



# Memorandum

**TO:** RULES & OPEN GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Councilmember Raul Perez

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** February 11, 2021

Approved

Date: 02/11/2021

**SUBJECT:** PROTECTING OUR ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER (API) COMMUNITY

## RECOMMENDATION

Per my April 8, 2020 memorandum<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent April 21 City Council approval, direct the City Manager to provide a time-certain City Council report no later than the beginning of March on what strategies the City is working on to combat xenophobia and prevent violence against the API community. Some ideas to consider are:

1. Partner with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office to explore what public safety measures can be taken in light of recent Bay Area incidents,
2. Conduct as soon as possible a public listening session with API community leaders to hear their feedback on the recent events, and
3. Hold a public safety workshop for the elderly and their families as well as a small pilot intended to increase visibility and safety such as a neighborhood walking event in areas like Little Saigon and Japantown.

## BACKGROUND

During the beginning months of the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed a national surge in violent attacks and xenophobic behavior against the API community. I appreciate that my council colleagues supported my proposed resolution in condemning such behavior and actions.<sup>2</sup> Sadly, we are once again seeing a rise in violent incidents against the Asian

<sup>1</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=8249980&GUID=16074BE3-A7A2-49C2-A290-D6E40C1FA049>

<sup>2</sup> <https://records.sanjoseca.gov/Resolutions/RES79486.pdf>

American community, specifically targeting the elderly. On February 3, a 64-year-old Vietnamese resident was robbed mid-afternoon in Downtown San José while preparing for the Lunar New Year.

Other notable incidents that have occurred within the last few weeks:

- On January 28, 84-year-old Vicha Ratanapakdee was murdered while walking in San Francisco,
- On January 31, a 91-year-old, 60-year-old, and 55-year-old Asian American were all assaulted in Oakland's Chinatown district,
- Also on February 3, 61-year-old Noel Quintana was attacked and disfigured in a New York City subway,
- On February 7, a 71-year-old Asian woman was robbed on the sidewalk in Oakland, and
- On February 8, an Asian man was violently assaulted and robbed at a San Leandro bank.

This string of crimes committed against the API community, especially the elderly, are incredibly tragic, disturbing and unacceptable. While there have been less incidents in San José compared to the rest of the region, we must not be complacent and instead ensure vigilance to protect our API community, which makes up 38% of San José's population. As part of my April 8th memo, the City Council directed the City Manager to return with a report on what strategies the City is working on to combat this growing crisis. There is no more critical time than now to have this discussion. It is important though to note while there may be proactive and preventive measures available, we should ensure that it does not marginalize or disproportionately affect other communities of color.

In closing, I stand in absolute solidarity with our API community and am committed to work with our community partners to elevate their voices and concerns.