

Disability Affairs Annual Report

Community & Economic Development Committee

Item (d)2
May 20, 2024

Presenters:

Sarah Zarate, Director

Raania Mohsen, Disability Affairs Officer

City of San José

City Manager's Office of Administration, Policy and Intergovernmental Relations



Disability Affairs Portfolio

Background

- ✓ Portfolio emerged from lessons learned during COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ Budget Document submitted FY 2021-2022 by Councilmember Foley
- ✓ City Council supported City Manager's Organizational Disability Assessment and budget appropriation in FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24
- ✓ New Disability Affairs Officer hired December 2022

Disability Affairs Portfolio

Disability Inclusion Equity Pledge

City Council adopted Pledge, June 13, 2023

- Prioritizes disability inclusion as a human right and matter of equity
- Rooted in the social model of disability –

What if our environment is what “disables” people and not their functional limitations?

We commit to prioritizing disability inclusion through a learning process, modeling behavior, and action steps, which may take us beyond the minimum legal requirements. We affirm that the full and complete realization of the human rights of all persons with disabilities is an essential, integral, and invisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We pledge to prioritize disability inclusion to ensure the human rights of persons with disabilities are achieved.

We promise to work to build trust and confidence among persons with disabilities, as ongoing ableism has harmed the trust and confidence among people with disabilities.

We confirm that people with disabilities deserve an environment that allows them to participate on an equal basis fully and effectively with others.

We support the Disability and Independent Living motto of “Nothing About Us Without Us.” We must partner with our community first so that we can adequately address the needs of all residents. All people must be included in planning and problem-solving.

We recognize that these are first steps and commit to continuous learning and implementation processes that will advance systemic change within the City of San José and serve as a model for disability inclusion in the City and beyond.

We commit to pursuing the following in our efforts to gain disability inclusion.

- **Engage the Disability Community** through the creation of community engagement policy and principles for including people with disabilities, as well as family members and care providers of people with disabilities, in community engagement activities and other advisory roles in the spirit of the disability rights principle “Nothing About Us Without Us.”
- **Implement Best Practices** that help recruit, retain, and promote people with disabilities as City staff, including but not limited to accommodation policies, job descriptions and training of hiring managers.
- **Build Staff Capacity and Training Programs** that include disability education, access, equity and inclusion training.
- **Prioritize Events Accessibility** that includes accommodations language on invitations and registrations for all events that the City hosts and sponsors citywide.
- **Use Disability-Inclusive Language** by recognizing that the language of identity is an individual choice that varies widely among the disability community, use both person-first and identity-first language to respectfully acknowledge different preferences in internal and public facing communications and style guides.
- **Create Disability Metrics** as a dimension of diversity and equity to work collectively to track disability participation as appropriate, in the City of San Jose’s programs and services aiming to optimize accessibility and participation.

Disability Affairs Portfolio

Guiding Objectives: A Phased Approach

➤ *Phase 1:*

1. Build institutional awareness about disability inclusion
2. Support Disability Affairs organizationally (internal + external)
3. Improve accessibility in five areas across offices and departments:
 - Communications and information access
 - Community engagement
 - Physical access
 - Employment access
 - Shared data collection

➤ *Phase 2 objectives informed by Phase 1*

Disability Affairs Portfolio

Strategic Framework: Fostering Inclusion & Equitable Opportunities



Build Awareness
thru Education



Advance Policy &
Advocacy



Cultivate Proactive
Accessibility



Partner with
Community



Strengthen Data
Collection

Phase 1 in Action: Operationalize Pledge

Collaboration with Departments – Early Actions

- Disability Access Improvement Grant Program, funding up to \$25,000
- Al Fresco Parklet/Sidewalk Seating regulations and permit applications now includes “accessibility plan” as part of checklist for approval
- Updated assistive technology devices for City Hall Tower
- Identified nearly \$1 million in funding for Accessible Pedestrian Signal updates and internship opportunities for people with disabilities
- Provided guidance on Library upgrades to assistive technologies
- Developed ADA Mandatory Disclosure flyer for all business tax licensees per SB 748



Launched New Disability Access Improvement Grant Program

Co-hosted with California Commission on Disability Access:
Listening Forum, August 31 + Webinar, December 11, 2023

Phase 1 in Action: Operationalize Pledge

Other Activities

- Serve as “go to” contact for disability affairs, internally and externally
- Monitor ADA Grievance/Complaint Procedure and implementation
- Partner with community by participating in 75+ meeting/events with key community members and organizations
- Monitor & track legislation and funding opportunities to improve life outcomes for people with disabilities
- Co-lead Disability Access Working Group of other government agencies to advance proactive approach to accessibility across region

Phase 1 in Action: Operationalize Pledge

Gap Analysis (Pilot Departments), Training + Skill Building

March 2023

November 2023

June 2024

Advances Guiding Objectives



Community Partnership & Feedback

- Community Meeting, April 18, 2024 – shared update and glossary of terms for input
- Based on feedback, staff to include and collaborate on disability equity in policy work and strategy around:
 - Inclusive programs, services for children
 - Public safety and 911 alternate response
 - Emergency preparedness and response
 - Digital accessibility
 - Advisory body of people with lived experience
- Staff attends regular community working group meetings re: public safety, emergency response, and governmental collaboration

Next Steps – City Manager's Proposed Budget

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Proposed Budget:

- Continues and makes permanent role of Disability Affairs Officer (Assistant to the City Manager)
- Integrates disability affairs into mission-aligned Office of Racial and Social Equity

If approved by City Council:

- Continue embedding and normalizing disability inclusion (Phase 2)
- Prioritize collaboration and partnership with people with lived experience

Phase 2: Continue Building Capacity, Embedding Disability Inclusion

Key Anticipated Initiatives FY 2024-2025

- Develop training curriculum to facilitate citywide disability awareness
- Disseminate newly created tools and resources
- Streamline gap analysis across departments
- Continued collaboration with departments re: disability equity improvements
- Review and update internal policies to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities / develop standardized procedures where needed
- Establish working group of Accessibility Liaisons (language + disability) across departments
- Launch update of citywide ADA Transition Plan
- Update RFP/contract language for 3rd party compliance w/ disability access laws

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