



2006

**Citizen Board, Committee and
Commission Volunteer Survey**

City of Tacoma

Executive Summary

Survey

Survey Results

Survey Comments

City of Tacoma Citizen Volunteer Survey

Executive Summary 2006

Introduction

In 2005, the City of Tacoma authorized a project to assess participation of citizen volunteers on the many boards, committee, and commission appointed by the City Council. The purpose of the original 2005 Citizen Volunteer Input Project was to assess the volunteer understanding of their roles and assess the quality of staff support for their work, in an effort to enhance their experience. This assessment recognized areas for improvement that resulted in a number of training materials and orientations designed to support the citizen commissions, boards, and committees.

To assess the impact of the improvement efforts in 2005 and to further explore opportunities for improvement, a follow up survey questionnaire was sent to citizen volunteers in late March 2006. The survey consisted of four identical elements to the 2005 survey, which assessed performance of staff fulfilling their roles, staff support and preparation, overall satisfaction with staff, and narrative responses related to staff effectiveness.

Survey questionnaires were sent to citizen volunteers from the following:

- Citizen Recognition Committee
- Human Rights Commission
- Human Services Commission
- Landmarks Preservation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities
- Tacoma Arts Commission
- Tacoma Sister Cities.

The overall response rate to the questionnaire was lower than 2005, at 24 percent, representing 25 responses. Because the response rate was low, a number of boards, committees or commissions surveyed had only one to three respondents. However, the cumulative questionnaire responses are sufficient to provide a meaningful summary of volunteer perception regarding staff support for their organization.

This report includes a 1) a summary of all responses; 2) tabulation of survey questionnaire responses for each individual board, committee, or commission; and 3) a comparison of responses from 2005 to 2006.

In general, survey respondents rated staff support very positively. More than 90 percent of participants responded that staff fulfilled their roles Well or Reasonably Well in four of five categories assessed. Similarly, in three of five categories more than 90 percent of responses indicated above average or outstanding staff support and effectiveness, with more than 70 percent indicating the same level of satisfaction in the remaining two categories.

In comparison with 2005 survey responses, every category had a higher percentage of respondents expressing satisfaction including a significant increase in satisfaction with volunteer orientation. However, the potential for improvement is evident in two areas that had less than 80 percent of satisfied responses and also showed the least improvement from the 2005 survey. The two areas identified include 1) staff arranging citizen forums for input; and 2) clearly orienting and describing the role of volunteers in their respective groups.

Citizen Volunteer Survey

A. Please identify the Committee or Commission on which you serve:

- Citizen Recognition Committee
- Human Rights Commission
- Human Services Commission
- Landmarks Preservation Commission

- Planning Commission
- Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities
- Tacoma Arts Commission
- Tacoma Sister Cities

B. How well does staff fulfill their role(s):

	Very well	Reasonably well	Not so well	Poorly
They provide training and support for our group's overall functioning				
They set up forums for citizen input.				
They provide information on policies and programs.				
They coordinate and present appropriate data on which decisions can be made.				
They present our recommendations to others.				
Other:				

C. Please let us know your degree of agreement with the following statements.

	Absolutely agree	Agree somewhat	Agree slightly	Don't agree
The expectations for my role in this group were clearly described before I joined.				
I received sufficient orientation at the beginning of my service on this group.				
We regularly receive sufficient information to fulfill our role				
Our group receives sufficient guidelines from staff on working together effectively.				

D. Please provide more details on the following questions:

What resources and/or information provided by staff have been most helpful?

What resources and/or information provided by staff have been least helpful?

What no-cost changes in staff support would help your group be more effective advisors?

E. Finally, please rate your overall satisfaction with the support received from staff for your group.

Outstanding Above Average Acceptable Unacceptable

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please place it in the envelope provided and mail it. If the envelope is lost, please send the completed survey to:

City of Tacoma
City Manager's Office
747 Market St. Room 1200
Tacoma WA 98402

If you wish, you may fax the completed survey to 253-591-5794.

PLEASE RESPOND NO LATER THAN APRIL 7, 2006 TO HAVE YOUR INPUT INCLUDED

Summary

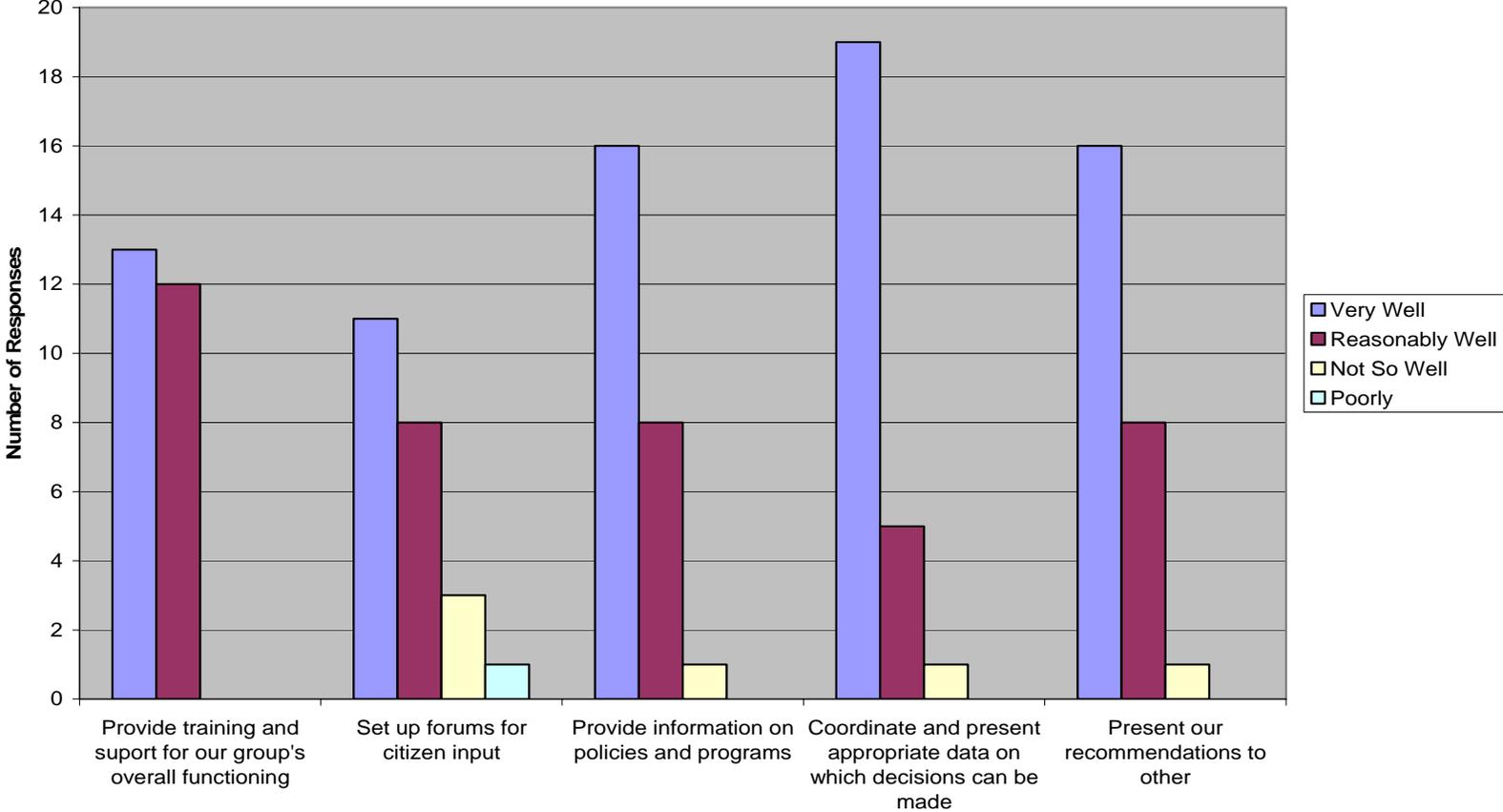
25 Responses 104 Sent 24% Response Rate

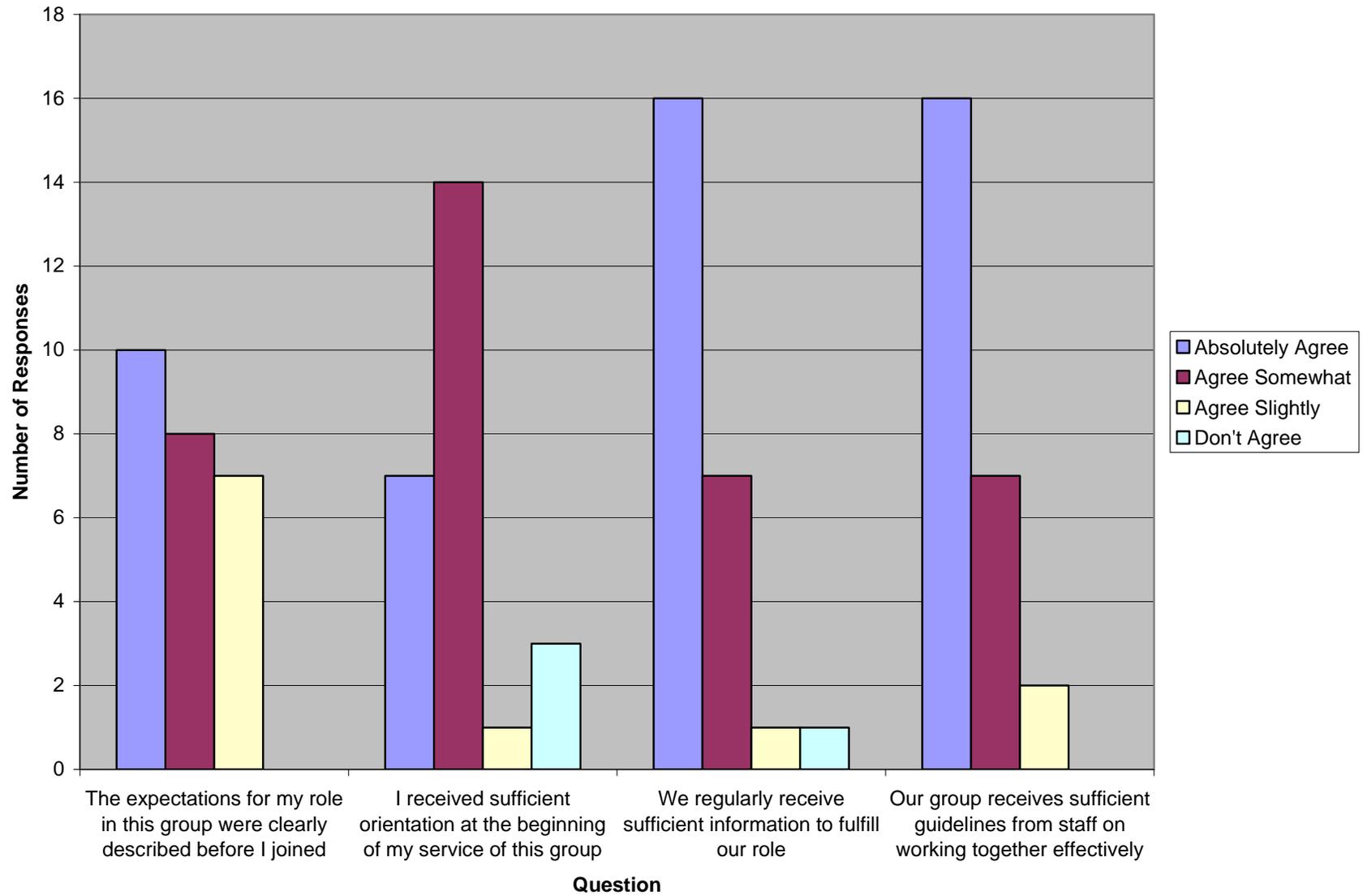
How well does staff fulfill their role(s):	Very Well	Reasonably Well	Not so Well	Poorly	% Well or Reasonably Well	
					2006	2005
Provide training and support for our group's overall functioning	13	12	0	0	100%	83%
Set up forums for citizen input	11	8	3	1	76%	70%
Provide information on policies and programs	16	8	1	0	96%	85%
Coordinate and present appropriate data on which decisions can be made	19	5	1	0	96%	83%
Present our recommendations to other	16	8	1	0	96%	83%

	Absolutely Agree	Agree Somewhat	Agree Slightly	Don't Agree	% Agree or Agree Somewhat	
					2006	2005
The expectations for my role in this group were clearly described before I joined	10	8	7	0	72%	65%
I received sufficient orientation at the beginning of my service of this group	7	14	1	3	84%	63%
We regularly receive sufficient information to fulfill our role	16	7	1	1	92%	80%
Our group receives sufficient guidelines from staff on working together effectively	16	7	2	0	92%	80%

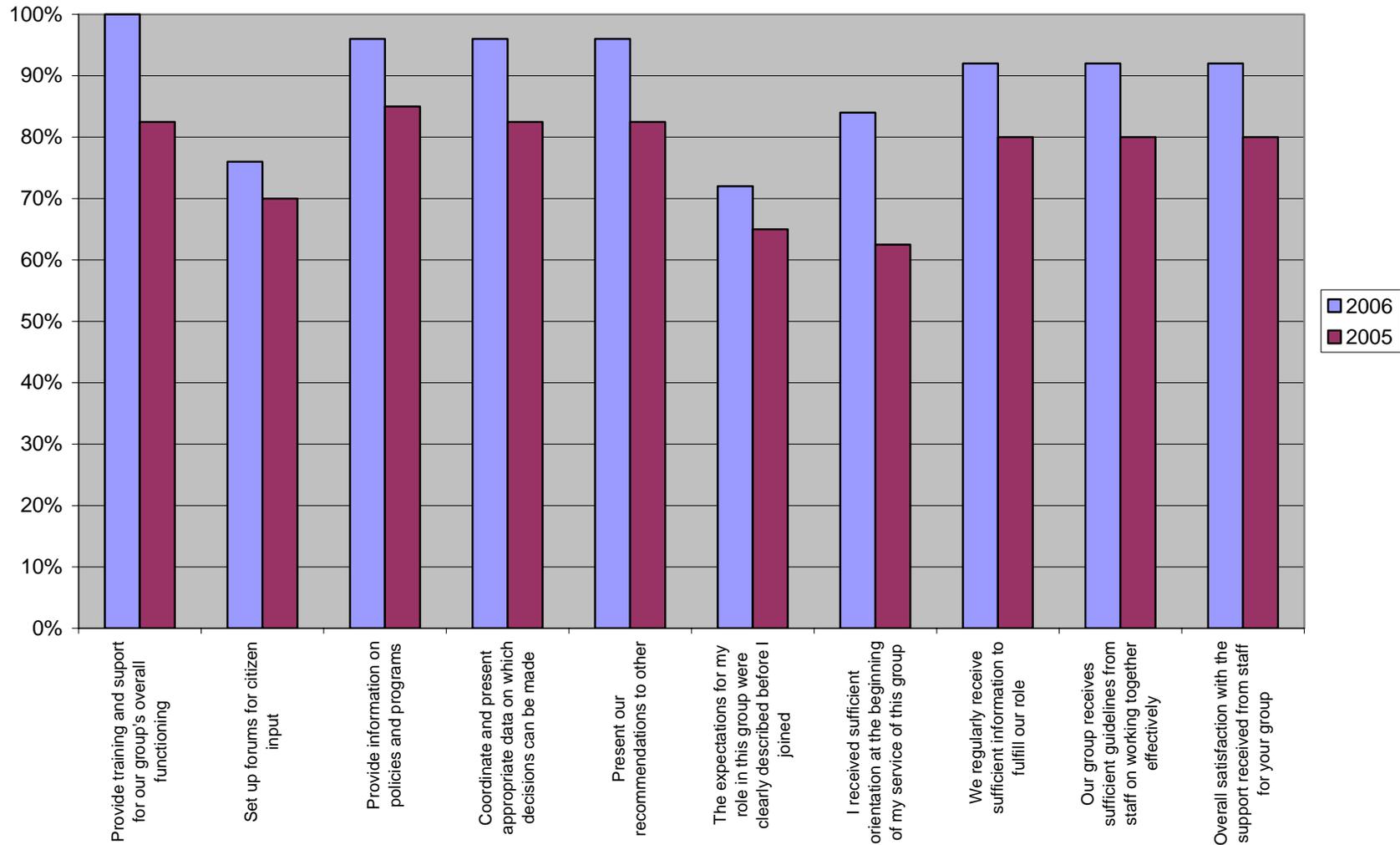
	Outstanding	Above Average	Acceptable	Unacceptable	% Outstanding or Above Average	
					2006	2005
Overall satisfaction with the support received from staff for your group	17	6	2	0	92%	80%

How well staff fulfills their role





Trends Comparison



Citizen Volunteer Survey Comments

What resources and/or information provided by staff have been most helpful?

- Coordination of committee programs
- Keep us informed of program details and activities
- Information about policies for events, for fundraising
- Coordination, communication with sister cities, help on Film & Music Festival
- They coordinate our ten Sister City committees very well
- The major work that staff does on compiling and coordinating all the nomination forms that come in for the City of Destiny Awards each year – by category – i.e.: Adult Leadership/Teen Service/Groups – a great job done and very time consuming
- Always respectful of others opinion, thoughts and views
- The initial binder of information
- Information is provided in detail, until I totally understand
- Training and support by staff is excellent
- Staff provides training to help evaluate the applications
- Resources that train HSC in grant evaluation and organization of schedules and materials relevant to grant evaluation are great
- Staff provides long term strategic planning very well
- Landmarks Preservation staff provides excellent support service
- Landmarks Preservation has a wealth of knowledge which makes them an excellent resource. If they don't know an answer they find out. They are prompt to return phone messages and e-mails
- Staff Report on Pending Cases – including citations of appropriate regulations
- Notices of historic preservation related events
- Minutes of meetings
- Available courses, seminars to further our knowledge on presentation to enable commissioner to be educated and informed and act accordingly
- An understanding of city policy and organization
- Staff is always helpful and responsive and provided an excellent orientation to serving the commission
- Working with applicants (design review and nomination to Tacoma Register) to ensure the Commission has the detailed info necessary to make reasoned decision
- Expert knowledge of different city processes and systems
- Good relationships with other city departments and staff
- Timely follow-through
- Staff reports and studies
- Taking of minutes at each meeting, providing monthly agenda for next meeting, keeping group on task
- Guest Speakers
- Planning Meeting
- The retreat that we had last two years has done the most for our group
- Staff has provided a harmonious interface with the City Administration

- Things have improved significantly in orientation and explaining expectations in the last several years
- Staff serves as an excellent support and advocate
- Written info regarding policies and processes
- Staff/commission retreat in early December was essential for clarifying goals and team building
- Articles from national press
- Announcements of upcoming events
- Briefings on City meetings, discussion, initiatives
- Guidance and leadership on major Commission initiatives
- Sense of historical precedence and legal obligations
- When we've had questions the Art Administrator is very knowledgeable and willing to inform us
- We've had a good facilitation retreat and sufficient data given to us for decision making
- Information on arts projects involving City funds
- Information on allocations process
- Information on how individual artists are selected
- New staff reports before Commission meetings
- Monthly updates
- Yearly retreat

What resources and/or information provided by staff have been least helpful?

- Difficulty in arranging meeting space
- We have no support for recruitment of more volunteers
- Keeping membership lists
- Can't recall anything staff does for us for our difficult role of determining qualified candidates for each category that hasn't been very helpful!
- Everything has been helpful
- Understanding outcome based evaluations
- We have not found anything that has not aided us
- Orientation for my role and commission came a year late
- It's all been helpful to me
- Outdated or obsolete ordinance and procedural guidelines (Presently being updated)
- I often will receive duplicates (sometimes 3 copies) of agendas and minutes, we should be taking down fewer trees
- Everything provided is most useful and informative

What no-cost changes in staff support would help your group be more effective advisors?

- The only suggestion I'd have would be a change that would have a cost factor – more staff to assist
- It would be nice if we had some kind of parking permit so that we could be in the city parking lot for over 2 hours when we are here on commission business
- Provide information on issues prior to scheduled meetings
- Continue to develop website, which is already an excellent resource and helps greatly with communication
- Staff has done a very professional job at prioritizing his responsibilities and laying out a sequential and systematic long-term strategy for historic preservation
- Provide more condensed reports. Sometimes too much information is provided
- To meet with the City Attorney and be advised that Tacoma isn't in full compliance with ADA. This group should not be the watchdog to make the city follow the law. Have police prioritize enforcement of Disabled Parking spaces and check permits making sure permit holder is driver or passenger in vehicle, also ticketing those without permit that park in disabled spaces
- At this time I see no changes to be made
- We have just completed a reorganization and in good shape for now
- Clarity on procedures, policies and our defined roles (which we are presently working on)
- I believe that the Arts Commission can provide valuable on-going advice to City on “the State of the State” of the arts. There has been a disconnect and downright neglect on the City's part. Why not develop a small (2-3) person advisory committee that meets quarterly to be of use to the City. Could staff enable this communication?
- Communication with Commissioners
- Establishing team atmosphere with meaningful involvement, not a rubber stamp organization
- Moving staff from 10th floor to 9th has been hard but so far the new 2 person department is doing the best it can with what they have from the City
- Support for recruitment of volunteers
- Some guidance or better coordination by Sister Cities Council would help
- Can't think of any without cost!
- Program needs more resources