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CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

MEMORANDUM

TO: **Sunshine Reform Task Force** **FROM:** **Councilmember Dave Cortese**

SUBJECT: **Reform Proposals for Consideration** **DATE:** **August 31, 2006**

APPROVED: For D.C. DATE: 08/31/06

I request the Sunshine Reform Task Force (SRTF) explore the following reform ideas in the context of their work plan:

Recommendation #1

Prohibit multiple members of City Council from signing on to memorandums that are distributed before the day of the City Council Meeting in question.

It is common practice for up to five members of the Council to sign on to a memo for items that appear on the City Council agenda. This practice creates consensus before the public has expressed their views at the Council Meeting.

This recommendation is consistent with the overall goals and policies as laid out by the City Manager and approved by Council at its April 18, 2006 meeting, including but not limited to:

1. The public's business should be conducted in public.
2. The public should have a meaningful opportunity to participate in public decisions.
3. There should be full and complete disclosure of information relevant to an issue being considered by any public body.
4. Stakeholders should be provided with an opportunity to be fully engaged before significant items are brought to a public body for consideration.

It is also consistent to the goals and expectations of the Brown Act as governs meetings and interactions between policymakers related to creation of consensus before a public meeting has been held. This recommendation keeps policymakers from approaching or reaching consensus before the public has had ample opportunity to make their concerns and needs known.

Recommendation #2

Establish and make public a citywide directory of neighborhood associations with current contact information. This directory should include at minimum Neighborhood Groups, Community Associations, and their designees.

The SRTF is spending considerable time discussing how to increase community access and participation in government. Neighborhood and homeowners associations are a fundamental level of grassroots representation. These groups help to transmit information to and from residents and are

therefore a vital component to comprehensive outreach. The City works informally with these groups however there is no public repository for a comprehensive list of all associations citywide. Ideally the City should undertake this as an ongoing responsibility.

Recommendation #3

Review Council action, intent, and discussion at its September 29, 2006 meeting surrounding Item 3.8 – Approval of an ordinance amending Title 12 of the San José Municipal Code.

On Tuesday, the City Council had lengthy discussion surrounding Item 3.8. The SRTF should at minimum revisit that discussion, intent, and subsequent action taken by the Council, in order to make further recommendations congruent with the intent and direction originally given the SRTF toward promoting principles of transparency, openness, and accessibility in San Jose.