



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

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18 FEB 28 PM 1:52

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Councilwoman Ana E. Sandoval

COPIES TO: Sheryl Sculley, City Manager; Leticia Vacek, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Christopher Callanen, Assistant to City Council

SUBJECT: Advancing City Public Participation

DATE: February 27, 2018

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available Governance Committee:

A proposal to direct staff to review City public-participation and information practices and recommend improvements, including but not limited to:

- Developing principles of public participation for Council adoption and integrating these into City public-participation and information practices;
- Assessing current public participation techniques by all city departments, and sharing and recommending best practices for use by city departments;
- Reviewing "Citizens to be Heard" format and recommending best practices;
- Developing a tool that allows members of the public who are interested in particular issues, such as animal care policy, to routinely receive updates on all municipal developments within those fields; and
- Reporting on geographic and demographic diversity in public participation processes.

Brief Background

Engaged citizens are fundamental to the health of our City government. The successful development of policy and implementation of City programs depend on meaningful civic engagement, which also engenders trust between the community and our public institutions, and adds another measure of accountability.



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The City's current public participation practices allow for a wide range of participation using an array of tools, from "Citizens to be Heard," at which members of the public may speak before Council on any topic, to task forces, such as the Short-Term Rental Task Force and the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Policy, which charge stakeholders with developing solutions to complex challenges.

City staff and elected leaders must continually and carefully consider how to best engage the public in decision-making processes. To improve public participation in City government, staff and elected leaders must commit to practices that are:

- (1) **Meaningful** – meaningful public participation strengthens decision-making and helps the City improve programs, policies, and ordinances;
- (2) **Inclusive** – inclusive public-participation practices engage a broad range of stakeholders, including those who do not normally take part in City policy- or decision-making or who face language, physical or other barriers to participation;
- (3) **Transparent** – transparent civic-engagement practices communicate decision-making processes clearly to the public, including the role of the public in those processes, what type of input is sought, and how the input will be used;
- (4) **Respectful** – respectful public participation considers all input received, including differing viewpoints, while balancing the interests of all stakeholders;
- (5) **Informative** – informative public participation provides clear, accessible, and timely information that allows the public to participate in an informed way;
- (6) **Timely** – timely public participation is proactive and timely, occurring well ahead of key decisions;
- (7) **Responsive** – responsive public participation communicates outcomes to all who participate and provide input.

This proposal supports our City's focus on equity and inclusiveness. Our City's programs will only be strengthened through meaningful civic engagement that ensures participation by all those interested and impacted.



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Submitted for Council consideration by:

Councilwoman Ana E. Sandoval, District 7

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures

District

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