OPEN GOVERNMENT TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Presented By:

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BACKGROUND

- 2014 Mayor's Open Government Task Force
  - Convened by Mayor Scott Bartley

- Community members asked for:
  - Improved communications
  - Improved collaboration
  - Access to decision makers
  - Voices to be acknowledged and efforts respected during governmental decision-making processes

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOR COUNCIL

Recommendations

1.1 Set a Council goal of "Open and Transparent Government"

- Previous Council Goal: Provide for community safety, valued City services and open government ✓

1.2 Set three strategic objectives for the organization

- Hire a Communications Director ✓
- Adopt a sunshine ordinance based on Task Force recommendations ✓
- Create a City mission statement which embraces community engagement **(Not complete)**

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.1 Genuinely engage and partner with neighborhood, volunteers, businesses, institutions, and other organizations which support our community

Recommendations
2.1.a Shift definition of partnership to include Community Involvement
2.1.b Coordinate use of volunteers City-wide ✓
2.1.c Look for opportunities to form partnerships with other community organizations and neighborhood groups ✓
2.1.d Create opportunities for partnerships and ask for help in getting people engaged ✓

Goal 2, Objective 2.1 cont.

Recommendations
2.1.e. Further incorporate the Community Advisory Board (CAB) in civic engagement practices: A. Clarify role and mission ✓ B. Education and outreach about participatory government **(in process)** C. Work with Teen Council **(not completed)** D. Emergency Preparedness **(completed as Neighborfest – suspended)** E. Regular communication with Council **(ongoing)**
2.1.f Explore reassessing and restructuring CAB so that it can help facilitate and activate more effective practices for community engagement ✓
2.1.g Build on excellent engagement model of the Santa Rosa Violence Prevention Partnership **(was in process as Neighborfest – suspended)**

Goal 2, Objective 2.1 cont.

Recommendations

2.1.h Make use of key strategies outlined in Matt Leighninger's discussion to effectively engage the community during decision-making.

A. Actively recruit diverse viewpoints ✓

B. Involve those citizens in structured, facilitated small-group discussions, interspersed with large forums for amplifying shared conclusions and moving from talk to action. ✓

C. Give the participants in these meetings the opportunity to compare values and experiences, and to consider a range of views and policy options. ✓

D. Produce tangible actions and outcomes. **(In process)**

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.2 Establish Santa Rosa as a leader in civic engagement with the goal of increasing Openness, Transparency and Accountability

Recommendations

2.2.1 Recommendations for Increasing Transparency

A. Develop a cross-departmental framework in order to institutionalize a more collaborative approach to public engagement, including a mission statement and measurable outcomes **(In process)**

B. Expand use of City mailing lists ✓

C. Increase direct communication from the City Council and City Manager
- Brown bag lunches
- Electronic newsletters ✓
- Coffee with a Council member or local leader
- Listening forums ✓

Goal 2, Objective 2.2 cont.

Recommendations

2.1.1 Recommendations for Increasing Transparency, cont.

D. Create strategically located, electronic, and bilingual kiosks for public information. **(Not implemented)**

E. Overhaul City website ✓

F. Encourage next charter review committee to explore

- District Elections ✓
- Pay for Council ✓

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.3: Close the communication loop - Acknowledge the value of community input, wisdom, and participation

Recommendations
2.3.a Make time at the beginning of Council meetings for public comment ✓
2.3.b Close the communication loop **(In process)**
2.3.c Foster a spirit of collaboration in problem solving and decision-making ✓
2.3.d Communication in times of crisis needs significant improvement ✓
2.3.e Start critical conversations earlier with the community and hold such meetings at times and places conducive to public participation ✓

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.4 Increase opportunities for diverse community engagement and effective participation

Recommendations

a. Give the "Communications Director" the responsibility and authority to work within the City organization to activate and promote more effective public engagement.

b. Hold meetings at various locations throughout the City ✓

c. Go beyond conventional feedback tools of community meetings and surveys ✓

d. Assist Neighborhood Groups to organize and engage. **(CAB)**

e. Make use of neighborhood apps, such as Nextdoor ✓

f. Schedule quarterly public forums/Town Hall Meetings with City Council **(Not implemented)**

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.4 Increase opportunities for diverse community engagement and effective participation

Recommendations
g. Increase outreach through media, events, webcasts, surveys, newsletters (English/Spanish) ✓
h. In times of crisis focus on two-way communication
i. Make public noticing understandable – move away from “government speak”
j. Explore how technology can increase accessibility at Council meetings ✓
k. Explore organizing City government in a way that better meets the needs of residents
l. Make the website resident-centric

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.5 Build a strong civic infrastructure – educate people about how best to engage.

Recommendations

a. Launch an educational series to build the civic skills and capacity of those who live in Santa Rosa through technology **(in process):**
   - "Citizen Guides:
     - How to request Public Records
     - How to participate in a Council meeting
     - Local government 101
     - General Plan
   - Citizen's Academy to actively involve all community stakeholders in their government **(not complete)**

Goal 2: Develop a Culture That Values Public Engagement

Objective 2.5 Build a strong civic infrastructure – educate people about how best to engage.

Recommendations

b. Encourage and support school districts to include curriculum focused on local government

- Support Student Curriculum by providing speakers and information to districts
- Partner with existing organizations to reengage the Teen Council and explore expanding the reach
- Explore with educational institutions best way to partner to encourage engagement:
  - Design youth contests for City apps
  - Youth Council (Teen)
  - Working with State Legislators on Curriculum that focuses on local government
  - Utilization of internships with credit
  - Job shadowing

Not Implemented

Goal 3: Develop a Culture Focused on Communication

Recommendations

3.1 Create a Communications Director position ✓

- **Complete:** Director of Community Engagement hired Oct. 2015, Mar. 2017 and new Division Director July 2020. Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Officer hired Jan. 2018.

3.2 Overhaul City's website to create effective tools for residents ✓

- **Complete:** Completed and launched 3/31/17; launched Let's Connect SR in 2021 (interactive engagement platform)

Goal 4: Develop Policies that Promote Openness

Recommendations
4.1 Draft and adopt a Sunshine Ordinance that supports transparency and open government through policies that exceed minimum requirements and statutes for meeting public records • Adopted on December 2, 2020 ✓ 4.2 Policy recommendations that exceed minimum requirements for meetings and public records • Adopted Open Government Ordinance on December 2, 2020 ✓ • Guidebook to Participation in Local Government in development

QUESTIONS?