

## Levesque, Jennifer

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**From:** Flachman, Jennifer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 04, 2021 1:11 PM  
**To:** Tresidder, John; Levesque, Jennifer  
**Cc:** Dietz, Stephanie  
**Subject:** FW: Public Outreach Ideas

Hello John and Jennifer,

Forwarding the following email to include in public comment.

Thank you,

Jennifer



**Jennifer Flachman**

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**From:** Daniel Mello [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021 7:07 PM  
**To:** Flachman, Jennifer <[FlachmanJ@cityofmerced.org](mailto:FlachmanJ@cityofmerced.org)>  
**Subject:** Public Outreach Ideas

Hey, Jennifer, this is Dr. Daniel Mello, reaching out after meeting in-person last night at the Council meeting. Thanks for hearing me out!

I feel like having focus groups, etc., would not only take up time, but how would you ensure you'd get a representative sample of the demographic? Most folks with time and energy to make such a group would be of higher-SES White echelons, no?

So, in light of trying to solicit public input into how to best use available funds, my ideas for public outreach are thus:

- People typically congregate around food, drink, music, art, and music, as well as free things that can help reduce the burden in their lives. Why not have one or two community events framed around 'community appreciation and enhancement', or something to that effect? It should, ideally, include all of those elements, with the Council members shaking hands, kissing babies, etc., and the city providing maybe gift cards (pre-loaded Visa cards to be spent at any store in town) for folks who fill out simple surveys (some demographics items + 4-5 simple checkbox items; translated into multiple local languages, like Spanish, Hmong, etc.).

- Downsides: could take a while to plan and implement, and, apparently, time is of the essence. Plus, it'd have to be on a weekend, when folks from all walks of life are most likely to be able to attend. Plus plus, it'd have to be in a location that's relatively easy for everyone to access, especially those with limited mobility/transportation, if such a one exists in Merced.

- Since it seems like you need to garner opinions in a relatively quick manner, why not a Poll Bus, like a party bus, but converted into a mobile polling station? Music, lights, a police escort where they could go meet the folks in their

community (worked for Camden, NJ, but you'd have to ensure it's non-threatening, like they're *not* responding to an emergency or anything), you could, quite literally, take the bus through multiple neighborhoods, stop in some places to get folks to fill out your surveys, provide snacks, water, and the aforementioned gift cards, have the Council members also meet folks (even Mr. Shelton was saying that they'd have to get some new shoes to hit the pavement, go door-to-door, if they want engagement).

Overall, the surveys would have to be pretty short, maybe a minute or two to fill out, for a \$50 Visa gift card right there, in the moment (no mail-and-wait) because the cost-benefit has to be immediate and beneficial:

- Demos: sex/gender identity, racial identity, ethnic identity, preferred spoken language, occupation. That's it. Other elements might be too intrusive.

- Funds Allocation: Here, the Council would need maybe up to five options pre-determined, and folks could choose or rank them, with an 'Other' option for them to fill in what they think is the best priority. Also, it might be handy for Council members to keep a Voice Recording app on-hand for folks who maybe illiterate, but can speak their opinion. Lastly, all of this should be anonymous, as folks need to trust the local Gov't. Meeting them face-to-face would go a long way, including meeting our Peace Officers, who should be open to taking the first step in introducing themselves.

Anywho, just some thoughts, and happy to chat more, if you'd like. Full disclosure: I have no prior experience with public outreach, so, please feel free to tell me if these are terrible ideas. 😊

DM

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