



Memorandum

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION

FROM: Neil Rufino

SUBJECT: PLACEMAKING IN SAN JOSE

DATE: February 16, 2018

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) report on Placemaking achievements and opportunities in San José.

OUTCOME

The vision of PRNS is to be a national leader in parks and recreation in cultivating healthy communities through quality programs and dynamic public spaces. Public spaces help define the character of our city, build civic pride, and encourage social connection. Developing, activating, and maintaining public spaces creates mutual stewardship of place within the community, encouraging residents to come out to play and have fun. The Department places emphasis on “building community through fun” and Placemaking programs embody this mentality by providing services that facilitate access to and ownership of public spaces throughout San José.

BACKGROUND

The mission of PRNS is to build healthy communities through people, parks, and programs. In pursuit of this mission, the Department has focused efforts on Placemaking as strategy to increase access to and activate public spaces. With the goal of better supporting of the long-term maintenance of spaces that facilitate community building and engage residents to come out and play by encouraging civic ownership over the spaces.

The concept of a community-based, people-focused approach to urban design began in the 1960s when influential urbanists like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte began to advocate for city design that caters to a people-oriented built environments. The term Placemaking was

introduced by urban planners and architects in the 1970s to describing the process of working collaboratively with stakeholders from all sectors to create public spaces like plazas and parks that were made to be pleasurable or interesting, and reflective of communities that use them. Placemaking is commonly described as the process of intentionally “creating quality places, wherein people want to live, work, play, and learn.”

PRNS has historically utilized a Placemaking approach to the way it does business, which can be seen in many of its efforts. The vision of PRNS is to be a national leader in parks and recreation through the cultivation of healthy communities, quality programs, and dynamic public spaces, a fundamental foundation in the concept of Placemaking. Public spaces help define the character of the city, build civic pride, and encourage social connection. By creating mutual stewardship of place within the community, Placemaking strengthens local leadership and engages communities in the creation of public spaces that people value and want to use.

ANALYSIS

The mission of PRNS drives staff to enhance service delivery through Placemaking. Key to the PRNS approach is engaging residents as stakeholders, and instilling a sense of pride and ownership in the places created. PRNS is dedicated to facilitating social interaction, developing valued public spaces, and improving the quality-of-life of our residents, an integral part of the core services and Department’s efforts as Placemakers.

2016-2017 Placemaking Efforts

The 2017 activation season was a great success for PRNS Placemaking programs. PRNS successfully delivered a significant number of Placemaking program events that have continued to create momentum for neighborhood residents to reclaim their parks as vibrant and dynamic community gathering spaces. Some examples of the successful Placemaking activities include:

- This year, our department led the third successful implementation of the Viva CalleSJ open streets event. Encouraging thousands of residents to come out and help bridge socio-economic divides by enjoying our city’s largest public space. The 2017 Viva CalleSJ open streets event temporarily transformed 7.2 miles of city streets into one of the largest urban parks for families to enjoy – car free. The event has continued to be successful in connecting neighbors, highlighting their identities, and building community through fun, attracting 130,000 neighbors to come walk, bike, and enjoy each other’s company. The program continued its innovative engagement practices, relying on the strength of community partners and stakeholders to highlight resources available along the route. Over 60 organizations from all sectors were engaged in a one-day community building effort including, the Knight Foundation, AARP, the Exhibition District, neighborhood groups such as the Alum Rock Village Action Committee, local business district associations, and multiple City and County departments. In the last year alone, contributions from the Health Trust, AARP, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority,

and Santa Clara County equaled approximately \$365,000 in direct cash and in-kind marketing support (multi-lingual support through billboards, buses, bus-stops, light rail etc). Recently, PRNS was successful in securing a \$441,000 State Cap and Trade grant that will facilitate event implementation for the coming years. The highlight of the 2017 Viva CalleSJ was the new, innovative partnership launched with Niantic, Inc. and their Pokémon GO augmented reality gaming application. This partnership created a completely new approach to recreational programming by utilizing Pokémon GO as a digital carrot to entice participants. Viva CalleSJ successfully merged technology to encourage social integration and exercise. This free partnership resulted in over 35,000 unique application logins and over 1 million Pokémon being caught in the game, and people coming from as far as Canada to attend Viva CalleSJ.

- In its third year of operation, the ¡Viva Parks! program has continued to support and provide advocacy for underserved communities and underutilized parks throughout San José. ¡Viva Parks! ongoing community building efforts through positive programming, physical wellness, civic engagement opportunities for families in high-need areas across San José. Because of the neighborhood park activations, Department efforts have been successful in increasing participation in our City parks, Department programming, and connecting people to people. For the 2017 summer season, PRNS continued its successful activation of the underutilized parks identified in Council Districts 3, 5, and 8 with 23 program events implemented over the summer. Furthermore, the ¡Viva Parks! program increased its operations, adding 10 additional program events, and expanding its reach into Council Districts 2, 8, and 10. In the 2017 programming season, services were provided to over 10,000 community members, increasing access to recreational activities and resources to families in need. As a result of the hard work and dedication of the ¡Viva Parks! staff and impact of the program, PRNS' efforts were recognized and commended by the Mayor and City Council for its outstanding support and passionate advocacy for the youth and families of San José.
- The 2017 Placemaking efforts saw the It's Happening! program continue the successful activation of the downtown parks, Plaza de Cesar Chavez and St. James Park. A total of 25,600 participants enjoyed our downtown activations in 2017. Whether residents were grabbing a bite and enjoying it in the park, stepping out of the office and holding a meeting under the shade of a tree, or participating in any of the free programs, our parks provided a perfect location for residents to engage with the community or unplug and enjoy the beauty of our downtown's built environment. Residents continued to eat, relax, sit, and play in the park, experiencing some of the ongoing program established in 2014, including the Summer Concert Series and Doga (Dog Yoga). Additionally, for the 2017 season, staff worked hard to present residents with a chance to be engaged in new and exciting programming, expanding the recreational opportunities to include Sunset Yoga, Wine and Painting in the Park, and Open Mic Nights.
- Lastly, 2017 was another successful year for the Placemaking team's St. James Park and Urban Activation Grant Program. Continuing the effort to fully integrate community

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stakeholders and local public-space activation experts into the PRNS Placemaking program, the pool of providers increased. The approximately 25 vendors that now make up the resources available to the Placemaking team resulted in an increase to the scope of services available at Viva CalleSJ, ¡Viva Parks!, and It's Happening! programs.

2018 Placemaking Updates

In preparation for the upcoming Placemaking activation season, PRNS has been inspired by San José resident's positive reception of the new, dynamic, and vibrant public-life programs planned and implemented by the small Placemaking team. Working in collaboration with stakeholders from private and public sectors, Placemaking events implemented have been refined, expanded, and become more representative of the communities we activate. Fully embracing the practice of creative Placemaking, our department is excited about the potential to enhancing park programming through innovative private-public partnerships. As we look to build forward, we are excited begin planning for the return of the Viva CalleSJ open streets event in the fall of 2018, increasing the impact of the program by bringing the far-reaching benefits to new communities, neighborhoods, and business districts throughout a new route. Additionally, as we prepare for the 2018 ¡Viva Park! summer activation season, we are thrilled to potentially increase the number of program events, extending the impact of the program into new council districts and parks throughout San José.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

PRNS will continue to collaborate with other City departments, partners, and stakeholders to develop Placemaking strategies for community, economic, and infrastructure development. Staff will also continue partnership with the Mineta Transportation Institute who provide pro-bono evaluation of Viva CalleSJ.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memo will be posted on the City's website for the March 7, 2018 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

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COMMISSION COORDINATION

The Parks and Recreation Commission's comments regarding this memorandum will be shared with the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee on March 8, 2018.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP10-069 (a) Staff Report. Not a project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City Action.

/s/
Neil Rufino
Deputy Director, Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Neil Rufino, Deputy Director, at (408) 535-3570.

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PLACEMAKING 2017

Parks and Recreation Commission

Viva CalleSJ • It's Happening / Viva Parks Downtown • Viva Parks

VIVA PARKS

VIVA PARKS

33 activations in Council Districts 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10

Approximately **10,000** residents engaged

Provided positive programming, physical wellness, civic engagement, and **connected people to people**

Incorporated **cultural awareness** and diversity awareness components into each activation



IT'S HAPPENING / VIVA PARKS DOWNTOWN



IT'S HAPPENING / VIVA PARKS DOWNTOWN

25,600 Participants in 2017

Perfect spot for lunch or a mid-day break

Wine and Painting Nights brought in over

100 undiscovered artists

Local artist had the opportunity to shine at Open Mic Nights and Friday Night Concert Series

Sunset Yoga engaged over 500 aspiring yogi



VIVA CALLESJ

VIVA CALLESJ

7.2 mile route

130,000 estimated attendance

60 local and regional organizations engaged

170 volunteers

Partnerships with AARP, The Health Trust, Public Health, and Niantic (Pokemon GO)

35,000 unique Pokemon GO logins through out the Viva CalleSJ route, with over 1 million Pokemon caught



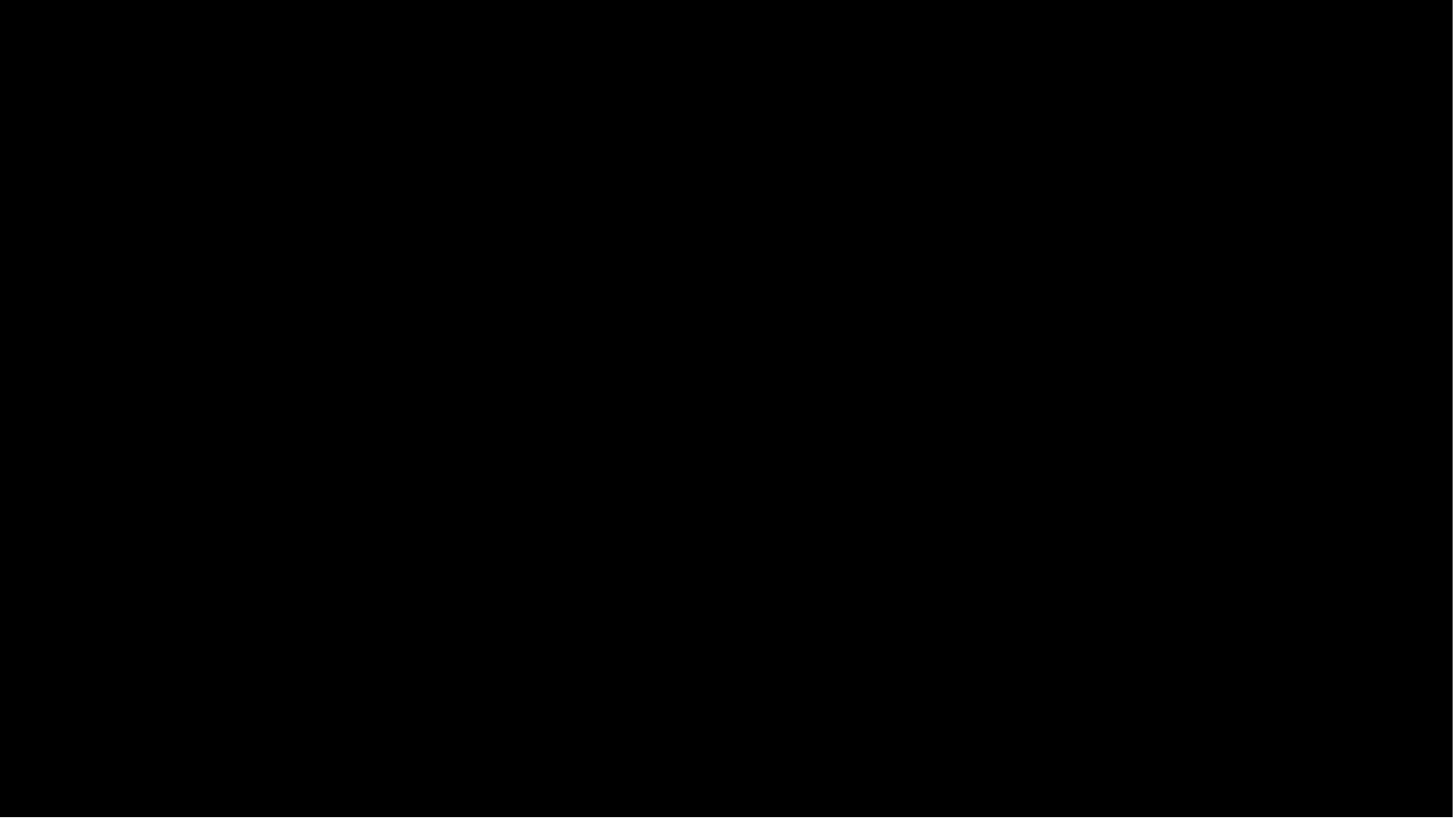
Placemaking Through Partnerships

2017 PRNS fully launched St. James Park and Urban Activation Grant Program

Over \$100,000 available for funding vendors

A pool of 26 qualified vendors has been established for activations

Culturally diverse music, art, dance, food, and design elements are provided by professional vendors to enhance all activation efforts of Placemaking.



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QUESTIONS