally run the stuffed envelopes through an address labeler. These three machines required an employee to watch them constantly as they would jam up often and sometimes not work at all, resulting in staff having to hand stuff letters or even paying to outsource the printing.



To resolve these issues, the team's innovative idea was to send out postcards that would be eye catching and provide key information that the public would need to know instead of sending lengthy letters. Also, rather than purchasing printing machines, the Department could lease one post card printing machine, which eliminated maintenance costs.

“It took a lot of research learning the software programs [to create the postcards],” and “took a lot of collaboration with all the planners, about an hour a

week for a few months, as well as working with the City Attorney's Office, to ensure the postcard had all the mandated language,” said Ms. Piozet. Mailing post cards also resulted in lowered postage costs, less labor hours, and less calls from the public.

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The City Manager's Budget Office verified a cost savings of \$28,000. This team will be awarded 5% of the projected savings, which comes to \$1,400 for this team. Congratulations to the winning team! The Employee Suggestion Committee looks forward to the next year of Pilot Programs and Suggestions.

/s/

JENNIFER SCHEMBRI

Director of City Manager's Office of Employee Relations

Director of Human Resources

For questions, please contact Cheryl Parkman, Assistant to the City Manager, City Manager's Office of Employee Relations, at (408) 535-8152.

