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**National League of Cities picks San Jose Strong  
Neighborhoods as Award Winner**  
*Honor recognizes Cities and Towns for Municipal Excellences*

*SAN JOSE, Calif.* --- The Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI), San Jose's successful community-driven neighborhood improvement program, has won the 2008 National League of Cities Gold Award for Municipal Excellence, an honor that recognizes outstanding programs that have improved the quality of life in cities and towns across the United States.

Strong Neighborhoods won the top award from a field of 10 finalists in the category of populations of more than 500,000. In all, 57 of 173 programs in 36 states were chosen as finalists in four population categories. Gold and silver awards are given in each category.

The winners will receive awards at a luncheon on Friday, November 14, at the League's Congress of Cities & Expositions in Orlando, Florida.

"In San Jose, we are creating safe and livable neighborhoods," said Mayor Chuck Reed. "Our Strong Neighborhoods program connects residents with the resources they need to create change. Whether it's gang prevention, traffic calming or revitalization, residents partner with San Jose staff to make our neighborhoods better places to live and raise families."

The City of San Jose and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency leaders launched the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) in 2000 as a collaborative, resident-focused approach to improve blight-ridden neighborhoods and build strong community relationships. Working through neighborhood committees in 19 areas, residents and staff mapped out assets and developed Top Ten lists of priority improvement projects.

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## **National League of Cities picks San Jose Strong Neighborhoods for Award 2-2-2**

“The SNI program has helped to empower our residents to participate in activities that have improved their quality of life and their neighborhoods,” said Harry S. Mavrogenes, Executive Director, San Jose Redevelopment Agency. “More importantly, we have been able to achieve tangible results by building nearly 3,000 affordable housing units, 50 new community facilities and spur approximately \$2 billion in private investments.”

Of the 190 priorities initially proposed by the neighborhoods, 150 projects have been completed, and more are in the pipeline. The completed projects include street repaving, sidewalks, streetlights and new sewer systems, new parks and community centers, traffic calming, sprucing up business districts, and engaging residents in cleanups and helping them rehabilitate their homes.

“This program has changed the way that San Jose delivers services to our residents by bringing employees from many City departments together to work directly with neighborhood leaders,” said San Jose City Manager Debra Figone. “It has strengthened the vibrancy and involvement of our many neighborhood organizations.”

Since 2000, the Agency and City have invested \$95 million in neighborhood priority projects. With much more work to be done, committees in the 19 areas are setting new goals to be reached in the next three to five years.

The programs nominated for the Award for Municipal Excellence were judged on criteria, including public-private partnerships, resident and community collaborations, effective management of city resources, innovative government policies and projects with tangible results. Gold winners will receive \$2,000 to be donated to a local non-profit, and Silver winners receive \$1,000.

The award is sponsored by the National League of Cities and CH2M HILL, a private and worldwide engineering and construction firm.

Earlier this year, Strong Neighborhoods was honored for CommUniverCity, a partnership with San Jose State University, the City and the Redevelopment Agency. CommUniverCity finished first among eight finalists in the Best Neighborhood Program Social Revitalization category awarded by Neighborhoods, USA, a national non-profit organization. The new citywide Neighborhoods Commission, a pilot program generated through SNI, was a finalist in the category of Multi-Neighborhood Project Partnerships. The 30-member commission is designed to give neighborhoods a stronger voice in the decision-making process at City Hall.

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## **National League of Cities picks San Jose Strong Neighborhoods for Award 3-3-3**

### **About the San Jose Redevelopment Agency**

The Agency is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San José. Governed by the City Council, the Agency facilitates and oversees comprehensive programs for development to revitalize and strengthen quality of life and competitiveness for San Jose's downtown, neighborhoods, and industrial areas. [www.sjredevelopment.org](http://www.sjredevelopment.org)

### **About the Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI)**

The Strong Neighborhoods Initiative is a partnership of the community, City of San José, and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency to build clean, safe, and attractive neighborhoods with independent and capable neighborhood organizations. The San Jose Redevelopment Agency Board/City Council adopted the Redevelopment Plan in 2002. [www.strongneighborhoods.org](http://www.strongneighborhoods.org).

### **About National League of Cities**

The National League of Cities is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. Working in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues, the National League of Cities serves as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages, and towns it represents. More than 1,600 municipalities of all sizes pay dues to NLC and actively participate as leaders and voting members in the organization. [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

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