

Memorandum

TO: SENIOR STAFF

FROM: Jennifer A. Maguire
City Manager

**SUBJECT: *One Team* Leadership Values and
Expectations**

DATE: December 15, 2021

As I approach my four-month mark as your City Manager, I continue to be grateful and honored to serve this organization and the City I love. I am proud of the work we have already accomplished in the short time I have been your City Manager, and I look forward to embarking on the path ahead, supporting our Mayor and City Council, leading our very talented workforce, and serving our amazing and diverse community.

My success as City Manager is directly dependent on you, the Senior Staff, just as your success is dependent on me and each other. This is why it is so important that we work as *One Team*. By collaborating and supporting each other we can ensure our collective success at achieving our City's mission. **The Leadership Values and Expectations in this memo are intended to establish and clarify the foundation for how we work together as *One Team*.** I adopted several of these values and expectations from my predecessors, added others that are specific to me and my experiences, and integrated ideas and suggestions from your input at our first Senior Staff Retreat on October 20, 2021.

I believe that establishing values and expectations is critical to creating shared norms and predictable patterns of professional conduct. Our effectiveness as the organization's senior leadership team depends on having a consistent framework that fosters trust and confidence with our community, the Mayor and City Council, each other, and our employees. Working together under a set of common values and expectations is especially important for us as we manage San José's dynamic and fluid organizational environment during these challenging times.

I would like to reiterate some of the points I made in my opening comments at our Senior Staff Retreat in October. While several of these points have been integrated into the *One Team* Leadership Values and Expectations below, I want to highlight them to reinforce my priorities and goals.

First, it is important to me that we *Partner with Our Community*. By this, I mean providing excellent customer service to our residents, businesses, and visitors through prompt response times, empathy, and resolution. By listening to our community, valuing their perspectives, and learning from their lived experiences, we can make a positive difference in someone's life every day. We earn the community's trust by being transparent, honest, ethical, and by providing the greatest help to those most vulnerable in our community.

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Second, it is important to me that we effectively *Support the Mayor and City Council*. This means providing our best professional recommendations, not advocating for them, and following approved City Council policy direction even if it conflicts with our own personal perspective. I encourage you to find a path to yes where possible, and to know that you are empowered to say “no” or “not now” when necessary (but only after exploring other options and alternatives that may achieve their goals) “Tell the truth with kindness”. I have found that developing relationships based on trust and adapting to the unique perspectives and priorities of our elected officials is critical to being effective over time. More specifically, you should hold regular individual City Councilmember briefings, as appropriate, with an agenda that proactively identifies items that they will want to know about, including the “big” City Council agenda items. Be sure to create opportunities for the City Councilmembers to ask questions in advance.

Finally, your *Priorities, Goals, and Behaviors as a Senior Staff Member* are important to me. This means exhibiting compassion, sensitivity, and genuine interest in others, including the needs of employees. I strongly encourage leaders to connect with employees at their level, get out in the field, and create safe spaces with a wide open-door policy to listen and learn. It is also important to prioritize hiring and to build strong and capable teams. We will more effectively recruit, retain, and develop employees by providing professional growth opportunities that enable employees to reach their full potential. Your own professional growth and development is also important. Be sure to create time to think strategically and proactively partner with colleagues and our community. Be flexible and open to other perspectives. Issues and problems inevitably change and evolve so it is critical that we continually monitor and adapt our assumptions and behaviors.

As you read through the ***One Team Leadership Values and Expectations*** below, you will see how they complement my priorities and goals for you and our organization as a whole. I firmly believe that embracing and adhering to these values and expectations will enable us to function together effectively as *One Team* in service to our community, Mayor and Council, Senior Staff colleagues, and employees. In addition, the ***Expectations for How the Assistant City Manager/Deputy City Managers and Directors Work Together*** that follows clarifies and formalizes my expectations of what success looks like for the City Manager’s Office Leadership Team and Directors in alignment with the leadership values and expectations outlined in this memorandum.

I. *One Team Leadership Values and Expectations*

- *Quality and Excellent Customer Service*

We are directly responsible for the quality of services and work products that we and our staff provide, both externally to the community and internally within the organization. This means that you and your staff are expected to adopt a customer service orientation to ensure that quality services are delivered every day to our residents, businesses, visitors and each other. More specifically, excellent customer service means that we set expectations and then meet or exceed those expectations, have prompt response times and resolution to inquiries and issues, exhibit empathy, and are creative problem solvers who do not respond to customers with “we don’t have the funding or the resources,” or “this is not my problem.”

- *Empowerment and Accountability*

Each member of the Senior Staff leads major operations that serve the people and businesses of our community. You have been entrusted with budget and staff and have a great deal of autonomy based on your experience and expertise. As part of being empowered executives in the organization, you are also accountable for outcomes and results, quality work products (e.g., City Council memoranda), management, and communications to the City Manager, your Senior Staff colleagues, the City Council, the community, and our employees. More broadly, being empowered and accountable means taking responsibility for solving problems, including those that are complex and cross-departmental. We as leaders fix mistakes and gaps. We do not deflect them or push them off to others. If you are responsible for a service, then you are accountable for a problem associated with that service, and responsible for collaborating across departments to propose options and recommend a citywide solution. In addition to focusing on our day-to-day service delivery needs, we must also regularly step back and take a broader view to identify and create opportunities that address major issues that affect our City. Solving complex problems requires us to not only look internally for solutions, but be adept at working with others in our external environment, including partnering with other leaders locally, regionally, and at the state and/or federal level, as appropriate.

- *Collaboration and Communication*

We collaborate and support each other as *One Team* by identifying and solving complex problems and issues together to ensure our collective success in achieving our City's mission. This means that we cannot work in silos; it means we communicate early, often, and effectively, up, down, and sideways, using any and all channels that might be necessary; and it means no surprises for the City Manager, City Manager's Office, Senior Staff colleagues and other partners. Collaboration and communication with the Mayor and City Council is also critical to our shared success. Make the effort to develop productive relationships with our elected officials, adapt to their unique perspectives and needs, ask what success looks like to them, anticipate their concerns and questions, and inform them on items that are important to them and their constituents, their colleagues, and the community at large.

- *Racial Equity*

We are committed to advancing and achieving racial equity for our community and employees. This means that we work together to ensure that our policies, practices, and operations assist in creating the conditions where race no longer factors into or determines one's life outcomes. By intentionally eliminating racial inequities and improving outcomes for historically marginalized communities, we contribute towards making San José a livable City for all. It is our commitment to ensuring that the needs of all groups are met, no matter who they are, where they come from, what language they speak, or how they identify, and that everyone benefits from living and working in a more just and equitable community and organization.

- *Community and Employee Engagement*

We make community and employee engagement a priority. We do this by listening carefully to community members and employees, valuing their perspectives, and learning from their lived experiences which we will employ to inform our decisions. Through engagement, we enhance the quality of life for residents and create working conditions where staff can thrive and be productive. Remember: The community and our employees are counting on us, even if we don't hear from them. Engagement ensures that their voices are heard and integrated into the work we do for our community and in our approach to how we structure our work for our employees.

- *Championing Our Employees*

We build strong and capable teams and champion our employees by being proactive in ensuring that our staff have the skills, training, and support to be effective and grow in their jobs. We accomplish this in several ways: One, by creating a "system of care" wherein we exhibit compassion and sensitivity to employee needs such as allowing flexibility in schedules and work locations, where appropriate, while still maintaining performance standards and quality customer service. Two, by enabling all employees to reach their full potential by allowing them to take on challenging assignments, be empowered, and make their own mark. Three, by being proactive in building the bench and succession planning, which involves identifying, encouraging, and mentoring staff with leadership and management potential and developing pathways for talented employees to successfully promote or move to a different assignment. At the same time, we are committed to life-long learning for ourselves as we pursue our own professional development and growth opportunities. This means leveraging and refining our leadership and management strengths and taking action to address our areas for improvement.

- *Political Awareness and Professionalism*

We are expected to be politically astute, aware of how our behaviors, policies, and practices look to others, whether by the Mayor and City Council, Senior Staff colleagues, employees, the general public, or the news media. At the same time, we will not abdicate or contort our professional analysis and recommendations for political reasons. It is imperative that we always respect and support all the policies and directions set by the Mayor and City Council.

- *Representatives of the City Manager*

Senior Staff is accountable to the City Manager, just as the City Manager is accountable to the Mayor and City Council. As a Senior Staff committed to functioning together as *One Team*, we must have trust and confidence that we are aligned, all working from a shared set of values and norms. This means that we cannot afford freelancing in terms of policy or direction, nor going around the City Manager. We share a mission and mutual responsibility to achieve it. While Senior Staff are recognized for their expertise, we are all expected to operate within a common leadership and management framework. We can disagree AND commit. Remember: You are agents of the City Manager, not free agents.

- *Budget Management and Stewardship*

We are expected to be diligent managers and stewards of the budget, carefully monitoring and attending to the resources to which we have been entrusted. The reality is that we will never have enough resources to do all that we want or need, provide all that our community expects, or deliver all that our City Council requests. For this reason, we must stretch every penny, be adept at prioritizing, and accountable for both what we spend and the public's perception of how we use public dollars.

- *Policy Adherence*

We are expected to align to citywide policies, recognizing that they have many important functions and benefits. They help us protect public resources, they provide consistency and fairness, they ensure accountability, and they help sustain public and political confidence that we are doing the right things, all the time. Similarly, City Council direction is policy that guides our priorities and resources.

II. Expectations for How the Assistant City Manager/Deputy City Managers and Directors Work Together

- *Success and Support*

First and foremost, the Assistant City Manager (ACM) and Deputy City Managers (DCMs) are committed to helping directors be successful in managing and leading their departments while also achieving citywide priorities and goals. This entails both supporting and empowering directors while ensuring that they hold themselves and the directors accountable for achieving results. Directors should have the trust and confidence that the ACM and DCMs “have their back” on behalf of the City Manager in alignment with the leadership values and expectations outlined in Section I of this memorandum.

- *Focus and Priorities*

The ACM and DCMs help directors and departments identify and focus on enterprise priorities that align to broader organizational and community-wide dynamics, needs, and issues. This means assisting directors in balancing enterprise priorities with department-specific goals, working through the inevitable tradeoffs, managing expectations, and helping directors say “no” or “not now” when capacity and resources are stretched thin, after exploring alternatives and options. Ultimately, the ACM and DCMs are expected to help align the “big picture” to department goals and operations, and directors are expected to align department goals and operations to the “big picture.”

- *Coordination and Facilitation*

The ACM and DCMs help directors make connections and facilitate communication and understanding in community, political, and organizational contexts. This entails assisting directors in their efforts to coordinate inter-departmental efforts and how to best promote “teaming” in order to pull departments and teams together to collaborate on “wicked problems,” those that are critical, sensitive, unexpected, ambiguous, and require new

learning, a diversity of perspectives, and expertise. Standard management issues and problems within and across departments should be addressed at the lowest possible level; the ACM and DCMs should be consulted if departments are not able to achieve collective alignment in their problem solving.

Please go here for more information on how the ACM and DCMs will be working with directors to solve wicked problems through more effective cross department teaming:

- [Wicked Problem Solvers](#)
- [Teamwork on the Fly](#)

- *Advice and Consultation*

The ACM, DCMs, and directors are expected to have a partnership relationship, with the ACM and DCMs functioning as a “sounding board” for directors by listening, identifying opportunities, providing information and background, and clarifying the strategic direction and requests from the City Manager, City Council, and community. The ACM and DCMs should serve as coaches, mentors, and facilitators, offering suggestions and ideas so that City priorities and goals can be achieved. Advice and consultation are especially important in situations where Senior Staff need to manage the tension between clarity of purpose and potentially shifting goals.

- *Communications and Messaging*

Timely two-way communication is critical to advancing the goal of being *One Team* and ensuring consistent and effective messaging across the organization. The ACM and DCMs help inform and shape messages for different audiences, assisting directors and departments in telling their “stories” in meaningful and compelling ways that resonate with the intended audiences.

- *Liaisons to the City Manager*

The ACM and DCMs serve as liaisons to the City Manager, helping to frame messages, both positive and negative, from directors and delivering them to me. They are truly my assistant and deputies, and they help me stretch my attention across all of the departments. More broadly, the ACM and DCMs help all of us in their liaison role by sharing information, clarifying decision points, and serving as an early warning system from the directors and departments to me. At the same time, directors are also expected to serve as the first warning system, anticipating and communicating issues and problems to the ACM and DCMs (and directly to me when necessary), providing cross departmental options and recommended solutions to problems, and ensuring that the City Manager and City Manager’s Office are informed and engaged, as appropriate. Remember: “No surprises.”

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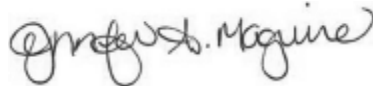
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- *Checks and Balances*

The ACM and DCMs provide checks and balances to ensure that directors are not working in isolation and are aware of constraints, countervailing forces, and potential problems, as well as other resources that can help. The ACM, DCMs, and directors work together to anticipate and prevent mistakes, close loopholes, and ward off “answer shopping”.

Thank you all for your commitment to these *One Team* Leadership Values and Expectations. I am excited for our future as we work together to make a better San José for everyone in our community.



Jennifer A. Maguire
City Manager