

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, March 11, 2008

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City Seeks Candidates for New Neighborhoods Commission *Resident Delegates to Elect Commissioners through Caucus Process*

While state caucuses to choose presidential candidates have been grabbing headlines across the country, neighborhood leaders in San Jose have been planning caucuses of their own. These local delegate gatherings will create the city's first Neighborhoods Commission. This is a unique opportunity for San Jose residents to get involved with their local government.

The commission, approved by the San Jose City Council in September 2007, is a two-year pilot project aimed at giving neighborhoods a stronger voice in the decision-making process at City Hall.

Unlike members of the City's other 22 boards and commission who are appointed, Neighborhood Commission members will be elected by delegates from neighborhood groups through caucuses in each of the 10 City Council districts. Three will be elected from each district.

Here is how it will work:

- Neighborhood groups are to register by April 4 with the Neighborhood Development Center as a first step in selecting one delegate and an alternate for their caucuses. The deadline to identify delegates is at least a week before the district caucus. A neighborhood group is an organization that represents a specific neighborhood with the goal of improving that neighborhood and should be registered with the City.

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- Residents who want to serve on the commission can apply through the San Jose City Clerk's office. (www.sanjoseca.gov/Clerk/commissionboard/NC/NC.asp) Applications are due by 5 p.m. April 4. Candidates will be elected by their Council District delegates to represent the neighborhoods in their districts as well as to advocate for neighborhoods in general.
- Neighborhood Caucuses will be held from May 17 to June 14 in each of the 10 council districts. Candidates will give a two-minute opening statement, be available to answer questions and provide a closing statement.
- Candidates must receive a majority of votes to be elected through rounds of public balloting. The City Council will seat the commissioners in the fall. They will serve two-year terms under the initial pilot project.

The new commissioners will provide a voice on citywide neighborhood spending priorities and quality of life issues; review proposed policies and programs affecting neighborhoods and make recommendations to the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency.

The Neighborhoods Commission was proposed by members of the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative's Project Advisory Committee to create a citywide forum for neighborhood issues. The Project Advisory Committee, which will sunset on March 31, was established in 2002 as an advisory body to guide the 19 SNI redevelopment plans.

The Neighborhood Development Center can be reached at (408) 723-4114; the San Jose City Clerk's office at (408) 535-1260.

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