



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Norberto Dueñas

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY BUDGET MEETINGS **DATE:** May 31, 2012
SUMMARY

Approved

Date

5/31/12

BACKGROUND

Since April, the Mayor, City Councilmembers, and the City Manager's Office have jointly coordinated and hosted a series of community budget information meetings to provide residents an opportunity to learn more about the budget and how general fund dollars are spent, as well as encourage community conversation around the City Manager's Proposed 2012-2013 Budget. Eleven meetings were held with at least one meeting in each City Council District and more than 500 people attended to share their thoughts with their Councilmember and city officials.

Each meeting began with the Councilmember opening the meeting and Mayor Reed presenting information on retirement costs, the budget and answering resident questions. This was followed by the City Manager's Office presentation on the overall budget including a video of the Neighborhood Priority Setting Session.

After each presentation, staff responded to questions and facilitated a listening exercise with participants being asked to share their best advice on the City Budget along with responses to specific questions. Representatives from the City Manager's Office and Police, Fire, Library, Transportation, and Parks Recreation and Neighborhood Services were present to listen and serve as subject matter experts to respond to questions.


ANALYSIS

Several themes about the priorities for the City emerged from residents in all 10 City Council Districts:

- Fiscal Soundness – the City should wisely manage tax dollars and control costs, though opinions on how best to do that varied widely.
- Basic Service Delivery –the City should work toward restoring levels of service that have been reduced in recent years.

- Infrastructure Maintenance – the backlog of maintenance on infrastructure was a source of concern for many, especially the maintenance of City streets that affect them on a daily basis.
- Innovation – there was a strong positive relation to innovations in service delivery and the use of technology to improve the delivery of City Services.
- Volunteers – many participants expressed a willingness to volunteer to be part of the solution and suggested many possibilities for volunteerism in the City.

After each meeting participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to have their voices heard and to learn more about the City budget. Though smaller in number than last year, the participants actively sought to engage and understand the complexities of the City budget and used the availability of the subject matter experts to deepen their understanding. Overall it is clear that the residents of the City of San José want their services to be both effective and affordable.



Norberto Dueñas
Deputy City Manager

For more information, please contact Norberto Dueñas, Deputy City Manager, at 408-535-8180.