



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Norberto Dueñas

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY BUDGET  
MEETINGS SUMMARY

**DATE:** May 30, 2014

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Approved /s/ Edward K. Shikada

Date 05-30-14

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## **BACKGROUND**

Following the release of the City Manager's Proposed 2014-2015 Budget on May 1, the Mayor, City Council members, and the City Manager's Office have conducted a series of informational meetings in each of the ten Council districts during May. The purpose of the annual community budget meetings is to provide residents with information about the Proposed Budget and an opportunity for them to ask questions of elected officials and City staff. The ten meetings had lower attendance compared to previous years, likely because the budget outlook is relatively stable this year.

The community meetings generally were opened by the district's councilmember, followed by budget presentations by Mayor Reed and City staff, and ending with a question and answer period. Meeting attendees also were provided copies of the Budget in Brief that offers a more detailed explanation of the coming year's budget. During the discussion periods, representatives from the City Manager's Office, Police, Fire, Library, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Departments were available to respond to residents' specific questions and suggestions.

## **ANALYSIS**

Though the topics of interest varied from district to district, a number of common themes emerged. These included public safety, library services, economic development, maintenance of parks and community centers, code enforcement, homeless encampments, street maintenance, and traffic safety. Participant input is summarized below:

**Public Safety** – In addition to residents' concerns about burglaries, response times, and gang prevention services, they also shared ideas regarding neighborhoods taking a more active role in safety-related issues, such as funding for Neighborhood Watch programs and crime prevention training for residents.

**Libraries** – Residents expressed the importance of increasing branch library hours, especially for working parents, and suggested a range of alternatives for opening more or different libraries on certain days.

**Economic Development** – Comments encouraged the City and the Administration to continue attracting more businesses, and residents suggested that the City continue its efforts to streamline the permitting process and update technology to assist business development.

**Park and Community Center Maintenance** – Participants acknowledged the serious backlog of infrastructure maintenance throughout the community, but they also urged the City to review priorities and add more funding for park and community center maintenance.

**Code Enforcement:** Residents commented on the need for additional code enforcement officers and also noted the importance of leveraging code enforcement for neighborhood safety. Working with multi-agency partnerships as a way for the City to manage limited resources was a consistent theme. Such partnerships could improve communications so that neighbors can report criminal activity and code violations, and reduce bureaucratic hurdles by sharing information that affects more than one jurisdiction.

**Homeless Encampments** – This was a common area of concern for residents who recommended that the City should restore or enhance a long-term plan for assisting homeless individuals and providing other living options. They also noted that this was a multi-agency problem, and encouraged coordination with the County and community organizations such as churches and non-profits to leverage limited financial resources. Since homeless people often move to other locations after cleanups of encampments, residents strongly encouraged that the City develop a long-term solution for homeless individuals living in encampments.

**Road Maintenance and Traffic Safety** – Another area of residents' concern was the deteriorating state of roads. They shared their frustrations for specific neighborhood problems, and the consistent theme was a concern for road maintenance and traffic safety issues resulting from reduced street maintenance.

Overall, San José residents expressed their interest in working with the City on finding solutions to address their concerns, and they acknowledged their commitment to improving our community together. After each meeting, participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to have their voices heard and to learn more about the City budget. They also expressed optimism regarding the budget outlook and the potential for enhancing services in future years.

Although attendance was lower this year compared to prior years, the level of engagement by individuals was strong. The participants actively sought to engage and understand the complexities of the City budget, and they used the availability of subject matter experts to deepen their understanding. In the upcoming year, staff will coordinate with Council Offices and

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the Neighborhood Commission to develop an outreach plan in order to broaden community participation in the budget process and identify additional approaches for involving residents.

**COORDINATION**

This memorandum was prepared in coordination with the Departments of Police, Fire, Libraries, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, and Transportation.



Norberto Dueñas  
Deputy City Manager