



# Memorandum

**TO:** All Children Achieve Committee

**FROM:** Sara L. Hensley

**SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON YOUTH  
COMMISSION ACTIVITIES**

**DATE:** 03-09-06

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Approved

Date

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Accept the status report on Youth Commission activities.

## **BACKGROUND**

The San José Youth Commission serves as an advisory body to the City Council and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) on matters of importance to the youth of San José. Youth Commissioners strive to understand and represent local and citywide issues by developing and participating in Youth Advisory Councils (YAC) in each of the ten (10) Council Districts.

## **ANALYSIS**

Since the Youth Commission's last report to the Committee on September 8, 2005, there has been significant progress toward completion of the strategic goals for FY 05-06. To date, the Commission has accomplished the following:

### **Goal # 1: Build Cohesive and Effective Commission**

Filling Commissioner vacancies and maintaining effective levels of participation in the YACs remains the Youth Commission's highest priority. With a preponderance of Commissioners in high school, vacancies occur each year as Commissioners attend college out of town, take jobs, and make other life changes. The YACs have proven to be a good source for prospective Commissioners, while Council District representatives seek other potential community youth leaders. The Commission has maintained a high degree of ethnic diversity, although female members currently hold seven of the eleven seats.

### Goal # 2: Provide Leadership and Training

A major item on the 20005-20006 Work Plan is the annual Youth Summit or “YAC Attack” sponsored by the Commission. This year’s YAC Attack, “Opening Doors to Your Future”, will be held on March 11. Youth Commissioners and teenagers from throughout the Bay Area will attend the all-day summit featuring workshops, roundtable discussions, guest speakers and interactive sessions. Topics will include the relationship between youth and police, driving regulations, effective meetings, public speaking, the Commission’s role as voice of youth, and relationships with City and regional government.

The San José Youth Commission has taken a lead role in designing this year’s YAC Attack. Commissioners, with PRNS staff support, developed the summit agenda by meeting with youth Commissioners from nearby cities, researching current trends and best practices in youth programming and services, and surveying local youth through the YACs.

### Goal # 3: Establish and Maintain Youth Advisory Councils

The on-going involvement of YACs in directing discussion and debate among youth has resulted in Commission advocacy on the PRNS Facility Re-Use Strategy Committee. The Commission subsequently recommended the re-use of the Old Berryessa Library as a youth and senior program site.

District YACs were also instrumental in the success of the following:

- Starbird Youth Center Police and Youth Meet and Greet
- The selection of youth scholarship recipients in CD 4
- Recruiting YAC members with middle and high school class presentations and assemblies
- CD 5 YAC representation on East Side Weed and Seed Program sub-committees
- Co-sponsoring teen dances and activity nights throughout all Council Districts

### Goal # 4: Advise City Council and PRNS on Youth Related Initiatives

The Commission continues to strengthen its communication with City Council on youth related issues. Each Council District supports a district-wide youth focused work plan that is managed by the District Youth Commissioner with support from the District YAC and PRNS staff. Council representatives take an active role in supporting the work of the Commission by regularly attending Commission meetings, monthly YAC meetings, and Commission-sponsored special events.

This increased involvement has aided in the Youth Commissions ability to more fully represent District youth; Commissioners act as liaisons to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Senior Citizens Commission. Commissioners also take an active

role in recommending budget priorities, provide input in new facility design elements and features and assess current PRNS programming.

Goal # 5: Heighten Awareness of Youth Commission

The Youth Commission and Youth Advisory Councils have been active and visible throughout the community in a variety of ways.

- Membership on Strong Neighborhood Initiative, Neighborhood Advisory Councils and other community associations
- School student body office holders
- City youth center advisory boards
- Feature columnist in Community newspapers
- Providing written documentation that helped secure San José's place as a "100 Best Cities for Youth" in the nation.
- Co sponsor with PRNS, community activities and cultural celebrations.
- Participate in the annual San José Holiday Parade
- Attend the annual Project Cornerstone Recognition Breakfast
- Speak on behalf of youth during City budget process
- Serve as members of the San José Police Chief's Youth Advisory Council.

The Youth Commission continues to play a lead role in supporting youth throughout the region, and expects to accomplish the work outlined in the 2005-2006 Work Plan. An updated Strategic Work Plan will be presented in August 2006 following the annual Youth Commission Retreat. New goals and objectives will be recommended in addition to a number of on-going strategic goals.

**COST IMPLICATION**

There is no cost associated with this report.

**COORDINATION**

This report was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

Sara L Hensley  
Director  
Department of Parks, Recreation and  
Neighborhood Services