



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: 2019-2020 PROJECT HOPE ANNUAL
REPORT AND 2020-2021 PROJECT
HOPE EXPANSION STATUS UPDATE

DATE: February 22, 2021

Approved

Date

03/03/21

COUNCIL DISTRICTS: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7,
8, and 10

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the 2019-2020 Project Hope Annual Report and a status update on the expansion of Project Hope into additional neighborhoods in 2020-2021.

OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education (NSE) Committee will receive an update on the current status of implementation for Project Hope and the impact of COVID-19 on strategy and activities.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (Department) started Project Hope, a neighborhood empowerment program with the goal to develop resident voices and increase civic engagement to address neighborhood issues such as crime, blight and other community priorities.

The Project Hope strategy focuses on four key deliverables:

- Sustainable, organized groups of community leaders
- Safer and cleaner environments
- Informed residents who can access City services
- Strong community partnerships that can assist in sustaining efforts

In alignment with the Department's ActivateSJ Strategic Plan principles of Equity and Access, Project Hope is a neighborhood-based program delivering a unique set of strategies and intense

engagement activities in historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities. While Project Hope alone will not solve the complex socio-economic circumstances and living conditions without parallel policy-level initiatives to remove historic and institutional barriers, Project Hope establishes community leaders who trust the City and will have the tools to advocate and improve their neighborhoods.

The current nine Project Hope sites were chosen through a combination of Council priorities and areas identified due to risk factors. Sites identified and approved by Council are the Winchester/Cadillac, Roundtable/Edenvale, Welch Park, and Hoffman/Via Monte neighborhoods. The remaining five sites - Poco Way, Santee, Jeanne Avenue, Washington, and Foxdale were identified through an “equity screen” analysis of the 18 Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force hot spots. The Department used the equity screen to analyze and rank the degree to which community vulnerability and risk factors such as poverty rates, youth arrests, graffiti incidents, presence of illegal firearms, frequency of high-priority calls to police, and educational attainment are present in particular places. The location of the neighborhoods is shown in the attached Project Hope Site Map 2020-2021.

The Department has ongoing funding for six neighborhoods, with three areas currently funded on a one-time basis through June 2021: Foxdale Ave; Jeanne Avenue; and Washington.

Continuation of services in the three one-time funded areas will be subject to the appropriation of funds during the annual budget process for 2021-2022.

ANALYSIS

Project Hope Community Engagement Model

The Project Hope Community Engagement model has five phases: 1) Staff Planning; 2) Community Capacity Building; 3) Implementation; 4) Community Mobilization; and, 5) Sustainability to ensure the project can meet the established deliverables.

It is important to note that progress can only occur at the pace the community can manage in accordance with its developed level of trust. Project Hope communities are transient by nature, requiring periodic rebooting to address resident attrition and staff’s ongoing nurturing of the community structures developed so residents are resilient as change occurs.

PROJECT HOPE – ENGAGEMENT PHASE		
Neighborhood	Council District	Current Phase
Winchester/Cadillac	1	Sustainability
Roundtable/Edenvale	2	Sustainability
Welch Park	8	Sustainability
Hoffman/Via Monte	10	Community Mobilization
Poco Way	5	Community Mobilization
Santee	7	Community Mobilization
Foxdale	5	Staff Planning
Jeanne	3	Staff Planning
Washington	3	Staff Planning

COVID-19 Response

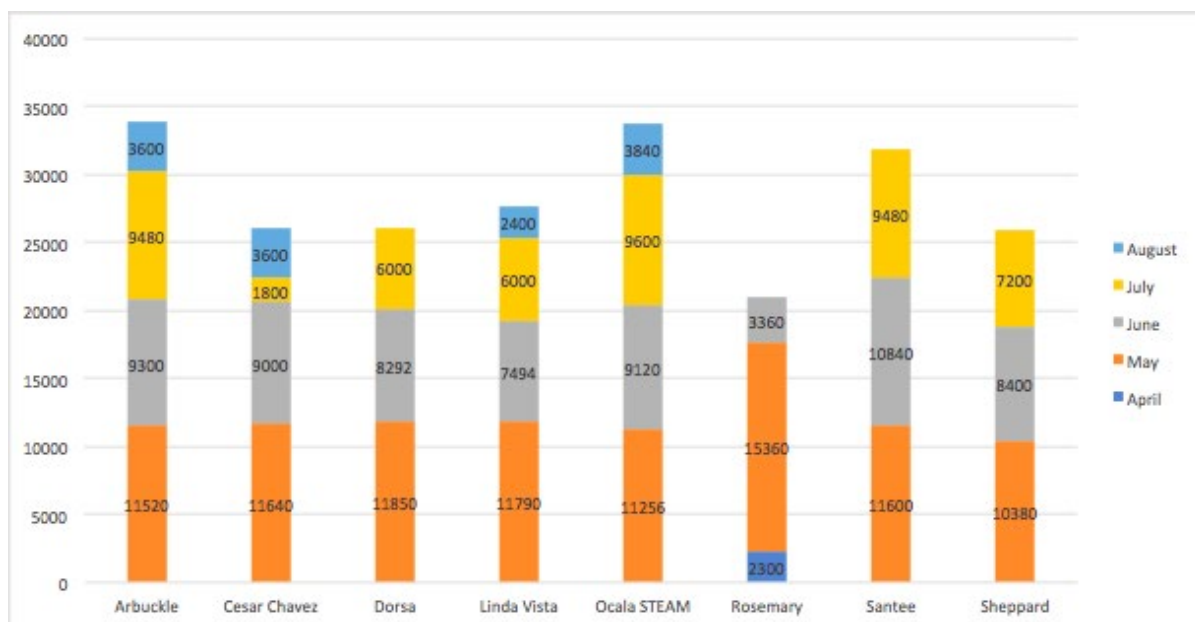
In March 2020, the County of Santa Clara established restrictions on business activity, community gatherings, and other in-person social interactions deemed non-essential in order to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. The restrictions on non-essential gatherings and activities had an immediate impact on Project Hope with face-to-face canvassing and community pride events pausing from March to October 2020. Yet with these challenges, staff rose to the occasion to ensure that suffering families in Project Hope areas had access to food, internet access, digital devices and other survival needs. Supportive efforts include:

- Helped families in Cadillac/Winchester register for 60 days of free internet services.
- Created “How to Use Zoom” videos in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese providing step-by-step instructions for easy use. The Emergency Operations Center used these videos to guide virtual communication citywide.
- Facilitated in-person association meetings and events shifted to virtual meetings in the three neighborhoods of Winchester/Cadillac, Roundtable/Edenvale, and Welch Park.
- Helped the Roundtable Neighborhood Association provide more than 100 residents weekly food boxes and hot meals through a “Mercadito” sponsored by the Association, Councilmember Jimenez, Christ the King Church, and Catholic Charities (the Roundtable Neighborhood Association was also named Association of the Year by Councilmember Jimenez as the only Association that continued to meet via Zoom during the pandemic lockdown).
- Provided holiday help to nearly 900 families in the Poco Way, Santee, Hoffman/Via Monte, Cadillac/Winchester, Roundtable, and Welch Park neighborhoods. The events included Holiday on Wheels and home visits; and provided Tamale Kit baskets, Christmas trees, gift cards, children’s pajamas, sweaters, gift cards, and personal protective equipment. The help was provided in collaboration with Councilmembers Arenas, Carrasco, Esparza, Khamis, and Vice Mayor Jones, local schools, community-based organizations, the East San José PEACE Partnership, and the County.

- Purchased Surface Pro laptops and set up a loaner program for board members in Project Hope neighborhood associations to conduct association meetings and other events via Zoom.

In addition to the Project Hope program pivot, staff were also assigned to the Emergency Operations Center and led the food distribution teams at seven schools in the Alum Rock School District and Franklin-McKinley School District providing weekend meals to supplement food provided by the school sites. Five Project Hope staff members spearheaded this work along with staff from Youth Intervention Services scheduling and supervising other City staff and volunteers at the school sites; designing the food packaging and distribution system at each site; and reporting data on the meals provided. Over the period of May 15 - August 14, 2020, this program distributed 226,502 meals to needy families in the City as shown in the graph below.

Meals Distributed at Alum Rock/Franklin-McKinley School Sites, by Month



2020 U.S. Census

In August 2020, the City of San José's response rate to the U.S. Census was lagging in hard-to-count areas and the Department was deployed for six weeks to count residents in these neighborhoods. Staff from Project Hope were among the leaders of this project. City staff knocked on approximately 24,000 doors and the Census response rate in targeted tracts rose an average of 5.6 percent. The City's overall Census response rate of 77 percent led all major U.S. cities.

Withstanding the challenges of the COVID-19, Project Hope and its connection to community members is a key contributor to how the City engages on various policy issues. Here are some highlights where community leaders in Project Hope neighborhoods are involved:

- The Cadillac/Winchester residents voiced their position in support of keeping a community center in the Payne Avenue Park Master Plan during a City Council meeting on October 27, 2020. Staff hosted two meetings with association leadership and the community to learn about the plan and process in collaboration with the Department's Capital Improvement Division.
- Welch Park Neighborhood Association members spoke at public meetings conducted on November 17 and November 19, 2020, in support of their position on the repurposing and future of Reid-Hillview Airport. Closing and repurposing the airport in 2031 was ultimately endorsed by the County Board of Supervisors.
- Mayor Sam Liccardo conducted a Community Conversation on February 17, 2021, with City residents, that included representation from all Project Hope areas, regarding gun-harm reduction strategies, police accountability and educational opportunities.
- The San José Police Department is currently meeting with the Winchester/Cadillac community regarding installation of gun-shot detection devices and other technology to pinpoint the location of gun shots to gather evidence.

CONCLUSION

Project Hope has grown from a pilot program to a key empowerment program and important tool for engaging marginalized communities for the City of San José. Project Hope rose to the challenge of the COVID-19 restrictions and redeployment of staff to Emergency Operations Center. An evaluation of the program structure, process and outcomes are underway to ensure that the program is designed and built for greater effectiveness and impact in communities that disproportionately experience unsafe and unhealthy outcomes.

Finally, the Department has learned the following key lessons from the four years of implementing Project Hope and are reflective of best practices in community building with an "equity lens."

Relationships are key – The work with marginalized communities is relationship-based and must be anchored in trust and respect. Consistent, ongoing support in resources and staffing have an impact on creating and maintaining these relationships which, when interrupted, can further erode trust and progress.

Continuing Support Needed – The work is cyclical and is never done due to volunteer fatigue and the transient nature of the Project Hope neighborhoods. New generations of neighborhood leaders must be identified and trained so that the community organizing structures are maintained and strengthened over time.

Outcomes Depend on Coordinated Resources – By design, Project Hope creates community expectations of the City, other City departments and their resources. If stakeholders and partners are under-resourced or unable to be responsive, it has an impact on meeting expectations and delivering on outcomes.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

In its fourth year of implementation, the Department continues to make progress in six Project Hope sites and is ready to engage in three more areas. The Department, in conjunction with stakeholders, continuously reviews the strategy for effectiveness and seeks ways to improve upon the program. To this end, by the end of the Fiscal Year, the Department will be reinstituting an executive-level Project Hope Coordinating Committee with representatives from Council Districts, City Manager's Office, San José Police Department, the San José Fire Department, BeautifySJ, Transportation, and Housing. The Coordinating Committee will meet quarterly to discuss how Project Hope interactions have affected service loads, the current status of service requests and what is needed to address those requests.

In early 2020, the Department hired Resource Development Associates (RDA) to develop community surveys to inform community priorities and assess resident perceptions. Surveys had been delayed due to COVID-19 outbreak; regardless, five of the first six Project Hope communities are now completed. In addition, the Department expanded the scope of RDA's work to include an evaluation of the implementation process and preliminary outcomes including:

- Expanding to the Jeanne Avenue, Washington, and Foxdale neighborhoods
- Conducting focus groups in all nine neighborhoods
- Analysis of service-utilization data for all nine neighborhoods from key City departments such as San José Police Department, Housing Department, Code Enforcement, and the Department of Transportation

The evaluation will assess demographics; measure residents' ability to engage with the City on two-way information sharing; gauge their level of involvement with decision making; and gauge their perceptions of safety and service utilization and satisfaction. The evaluation process is expected to be completed with a final report in the summer of 2022.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the March 11, 2021 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office and the City Attorney's Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

/s/

JON CICIRELLI
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Andrea Flores Shelton, Interim Deputy Director, at (408) 535-3571 or andrea.floresshelton@sanjoseca.gov.

Attachment: Project Hope Site Expansion Map 2020-2021