



# Santa Clara Valley Water District

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**File No.:** 17-0066

**Agenda Date:** 2/28/2017  
**Item No.:** 7.1.

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## BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

### **SUBJECT:**

Annual Diversity and Inclusion Program Report.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive information about programs, events and initiatives that support and develop a diverse and inclusive work environment at the District.

### **SUMMARY:**

Diversity and inclusion are key components to the District's continued business success. The purpose of the Diversity & Inclusion Program is to bring together diverse perspectives and backgrounds and to promote understanding and acceptance among employees. Valuing and leveraging of diverse cultures, experiences, knowledge, life styles, and perspectives enhances the delivery of services to the community.

This report provides information on the progress of the implementation of the District's Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan for 2015-2019. This Master Plan is the strategic framework for advancing the District's goals to engage all employees in a culture of inclusion, openness, respect, and trust while maintaining a diverse workforce. This report also provides information regarding the District's various initiatives and programs designed to enhance the skill set of employees, improve the effectiveness of recruitment practices, and community outreach efforts.

As a result of the Board's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the District continues to make progress in creating a workforce that is representative of the community. Specific details on goals, strategies, and tactics of the Diversity & Inclusion Master Plan are outlined in the attachments to this report.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan: Engaging Our Diversity: 2015-2019**

The District's Diversity and Inclusion Program is chartered with developing and implementing programs and initiatives outlined in the District's Values Statement GP-7.7 of the Governance

Policies of the Board. In accordance with this statement, at the District “we believe, and together we will exemplify, the following values... We are committed to creating an inclusive work environment which reflects and supports the diversity of our community and enriches our perspectives.”

The Diversity and Inclusion Program is guided by a Master Plan that includes strategies, goals and objectives that help advance the District along a continuum towards diversity, inclusion and full employee engagement. The plan places an emphasis on employee engagement and productivity to assist the District to face significant challenges including severe drought, aging infrastructure, and climate change. These challenges require a high functioning and engaged workforce.

To leverage the District’s diversity as an organization, and achieve a more fully inclusive work environment in which all employees are actively engaged, the District is focusing on the three main goals outlined in the Master Plan:

- Attracting, promoting, and retaining a diverse, creative and highly skilled workforce to support a high-performing organization;
- Supporting and empowering individuals to contribute to their full potential, to cultivate an inclusive and engaged workforce that respects differences and values the unique qualities, ideas and perspectives of all employees; and
- Leveraging and supporting strategic community alliances to connect an understanding of our customer base with improved service delivery.

**Attracting, promoting, and retaining a diverse, creative and highly skilled workforce:** The Diversity and Inclusion Program, in partnership with Human Resources, has developed effective outreach programs to reach communities that are under-represented at the District. Based on ethnic and gender demographics at the District, going forward these outreach efforts will need to be highly targeted to the Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander communities and women in engineering roles.

Outreach strategies are discussed in detail in Attachment #1 and are intended to broaden the pool of job candidates competing for District employment opportunities. Working very closely with the Legal Department, the programs and practices of Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion are conducted within the limits of Proposition 209 (Cal. Constitution, Art. 1, sec. 31.) to ensure employment decisions (hiring, promotion, etc.) are not be based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin.

In addition to attracting a diverse workforce, the District is also committed to cultivating the skill sets of existing employees to create more opportunity for professional growth. During the past year, the District recognized the importance of management skills and created three new innovative leadership programs that show promise for the future:

- The Management 101 program is a 10-month program tailored to newly hired and promoted supervisors and managers in which internal subject-matter-experts teach courses on key District procedures. The participants learn about diversity in the workplace, labor relations, recruitment and selection, budgeting, procurement, leave of absence management, Board

agenda process, etc.

- The Unit Manager Academy is a year-long program for middle managers to enhance their leadership and coaching skills. Courses include industry recognized training such as, Leading at the Speed of Trust, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, InsideOut Coaching, along with soft skill development relative to delegation, project management, team building, running effective meetings, diversity and inclusion, etc. Working with the District's Bargaining Units, several job descriptions were revised to enhance the minimum requirements to include requiring two years of supervisory experience for management positions.
- The Emerging Leaders Certification Program is a 12-month course designed to provide employees with the critical skills needed to be successful as supervisors. Upon completion, the 26 competitively selected participants will be given credit for 2 years of supervisory experience and will thus be able to compete for management positions.

During the past year, the District also developed and launched the Succession Development Action Plan to accelerate the development of employees and transfer knowledge within the District. To introduce employees to a different business area and allow employees to develop new skills, the District instituted job rotations that enable employees to perform job assignments throughout the District. These job rotations are very popular and have given employees an opportunity to enhance their skill and prepare for future promotions and transfers.

The District also participates in the Santa Clara County Leadership Academy which allows employees the opportunity to network with other local government agency employees. These network experiences enhance employee leadership skills and prepare employees for promotions in the future. Through District representation at the Two-County Next Generation Committee, sponsored by the City/County Managers Associations of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, District employees have also attended Speed Coaching and Networking Lunch events and participated in the Management Talent Exchange Program (MTEP) in which high-potential employees are placed in another local government agency for three months to accelerate leadership growth.

**Supporting and empowering individuals:** As an employer, the District is committed to supporting and empowering individuals to achieve their full potential, and to cultivating an inclusive and engaged workforce that respects differences and values the unique qualities, ideas, and perspectives of all employees. During the past year, the Diversity and Inclusion Program continued to support eleven Employee Resource Groups to provide innovative programming that serves to build internal networks and allow employees to view the world through the eyes of others. In addition to the robust Employee Resource Group program, the District provided formal recognition for outstanding work and new opportunities to communicate with the CEO. Examples of some measures put in to place to help support and empower individuals are described below:

- For the first time in three years an All Employee Meeting took place in September, 2016. The goal of that meeting was to bring all employees together to discuss the direction of the District to ensure common objectives are readily known and that employee engagement levels are

high. Results of a post-event survey found that nearly 80% of employees who attended felt that the District is a great place to work.

- During the past year, the District provided several avenues for employee recognition including service awards for tenure and On-The-Spot awards for employees who demonstrate excellent customer service.
- Informed by the results of the Great Places to Work employee satisfaction survey, the Leadership Team has charged a group of employees within the Emerging Leaders Program to lead a Culture Innovation Lab to research historical satisfaction issues at the District and establish implementation measures to address them
- To improve communication with District management, employees now have multiple avenues to communicate directly with the Interim CEO. First, the CEO anonymous input box continues to be utilized as an effective outlet of ideas and suggestions. All comments are reviewed at the weekly Chiefs' meeting, and any responses are posted on the CEO Corner of Aqua.gov. Second, the Interim CEO provides weekly appointment times for any employee who would like to come speak with her on any topic. Each week, on average, 2-4 employees attend CEO office hours. Finally, beginning in Q2 of FY2017, the Interim CEO places updates from board meetings, Chiefs meetings, LT/MLT meetings and other events on the CEO Corner. These transparency efforts have been well-received by employees.

For more information about this goal, see Attachment #2.

**Leveraging and supporting strategic community alliances:** Because of the strong partnership that has been created among Government Relations, Human Resources, and Diversity and Inclusion, the District continues to engage in outreach events that touch all areas of the community that we serve.

- The District hosted a Latino Community Tour Day on July 25 by partnering with Somos Mayfair, a local non-profit community-based organization in East San Jose that serves the Latino community. Approximately 60 Latino families attended the event, which included Spanish language tours, kids activities and games, and a taste test station. Additional multicultural tour days will be scheduled soon, including an Asian tour day being planned for the spring of this year. Video scripts in other languages were also translated and produced in Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese for upcoming multilingual tours. Translations for these same languages are also being prepared for other written materials such as tour postcards.
- All project signage and neighborhood and work notices now include a "We speak your language" section with information on who to contact at the District that can address questions in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese or Tagalog.
- The District's Community Partnering Sponsorship Program continues to support organizations with a direct nexus to the District's mission, vision or Board Governance Policies. Through the first half of FY17, the District has provided 35 sponsorships, including, San Jose Silicon Valley

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NAACP Freedom and Friendship Gala, Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute's 2016 Banquet, Happy Hollow Foundation's Hoot & Howl, Santa Clara County Day on the Bay Multicultural Festival, Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley's 2016 Hispanic Foundation Ball, and the Billy De Frank Silicon Valley LGBT Community Center's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Silicon Valley LGBT Movie Benefit, among others.

- The Speaker's Bureau made presentations to many community organizations, including, the Alviso Neighborhood Group, Saratoga Rotary, Seven Springs Home Owner Association and many others. This past May the Speakers Bureau presentation on the purified water outreach program was launched. Some of the groups receiving presentations included the Portuguese Community Center, Eco-Green Group of Silicon Valley, Japantown Neighborhood Association, Alviso Neighborhood Group and the Japantown Business Association.

### **Diversity and Inclusion Program Organizational Change Update**

In order to enhance District coordination and program implementation, the Diversity and Inclusion Program has moved from the Office of the CEO and Board Support to the Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services' Office. This organizational change will allow for a closer alignment between Human Resources and Diversity and Inclusion as both departments will be contained within the same Division.

### **Conclusion**

The Diversity and Inclusion Program at the District has a long, rich history in large part because of Board interest and advocacy for it over the years. While many large technology companies in the Bay Area have recently highlighted very public and well-funded D&I programs, the D&I Program at the District has an established history over nearly two decades. Based on the success of this effort, the District will continue to strengthen its Diversity and Inclusion Program to continue improving service to the citizens of the Santa Clara County.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact associated with this item.

### **CEQA:**

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have a potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1: D&I Master Plan, Goal #1
- Attachment 2: D&I Master Plan, Goal #2
- Attachment 3: D&I Master Plan 2015-2019
- Attachment 4: Presentation

**UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:**

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