

Social and Economic Justice Commission Response
Impact of the Economy on Community (Councilmember Wile Recommendation)
Final Document

Discussion:

The recommendation from Council is within the purview of the SEJC. However, as described the request is broad and undefined. It is difficult for the Commission or it's sub-committee to discern what type of information would be helpful. Initial discussion of SEJC suggests that the council and community could benefit from establishing local economic indicators. Regular and systematic trending these indicators could lead to actionable information by community members, council, and/or staff. Examples of possible indicators that can be considered are outlined below.

Additional suggestions are also referenced in items 2-4 below.

Recommendations:

1. Local economic indicators review should include both current information and trending from past years. Data that might be readily available includes:
 - rental vacancy rates within the city,
 - mortgage foreclosure rates within the city, and
 - eligibility for federal subsidized lunch program within AUSD
 - senior meals on wheels enrollment figures
 - zip code sorted unemployment data
2. Anecdotal information from community members could be gathered from blog post on personal experience. These postings could be reviewed by the public at large and by the commission as a standing part of the agenda.
3. The impact of the economy on local citizens is, to a certain extent, apparent even without trending of yet to be finalized local indicators. As such, the Council is advised to enact a living wage ordinance to reflect and support the difficulties faced by low wage workers in Albany.
4. Community might also consider creative funding supplementation to Senior Meals on Wheels Program allowing interested Albany citizens to sponsor and/or directly provide 1 meal per week to meals on wheels participants using a neighborhood buddy system, "Meals on Heels".

Reviewed and approved: SEJC 4/15/2009