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 programing 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