



# Memorandum

**TO:** COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Aurelia Bailey  
Carlos Velazquez

**SUBJECT:** CITY ROADMAP: COVID-19  
RECOVERY TASK FORCE

**DATE:** October 17, 2022

Approved

Date

10/13/22

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the activities and accomplishments of the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force as part of the approved City Roadmap for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY 2022-2023).

## BACKGROUND

On March 16, 2021, the City Council approved the City Roadmap (Roadmap) for FY 2022-2023. The Roadmap is a tool and process for prioritizing and implementing strategic and complex change initiatives. It is organized by eight enterprise priorities, including the “COVID-19 Pandemic: Community & Economic Recovery” Enterprise Priority. The FY 2022-2023 objectives for this Enterprise Priority are 1) Invest in Our Most Vulnerable Residents, Families, Small Businesses, and Non-Profits; 2) Empower Our Community with Resources that Build Resiliency, and 3) Stabilize and Improve Equitable Outcomes for All. The initiatives driving this Enterprise Priority are:

1. Housing Stabilization
2. Re-Employment and Workforce Development
3. Small Business Recovery
4. The COVID-19 Recovery Task Force

The 55-member Task Force was approved by the City Council on September 21, 2021. Its scope is to work with the community to “think about the future” as it relates to strengthening and stabilizing families, workers, and small businesses. The role and responsibilities of the Task Force include:

- Advise and monitor progress on the Roadmap Recovery initiatives
- Develop a community engagement and communications plan
- Disseminate information to constituencies and share community feedback with the Task Force on establishing and evaluating projects and programs
- Develop new recommended actions for Recovery to be considered by the City Council

The Task Force process commenced in November 2021, and City staff have provided three updates to the Community and Economic Development (CED) Committee on the Task Force's progress: [August 23, 2021](#)<sup>1</sup>, [January 24, 2022](#)<sup>2</sup>, and [April 25, 2022](#)<sup>3</sup>.

The City's FY 2022-2023 Budget includes an allocation of \$2 million for anticipated recommendations of the Task Force process.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Community Engagement Update**

Meaningful, equitable community engagement is the cornerstone of the Task Force process. Engaging residents and small businesses is an important purpose of the Task Force process as the feedback obtained will inform recommendations that the Task Force will develop.

In May 2022, the Task Force, supported by City staff and consultants, developed a [Community Engagement Plan](#)<sup>4</sup> (Plan) that focuses on connecting with and gathering input from individuals, families, workers, and business owners in San José who have been the most impacted by the pandemic. The Plan includes five components:

- 1) Community Survey
- 2) COVID-19 Recovery Report and Survey Consolidation
- 3) Storytelling Project
- 4) Engagement Toolkit
- 5) Lived Experience Group

The Plan's approaches and strategies respond to the many needs and requirements of San José's rich and diverse communities, paying careful attention to cultural sensitivity, disability requirements, language, childcare, technology skills, and other accessibility concerns. The engagement process aims to move toward a recovery grounded in equity, dignity, empathy, and action. To achieve this, ten engagement principles were embraced: 1) listen deeply, 2) collaborate on ideas/solutions, 3) recognize and build from resident expertise, 4) stay adaptable, 5) remain patient, 6) resist being extractive, 7) provide resources, 8) be accessible, 9) make space, and 10) think long-term. Collectively, a total of 1,500 people engaged in 31 in-person and virtual activities. Members of the Lived Experience Group designed and led several activities, including 12 community pop-up events, two community forums, and 16 focus groups. The

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9716809&GUID=B44158A2-E448-4F56-AE1C-1E3D3AB47A02>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5364209&GUID=4860A95F-0759-4A73-83B0-8E9C0C7A4FB1&Options=&Search=>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5553080&GUID=8CAA61DC-1ED7-4D8D-AA7E-07D64FF8E460&Options=&Search=>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/85627/637877036355930000>

community resource fair attracted 500 people. Additionally, 771 people completed the community survey. These activities educated the community on existing programs while facilitating genuine community feedback that identified community needs. Those engaged include:

- Small business owners
- Renters who have faced threat of eviction
- Unhoused residents
- Parents of people with disabilities; people with disabilities
- High school and college students
- Healthcare workers
- Parents with children under five years old
- Senior residents
- People who cared for and/or lost a loved one to COVID-19
- People with pre-existing health conditions
- Artists, cultural workers
- LGBTQ+
- Black/African-American
- Latino and undocumented community
- Vietnamese community

### **Community Engagement Highlights**

Issues pertaining to economic security, mental health, childcare, and recovery of the workforce and small business ecosystem featured prominently in community conversations. People talked about the impacts of facing these issues both individually and at a community level. Across the board, outreach and engagement surfaced as a prevalent need, with most people indicating that they were either unaware of or did not know how to access existing resources. Below is a summary of some of the key findings of the [Community Engagement Report](#)<sup>5</sup>:

- **Economic Security:** Renters continue to struggle with paying still-rising rents alongside back-rent accrued during the height of the pandemic. Many have seen their savings dwindle and some have borrowed from third parties to pay their landlords. People called for continuation and easier access to rental assistance programs, with nearly half of survey respondents indicating rental assistance among the top three kinds of support they would like to see the City provide. Food insecurity was also a prevalent issue, with many citing food distributions as indispensable to their families in times of economic need throughout the pandemic.
- **Mental Health:** A lack of access to affordable recreation and other services aimed at preserving mental health in the community was a common theme during the engagement process. Across the board, people were most concerned about the impacts of the pandemic on the mental health of children and youth. Parents talked about previously active children who are now lethargic and disengaged. High school students talked about ubiquitous and persistent depression and anxiety paired with inadequate therapy and

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/85627/637877036355930000>

recreation program availability.

- **Childcare:** The unaffordability and shortage of childcare options were also common points of discussion in community conversations. Parents of children with disabilities were particularly impacted by pandemic-related cuts in services that are still ongoing. Many shared about their inability to join the workforce due to childcare necessities that could not be provided for elsewhere, with one in two survey respondents indicating that childcare was the main challenge preventing them from returning to work.
- **Workers and Small Businesses:** Many are still struggling to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, whether it is seeking a new job, finding assistance to restart a micro business, or coping with the stresses of being a frontline worker, with two in five survey respondents indicating that they were not currently working. People indicated the need for more programs to help identify jobs and the need to keep and strengthen existing COVID-related worker protections, particularly as waves of COVID-19 are anticipated to continue. Additionally, community members indicated the need for improved health and safety conditions in the workplace, with two in five survey respondents indicating that this was among the biggest challenges they faced during the pandemic.
- **Engagement:** Community members were often surprised when hearing about existing resources. By practicing deep engagement, leveraging the strength of existing community networks, and meeting community members where they are, and in languages and spaces most accessible to them, the City and community partners could amplify the reach of their messages in a manner that is more efficient and cost-effective than traditional outreach approaches. This is especially true when the target audience consists of communities such as undocumented families, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, the unhoused, and artists.

## **Promotores Model**

On November 30, 2021, the City Council approved the allocation of \$500,000 in Community and Economic Recovery Budget Adjustments to pilot and implement a Promotores model as a tool for community engagement through the Task Force. The goal is to identify the recovery needs of the hardest-to-reach community members by hearing and understanding their stories and to connect them with the programs and services that are already funded in the City's Recovery Initiatives as well as services provided by other government agencies and community partners.

Promotores are uniquely qualified to address the needs of under-resourced communities because they reach community members where they are. They speak the same language, share a common culture, and connect with people in their homes, at markets, in restaurants, at parks, at work, at places of worship, and other neighborhood locations. Promotores are neighbors—parents, youth, seniors, business owners, teachers, etc.—who are trained and believe in helping and including others to be part of the solution to create healthier places for everyone.

Working in conjunction with the Task Force Community Engagement Committee, staff identified community-based organizations (CBOs) with existing Promotores programs and similar resident leadership development programs to recruit and train individuals to engage with and provide outreach on existing Recovery resources offered by the City and community partners. The City awarded grants to three CBOs to deliver these services: 1) Community Health Partnerships, 2) CommUniverCity, and 3) *¡Si Se Puede!* Collective (Amigos de Guadalupe, Grail Family Services, School of Arts and Culture, SOMOS Mayfair, Veggielution). Twenty-one Promotores hired, trained, and started community outreach and engagement in the areas most impacted by the pandemic, specifically in Zip Codes 95111, 95112, 95116, 95122, and 95127. In August and September 2022, Promotores disseminated information on the Community Resource Fair held on August 20, 2022, as well as the Career Expo hosted by work2future and San José Works on September 23, 2022.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

After a presentation on the Community Engagement Report at the September 15, 2022, Task Force meeting, committees are using the community feedback to inform their draft recommendations and allocation of the \$2 million funding. At the October 13, 2022, Task Force meeting, Committee chairs will present the draft recommendations for Task Force discussion and acceptance. It is anticipated that the Steering Committee will refine the draft recommendations at their meeting on October 26, 2022. The final Task Force meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2022, where members will vote to approve the final set of recommendations and report. It is anticipated that the final report will be agendized for the December 6, 2022, City Council meeting.

### **CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE**

The recommendation in this memorandum has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the October 24, 2022, CED Committee meeting.

### **COORDINATION**

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

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
October 17, 2022  
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**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-010, City Organizational and Administrative Activities resulting in no changes to the physical environment

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