



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING STRONG
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

FROM: Kimberly Shunk

SUBJECT: SAN JOSÉ *PREPARED!* UPDATE

DATE: August 14, 2006

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide
SNI AREA: All

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee accept this report on the San José *Prepared!* program.

OUTCOME

This report updates the Committee on the activities of the San José *Prepared!* program during the past year and provides an overview of work plan items for Fiscal Year 2006-2007.

BACKGROUND

San José Prepared! is the community emergency response team (CERT) program for San José. Started as a pilot program in 1995 and then expanded citywide in 1996, San José *Prepared!* has trained more than 3,100 residents in emergency preparedness using the federal CERT model. Today there are approximately 2,260 San José *Prepared!* graduates, residing throughout each of the 10 Council Districts, who are still active in the program. The members live in 151 of the City's 429 neighborhoods, including 13 in Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) area.

ANALYSIS

Current training program

San José *Prepared!* consists of 20 hours of lecture, small group exercises, and hands-on training. Classes are offered in several formats: five four-hour sessions; a combination of four modules in two day-long classes with a third class as the final session; and the capability introduced last year for residents to take the classroom work on the FEMA Internet site (http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/training_mat.shtm) and then complete their practical training through one San José *Prepared!* class.

Classes are offered on a citywide basis or as requested by any neighborhood or community group with 10 or more students at their location. Classes are scheduled to meet the group's preference for number of modules offered each day, day of the week and time of day, and language of instruction. A bi-lingual instructor is available for Spanish language classes. Other languages can be accommodated using simultaneous translation through earphones, a service coordinated with Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS). Course materials are available in English in the *San José Prepared!* format and in Spanish in the FEMA format.

In May 2006, the *San José Prepared!* website (<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/emergencyServices/SanJosePrepared/>) was updated so that an automated response is now generated when someone registers for class online.

Community awareness

Community disaster preparedness training is also available in shorter classes and presentations. *San José Prepared!* staff provides talks varying in length from 15 minutes to several hours for community groups. The book, *It's a Disaster*, is provided to community members for use as a reference outside of the traditional classroom setting. Since April 2005, this book has been distributed to *San José Prepared!* participants as well as to people who attend staff presentations.

In June 2006, the *San José Prepared!* brochure was updated through the generous support of a private grant from the Fireman's Fund Heritage foundation. The brochure is a key element in community outreach since it is handed to residents at community events attended by Police, Fire, and OES staff. The brochure has also been provided to Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services and the Library for public distribution.

Exercises

Each April, neighborhoods are encouraged to conduct disaster exercises to refresh skills and renew acquaintances. Communications support is provided by San José Radio Amateurs in Emergency Service (RACES), the local amateur radio club. This year, three communities conducted exercises: Mill Pond mobile home park, Quail Hollow mobile home park, and Eden neighborhood.

Work plan

The work plan for fiscal year 2006-2007 includes the continuation of existing services and outreach along with four initiatives: a new short course; an expanded pool of instructors; the addition of a Senior Analyst to OES; and designation of *San José Prepared!* graduates as official Disaster Service Workers.

OES is developing a four-hour class on Personal and Home Preparedness. The goal is to launch the English-language version of this short course in October 2006, with Spanish and Vietnamese-language versions in early 2007.

OES plans to invite a select number of seasoned *San José Prepared!* graduates as well as students in the Fire Science program at a local community college to become *San José Prepared!* instructors. At present, *San José Prepared!* is taught by only two people: a full-time employee, who is retiring on August 18, 2006, and a temporary employee who has several years of experience with the program.

While the program can be sustained with existing staff, community outreach cannot be expanded effectively until additional instructors are onboard.

The adopted budget for fiscal year 2006-2007 added a Senior Analyst to OES staff for the primary purpose of being a program manager for the San José *Prepared!* program. Recruitment for this position is in progress.

After consultation with the City Attorney's Office, OES has determined that graduates of the San José *Prepared!* program, like graduates of similar programs around the San Francisco Bay Area, may be designated as official Disaster Service Workers under California State law. This recognition will enable CERT volunteers to be eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits if they are injured in the course of assisting the City during a disaster. A system of records keeping is the only step still needed to effect this change in the program.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- Criteria 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater.
- Criteria 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City.
- Criteria 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach.

None of the above criteria apply to this program update. However, over the past year, staff members have worked closely with a wide range of organizations to provide information and training to community members. These organizations include: Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) program, Neighborhood Housing Services, Neighborhood Development Center, Mobile Home Advisory Commission, Council on Aging, Metropolitan Education District, Vulnerable Populations Committee of the County's Emergency Managers' Association, San José/Evergreen Community College District, Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley, Deaf Advocacy and Referral Agency, and the Santa Clara Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Community outreach also takes place through presentations to homeowners associations, civic groups, schools, businesses, and faith-based organizations. During the past year, San José Prepared! staff made 78 presentations, reaching an estimated 3,900 residents. In addition, San José Prepared! staff supported 24 community/Council events that were open to the public at which approximately 5,000 people were in attendance.

COORDINATION

San José's Office of Emergency Services works closely with the 15 cities throughout Santa Clara County that also have local versions of the CERT program.

Within the City of San José, the *San José Prepared!* program actively supports community events sponsored by Councilmembers and has close working relationships with Fire, Police, Library, City Attorney's Office, and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

With the adopted budget of 2006-2007, the budget for the *San José Prepared!* program will be combined with that for the Office of Emergency Services.

BUDGET REFERENCE

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	Total Appn	Amt. for Contract	Adopted Budget Page*	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
001	0401	PS-Emergency Services	\$430,195	N/A	VIII-34	
001	0402	NP/Equip-Emergency Services	\$51,472	N/A	VIII-34	

*The 2006-2007 Adopted Operating Budget was approved by the City Council on June 27, 2006.

CEQA

CEQA: Exempt (not a project).

KIMBERLY SHUNK
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For questions, please contact Kimberly Shunk at (408) 277-4595.