

Davenport Institute Awards Platinum Public Engagement to the City of San Rafael

Los Angeles, CA – The Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership at Pepperdine University School of Public Policy is pleased to announce that the City of San Rafael has earned Platinum Public Engagement, the Institute’s highest engagement award. The City is being honored with the award because of its dedication to involving residents in local decision-making through the employment of advanced public engagement policies and techniques.

The Davenport Institute’s executive director, Ashley Trim, and School of Public Policy dean, Pete Peterson, will formally present the award to the City of San Rafael at the San Rafael City Council meeting on July 18, 2016.

“This award is a testament to the great work of our dedicated staff and to a City Council committed to working with the community to make San Rafael an even better place,” said Mayor Gary Phillips, “This is an area where we must constantly improve, iterate, learn, and listen. The job is never done.

A City Council sub-committee labored for two years to develop the San Rafael Community Engagement Action Plan, which was formally adopted as City policy in January of 2015. The policy encompasses a wide range of communication strategies, delivery systems, databases and platforms which have been employed to disseminate information and receive feedback from residents. As a result, the City of San Rafael has effectively heightened civic engagement by using its fine-tuned techniques to involve its residents in a variety of issues, including the development of a Homeless Action Plan, Quiet Zones, business issues, labor negotiations, climate change activities, safety facilities, sidewalk maintenance, downtown parking and way finding.

In addition to a substantial number of boards, commissions and other advisory bodies, the City meets regularly with neighborhood associations, the businesses community, schools and other community-based organizations. The City Council periodically receives and evaluates progress against the goals set forth in the San Rafael Community Engagement Action Plan.

Interim Executive Director Ashley Trim lauded San Rafael saying, “San Rafael is a city that places residents at the center of policy making. The City earned this Platinum Award by scoring highly on more than 17 of the 20 criteria on our [Public Engagement Evaluation Platform](#). It is the Davenport Institute’s hope that other cities will be inspired to follow their example.”

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Pete Peterson, dean of the Pepperdine School of Public Policy, added, “In launching the new evaluation platform, we wanted to not only look at particular public engagement projects, but recognize municipalities that have developed city-wide cultures of participation. The City of San Rafael stands as a great example in this regard.”

For nearly a decade, the Davenport Institute has been researching, training, and consulting with public officials to improve ways in which local governments involve their residents in making difficult policy decisions. In May of this year, the Davenport Institute launched the “How are WE Doing? Public Engagement Evaluation Platform” to help cities and local government agencies evaluate public engagement efforts. The platform includes the opportunity for recognition as part of an awards program.

To learn more about the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership at Pepperdine University visit the website [here](#). To learn more about the “How are We Doing? Public Engagement Evaluation Platform” or to submit a city for recognition visit the platform [here](#).