



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilwoman Sylvia Arenas

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 21, 2019

Approved

Date

2-21-19

SUBJECT: AGE AND FAMILY FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Modify the name of the “Age Friendly City Initiative” to the “Age and Family Friendly City Initiative.”
- 2) Integrate into the “Age and Family Friendly Initiative” current and relevant items in the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee work plan.
- 3) At the next Quarterly Legislative Update, bring forward to Council an update to the “Family Friendly Legislation” policy position to read “Age and Family Friendly Legislation” and include it in the list of top city-wide legislative priorities. Also, include updates on legislative efforts that focus on children and families.
- 4) Include in the “Age and Family Friendly City Initiative” other relevant prioritization items that the Council adopts, as well as the implementation of existing human resources city policies.

BACKGROUND

San Jose has recognized that there is a housing crisis, but we rarely address how we will support families while we increase our housing stock. The reality is that families are at the center of this crisis, dealing with low wage jobs, a high cost of living, cramped living arrangements and the need of a two-income household. Each of us have seen the exodus of San Jose families in the low student enrollment throughout our schools, in our city’s survey results, and in news coverage with headlines like “Life after the Bay Area: Fleeing residents feel heartbreak, joy.”

The City Auditor’s Annual Report on City Services FY 2017-2018 Resident Survey revealed a decrease in overall quality of life in San Jose and only 41% of residents considers San Jose as a good place to raise children. Nearly three in four residents reported that it is very important for San Jose to focus on sense of community in the next two years. Approximately 80% of San Jose residents rated the availability of affordable child care/preschool as poor/fair.

San Jose families are essential to the fabric of our community and it is time for a city-wide and department-wide response to this crisis. It’s critical that we address this crisis with a coordinated

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Subject: Age and Family Friendly City Initiative

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effort. I am recommending we modify the name of the “Age Friendly City Initiative” to the “Age and Family Friendly City Initiative.”

Additionally, I recommend that we incorporate into the initiative existing efforts to better reflect our city’s commitment to addressing this crisis. These would include current relevant items on the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee work plan such as: Quality Standards for Early Education Programming, City-Wide Expanded Learning Programs, and Demand for Affordable Housing for Families with Children. Also included, would be any relevant Council adopted Prioritization items.

This memo focuses on process improvements to coordinate and streamline existing efforts — similar to the BeautifySJ initiative. It includes referrals to existing processes, such as legislative referrals to the Quarterly Update Process and technical fixes to include priority setting items that successfully pass through that process.

These small technical steps will help improve the process of addressing the crisis we see in San Jose families.

CALL TO ACTION

San Jose is known as a leader in civic innovation and we must continue to lead in creating real solutions for families. There is a both a local and national issue that must be resolved and the political will is there to finally address these fundamental issues. We must begin to initiate conversations towards tangible solutions for San Jose families of all ages.

This memo outlines my suggestions for first steps that the City should pursue. It also suggests tying these efforts together as part of a city “Age and Family Friendly Initiative.” While there are many approaches that have merit – what is vital is an approach that correctly identifies the problem. San Jose families are struggling to make it. We will lose something very fundamental if we don’t take sufficient action to address the issue head on.