



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Raul Peralez

SUBJECT: Council Priority Setting

DATE: March 4, 2019

Approved by:

Date: 3/4/19

DISCUSSION

Thank you to City Staff for their work in organizing this year's annual Priority Setting session. I have long respected the process as it is considered a fair way for policymaking while being sensitive to our staff's workload. As we are turning the corner from an era of massive turnovers in city personnel, I hope to see more acceptance of creative policy ideas that could contribute to the betterment of our City. With that said, I would like to offer a few insights on some of the proposed policies.

Suicide Prevention

Late last year during a Joint City and County meeting, the County Director of the Behavioral Health Department stated that all cities in the county should adopt a Suicide Prevention Policy. While staff may not have provided estimations on workload time and personnel, this is a worthwhile venture the City should pursue considering there may be preventative actions we have yet to unearth. It is evident there is interest in promoting this effort and I applaud examples such as the Mayor and Vice Mayor's recently green-lit Gun Violence Prevention proposal that included a suicide prevention component. We should catch up to our smaller neighbors such as Milpitas¹ and Morgan Hill² who in the past year have adopted their own policies.

Wage Theft

In June 2015, the City Council ranked wage theft prevention as the number one priority and in 2016 the Council unanimously approved the Wage Theft Prevention Policy.

¹ Milpitas Suicide Prevention Policy:

http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/pdfs/council/2018/061918/item_21.pdf

² Morgan Hill Suicide Prevention Policy:

<http://www.morgan-hill.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22917/CP-18-01-Suicide-Prevention?bidId=>

However, the initial policy excluded both construction and the City's Public Works projects. Wage Theft is occurring all too often in the construction industry and right here in San José. The most recent example, is the discovery of construction workers forced into human trafficking at the Silvery Towers construction site. I encourage my colleagues to discourage developers and contractors from exploiting workers in our City and prioritize updating our wage theft policy to include those safeguards.

Riparian Corridor & Bird Safe Design

I am disappointed that this policy³ went through the proper process of priority setting, and now has to be renominated. It was my understanding that priority setting was no longer the place where "policies went to die" and this seems counterintuitive to that. There are high-density projects that are being proposed along the Riparian Corridor such as the Almaden Project and Adobe Tower 4 Project, which is why it is critical that we place environmental safeguards for our habitat areas. The City has taken great strides toward being a model for conservation and environmentalism such as Climate Smart San José and San José Clean Energy. I urge my council colleagues to maintain that momentum by keeping this policy on the priority list.

Storage for the Homeless

Thank you Councilmember Jimenez for nominating this idea for priority setting. I am supportive of the concept and my office has been working on this idea for awhile now. In my conversations with various stakeholders from law enforcement to homeless advocates, all parties have signaled that storage for personal belongings is a high priority. However, rather than allocating our staff's scarce time, I feel we may be better off supporting the efforts already underway.

Last year, the Rotary Club of Downtown San José (Rotary) approached my office with an interest in producing a project that will benefit the homeless and as a result took to heart the idea of storage for the homeless. We facilitated a discussion with the Downtown homeless service provider, People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) who also looped in another non-profit organization, Mental Health Services (MHS), which has experience in managing personal storage spaces for the homeless in Southern California. Rotary and MHS are currently in discussions on exploring further this project idea. Whether or not this item is prioritized, I recommend staff look to support this developing community partnership and/or consider it for future budget discussions.

CONCLUSION

Thank you to my colleagues for putting forth some very innovative ideas that may make our City a better place to live, work and play. I wish that I could support many of them including Councilmembers Khamis, Davis and my own proposal for Interactive Wayfinding Signage but unfortunately we are limited by the number of priority setting votes. I hope that as we increase our staff capacity, we can also increase the capacity for more policy development.

³ August 19, 2016 Memorandum: Riparian Corridor Policy and Bird Safe Design
http://sanjose.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&event_id=2150&meta_id=588931