CED AGENDA: 5/23/22
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ITEM: CC 22-141

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: John Aitken

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 10, 2022

Approved Rosalynn Hughey

Date 5/13/22

SUBJECT: COVID-19 RELATED IMPACTS TO EMPLOYEES AT NORMAN Y. MINETA SAN JOSÉ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – FOLLOW UP

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the follow-up report to the Community and Economic Development (CED) Committee on COVID-19-related impacts on employees at the Normal Y. Mineta San José International Airport and the outreach to the union and workers at the Airport.

OUTCOME

The CED Committee will receive a report on staff's outreach to the union and workers at the Normal Y. Mineta San José International Airport as it relates to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

On January 24, 2022, Airport staff provided the CED Committee with a presentation and summary of how COVID-19 has impacted the employees at the Airport. At this meeting, the Committee asked Airport staff to conduct outreach to the unions and labor organizations that represent workers at the Airport and to report back to the Committee.

Airport staff met with three representatives of UNITE Here, which represents the employees who work for the food and beverage concessionaire, HMS Host, and the retail concessionaire, Hudson. Staff also held a series of four open forum meetings to hear directly from the employees regarding the benefits and challenges of working at the Airport. These meetings were offered multiple times throughout the day to accommodate multiple shifts, with meeting times at

9:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. over two days. These meetings were also conducted in a hybrid format so that employees could either attend in person or via Zoom. Following the meetings, staff also made themselves available by email and telephone if there were other employees who could not attend any of the meetings but still wished to speak with the Airport Administration. This memorandum provides a report to the CED Committee on the items expressed by the union and employees.

ANALYSIS

Meeting with UNITE Here

Airport staff met with three representatives from UNITE Here—Enrique Fernandez, Sarah McDermott, and Tho Do—on February 10, 2022. Representatives of the union expressed concern for their workers and the challenges that the last two years of the pandemic has had on them. They shared that they would like to see a recovery for the City and Airport. Their focus has been on providing a good standard of living with sensible wages, good health care, and a pension. The representatives expressed they would like to have regular meetings with Airport staff to have a structured check-in opportunity.

The union raised several COVID-related items. They expressed concern for the safety of their workers. Given that some passengers do not want to wear masks, they are concerned about workers being exposed to COVID-19. Workers also are very uncomfortable policing the situation for passengers that are not wearing their masks or not wearing the masks properly. The union also acknowledged the challenges related to ensuring employees are vaccinated and are actively working with their members to encourage them to get vaccinated.

Construction times and timelines for the openings of some of the new food and beverage concessions were also discussed during the meeting. With the pandemic leading to the temporary closure of some concession locations, the construction and timeline for the opening of new locations and the re-opening of other locations have been delayed.

There was also a discussion about the differences between the City of San José Living Wage Policy, which impacts City service contracts for 18 covered categories, and the Airport Living Wage Ordinance (ALWO), which applies to all covered employees at the Airport. Covered employees include those individuals that work the majority of their time at the Airport. Employees under a collective bargaining agreement, which expressly states that employees have agreed to supersede either the City's Living Wage Policy or the minimum compensation requirements of the ALWO are exempt from the Airport Living Wage Program.

UNITE Here expressed the desire to have more training opportunities for workers, including additional training around customer services. Prior to the pandemic, the Airport had a customer service training program that offered training classes to Concessionaire employees. Given the

shift to a new post-pandemic environment, the Airport will explore ways to restart this training program again.

Finally, the discussion focused on the challenges around worker shortages. The union acknowledged the high demand for workers and wants to help the concessionaires and Airport find more workers. They would like to collaborate and coordinate with the concessionaires on job fairs and other recruitment activities.

The Airport and the union agreed to formalize these conversations by scheduling regular quarterly meetings between the Airport and the union. There was an understanding that these meetings are separate and unrelated to conversations between the union and companies and their collective bargaining agreements.

Meetings with Employees

The Airport also held a series of conversations directly with tenant employees. These meetings were open to all employees at the Airport who wanted to express their concerns to the Airport administration staff. The employees expressed a wide range of concerns summarized below:

- Homeless individuals at the Airport create security and safety issues for employees, especially for those that work in the evening and overnight
- Road traffic sometimes creates a safety issue for employees crossing the streets
- Passenger questions – Many passengers are confused about where to go and often approach tenant staff to ask for directions or assistance, especially after walking through the TSA checkpoint
- Getting to work:
    - Bus rides around the Airport are sometimes lengthy with multiple stops
    - TSA lines can be a challenge, especially when they are long
- Airport Living Wage – A better understanding of the difference between the Airport Living Wage and the City Living Wage Policy
- State Mandated COVID Sick Leave – Questions as to whether the State's COVID-19 sick pay would be retroactive to January 1, 2022
- Employee parking – Clarity on why some companies subsidize parking while others do not

Staff is working on a number of these items to address the concerns, including:

- Communication with all concessionaires that their employees are allowed to use the priority lanes at the TSA checkpoints or to move to the front of the line to skip long queues
- Implementation of a ground transportation initiative to improve crosswalks and pedestrian safety around the Airport

- Focus to increase the presence and response to homelessness, particularly during the off-hours when passengers are not around.

CONCLUSION

Airport staff looks forward to regular meetings with UNITE Here representatives and continued engagement with employees. Staff will continue to focus on the priority concerns shared by employees, including the Airport traffic and pedestrian safety and response to homelessness.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSÉ

The items in the follow-up report align with one or more of Climate Smart San Jose's energy, water, or mobility goals.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the May 23, 2022, Community and Economic Development Committee.

COORDINATION

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

CEQA

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

/s/
JOHN AITKEN, A.A.E.
Director of Aviation

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