



Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL**

FROM: Tom Manheim

**SUBJECT: 2007 SAN JOSE
COMMUNITY SURVEY**

DATE: March 28, 2008

Approved

Christine J. Shippy

Date

3-27-08

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the report of survey results from the 2007 San Jose Community Survey.

BACKGROUND

Since 2000, the City has gathered customer satisfaction data through a bi-annual survey of San Jose residents. The 2007 Community Survey is our fifth such survey, building on the benchmark information provided by previous surveys conducted in 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2005. Because many questions have been asked in each of the previous surveys, the data reveals both a snapshot of current satisfaction levels, as well as information about how those satisfaction levels have changed over time.

ANALYSIS

Survey Methodology

The work for this survey was conducted by the firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMM&A), building on their work in previous surveys for the City. Departmental representatives were contacted to update the annual survey instrument. Changes were designed to address approved changes to those performance measures that use the survey data and to develop new or revised questions. Nevertheless, to maintain consistency and provide data that shows trends over time, changes were kept to a minimum.

From November 26 to December 2, 2007, FMM&A conducted telephone interviews with 1,000 San Jose residents whose phone numbers were randomly selected. The survey was administered in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Given the City's population, the survey results as a whole have a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent. Any smaller subgroups of the sample (e.g., by age, income level, etc.) have higher margins of error, and are thus somewhat less reliable. As in the 2005 Survey,

responses from residents of Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) areas have been tabulated to compare SNI residents' perceptions of conditions and satisfaction with service delivery to overall, citywide responses.

The survey results continue to reflect overall positive perceptions about San Jose and the services the City provides. At the same time, the 2007 survey does show some changing trends in what concerns our residents. A complete review of the most significant findings can be found in the *City of San José 2007 Community Survey, Report of Findings* (Attachment A), but a few highlights are noted here:

- San Jose residents remain generally happy with the quality of life in San Jose, with 80% percent rating the quality of life as good or excellent, nearly identical to this rating (79%) in 2005.
- The percentage of San Jose residents who are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall quality of City Services reached (78%) in this survey. While the difference between 2007 and 2005 remains within the margin of error, the 2007 findings mark the highest satisfaction levels since the City began surveying.

Given the continuing significant reductions in funding available for many services over the past seven years, these overall results reflect well on the commitment, hard work and productivity of City staff, as well as the measured approach taken by the City Council in balancing service reductions and focusing resources on high priority areas. Other key findings of the survey include:

- When asked to rate nine individual community conditions that contribute to the overall quality of life in their neighborhood, all but one was rated “excellent” or “good” by a significant majority of residents.
- Some 71% of San Jose residents rate the "overall physical condition" of their neighborhood as good or excellent, a statistically insignificant change from the 72% who felt this way in 2005. In addition, the number of residents who say their neighbors share a sense of local community pride has risen to 68%, four points up from the 2005 rating (64%).
- Crime-related issues continue to top the list of concerns raised by residents when asked about the most serious issues facing San José. The level of concern has risen significantly from 14% two years ago to 22% in 2007. Since the City began surveying in 2000, crime, traffic congestion, housing costs and education have been among the top concerns raised each year. This year, street maintenance is emerging as a rising concern with 7% of respondents citing this issue.
- San Jose residents continue to feel safe during the day walking around in their neighborhoods (90 percent), in the park nearest their house (83 percent), or in the downtown area (68%). Most residents also feel safe at night in their neighborhood (70%). Feeling of safety are lower in the evening hours in the park nearest their house (48%) or downtown (41%). While

lower than the numbers registered in 2005, these ratings are within the margin of error for every survey since the first survey in 2000, when these numbers were lower.

There have been other changes worth noting, both since the 2005 survey, as well as overall since we began surveying in 2000:

- Since 2005, feelings of satisfaction fell slightly in two areas: 1) *removing graffiti from buildings* (from 60% to 52%); and, 2) *supporting a diverse range of arts and cultural activities* (from 54% to 47%).
- Alternatively, since the last survey, reported satisfaction levels increased for *providing fire prevention and protection* (from 72% to 77%).
- Overall, since 2000 ratings have risen substantially for library services, fire services, after-school programs, child care programs, programs for seniors to live on their own, enhancing public spaces with art, planning for future growth.

As noted above, changes to the 2007 survey instrument questions were kept to a minimum to maintain the ability to track changes over time. However, new questions were added this year in two significant areas: 1) perceptions of City government as open and accountable; and, 2) actively participating in energy-efficient practices:

- In the area of openness and accountability, overall 81% expressed at least some confidence that San Jose city government is open and accountable. However, the number who felt “extremely” or “very” confident of their position was relatively low (35%). Given the recent community and media focus on this issue, it is not surprising that ratings in this area are weaker than we would like. The 2007 measure will provide a good baseline for measuring changes in the future.
- Residents were asked a series of questions to determine whether they are taking a number of specific steps to reduced energy consumption in their lives. The results show a high number of residents are already doing the easier things such as adjusting thermostats (73%) and using compact fluorescent or LED bulbs (63%). Not surprisingly, a lower number are taking advantage of the more difficult or expensive ways to reduce energy consumption such as driving a hybrid, electric or alternative fuel vehicle (8%) or installing solar panels (8%).

OUTCOME

The community survey provides a broad look at how residents feel about San Jose and various City services. The results are used by City Service Areas and departmental teams to evaluate performance in a number of areas.

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PUBLIC OUTREACH

Input for the survey responses was gathered from 1000 randomly selected San Jose residents through telephone interviews during the period November 26 – December 2, 2007.

COORDINATION

Community Survey questions and results are coordinated with all City departments and Council Appointees.

COST IMPLICATIONS

None

CEQA

N/A



TOM MANHEIM
Communications Director

Attachment