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NEIGHBORHOODS, PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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March 28, 2001

City Council
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: COUNCIL BUS TOURS - 2001

LOCATION AND COUNCIL DISTRICT: All

RECOMMENDATION: Direct staff to proceed with the design and implementation of a series of Council bus tours.

CONTACT PERSON:

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FOR COUNCIL MEETING OF: April 10, 2001

SUMMARY:

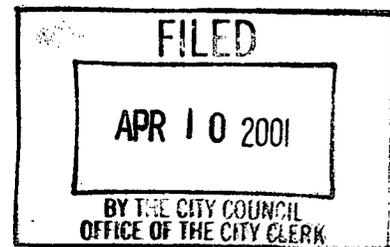
This report describes the merits of conducting Council bus tours, and in general terms how they will be designed.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION ACTION:

There was none required for this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 1992-1993, after neighborhood activists held a major conference (IMBY – In My Backyard), Mayor Serna asked that citywide bus tours be conducted in every Council District. This request was made after and during:



- Council district redistricting
- Restructuring of City services and operations
- Implementation of new innovative management concepts that could improve customer service and neighborhood and community based problem solving.

Eventually four bus tours were organized and every Council District was visited. These bus tours were well received and between 150 –200 went on every tour. The tours focused on issues as well as successes. The major benefit of these bus tours was that they allowed staff, neighborhood leaders, and elected officials to understand each other's need and issues.

This understanding provided a framework to consider city restructuring and reform. The Council continued with its efforts to connect with various communities and neighborhoods by conducting Council meetings at various community locations. Due to logistical problems and other cost factors, the tours were discontinued.

Recently a suggestion has been made to consider re-instituting some form of Council tours. The proposed format of the tours will focus on citywide issues that already have been considered and acted upon by the City Council. These tours will enable the Council to review the status of enacted Council policy, and to better understand issues that may come to the City Council for consideration related to project/program implementation.

These tours will be conducted during a time of enhanced and expanded city services. As such Council Tours 2000 can help Council members to better understand the status of council policy, and the impacts of new city needs, and budgetary decisions. These bus tours will be designed to be informal and educational, as well as involve citizen participation.

In 1992-93 the Council bus tours were held on a Saturday and less than four Council members participated on any given tour. Assuming that all council members will be asked to participate, the new bus tours must comply with the Brown Act, and citizen participation will be included in the design of the tours. The proposed tours could occur on a Tuesday in place of a Closed Session or as a substitute for the afternoon Council meeting (depending on agenda volume). The report outlines other tour options.

The Brown Act and Citizen Participation

In order to comply with the Brown Act, a Council bus tour should be noticed as a special Council Meeting. As such, the public and press should have access and the ability to participate in some manner during the tour. The press and public could have access in a variety of ways:

- Riding on the bus with the Council
- As part of the itinerary of the tour, meeting the Council at any one of the tour stops

- Consider other public comments during the evening Council session.

The afternoon Council session can occur concurrently with the bus tour, and then a portion of the evening agenda used to discuss in more detail the results of the tour and to accept additional public comments.

Identification of Issues and Tour Scheduling

Based on comments made by the Mayor and City Council during a discussion of Council bus tours at the March 20th Council meeting, the following themes are recommended for Council bus tours during 2001:

- Natomas Growth - May 22, during the afternoon
- Older retail Corridors - August
- Sacramento's Nightlife – Sept. /Oct.

These three bus tours can focus on the linkage between new growth and community facilities, regional issues, and smart growth; new economic development and revitalization along older retail corridors; and seeing Sacramento after hours.

Also, it is recommended that between 2-3 tours be scheduled for next year. City staff will work in partnership with the Council to determine which issues should be included on the 2002 tours. The steps for this process will include:

- Identification of issues that City management and the Council want to consider for the tours.
- A determination of which issues have the highest priority. If only 3 - 4 subject sites can be considered per tour, a selection process will be needed to prioritize or place them in general categories. Merging of issues can help focus efforts if a large number of issues are submitted.

The preferred option for the first tour (May 22, 2001) is to travel to Natomas on two buses during the afternoon Council session, and return for a joint meeting between the City Council, Natomas School Board, Sacramento Library Board, and the Los Rios Community College Board. The bus tour will allow the Council and invited guests to gain additional information for the joint Council session.

The preferred bus tour option is to have the Council and invited guests tour sites on buses, however depending on the issues targeted for the bus tours, other tour options could be used:

Alternative B – Variation of the Afternoon Bus Tour

This alternative is the same as the Preferred Option except smaller bus or vans can be used only to accommodate staff, Council members, and the press. At selected sites

Council Members and Staff can meet key community and neighborhood residents or other people that can provide key information on the issue. This method can include citizen participation without using a large bus (es). It can also allow for more informal conversations between Council and staff. Additional public comments will be taken during the evening Council meeting.

Alternative C – Saturday Bus Tour

Schedule a Saturday tour with a scheduled “Council meeting” at a community facility. This option can allow more time to focus on a complex set of issues as well as get closer to community concerns and comments. This alternative requires a higher level of logistics, but provides greater citizen participation at the neighborhood level.

Whichever option is used for the bus tours, the objective is to design the tour in a manner that adequately focuses on the issues at hand and promotes discussion and dialogue.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Depending on which option is chosen the cost per tour could range from \$500 – 2,000 per tour. The higher cost reflects additional logistical needs for a Saturday community meeting. The cost for the bus tours will be paid for within existing budgets.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

CEQA does not apply.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

Conducting Council bus tours is consistent with past Council and staff efforts to reconnect with city residents, and to use innovative methods to better understand policy issues and to determine Council needs and priorities.

E/SBD EFFORTS:

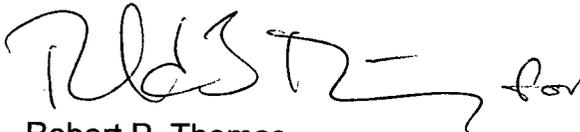
No goods or services will be purchased under this report.

Respectfully submitted,



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Administrative Analyst
NSD Area 3

RECOMMENDATION APPROVED:



Robert P. Thomas
City Manager



Richard Ramirez
Deputy City Manager