



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmembers Rocha, Kalra, and Pyle

**SUBJECT:** STUDY SESSIONS

**DATE:** October 5, 2012

Approved Don Rocha Ash Velazquez J.C. Date 10/5/12

**RECOMMENDATION** *Nancy Pyle (KS)*

1. Direct staff to bring forward study sessions on the following topics:
  - a. Green Vision Implementation
  - b. Best Practices in Local Government Public Health Policy
  - c. Parks and Recreation and Library Programming
  
2. Direct staff to make it a standing practice to bring forward the upcoming study session schedule when the Council considers workload prioritization

**ANALYSIS**

**Study Session Topics**

We would like to propose three study session topics for the next nine month period. All three are guided by the belief that local government has the opportunity to be innovative in the areas of health and the environment. We're not proposing any specific policy actions at this point, but we believe that a sustained effort to learn about and discuss these ideas will give the Council an opportunity to identify areas where it wants to develop policy. What follows is an overview of our three suggested topics.

- **Green Vision Implementation Study Session:** October marks the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of San Jose's Green Vision. Every year, the Council receives a report on Green Vision implementation; given that the plan is now one third of the way through its life, we think we should take the opportunity to hold a study session to review our progress so far when staff brings forward the 2012 implementation report. A study session would also allow us to look forward at the opportunities for progress over the next five years. We would like to give special attention to the funding opportunities that the State's cap and trade program may present, and would like to hear from staff at the study session about the opportunities may be

available and how we are planning to pursue them. By focusing on this potential funding source, we may have the opportunity to enhance our Green Vision activities and make more rapid progress.

- **Public Health Study Session:** Over the past few years, the Council has moved forward a number of individual policy items that touch on the issue of public health. We think it may be time for us to have a more comprehensive discussion about how we can be active in this area. As we all know, health problems like childhood obesity are a huge challenge for our community. If we have the ability to be leaders in solving these problems, we should take that opportunity.

In a study session format, we think it would be useful for staff to give an overview of what other jurisdictions have done in this area. There would be no need to bring forward specific proposals for council action, but simply provide examples of cutting-edge policies that other local governments are adopting. Nationally, cities like New York have been very active in this area, but it would also be useful to look at our own nearby jurisdictions. For example, the County of Santa Clara has adopted policies on Happy Meal toys and the City of Richmond is proposing a Soda Tax. We don't know at this point whether those are proposals we should pursue, but understanding policy ideas from other jurisdictions would give us a good foundation to decide how we want to proceed in this area.

- **Parks and Recreation and Library Programming:** Physical activity and lifelong learning are important for residents of all ages. We have been fortunate over the past years to have innovative Parks and Recreation and Library staff who have taken action to improve our class offerings by, for example, revising our pricing and revenue policy for recreation programs and implementing the Recreation and E-Commerce System (RECS). We think it would be useful to have a study session where staff could update the Council on progress made in improving our recreation model over the past few years, provide an update on the range of recreation programs currently provided, and discuss any additional ideas they may have to continue to improve how we provide this service. Much of the City's direct engagement with the community occurs through our community centers and libraries; we think it's an area that deserves attention.

### **Study Session Scheduling**

We also recommend that staff make it a standard practice to bring forward the upcoming study session schedule at future priority setting session. Continuing to review this issue would give the Council an opportunity to plan its policy development activities over a longer period.