

Memorandum

TO: BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE
ON ETHICS

FROM: Peter Jensen

SUBJECT: WORKPLAN FOR NEW CITY-
WIDE CODE OF ETHICS

DATE: April 11, 2005

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of process and key principles for adopting a new city-wide Code of Ethics.

BACKGROUND

The City of San José's Code of Ethics (Council Policy 0-15) was originally adopted in 1980, and last revised in 1991. The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Ethics work plan includes an effort to develop a new Code of Ethics for Council review. At its meeting of March 23, the Task Force directed staff to develop a process focusing on internal stakeholders to produce an updated Code of Ethics.

ANALYSIS

It is proposed that a draft Code of Ethics be prepared by a small project team under the direction of the City Manager. The team would be responsible for producing a draft in time for initial review by the Task Force at its April 27 meeting. The draft would be amended based on initial feedback from the Task Force, and then would be reviewed by various employees and employee groups at all levels of the organization. Once this feedback period is complete, a final proposed Code of Ethics would be presented to the Rules Committee for review and approval by the full Council.

Key principles to be followed by the project team are proposed to include:

- The Code would cover all City office holders and employees.
- The Code would focus on standards of behavior expected of all individuals under its purview. The standards would be stated positively, but would provide clear guidance on what kinds of behavior are expected and what kinds are not acceptable.
- The Code would be relatively shorter and more concise than the City's current Code, and would refer to the Ethics Ordinance of the Municipal Code for more specifics.
- The Code would be distributed to all individuals affected by it, and would be incorporated into existing City training; new training programs may be developed to ensure that all employees understand it.

Peter Jensen
Assistant to the City Manager