



COUNCIL AGENDA: 6-13-06  
ITEM: 9.1(b)

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Nadine N. Nader

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** June 6, 2006

Approved

*Seama Antune*

Date

*6/6/06*

**SUBJECT: STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS UPDATE [BUILDING STRONG  
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE]**

At the May 15, 2006 BSN Committee, staff presented a report on the Strong Neighborhoods Update, and requested direction to take the Building Strong Neighborhoods beyond redevelopment areas framework.

This item is being cross-referenced for full Council consideration.

*Nadine Nader*  
NADINE N. NADER  
Assistant to the City Manager

Attachment



## Memorandum

**TO:** BUILDING STRONG  
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Mark Linder

**SUBJECT:** STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS  
UPDATE

**DATE:** 5-15-2006

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### RECOMMENDATION

Strong Neighborhoods staff is seeking approval of the Building Strong Neighborhoods (BSN) report and direction to take the Building Strong Neighborhoods beyond redevelopment areas framework to the San Jose City Council for consideration.

### BACKGROUND

In the State of the City Address delivered on February 8, 2006, Mayor Ron Gonzales recommended a \$5 million dollar investment to begin a citywide Strong Neighborhoods effort. After five years of successful planning and implementation, the lessons of the Strong Neighborhood Initiative can provide the foundation for expanding Strong Neighborhoods beyond redevelopment areas.

This memorandum serves to inform the BSN Committee of the preliminary framework for expanding Strong Neighborhoods beyond redevelopment areas. As Strong Neighborhoods embarks on the Renewing the Action Agenda process within redevelopment areas, it will also begin the process of developing a strategy for Building Strong Neighborhoods throughout the rest of the City. The story and experience of Strong Neighborhoods and the development of the Renewing the Action Agenda process serve as guides for transforming the way the City works with all of its neighborhoods.

### *Lessons Learned*

For the past five years the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative has demonstrated the power of working with neighborhoods and citizen leaders collaboratively and openly to establish and address their own priorities. Leveraging resources and looking at issues from the perspective of residents has achieved a more responsive and inclusive service delivery system in the 19 Strong Neighborhoods areas. The following "lessons learned" are integral to the success of Strong Neighborhoods and become the foundation for a citywide application.

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**Neighborhoods as Building Blocks:** The creation of the Neighborhood Action Coalition establishes neighborhood identity and provides a meaningful forum for the identification and implementation of community priorities. Similarly, the development of cross-departmental neighborhood teams infuses staff’s work with street-level significance and creates solid community partnerships.

**Develop Neighborhood Leadership:** The organization of an initial guiding coalition, which relies heavily on existing community leadership and a broad representation of neighborhood stakeholders, is vital to the success of Strong Neighborhoods.

**Identify Clear Priorities and Establish Accountability:** Collaborative neighborhood planning must begin with an assessment of existing strengths and assets and an understanding of a common vision for desired quality of life. It is critical that the neighborhood drives its priorities and that clear, measurable objectives are set through the planning process. Staff must work hand-in-hand with leaders in the development of neighborhood plans to ensure that community expectations are aligned with City deliverables.

**Connect Priorities to Resources:** Strong Neighborhoods’ success has been significantly aided by San Jose Redevelopment Agency investment; however much of the success can be attributed to the integration of priorities into existing budgets and the alignment of projects with funding streams such as Community Development Block Grant. Given the limited budget for Building Strong Neighborhoods, neighborhood priorities should align with existing service and infrastructure needs and must rely on the existing City budget and grant opportunities as primary funding sources.

## FRAMEWORK

Staff recommends piloting Building Strong Neighborhoods in one or two neighborhoods using the framework outlined below. The implementation framework also recommends piloting a citywide community engagement approach using three key initiatives: General Plan update, Greenprint revision, and transportation prioritization around the Level of Service policy. By applying lessons learned from Strong Neighborhoods, staff can engage communities around important City initiatives, organize pilot neighborhoods, establish vision, and establish partnerships between the City and community through the creation of cross-departmental teams.

### **Building Strong Neighborhoods Vision of Success:**

- Communities that feel safe 24 hours per day
- Strong, capable, and engaged neighborhood organizations throughout the City
- Formal establishment of neighborhood vision and priorities
- City coordinated service and project delivery in alignment with neighborhood priorities

### Implementation Recommendation

**Pilot Initiative:** Building Strong Neighborhoods staff will support the work of the lead City department to create a citywide community engagement framework around the following important initiatives:

- General Plan Update (PBCE)
- Greenprint Revision (PRNS)
- Transportation Priorities for LOS Policy (DOT)

#### Resources Required

- Community organizing staff
- Cross-departmental teams

**Pilot Areas:** Select two pilot areas based on the following criteria:

**Pilot Area 1:** Demonstrates organization and infrastructure needs and a lack of connectivity with City departments and services.

**Pilot Area 2:** Demonstrates lack of connectivity with City departments and services but has solid social organization and infrastructure.

#### *Pilot 1 Approach:*

- Organizing effort to identify leaders and develop neighborhood organizations
- Education about City services and programs
- Alignment with non-profits
- Development of neighborhood vision and ranking of priorities
- Neighborhood team will assist in coordinating project and service delivery in alignment with priorities

#### *Pilot 2 Approach:*

- Education about City services and programs
- Alignment with non-profits as appropriate
- Development of neighborhood vision and ranking of priorities
- Neighborhood team will assist in coordinating project and service delivery in alignment with priorities

#### Resources Required

- Community organizing staff
- Planner
- Cross-departmental neighborhood team
- City and foundation grant support (CDBG, CAP, Community Foundation, etc.)

### **Implementation Themes:**

- Implementing Building Strong Neighborhoods citywide will be a five – ten year endeavor; however partnerships with the neighborhoods will be on-going.
- Pilot areas will require staff resources depending on level of need (organization, infrastructure, connectivity with City).
- Neighborhood projects and selected citywide initiatives will be approached as organizing tools to develop, strengthen, and engage organizations and leaders.
- Extensive and on-going community outreach is critical to establishing new leadership and creating an inclusive process. Outreach efforts will be coordinated with neighborhood organizations, City departments, and the council offices.
- Neighborhood Development Center will be integral to the successful expansion of Strong Neighborhoods beyond redevelopment areas. The NDC will assist in the areas of neighborhood organizing, organizational development, leadership recruitment and cultivation, translation and interpretation, City service coordination, etc.
- A coalition of citywide neighborhood organizations will assist in the implementation of this effort as will the Strong Neighborhoods Steering Committee comprised of Department Directors.
- Elements from existing department work plans will be coordinated within the pilot area planning processes as appropriate.
- As part of the pilot initiative, staff, in collaboration with the lead departments, will establish a community engagement framework to assist with updating the General Plan, revising the Greenprint, and prioritizing transportation improvements related to the Level of Service policy.
- After one year of implementation, each pilot area will be closely evaluated to assess resources necessary to support the effort. Based on the progress and amount of resources required within the pilot areas and pilot initiative, a citywide implementation timeline and strategy can be created.

### **NEXT STEPS**

#### **June 2006**

- City Council consideration of Building Strong Neighborhoods framework

#### **July – September 2006**

BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

Subject: Strong Neighborhoods Update

May 15, 2006

Page 5

- Neighborhood evaluation to assess levels of organization, infrastructure, and connectivity with City departments and services
- Prioritization of pilot areas
- Development of work plan and timeline

**October 2006**

- Present pilot neighborhood recommendations, work plan, and timeline to City Council

**COORDINATION**

This memorandum was coordinated with the Strong Neighborhoods Steering Committee.

  
MARK LINDER  
Assistant City Manager