



# Memorandum

**TO:** MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK  
BETTER COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Tom Manheim  
Sharon Landers

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** June 1, 2004

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Approved

Date

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**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ETHNIC OUTREACH EFFORTS**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept update report on City and SJRA ethnic outreach efforts.

**BACKGROUND:**

San José is a community with no single majority population. As a result, the City of San José is committed to effective outreach to all members of our diverse community. In the spring of 2003, the Making Government Work Better Committee requested and received a report reviewing City and the Redevelopment Agency efforts to effectively inform our community of events, public meetings, and other information about the city. A follow-up report in October 2003 provided more detailed information about outreach efforts in the Redevelopment Agency and Planning Department to ensure effective communication with all members of our diverse community. This third report provides additional information on Agency and City outreach efforts as requested at the October 2003 Committee meeting.

**ANALYSIS:**

In reviewing the City and Agency's ethnic outreach efforts, it is helpful to understand both the ethnic makeup of our City, as well as the various types of outreach campaigns undertaken in San José.

Any outreach effort begins with an examination of existing knowledge and data regarding the ethnic makeup of the target population. The 2000 Census provides race/ethnic information about San José's population, and the City's Planning Department has used this data to map census tracts throughout the City showing majority populations by ethnicity (Attachment A). The map, which demonstrates the diversity of our population, shows clearly those areas of the City where the majority population is Hispanic, Asian, and White, as well as a large area (perhaps 1/3<sup>rd</sup>) of

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the City that has no single majority population. The more challenging issue from a communication standpoint, is to understand the preferred language with which members of a given ethnic population prefer to receive information. In any outreach effort, additional neighborhood specific information can be gathered by consulting with the Planning Department, the Neighborhood Development Center and the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative staff, as well as with the appropriate City Council office.

With an understanding of the target population, it is also important to distinguish between different categories of outreach effort, some of which are designed to increase awareness or provide general information and others that are intended to notify or inform residents of a specific project or issue. Different types of notification will dictate distinctly different goals and tactics. When outreach is intended to raise awareness about City services and how best to access those services, the most effective outreach to a given group is achieved through participation in existing community and cultural events and festivals that, by their nature, draw families and individuals members of ethnic groups that may not be reached through mainstream general interest media outlets. Other outreach efforts, associated with specific projects or issues, fall into the category of notification. Such efforts are designed to raise awareness of a specific issue within a narrow timeframe to elicit input or encourage participation in public meetings.

### AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

For general awareness campaigns, staff routinely takes advantage of the many existing events to reach members of the ethnic community. A survey of those departments that interact with the community demonstrates a strong commitment in this area (see Attachment B, *Ethnic Outreach/Departmental Participation*, and Attachment C, *Translated Publications*.) Annually, members of the City staff attend nearly 50 festivals and fairs, including a number of Council sponsored and neighborhood events. At these events, general and program-specific information is provided in the appropriate language, and whenever possible, bilingual staff are available. Both the City and Agency have print translation and meeting interpretation services available through staff and/or contract services. The Viet Relations team, consisting of Redevelopment Agency and City staff, has become a Citywide resource for raising visibility, regularly attending events in the Vietnamese community to provide information. In addition, this group reaches out to Vietnamese business owners in various neighborhood business districts, providing City and Agency sponsored business assistance information. The Viet Relations group also regularly assists staff citywide with translation services. The success of this model has inspired an effort to expand this program. Staff is developing an Ethnic Relations team that will include other majority ethnic populations in San José, the Hispanic community. In addition, the Agency has been working closely with the ethnic media to assist them in better covering Agency and City issues of interest to their communities and is training staff fluent in Spanish and Vietnamese to speak to ethnic broadcast media on City issues when requested.

When San José creates a citywide publication, distribution can become a significant challenge and the costs of such efforts are significant. *Inside San José*, for example, was printed in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. The English edition was distributed citywide to more than

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300,000 households and businesses, and included invitations in Spanish and Vietnamese to receive the non-English versions of the publication by contacting the City. The cost including printing and distribution was roughly \$220,000 annually. In each case, 2,500 Spanish and Vietnamese editions were printed, but the number of actual requests for non-English versions of *Inside San José* was very low and not sustainable from a cost/per issue basis. Spanish and Vietnamese editions were also distributed as appropriate through the City's branch libraries and community centers, but demand through these facilities was also disappointing. In an ideal world, we would deliver the English, Spanish and/or Vietnamese language edition as preferred by each individual household. Unfortunately, this cannot be accommodated through bulk mail.

### NOTIFICATION CAMPAIGNS

In the case of notification campaigns, outreach efforts can be further divided between citywide outreach that necessarily relies on existing media outlets, and neighborhood specific efforts that, by their nature, are intended to reach a defined sub-area/group within the City. Citywide efforts typically include: 1) regularly scheduled public meetings (e.g. City Council, Planning Commission Meetings; Boards and Commission Meetings); 2) special public meetings such as the City Council redistricting effort; and, 3) special events such as the opening of the new MLK library opening. Neighborhood-specific meetings include: 1) zoning and other localized land-use issues (e.g. Lowes, Tropicana, Civic Center); and 2) neighborhood-based events such as neighborhood clean-ups.

#### Citywide

When the City or Agency is trying to notify the entire city of an important issue or meeting, the large population (925,000) and size of the community (177 square miles) requires that we use the region's media outlets, both free media (news coverage/calendar notices) as well as paid advertising. For instance, during the 2001 redistricting process, a press release was distributed to all media including neighborhood and ethnic media outlets detailing the meeting schedule for the Redistricting Advisory Committee and the importance of input from all members of the community. Meetings of the Redistricting Committee were further publicized through the purchase of print advertising space in mainstream and ethnic media outlets. This advertising was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese and interpreters were available at each meeting. The cost of this campaign was \$11,000.

When the City undertakes a direct-mail tri-lingual notification campaign the costs are significantly higher. In 2003, when Environmental Services initiated a new recycling cart program and changed collection schedules, an extensive outreach campaign was undertaken. The 18-month, \$1.8 million campaign incorporated a variety of multi-lingual tactics including: community meetings, special events and displays, direct mail, media relations, broadcast and transit advertising, collateral materials, and information posted on the City's website.

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### Neighborhood

Many of the City's and the Agency's outreach efforts are neighborhood-specific, targeting populations in particular sub-areas of the San José. Examples of these meetings include:

- Community meetings
- Zoning decisions
- Construction impact advisories
- Neighborhood clean-ups
- Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings

By their nature, neighborhood outreach efforts offers more targeted opportunities to reach specific groups in outreach efforts. In planning outreach efforts for neighborhood meetings or community events, the previously mentioned 2000 Census tract data (Attachment A) provides a starting point from which to determine the appropriateness of non-English language outreach efforts. This information is augmented through consultation with the Neighborhood Development Center, SNI coordinators, and/or City Council offices to determine the appropriate mix of ethnicity and outreach languages. This information then drives decisions regarding where to spend any advertising dollars, which ethnic media to use, and what languages materials should be translated into. Flyers and other information advertising the meeting are translated as appropriate, and language interpreters are made available at meeting to ensure that all attendees understand and can participate in the meeting.

### Planning Department

More than any other City department, Planning must stay mindful of the ethnic and language considerations of its target audiences since its notifications frequently involve neighborhood specific land use issues. While effective outreach is mandated, Planning is also required to weigh the cost of outreach efforts since these costs are passed on to project proponents.

The Planning Division is currently updating its City Council Policy on Public Outreach. Through September 2003, a subcommittee of the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Project Area Committee (SNI PAC) worked with Planning staff to craft a proposed update to the Policy. During the fall, subcommittee members spoke to every SNI Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) and obtained their feedback on the draft update. In addition, Planning staff reviewed the draft update with the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Home Builders Association (HBA).

While the response from the neighborhoods was very positive, the Chamber and HBA expressed concerns about the proposed update to the Outreach Policy. As a result of the initial outreach, staff invited representatives of the Chamber, HBA, NAIOP, and real estate development interests to work with the PAC subcommittee in a focus group setting to find common ground and direction for the update to the Outreach Policy.

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The focus group has been meeting since December to understand each other's interests, identify common outcomes, and work toward consensus on a revised policy. At its last meeting, the focus group agreed to consider an alternative format of the Policy that would:

- Describe the Policy purpose and intent
- Define development project sizes and types
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the City, applicant and community interest groups
- Identify outreach opportunities (early notification, community meeting, additional community engagement as needed, and public hearings)

The neighborhood and community groups are looking for a mechanism to fairly distribute the cost of outreach in alternative languages without burdening the City. One example being considered would create a set of criteria to determine when developers would pay the cost of translation and when neighborhood groups would take the cost of translation on themselves.

The focus group is expected to consider a revision of the Policy based on the above outline at its meeting later in mid-June. If there is consensus about the revision, then this version would be posted to the Planning website and outreach meetings would occur to obtain feedback from all stakeholders.

### CONCLUSION

The City is committed to effective ethnic outreach to our diverse community. As described in this report and the attached materials, the City and Agency take this responsibility seriously and have made it a regular part of their communications efforts. While the scope of ethnic outreach, is necessarily limited by both budgetary and human resource constraints, the commitment remains strong. The changing demographics of San José will continue to dictate new initiatives in the ethnic outreach arena. As a result, the City and Agency staff will remain responsive and flexible.

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