



Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Aurelia Bailey

SUBJECT: CITY-WIDE COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
ANNUAL REPORT

DATE: May 10, 2024

Approved

Date

5/13/24

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the annual report on the City's community engagement activities, including the use of on-call consultants and community-based organizations by departments and City Council offices.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Staff will provide an annual report on the City's community engagement activities, including the use of on-call consultants and community-based organizations by departments and City Council offices. The report also includes an update on the Citywide Community Engagement Framework (Framework) to standardize, improve, and streamline community engagement across all City departments.

BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts, the City of San José has focused on improving its community engagement approaches with residents and stakeholders. Removing barriers for residents to participate in engagement activities and serve on City boards and commissions has been a particular focus. The following City Council actions have been implemented:

- Lived Experience Members of Commissions
 - Lived Experience with Homelessness Commissioner seat on the Housing and Community Development Commission who receives a \$200 monthly stipend. (April 5, 2022, City Council approval)

- A new Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways Fund Commission that includes five seats for people with lived experience in the program areas the fund will address, such as housing insecurity, neighborhood instability, homelessness, low income, unemployment, and/or barriers to opportunity and economic mobility. Each commission member who qualifies as representing lived experiences will receive a \$200 monthly stipend. (August 16, 2022, City Council approval)
- Creation of *San José for All*, an equity-centered advisory body to support the City's goal to advance racial equity by examining effective strategies to ensure organizational uptake of those methods within the City. This advisory body will include 10 to 12 members who have the option of receiving a stipend. (August 30, 2022, City Council approval)
- Financial Need-Based Stipends for Boards and Commissions
 - Other members of boards and commissions may be eligible for a financial need-based stipend of \$200 for each meeting they attend, based on qualifying as a low-income household as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the County of Santa Clara. (November 8, 2022, City Council approval)

Community Engagement Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Process

Meaningful, equitable community engagement was the cornerstone of the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force (Task Force) process, and community feedback informed the recommendations developed by the Task Force. The Task Force, supported by the Community Engagement Committee, staff, and the consultant team, developed a five-part Community Engagement Plan.

Several factors led to the Task Force being successful in the engagement of residents and small business owners: 1) time dedicated to create an engagement strategy geared toward the impacted population (deliberate planning), 2) dedicated staff and resources (including contracting with a consultant) to support the effort (not solely reliant on volunteers), 3) establishment of a nine-member Lived Experience Group, who were compensated through a grant awarded to the consultant and charged with designing and executing specific engagement activities, and 4) a Promotores pilot, funded by the allocation of \$500,000 in Community and Economic Recovery Budget Adjustments (approved by City Council on November 30, 2021). The City contracted with three community-based organizations that hired and trained 21 Promotores to reach residents and small businesses in the zip codes most impacted by the pandemic. The Promotores reached over 15,000 residents, connecting them to COVID-19 resources by door-knocking, tabling at events, and participating in focus groups. The FY 2022-2023 Adopted Operating Budget allocated an additional \$500,000 to continue the pilot program through FY 2023-2024.

City Staff Community Engagement Working Group

The Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG), born out of staff participation in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), is a group of approximately 50 City

employees across 14 departments who *volunteer* their time to research, develop, and integrate best practices for coordinated, responsive, and equitable community engagement throughout City government. In FY 2022-2023, the CEWG conducted two community engagement trainings for senior staff, including introducing the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Many City staff now use the Spectrum to establish the public's role when developing outreach/engagement strategies and methods for specific departmental projects, programs and plans. Additionally, CEWG developed a comprehensive Community Engagement Report provided in **Attachment A**.

On-Call Community Engagement Consultants and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Community engagement involves community members in important decisions that may impact them. This includes learning about and providing feedback on these decisions. The City leads a variety of public projects and planning processes that involve engaging with residents to generate feedback. For these outreach and engagement efforts, staff often contract with consultants to augment staff capacity. Consultants provide a range of services related to community engagement, such as advising on strategy, preparing outreach and meeting materials, facilitating discussions, and taking notes. In addition to increasing work capacity, they bring specialized skills and project experiences to improve the quality of the process. In order to establish a list of on-call consultants, staff implemented a procurement process and recommended nine firms for the City to enter into master agreements with. City Council approved these nine consultants on August 16, 2022 ([22-1266](#)).¹

Staff conducted a separate procurement process to establish a list of on-call CBOs, recognizing the unique benefits of partnering with CBOs on outreach and engagement efforts. Specifically, staff recognizes the value of the trusted relationships CBOs have with community members and the established communication channels they maintain. CBOs have firsthand experience with connecting to underrepresented populations. These connections help to increase the breadth and depth of participation across communities and to generate quality feedback from residents. CBOs also have expertise with and knowledge of local issues and needs, which further helps to produce equitable outcomes. Recognizing these benefits, City Council approved staff's recommendation to conduct another request for proposals (RFP) specifically for CBOs as part of the August 16, 2022, City Council meeting. In response to this direction, the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs issued an RFP for master agreements with CBOs on community engagement projects.

Citywide Community Engagement Framework

As part of the Administration's focus on improving community outreach and engagement and in alignment with the One Team Leadership Value of Community and Employee Engagement, the CEWG initiated work to develop Citywide Community Engagement Framework (Framework). The purpose of the Framework is to provide a shared vision across all City departments for engaging residents and stakeholders. The Framework encapsulates the principles, recommended

¹ [City of San José - File #: 22-1266 \(legistar.com\)](#)

tools and best practices, and relevant parties to involve in an engagement effort. It is meant to provide a high-level overview of how City staff think about and approach engagement and is infused with both staff and community member feedback. In December 2022, the CEWG conducted a workshop with City staff across departments to obtain feedback on the initial draft of the Framework.

ANALYSIS

On-Call Community Engagement Consultants

On-call community engagement consultants continue to be available for community engagement work for all City staff, including City Council Offices, to utilize through a service order rather than a full procurement process. **Table 1** includes City projects to date that have utilized the list of on-call consultants for community engagement efforts. **Attachment B** provides the full list of on-call community engagement consultants.

Table 1: Use of On-Call Consultants

Project Name	Department	Consultant	Budget
COVID-19 Recovery Task Force process close-out final report	City Manager’s Office	Raimi & Associates	\$76,400
COVID-19 Recovery Task Force community engagement report	City Manager’s Office	Winter Consulting, LLC	\$39,000
Citywide Community Engagement Framework	City Manager’s Office	Winter Consulting, LLC	\$40,000
Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways Fund Commission	Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs	Winter Consulting, LLC	\$125,000
SJ Clean Energy Website Study	Energy Department	Baird + Driskell Community Planning/Community Planning Collaborative	\$23,400
Pleasant Hills Vision	Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement	PlaceWorks	\$250,000

Project Name	Department	Consultant	Budget
Police Department Community Engagement Plan	Police Department	PlaceWorks	\$130,000
Curb Digitization and Management Pilot	Department of Transportation	PlaceWorks	\$120,000

Utilizing on-call consultants will continue to be integral to community engagement in the above projects. For example, Winter Consulting was a critical resource to help set up the Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways Fund Commission staffed by the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA). Winter Consulting was engaged to prepare and implement a communication strategy about the Commission, inform residents of the opportunity to join the Commission, and assist in developing the Commission's goals and targeted outcomes. They were also helpful in developing ongoing communications with residents about Commission meetings, as well as planning and facilitating Commission meetings.

In another example, the Police Department engaged Placeworks in January 2024 to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of community engagement initiatives. This evaluation will gather feedback from stakeholders and diverse community members and provide recommendations and cost estimates to enhance engagement efforts. As part of their assessment, Placeworks will also design a statistically valid survey and produce a detailed written report after August 2024.

Further, the Department of Transportation is also engaging Placeworks on the Curb Digitization and Management Pilot. PlaceWorks will play a key role in developing an engagement plan, which will include interviewing key stakeholders, creating a community advisory committee, and developing website and social media content. They will also be responsible for overseeing a component of the curb data collection, including involving community members in the process. Utilizing this consultant supports community involvement in all aspects of the program and enables the community to be an integral part of shaping the use of curb space downtown.

The Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement engaged with PlaceWorks for the Pleasant Hills Golf Course Guiding Principles process to assist in engaging the community to develop a guiding principles document. PlaceWorks is working with two CBOs - the Latina Coalition Silicon Valley and the Vietnamese American Roundtable - to help reach out to difficult-to-reach communities. The community-based organizations are assisting with outreach by distributing multilingual flyers, conducting door-to-door outreach, and utilizing their social media platforms to share project information and updates. With the assistance of PlaceWorks, City staff has conducted two sets of workshops. PlaceWorks will continue to conduct outreach to obtain community feedback and prepare a guiding principles document for the City Council's consideration.

On-Call Community Based Organizations

Implementation of the on-call CBO program has been delayed due to needed training and capacity building with CBO partners and staff transitions in OEDCA. On November 16, 2023,

OEDCA hosted a training with the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits to help CBOs understand the processes and procedures of a master agreement relationship. There are currently ten master agreements with CBOs that have been executed, seven in progress, and five to be assigned. **Attachment C** provides the list of on-call community engagement CBOs. Moving forward, the City Manager’s Office will oversee the agreements and contracts with the CBOs. The streamlined contracting process will enable staff to develop an engagement strategy in partnership with the CBO early in the project planning process. This early partnership will generate more representative and meaningful participation, particularly among populations that do not often participate in City processes. In addition to these outcomes, this work supports the City’s goal of streamlining procurement processes – conserving significant staff time and resources by consolidating administrative tasks.

Citywide Community Engagement Framework

During fall 2023, the CEWG partnered with an external consultant (Winter Consulting)—funded by a grant from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation—to finalize Framework materials through three open houses where City residents responded to prompts regarding past experiences with City engagement and opinions on what would encourage their communities to participate in future engagement. Outreach was focused on communities that historically have not participated in City engagement processes. This engagement supplemented previous survey efforts that probed residents on similar themes. Major themes in resident feedback included:

- Incentives will boost participation in City engagement, particularly in economically strained communities;
- Lack of City follow-up to inform residents on actions resulting from community feedback is discouraging;
- Residents need information and engagement opportunities to be available in their language to properly engage with the City; and
- Overall importance of investing in barrier-reducing services, including food and childcare.

Attachment D provides the Winter Consulting Community Engagement Report. The Citywide Community Engagement Framework (provided in **Attachment E**) is a high-level document designed to help City staff align community engagement with the needs of the community. It includes engagement activities to consider, brainstorming questions to guide the creation of an engagement plan including the target audience, and the general steps to take when planning an engagement effort. The Framework also centers engagement around the guiding principles shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: City of San José Community Engagement Guiding Principles



Together, these guiding principles help build trust and strengthen relationships. The following are steps for applying these principles to a given process:

1. **Develop a community engagement strategy at the beginning of a project.** The first step involves getting clear with the team about the scope of the project and the details of the decision-making process. Ask questions such as: Who is making the decisions? What are the deliverables? What are the key milestones? Who are the stakeholders? Should we take a phased approach to the public involvement?
2. **Identify metrics of success.** Ask questions like: How will we know the process was successful? What are our process objectives? What can and should we measure to evaluate our progress? Examples include level of support expressed at the final hearing of the project, number of people in attendance at engagement events, demographic representation of participants, percentage of participants that respond favorably to event evaluations, etc.
3. **Use the IAP2 spectrum of public participation² or similar tool to identify the public involvement approach for the process and key decision points along the way.** Ask the team questions like: How will the public be involved? What influence will various

² <https://organizingengagement.org/models/spectrum-of-public-participation/>

stakeholders have over key decisions? How important is it to build consensus across stakeholders? Explore opportunities for collaboration and empowerment as ways to build consensus, increase trust, and result in community-driven outcomes.

4. **Establish a list of outreach and engagement methods you intend to use based on the selected approach(es).** There is no one-size-fits-all approach to community engagement, and the specific methods will vary depending on the project scope, stakeholders, resources, timing, and other factors.
5. **Consider the relationship with City Council offices, especially if City Council will have the final decision.** Understand their goals for the engagement process and how they want to be involved. Plan time for check-ins so the project team can anticipate concerns and address them as they would with any other key stakeholder.
6. **Allocate sufficient resources to support the objectives and metrics of success.** This includes staffing (e.g., engagement specialists, consultants), funding for language access and other direct costs, and time. Adjust the scope to align with available resources and vice versa. This may be an iterative process.
7. **Get input from stakeholders on the draft engagement strategy before beginning to implement it.** They will be more likely to get involved and buy into the outcomes if they helped shaped the process.
8. **Treat the strategy as a living document.** Iterate as you get feedback from stakeholders. Reflect, adapt, and innovate as you implement it. Making time for reflection during and after the process will not only improve outcomes, but it will also help build institutional capacity for the next process.
9. **Set clear expectations with the public at the beginning and as the process evolves.** Be honest about the level of involvement the public will have and follow through with it. Avoid making promises that you can't keep.

Additionally, City departments are encouraged to establish the Framework as a standard component of employee orientation and onboarding materials. Regarding using incentives to encourage resident participation, departments are encouraged to continue to scope securing grants in consultant and CBO contracts. Lastly, department leadership is encouraged to allocate appropriate staff time to ensure the Framework remains useful and actionable in their engagement activities.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Community and Economic Development Committee Agenda website for the May 20, 2024, meeting. The CEWG also hosted one in-depth session for staff feedback on the Framework and seven in-person presentations and focus group discussions with more than 150 residents, including members of the former Neighborhoods Commission, Neighborhood Associations, and Project Hope neighborhoods. Additionally, a survey was conducted from May 2023 to April 2024 to gather information on what practices the City should use to improve resident participation; more than 900 responses were received.

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Subject: City-Wide Community Engagement Framework Annual Report

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COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs.

/s/

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The principal author of this memorandum is Aurelia Bailey, Assistant to the City Manager. For questions, please contact Aurelia Bailey at aurelia.bailey@sanjoseca.gov.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Community Engagement Working Group Community Engagement Report

Attachment B: List of On-Call Community Engagement Consultants

Attachment C: List of On-Call Community Engagement Community-Based Organizations

Attachment D: Winter Consulting Community Engagement Report

Attachment E: Citywide Community Engagement Framework