

Note: Many responses are verbatim from the two employee focus groups but duplications have been eliminated. The headings have been added to group common themes.

What makes Santa Ana special?

- Diversity
 - Population, demographics, development
 - Diverse employees, residents, community
 - Diverse demographics/ uniqueness
 - City demographic richness
 - Mixture of cultures

- Community
 - Community involvement – headed in the right direction
 - Opportunities for involvement
 - Lots of families

- City organization
 - City employees
 - City looks out for its employees
 - Support employees resulting in better service to community
 - Open environment
 - Have supported employees

- City's role as County leader
 - Historic resources
 - City history/ regional importance, employee teamwork
 - Potential for leadership in Orange County

- Other
 - Education – Matre Dei, High School of the Arts
 - Good transportation and infrastructure
 - Youth
 - Density
 - Eager to learn
 - Lots of culture – undiscovered
 - Opportunities – employees and community
 - Potential

- Dynamic
- Opportunity to be more than what others think we are
- Unstoppable potential
- Renaissance – Downtown + open space/ rec space

What do you see as the strengths of the City of Santa Ana?

- Downtown
 - Downtown has improved
 - Downtown restaurants

- Santa Ana’s role as County leader
 - Size and central location
 - Location
 - County seat
 - Leadership role in County
 - Opportunity to be a regional leader

- Infrastructure
 - Best train station in Orange County
 - Regional transit hub
 - Increase in bike routes/ lanes
 - Street sweeping program

- City organization
 - Great city employees – willing to work with City Council in tough times; talented, educated; we get a lot accomplished, value staying here
 - Teamwork at City Hall
 - Good reputation for City employees
 - Employee association – good at sharing information with employees
 - Upcoming leadership/ direction; City Manager, Director of the CDA
 - Jail has revenue potential

- Economic Development
 - Employer growth potential
 - Post economic decline position us well to move forward
 - Region attractions (Zoo, Downtown, etc) to bring people in

- Community
 - Greater participation among different ethnic groups
 - Language facilitation
 - Family involvement
 - Neighborhood association involvement
 - Community with vision

- Great minds in the City
- Established resident population
- Other
 - Facilities – meeting rooms, training rooms
 - Diversity of housing , commercial, industrial
 - Clean slate – don't have an identity or brand
 - Property values have stabilized and are affordable
 - Civic pride – both for residents and to attract new businesses
 - Youth – opportunity to involve more

What do you see as the limitations of the City of Santa Ana?

- Economic development
 - City is built out
 - Lack major hotel, major draw for tourists
 - Perception that development process is tough
 - Business license fees are high
 - Lack of space to build
 - Building is for apartments, not retail, industrial, commercial
 - Lost businesses – e.g., tire company went to Fountain Valley
 - Perception that “It’s just Santa Ana” among incoming businesses
 - Expectations of developers
- Open space
 - Lack of new open space opportunities, lack of new large spaces
 - Have not optimized facilities with the school district – libraries, fields, gyms
- City organization
 - Not enough staff/ hours to do everything that should be done, causes employee frustration
 - Budget/ service Levels – actually serving a much larger population than officially recognized
 - Have lacked leadership at City Hall/ instability of city manager position
 - Employees have not been a part of vision and goals for many years
 - Leadership at City Hall has not been transparent about City financial situation and budget
 - Lack of accountability about manager performance
 - Insufficient staff; cuts in resources, limits what the individual can do, sworn staff are having to do non-sworn level work
 - Employees cannot attend events; need presence
 - Short-sighted approaches; invest in future revenues rather than cut the funding for those efforts

- Lack of leadership, direction, vision
- Ties to the community have been weakened; formerly strong community policing, now insular way of engaging with each other, ignoring community; community assumes City doesn't care; when the City can engage, there isn't time to do enough
- Financial limitations
- Reductions haven't been strategic; have been done through retirements and vacancies
- Limited training opportunities
- Parks and Rec – lack of direction, vision; late notice on programs; difficult to rent space – leaking money; hit/miss with program attendance (swimming is always packed); shortcomings are budget related
- Catch 22 – not enough staff time available to go after improvements, money, technology, etc.
- Low revenue base; low income population
- Need greater revenue base

- Homelessness
 - Homeless population (especially Civic Center)
 - Homeless problem limits businesses wanting to come in; no plan/ abandoned plan for helping the situation

- Youth
 - Underperforming schools
 - Lack focus on youth – gang prevention, programming / recreation, job training
 - Should consider emphasis on recreational programming instead of facilities (if choice needs to be made)

- Library
 - Only one main library and one main branch
 - Library running on grants, need to attend functions/ events to keep going, investments
 - Need more libraries; library education, partner with community, no book mobiles, reduced hours – misses a lot of people

- Image
 - Public image of Santa Ana – prior branding efforts were not effective; current messaging is stale
 - Poor reputation within the county; gangs, dangerous , etc.
 - People won't come

- Other
 - Geographically maxed out; can't encourage people to move here
 - Infrastructure

What do you see as the opportunities the City can build on in the future?

- City organization
 - New City Manager – get accountability in managers/coach managers on skills
 - Manage with intent/ develop a plan
 - Define service levels, community expectations
 - Do a comprehensive compensation study (recognizing that some employees are doing multiple jobs)
 - Openness to involve employees, get all involved in vision and buzz
 - Additional openness in City organization – open door policy
 - Quarterly meetings between employees and executive management
 - Succession planning/ mentorship/ leadership training/growth opportunities
 - Mentor employees/ future leaders
 - Network employees for problem solving
 - Reintroduce employee morale events
 - Encourage employees to add/ expand skills (especially technology)
 - Encourage employee training
 - Use technology more
 - Increase services via mobile devices
 - Creativity in delivering government's services
 - Opportunities for shared services with other communities
 - Take a look at parks and rec services and delivery
 - Bring back community-oriented programs - DARE, puppet man, McGruff
 - Increase community outreach – cable station - events; English and Spanish stations

- Economic development
 - Build on downtown success
 - Attract businesses that generate revenue
 - Business friendly; encourage hiring local residents
 - Market streamlined development/Downtown ABC review
 - Public education on public processes (liaison) – community training
 - Be creative with how we bring in businesses
 - Focus on desirable business presence; establish and follow up on a vision
 - Market to different age segments
 - Take advantage of internet connection to new markets – foodies/ food blog – young crowd
 - Promote Santa Ana; get the word out about the good things; branding/ promotion/ marketing
 - Create positive PR in and outside the community; know the audience – what do they want?

- Community
 - Establish community tech centers

- Promote computer access to residents; increase access to computer classes (long waiting list)
- Better programs for involving unreached populations
- Homelessness
 - Take back facilities around the Library; homeless have taken over; can't run any programs; no security to allow access via front entrance
 - Homeless shelter
- Other
 - Positively influence youth
 - Relationship between City and school district
 - Expand the Zoo; projects - e.g., History Museum

What do you see as the threats the City will face?

- City administration
 - Funding – loss of federal funding and loss of redevelopment
 - Services will need to be reduced or fees will need to increase
 - Traditional funding sources are drying up; need to identify new sources
 - PERS retirement cost increasing dramatically
 - City at mercy of contractors if services are outsourced – may not always be the best option
 - The economy; still have a lot of unmet needs
 - Unwillingness to change as an organization
 - Continued cutbacks; can't afford to cut more, currently at a breaking point
 - Employee retention; low morale (employees and community); outside agencies approach employees; lots of part time positions, lack of a career ladder
 - Loss of experience through retirements
 - Management focus doesn't translate to top priorities; needs more city manager leadership
 - Diverse/ split Council
 - With decrease in services, litigation will increase (e.g., sidewalk repair)
- Homelessness
 - Influence of other cities to keep homeless in Santa Ana
 - Perception of lack of safety due to homeless population
 - Homeless issues; other cities send them here (Santa Ana feeds them); people who refuse help; medical, psychological issues
- Economic development
 - Mobile vendors threaten success of brick and mortar establishments
 - Other cities are perceived as more business friendly

- Stability of real estate market is vulnerable
- Sales tax leakage
- Other
 - Tension between desire for change vs perception of racism
 - Not enough youth graduating from high school and going on to higher education

Vision

- Economic stability
- Fiscal sustainability
- Effective leadership
- Focused vision/ defined common good – leadership
- Leadership/ innovation/ risk talking
- Transparency (organization and community)
- Managed transparency
- Stability (organization)
- Employee participation in Santa Ana future – follow through
- Employee pride – good cooperation
- Pedestrian friendly; bikeability
- Public Transportation
- Cultural emersion
- Community ownership
- Preservation
- Staying ahead; forward thinking
- Geographic balance
- City pride for employees and residents
- Stay relevant – keep moving ahead
- Safe