



# City of Sunnyvale

## Notice and Agenda Human Relations Commission

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Thursday, December 11, 2025

7:00 PM

Online and Redwood Conference Room,  
City Hall, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA

94086

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Meeting online link: <https://sunnyvale-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/89619169146>

### Public Participation

View the end of the agenda for information on:

- Public participation options
- Request language translation
- Accessibility/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice
- Legal notices

### **7 P.M. HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MEETING**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Call to Order in the Redwood Conference Room.

#### **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

#### **ROLL CALL**

#### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Prior to opening public comment on Oral Communications, the Chair may determine it would be impractical to include remote public comment for the purpose of timeliness of the meeting or conducting an orderly meeting.

Oral Communications is the opportunity for the public to address the Human Relations Commission on items not listed on the agenda and is limited to 15 minutes with a maximum of up to three minutes per speaker (one appearance per speaker). Note the Brown Act does not allow the Commission to take action on an item not listed on the agenda. To address the Commission, refer to the notice at the end of this agenda.

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

All matters listed on the consent calendar will be acted upon by one motion unless

discussion is requested by a Commissioner or the public. To address the Commission, refer to the notice at the end of this agenda.

- 1.A [25-1120](#) Approve the Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2025

**Recommendation:** Approve the Human Relations Commission Minutes of November 13, 2025 as submitted.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS**

To speak on a public hearing/general business item, refer to notice at the end of this agenda. Each speaker is limited to three minutes.

- 2 [25-1121](#) Discussion and Possible Recommendation of One Priority Project Idea to the City Council
- 3 [25-1122](#) Annual Review of City Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials and Opportunity to Recommend Changes to the City Council
- 4 [25-1123](#) Community Needs Assessment Update

### **NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS**

-Commissioner Comments

-Staff Comments

### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Public Participation Options**

##### **In person public comment:**

You may provide public comment by filling out a speaker card (optional) and giving it to the Recording Secretary.

##### **Online participation:**

Members of the public may also attend online. However, the City cannot guarantee uninterrupted access to online technology. Technical difficulties may occur from time to time. Unless required by the Ralph M. Brown Act, the meeting will continue even if technical difficulties prevent online participation.

The Chair may determine it would be impractical to include remote public comment

during Oral Communications.

**Online public comment:**

To provide audio public comment, connect to the meeting online or by telephone. Use the Raise Hand feature to request to speak (\*9 on a telephone):

Meeting online link: <https://sunnyvale-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/89619169146>

Meeting call-in telephone number: 833-548-0276 | Meeting ID: 896 1916 9146  
(\*9 to request to speak | \*6 to unmute/mute)

Watch the Human Relations Commission meeting at  
<http://youtube.com/SunnyvaleMeetings>

**Written public comment:**

Email comments to the Human Relations Commission no later than 4 hours before the meeting at [HRC@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:HRC@sunnyvale.ca.gov). You can also mail or deliver comments to:

City Clerk, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

**Public review of items:**

You can view reports to commission on the City's website at [sunnyvale.ca.gov](http://sunnyvale.ca.gov). You can also review reports in person at the City Hall reception desk, 456 W. Olive Avenue, during normal business hours. Any other documents distributed to members of the Human Relations Commission regarding any open session item on this agenda are available in the Redwood Conference Room on the evening of the Commission Meeting. Otherwise, contact Celena Ruiz at 408-730-7904 or [cruiz@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:cruiz@sunnyvale.ca.gov) for questions.

**Planning a presentation for a Human Relations Commission meeting?**

Visit: <http://Sunnyvale.ca.gov/PublicComments>

**Planning to provide materials to the Commission?**

Please provide the Human Relations Commission with 12 copies of your materials.

**Language Access and Translation**

To access written and audio translation during the meeting, click the link below:  
Choose Language and Click Attend  
Use a headset on your phone for audio or read the transcript on your device.

**Spanish and Chinese, Simplified**

*Para acceder a la traducción escrita y en audio durante la reunión, haga clic en el siguiente enlace:*

*Seleccione su idioma y haga clic en "Attend"*

*Use sus auriculares/audifonos para escuchar el audio o leer la transcripción en el dispositivo.*

如需在会议期间使用文字和语音翻译，请点击以下链接：  
选择语言并点击“参加”  
使用手机耳机收听音频，或阅读设备上的文字记录。

**Translation Link: <https://bit.ly/HCQX-0562>**

**Accessibility/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice**

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City will make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. If you need special assistance, please contact the City at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Reach Celena Ruiz at 408-730-7904 or [cruiz@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:cruiz@sunnyvale.ca.gov) (28 CFR 35.160 (b) (1)).

**LEGAL NOTICES**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that if you file a lawsuit challenging any final decision on any public hearing item listed in this agenda, the issues in the lawsuit may be limited to the issues which were raised at the public hearing or presented in writing to the City at or before the public hearing.



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

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**25-1120**

**Agenda Date:** 12/11/2025

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**SUBJECT**

Approve the Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2025

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Human Relations Commission Minutes of November 13, 2025 as submitted.



# City of Sunnyvale

## Meeting Minutes - Draft

### Human Relations Commission

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Thursday, November 13, 2025

7:00 PM

Online and Redwood Conference Room,  
City Hall, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale,  
CA 94086

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#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Zapata called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

#### **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Chair Zapata led the salute to the United States flag.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 6 - Chair Maria Paulina Zapata  
Vice Chair Nenuca Syquia  
Commissioner Claudia Camacho  
Commissioner Aaron Terry  
Commissioner Pedro Valencia Landa  
Commissioner Ariana Ziolkowski

Commissioner Camacho arrived at 7:08 p.m.

Council Liaison Chang (present)

#### **PRESENTATION**

**A**      [25-1029](#)      Alzheimer's Association Organization Mission and Services  
Overview

Daniela Fowler, Community Outreach Specialist, provided a presentation on behalf of Alzheimer's Association. The presentation covered key facts and figures related to Alzheimer's disease in the United States, along with an overview of populations at elevated risk for developing Alzheimer's. The presentation also outlined the distinctions between dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Ten warning signs of Alzheimer's and the importance of early detection were reviewed. The presentation highlighted the Brain Health Recipe, which includes Physical Exercise, Cognitive Exercise, Nutrition, and Health Monitoring. In addition, ten healthy brain habits were discussed, with emphasis on the value of engaging in activities that can be

controlled, rather than uncontrollable factors such as age, sex, or race. The presentation concluded with an overview of available services, including the 24/7 Helpline, free education and support programs, and TrialMatch referrals. Fundraising events such as the Walk to End Alzheimer's and Do What You Love to End ALZ were also highlighted.

The Commission thanked Daniela for the presentation and for raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease and its relevance to the community. The Commission asked several follow-up questions regarding office location, services available to Sunnyvale residents, and the appropriate time to seek testing for Alzheimer's disease. Daniela explained that the home office for the Northern California and Northern Nevada region is located at 2290 N. First Street in San Jose. Additional chapters operate throughout the country, and the Commission was encouraged to use the organization's website to locate nearby offices. They also clarified that the mission of the Alzheimer's Association is to provide education and support to community members. Community members were advised to consult a medical professional if experiencing symptoms or health concerns. Testing can be conducted at any age, although certain factors such as persistent migraines or involvement in sports with frequent head trauma were highlighted as valid reasons to pursue evaluation.

Commissioner Camacho arrived at 7:08 p.m.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Public Comment opened at 7:45 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Comment closed at 7:45 p.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Landa moved and Commissioner Terry seconded the motion to approve agenda item 1.A as submitted.

The motion carried with the following vote:

**Yes: 6 -** Chair Zapata  
Vice Chair Syquia  
Commissioner Camacho  
Commissioner Terry  
Commissioner Valencia Landa  
Commissioner Ziolkowski

**No: 0**

**1.A**     [25-1028](#)     Approve the Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes of October 9, 2025

Approve the Human Relations Commission Minutes of October 9, 2025 as submitted.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2**     [25-0850](#)     Approve 2026 Annual Work Plan

EAI (Equity, Access, & Inclusion) Manager Fernanda Perdomo Arciniegas provided the staff report and noted that updates were made based on the discussion held at the previous meeting. The revised schedule moves the Community Presentation – Leadership Sunnyvale to July and places the NovaWorks presentation in October. In addition, a Community Presentation – Community Leaders has been added to the September 10 meeting.

Public Comment opened at 7:50 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Comment closed at 7:50 p.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Terry moved and Commissioner Landa seconded the motion to approve the Annual Work Plan.

The motion carried with the following vote:

**Yes: 6 -** Chair Zapata  
Vice Chair Syquia  
Commissioner Camacho  
Commissioner Terry  
Commissioner Valencia Landa  
Commissioner Ziolkowski

**No: 0**

**3**      [25-1030](#)      Community Needs Assessment Update

EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas presented the staff report and noted that meetings are occurring twice per month and that few changes have occurred since the last update. EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas reported that discussions regarding the survey sample size are underway, with plans to finalize the sample and provide an update in January. EVITARUS was identified as the third-party firm that will conduct the representative survey. They also stated that informational interviews remain under consideration and that a draft list is currently being reviewed. The Commission was reminded that the contract timeline has been extended from eight months to twelve months.

Vice Chair Syquia requested clarification regarding the budget and asked whether EVITARUS will be responsible for developing a data strategy or conducting a full quantitative analysis. Vice Chair Syquia also emphasized the importance of obtaining a truly representative population, noting concerns about avoiding self-selected responses that do not reflect the broader community. Additional questions were raised about how a representative sample will be ensured and how the data will be analyzed to confirm equitable representation rather than simply maximizing the number of responses. They also asked whether a contingency plan exists in the event the survey results are determined to be non-representative, including the possibility of conducting an additional round of surveying. A request was also made to document non-responses, recognizing that non-response itself carries meaning.

EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas stated that the exact percentage of the budget allocated for this work is not yet confirmed but is expected to be no more than 10 percent. They noted that this component is an additional service included in the contract and is more extensive than conducting focus groups or community conversations alone. They explained that the representative survey is planned for a sample size of 400 registered voters. Consideration is being given to expanding the survey to include all Sunnyvale residents, although this option carries significantly higher costs due to the increased sample size. They also clarified that project communications have been conducted with MIG (Moore, Iacofano Goltsman Inc.), and that EVITARUS is the third-party firm working directly with MIG. Conversations with MIG have confirmed that EVITARUS has successfully completed similar surveys in larger cities, including Los Angeles. They also acknowledged and agreed with Vice Chair Syquia regarding the importance of ensuring a truly representative survey, noting that this priority has been and will continue to be incorporated into

ongoing discussions with MIG and throughout the development of the representative survey.

Public Comment opened at 8:10 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Comment closed at 8:10 p.m.

**4      [25-1041](#)      Discussion and Possible Recommendation of One Priority Project Idea to the City Council**

EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas presented the staff report and reviewed the presentation on submitting one Priority Project Idea to the City Council. They stated that the Council approved the new Council Priority Projects Process Policy 7.3.26, which establishes a more structured method for identifying, prioritizing, and implementing new Council Priority Projects. This policy replaces the former Study Issues Process. The Council also modified Policy 7.2.19 regarding Board and Commission input. They reviewed the timeline for the new Council Priority Projects Process and clarified that each Board and Commission may, by majority vote, advance only one idea for Council consideration. They further clarified that Boards and Commissions will no longer submit a form, nor will staff prepare a staff recommendation. They confirmed that consultants analyzed the former Study Issues Process and found that, although many Study Issues were submitted, very few were ultimately adopted. As a result, the process consumed significant staff and Commission time. To streamline the approach and use resources more effectively, the new process was determined to be the most strategic solution.

They noted that participation by Boards and Commissions is optional. If the Commission chooses to participate, discussion would take place in November, with this year's deadline extended to December. They also reviewed the format of the discussion and walked through the information posted on the City's website. They encouraged Commissioners to attend the Council Priority Projects Workshop in February, during which the Council identifies proposals that move forward for staff analysis. Commissioners were reminded that they may attend as members of the public to advocate for an idea. They also reviewed the email sent by City Manager, Tim Kirby to all Board and Commission members. Finally, they reminded the Commission of the two Study Issues that had previously received a majority vote before the Study Issues Process was replaced.

The Commission took a recess at 8:25 p.m. and resumed at 8:32 p.m. with all Commissioners present.

EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas noted that, because two ideas have already received a majority vote, the Commission could review those ideas and hold a discussion that also allows additional ideas to be presented. To give Commissioners time to consider any new proposals, they suggested placing this item on the agenda again in December.

Chair Zapata asked for clarification regarding whether Commissioners could submit ideas by email and have those ideas added to a list. Staff explained that the previous process involved maintaining a list; however, under the new process, staff will no longer create or add items to such a list. New ideas will instead be introduced and discussed during the Commission meeting.

Commissioner Ziolkowski shared an idea for establishing a rental registry in the City, noting concerns related to renter issues and suggesting that requiring landlords to register rental properties would allow the City to track rent increases over time. They indicated a preference to discuss this idea in greater detail at the December meeting. EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas noted that the concept may fall within Housing-related matters but acknowledged the equity considerations involved. Commissioner Ziolkowski also observed that, because the two previously identified items have already been discussed, it may be more effective to table new ideas to allow Commissioners time to prepare proposals in a more detailed format, such as a written report or presentation. EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas clarified that staff would not be preparing materials but could provide input or answer questions related to existing initiatives to help avoid duplication of efforts. They also stated that they would seek additional clarification regarding the new process. Commissioner Ziolkowski then withdrew the idea, noting that they would conduct further research and consider proposing it the following year.

Commissioner Camacho noted that cultural events could receive additional support from the City. They referenced last year's Ibero-American event, explaining that it was challenging for community members to organize and suggesting that increased City support could encourage more cultural events in the future. EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas explained that the City does provide financial support for cultural events representing Sunnyvale's diverse communities through the Community Grants program. Although the grant funds are limited, they acknowledged the value of supporting new cultural events and the potential community benefit such support could provide.

Commissioner Terry suggested using ranked-choice voting to increase efficiency. EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas explained that, based on their understanding of the new process, the Commission would engage in discussion on each idea and then take a final vote, with each Commissioner casting only one vote. Council Liaison Chang clarified that the goal is for the Commission to move forward one idea. The original expectation was that the Commission would choose between the two previously identified ideas; however, with new ideas now being introduced, the question is whether Commissioners feel prepared to make a decision at the next meeting when comparing newly introduced ideas to those already under consideration.

Commissioner Landa asked whether Commissioners could discuss their ideas under non-agenda items throughout the year. Staff clarified that the discussion is scheduled to take place at the November meeting, as outlined in the Work Plan.

Chair Zapata noted that the City of San Francisco allows non-citizens to vote for school board trustees and asked whether the City could explore a similar idea. EAI Manager Perdomo Arciniegas responded that the City of San José has implemented resident voting and that this idea could be an idea added for consideration.

The Commission agreed that additional time was needed to research their ideas and opted to bring the discussion back at the December meeting. Council Liaison Chang noted that the two items previously on the list were proposed by former Commissioner Rosenfeld, who is no longer serving on the Commission, and therefore would not be able to speak to the details of those proposals.

Public Comment opened at 9:01 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Comment closed at 9:01 p.m.

### **NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS**

#### **-Commissioner Comments**

None.

#### **-Staff Comments**

Council Liaison Chang reminded the Commission about the upcoming Joint meeting of the City Council with Board/Commission Chairs and Vice Chairs on Tuesday, November 18 at 5:30 p.m., which will focus on analyzing and reviewing the overall effectiveness of Commission meetings. They also noted that the City Council will be

making an appointment to fill the vacancy on the Human Relations Commission.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Zapata adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

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**25-1121**

**Agenda Date:** 12/11/2025

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Discussion and Possible Recommendation of One Priority Project Idea to the City Council

Human Relations Commission first discussed this topic at their November 13, 2025 meeting.

**Possible Recommendations of Priority Project Ideas**

- Addressing the Surge of Jew-Hatred in Sunnyvale: A Call for a Community-Centered Study on Safety and Inclusion
- Amend Policy Manual to Include Religious Observances as Excused Absences



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

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**25-1122**

**Agenda Date:** 12/11/2025

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Annual Review of City Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials and Opportunity to Recommend Changes to the City Council



## **City of Sunnyvale**

### **2025 Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials**

*"Conduct is three-fourths of our life and its largest concern."*

*-- Matthew Arnold*

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*For ease of reference in the Code of Ethics and Conduct, the term “Member” refers to any member of the Sunnyvale City Council or the City’s boards and commissions established by the City Charter, City Ordinance or Council policy.*

## Ethics

### Policy Purpose

The Sunnyvale City Council has adopted a Code of Ethics and Conduct for members of the City Council and the City's boards and commissions to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

### A. ETHICS

The citizens and businesses of Sunnyvale are entitled to fair, ethical and accountable local government, which will instill public confidence in the fair operation and integrity of Sunnyvale's City government.. In keeping with the City of Sunnyvale's Commitment to Excellence and the City Council's commitment to the ethical values while representing its residents and community, the effective functioning of democratic government requires that:

- public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government;
- public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
- public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally permitted to be conducted in a closed session under the Ralph M. Brown Act, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.
- Public officials, both elected and appointed, act in a transparent manner to enable the public to obtain information about public official activities and the decision-making process.

To this end, the Sunnyvale City Council has adopted a Code of Ethics and Conduct for members of the City Council and of the City's boards and commissions to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation. The Ethics section of the City's Code of Ethics and Conduct provides guidance on ethical issues and questions of right and wrong.

1. **Act in the Public Interest.** Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of all the people of Sunnyvale and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims and transactions coming before the Sunnyvale City Council, boards and commissions.
2. **Comply with both the spirit and the letter of the Law and City Policy.** Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of California and the City of Sunnyvale in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and California constitutions; the [Sunnyvale City Charter](#); laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government; and City ordinances and policies.
3. **Conduct of Members.** The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, boards and commissions, staff or the public.

## Ethics

4. **Respect for Process.** Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council and board and commissions governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions.
5. **Conduct of Public Meetings.** Members shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers; making personal comments not germane to the business of the body; or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.
6. **Decisions Based on Merit.** Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand, rather than on unrelated considerations.
7. **Communication.** Members shall verbally disclose any contact or receipt of substantive information they have received outside of the public decision-making process that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Council or boards and commissions prior to considering that matter so that all parties have the opportunity to respond to that information.
8. **Conflict of Interest.** In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest, or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In accordance with the law, members shall disclose investments, interests in real property, sources of income, and gifts; and they shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist.
9. **Gifts and Favors.** Members shall not take any special advantage of their public office to access services or opportunities for personal gain that are not available to the general public. They shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits which might compromise or appear to compromise their independence of judgment or action.
10. **Confidential Information.** Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning certain negotiations (e.g., labor and real property), personnel matters, claims and litigation in order to avoid prejudicing the legal or negotiating position of the City or compromise the private interest of employees. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper City Council authorization nor use such information to advance their personal/private, financial, or other interests.
11. **Use of Public Resources.** Members shall not use public resources not available to the general public, such as City staff time, vehicles, equipment, supplies, land or facilities, for private gain or political or personal purposes.
12. **Representation of Private Interests.** In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any board, commission or proceeding of the City, nor shall members of

*For ease of reference in the Code of Ethics and Conduct, the term "Member" refers to any member of the Sunnyvale City Council or the City's boards and commissions established by the City Charter, City Ordinance or Council policy.*

## Ethics

boards and commissions appear before their own bodies or before the Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the subject matter jurisdiction of their bodies.

13. **Advocacy.** Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council, board or commission to the best of their ability when authorized to do so. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City of Sunnyvale, nor will they allow the inference that they do. Councilmembers and board and commission members have the right to endorse candidates for City Council or Mayor or other elected offices. It is inappropriate to mention or display endorsements during Council meetings, board/commission meetings, or other official City meetings or other governmental meetings where the member is serving in their capacity as an appointed official.
14. **Policy Role of Members.** Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of Sunnyvale City government as outlined by the Sunnyvale [City Charter Section 500 \(Form of Government\)](#). In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards and commissions, and City staff. Except as provided by the City Charter, members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff, nor impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.
15. **Independence of boards and commissions.** Because of the value of the independent advice of boards and commissions to the public decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or actions of board and commission proceedings.
16. **Positive Work Place Environment.** Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive workplace environment for City employees and for residents and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall direct their requests of staff pertaining to their elected or appointed role to the appropriate staff liaison or in the case of Councilmembers, to the City Manager.

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## Conduct

### **B. CONDUCT**

This section is designed to describe the manner in which Members should treat one another, City staff, constituents, and others they come into contact with when representing the City of Sunnyvale.

The constant and consistent theme through all of the conduct guidelines is "respect." Members experience huge workloads and tremendous stress in making decisions that could impact thousands of lives. Despite these pressures, Members are called upon to exhibit appropriate and respectful behavior at all times.

#### **1. Elected and Appointed Officials' Conduct with One Another**

Elected and appointed officials have a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Despite this diversity, all have chosen to serve in public office in order to support the community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even though individuals may "agree to disagree" on contentious issues.

##### **1(a). In Public Meetings**

###### *Use formal titles*

Elected and appointed officials should refer to one another formally during public meetings, such as Mayor, Vice Mayor, Councilmember, Chair, Vice Chair, Board Member or Commissioner followed by the individual's last name.

###### *Practice civility and decorum in discussions and debate*

Criticism is an essential component of democracy. This does not however, allow public officials to make belligerent, personal, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments. No shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening will be tolerated.

###### *Honor the role of the chair in maintaining order*

It is the responsibility of the chair to keep members on track during public meetings. Members should honor efforts by the chair to focus discussions on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the chair's actions, members should follow parliamentary procedure to voice their objections politely.

###### *Avoid personal comments that could offend other members*

If a member is personally offended by the remarks of another member, the offended member should note the actual words used and call for a "point of personal privilege" that challenges the other member to justify or retract their language. The chair will maintain control of this discussion.

###### *Demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches*

Members have a public stage to show how individuals with disparate points of view can find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole.

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## Conduct

### *Representing the Body*

Outside of official board or commission meetings, individual board and commission members are not authorized to represent the City or their board or commission unless specifically designated by the Council or their board or commission to do so for a particular purpose. In private settings, board and commission members may communicate at any time and on any subject with individual members of the City Council, and may express to them individual viewpoints and opinions. In public, however, all members shall represent the official policies or positions of their board or commission, with the following exception:

#### **1(b). In Private Encounters**

##### *Continue respectful behavior in private*

The same level of respect and consideration of differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for public discussions should be maintained in private conversations.

##### *Be aware of the insecurity of written notes, voicemail messages, and E-mail*

Technology allows words written or said without much forethought to be distributed wide and far. Would you feel comfortable to have this note posted to Twitter? How would you feel if this voicemail message were uploaded to YouTube? What would happen if this e-mail gets forwarded to others? Written notes, voicemail messages and e-mail should be treated as potentially "public" communication.

##### *Even private conversations can have a public presence*

Public officials are always on display – their actions, mannerisms, and language are monitored by people around them that they may not know. Lunch table conversations will be eavesdropped upon, parking lot debates will be watched, and casual comments between individuals before and after public meetings noted. Cellular phones and other technologies allow for recording of these events with the potential for recorded conversations and actions being shared via social media.

In private, board and commission members may communicate at any time and on any subject with the City Council, and may express to Council individual viewpoints and opinions.

## **2. Elected and Appointed Officials' Conduct with City Staff**

Governance of a City relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy, appointed officials who advise the elected, and City staff who implements and administers the Council's policies. Therefore, every effort should be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

### *Treat all staff as professionals*

Treat city staff with respect. Poor behavior towards staff is not acceptable.

### *Do not disrupt City staff from their jobs*

Public officials should not disrupt City staff while they are in meetings, on the phone, or engrossed in performing their job functions. Do not attend City staff meetings unless requested by staff – even

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if the official does not say anything, his or her presence could intimidate staff and hampers their ability to do their job objectively.

### *Never publicly criticize an individual employee*

Public officials should never express concerns about the performance of a City employee in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee's manager. Comments about staff performance should only be made to the City Manager privately. Comments about staff in the City Attorney's Office should be made directly to the City Attorney. Appointed officials should make their comments regarding staff to the City Manager or the Mayor.

### *Do not get involved in administrative functions*

Public officials must not attempt to influence City staff on the making of appointments, awarding of contracts, selecting of consultants, processing of development applications, or granting of City licenses and permits. [See Code of Ethics] The Sunnyvale [City Charter, Section 807](#), also contains information about the prohibition of Council interference in administrative functions.

### *Check with City staff on correspondence before taking action*

Before sending correspondence, Councilmembers should check with City staff to see if an official City response has already been sent or is in progress. Board and commission members shall not send correspondence except as authorized under the City's policy governing volunteers. ([Council Policy 7.2.19, Boards and Commissions](#))

### *Do not solicit political support from staff*

Public officials should not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from City staff. City staff may, as private citizens with constitutional rights, support political candidates but all such activities must be done away from the workplace and outside of the employee's work hours.

## **3. Elected and Appointed Officials' Conduct with the Public**

### **3(a). In Public Meetings**

Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect should be evident on the part of individual members toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.

*Be welcoming to speakers and treat them with respect and professionalism. While questions of clarification may be asked, the official's primary role during public testimony is to listen.*

*Be fair and equitable in allocating public hearing time to individual speakers.*

The chair will determine and announce limits on speakers at the start of the public hearing process. Questions should *not* be asked for the express purpose of allowing one speaker to evade the time limit imposed on all others (e.g., "Was there something else you wanted to say?"). Generally, each speaker will be allocated three minutes with applicants and appellants or their designated representatives allowed additional time. If many speakers are anticipated, the chair may shorten the time limit and/or

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ask speakers to limit themselves to new information and points of view not already covered by previous speakers.

No speaker will be turned away unless he or she exhibits disruptive behavior. Each speaker may only speak once during the public hearing unless the chair requests additional clarification later in the process. After the close of the public hearing, no more public testimony will be accepted unless the chair reopens the public hearing for a limited and specific purpose.

The purpose of the “oral communications” section of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for members of the public who attend the meeting in person to address the members of the body on items within the body’s subject matter jurisdiction that are not on the agenda. Remote comments (via call in or internet platform) must be allowed during oral communications if a member of the body is participating in the meeting remotely under provisions of the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953(f). Otherwise, the chair may, but is not required to, take remote public comments during oral communications and may determine it would be impractical to include remote public comment during oral communications for the purpose of timeliness of the meeting or conducting an orderly meeting.

### *Give the appearance of active listening*

It is disconcerting to speakers to have members not look at them when they are speaking. Avoid facial expressions that could be interpreted as smirking, disbelief, anger, disrespect, or boredom.

### *Maintain an open mind*

Members of the public deserve an opportunity to influence the thinking of public officials. To express an opinion prior to the close of a public hearing casts doubt on the body’s fairness. This is particularly important when officials are serving in a quasi-judicial capacity.

### *Ask for clarification, but avoid debate and argument with the public*

Only the chair – not individual members – can interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, a member can ask the chair for a point of order if the speaker is off the topic or exhibiting behavior or language the member finds disturbing.

If speakers become flustered or defensive by questions, it is the responsibility of the chair to calm and focus the speaker and to maintain order and decorum. Questions by members to the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker.

### *No personal attacks of any kind, under any circumstance*

Members should also be aware of their body language and tone of voice, as well as the words they use, can appear to be intimidating or aggressive.

### *Follow parliamentary procedure in conducting public meetings*

The City Attorney serves as advisory parliamentarian for the City and is available to answer questions or interpret situations according to parliamentary procedures. The Mayor or Chair, subject to the appeal of the full City Council or board/commission makes final rulings on parliamentary procedure.

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### **3(b). In Unofficial Settings**

*Make no promises on behalf of the Council, board/commission or City*

Members will frequently be asked to explain a Council or board/commission action or to give their opinion about an issue as they talk with community members. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of City policy and to refer to City staff for further information. It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Council or board/commission action, or to promise that City staff will do something specific (fix a pothole, remove a library book, plant new flowers in the median, etc.).

*Make no personal comments about other members*

It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other members, their opinions and actions.

*Remember that despite its impressive population figures, Sunnyvale is a small town at heart*

Members are constantly being observed by the community every day that they serve in office. Their behaviors and comments serve as models for proper deportment in the City of Sunnyvale. Honesty and respect for the dignity of each individual should be reflected in every word and action taken by members, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is a serious and continuous responsibility.

### **4. Elected and Appointed Officials' Conduct Regarding Ex-parte Communications**

Members have the responsibility to hear all viewpoints at a public hearing. Members must always keep an open mind, and not rush to pre-judge any matter, until all concerned parties (including but not limited to applicants, members of the public and staff) are heard during the public hearing. Members must not come to a conclusion on a matter until the public hearing is closed.

One key responsibility involves “ex parte” communications. Ex parte is a Latin phrase that literally means “from one party.” Generally, it is defined as any oral or written communication with a decisionmaker about the subject matter of an upcoming quasi-judicial proceeding, which takes place outside of a noticed hearing that is open to all parties to the matter. An ex parte communication can include sensory information, such as things that are seen or heard during a site visit.

Hearings are “quasi-judicial” when they require the Members to apply general rules and standards to specific factual situations and to reach conclusions that affect the rights or interests of an individual person or entity. Common examples of quasi-judicial matters include decisions to approve or deny specific development projects, permit revocation proceedings, and employee disciplinary matters.

For quasi-judicial agenda matters, a Member must report (disclose) any information that they received outside of the public hearing or staff report, if the information significantly influenced their views of the matter. The disclosure should state the nature of the communication (e.g., whether it was oral, written, or sensory), and should explain the substance of the communication so that other Members, interested parties, and the public will have an opportunity to become apprised of the factors influencing the Member and to attempt to controvert or rebut any such factor during the hearing. Disclosure alone will not be deemed a sufficient basis for a request to continue the hearing.

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An ex parte communication is not grounds to disqualify a Member from participation in a quasi-judicial hearing unless the Member feels that they cannot reach an impartial decision.

### **5. Council Conduct When Serving on Intergovernmental Assignments**

*Be clear about representing the City or personal interests*

When representing the City, the Councilmember must support and advocate the official City position on an issue, not a personal viewpoint. Outside of official board or commission meetings, board and commission members are not authorized to represent the City or their board or commission unless specifically designated by the Council or the board or commission to do so for a particular purpose.

*Correspondence also should be equally clear about representation*

City letterhead may be used when the Councilmember is representing the City and the City's official position. A copy of official correspondence shall be given to the Council Executive Assistant to be filed in the Council Office as part of the public record.

City letterhead shall not be used for non-City business nor for correspondence representing a dissenting point of view from an official Council position.

### **6. Council Conduct with Boards and Commissions**

The City has established several boards and commissions as a means of gathering more community input. Residents who serve on boards and commissions become more involved in government and serve as advisors to the City Council. They are a valuable resource to the City's leadership and should be treated with appreciation and respect.

*If attending a board or commission meeting, be careful to only express personal opinions*

Councilmembers may attend any board or commission meeting, which are always open to any member of the public. Councilmembers are encouraged to attend board or commissions meetings in support of their role as council liaison to a board or commission. However, they should be sensitive to the way their participation could be viewed as unfairly affecting the process—especially if it is on behalf of an individual, business or developer. Any public comments by a Councilmember at a board or commission meeting should be clearly made as individual opinion and not a representation of the feelings of the entire City Council.

*Limit participation to questions of clarification*

It is inappropriate for a Councilmember to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or developer, and vice versa. It is acceptable for Councilmembers to clarify a position taken by the board or commission or City Council.

*Remember that boards and commissions serve the community, not individual Councilmembers*

The City Council appoints individuals to serve on boards and commissions, and it is the responsibility of boards and commissions to follow policy established by the Council. But board and commission members do not report to individual Councilmembers, nor should Councilmembers feel they have the power or right to threaten board and commission members with removal if they disagree about an issue. Appointment and re-appointment to a board or commission should be based on such criteria as

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expertise, ability to work with staff and the public, and commitment to fulfilling official duties. A board or commission appointment should not be used as a political "reward."

### *Be respectful of diverse opinions*

A primary role of boards and commissions is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the City Council with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Councilmembers may have a close working relationship with some individuals serving on boards and commissions, but must be fair and respectful of all individuals serving on boards and commissions.

### *Keep political support away from public forums*

Board and commission members may offer political support to a Councilmember, but not in a public forum while conducting official duties. Conversely, Councilmembers may support board and commission members who are running for elective office, but not in an official forum in their capacity as a Councilmember.

## **7. Elected and Appointed Officials' Conduct with the Media**

Board and commission members are not authorized to represent the City outside of official board/commission meetings unless specifically authorized to do so.

Councilmembers are frequently contacted by the media for background and quotes.

### *The best advice for dealing with the media is to never go "off the record"*

Most members of the media follow journalistic ethics and can be trusted to keep their word. But one bad experience can be catastrophic. Words that are not said cannot be quoted.

### *The Mayor is the official spokesperson for the City on City positions.*

The Mayor is the designated representative of the City Council to present and speak on the official City position. If an individual Councilmember is contacted by the media, the Councilmember should direct the requester to the Mayor. If the Councilmember chooses to engage with the requester, they should be clear about whether their comments represent the official City position or a personal viewpoint.

### *Choose words carefully and cautiously*

Comments taken out of context can cause problems. Be especially cautious about humor, sarcasm, or word play. It is never appropriate to use personal slurs or swear words when talking with the media.

## **C. SANCTIONS**

### *Model of Excellence*

City Councilmembers, board and commission members, and Council appointees who do not sign the Model of Excellence (Appendix A) shall be ineligible for intergovernmental assignments or Council subcommittees.

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### *Ethics Training for Public Officials*

City Councilmembers, board and commission members, and Council appointees who are out of compliance with State- or City-mandated requirements for ethics training shall not represent the City on intergovernmental assignments or Council sub-committees, and may be subject to sanctions.

### *Public Disruption*

Members of the public who do not follow proper conduct after a warning in a public hearing may be barred from further testimony at that meeting or removed from the Council Chambers/meeting room. When taking remote public comments, a single warning may be given at the beginning of the remote comment period stating that speakers who disrupt the meeting by speaking on matters outside of the Council's subject matter jurisdiction or agenda item (as applicable) may be ruled out of order and barred from further testimony without a second warning.

### *Inappropriate Staff Behavior*

Councilmembers should refer to the City Manager for any City staff or to the City Attorney for any City Attorney Office's staff who do not follow proper conduct in their dealings with members, other City staff, or the public. These employees may be disciplined in accordance with standard City procedures for such actions. (Please refer to the section on Council Conduct with City Staff for more details on interaction with Staff.)

### *Members Behavior and Conduct*

The Sunnyvale Code of Ethics and Conduct expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for members of the Sunnyvale City Council, boards and commissions. Members are responsible for adhering to these standards. The chairs of boards and commissions and the Mayor and Council have the additional responsibility to intervene when actions of members that appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct are brought to their attention.

City Councilmembers who intentionally and repeatedly do not follow proper conduct may be reprimanded or formally censured by the Council, lose seniority and/or committee assignments (both internal and inter-governmental) and/or have official travel restricted. Serious infractions could lead to other sanctions as deemed appropriate by Council.

Councilmembers should point out to the offending Councilmember infractions of the Code of Ethics and Conduct. If the offenses continue, then the matter should be referred to the Mayor in private. If the Mayor is the individual whose actions are being challenged, then the matter should be referred to the Vice Mayor.

It is the responsibility of the Mayor to initiate action if a Councilmember's behavior may warrant sanction. If no action is taken by the Mayor, the alleged violation(s) can be brought up with the full Council in a public meeting.

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Glossary of Terms / Implementation

**D. GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>attitude</b>	The manner in which one shows one's dispositions, opinions, and feelings
<b>behavior</b>	External appearance or action; manner of behaving; carriage of oneself
<b>civility</b>	Politeness, consideration, courtesy
<b>conduct</b>	The way one acts; personal behavior
<b>courtesy</b>	Politeness connected with kindness
<b>decorum</b>	Suitable; proper; good taste in behavior
<b>manners</b>	A way of acting; a style, method, or form; the way in which things are done
<b>point of order</b>	An interruption of a meeting to question whether rules or bylaws are being broken, such as the speaker has strayed from the motion currently under consideration
<b>point of personal privilege</b>	A challenge to a speaker to defend or apologize for comments that a fellow member considers offensive
<b>propriety</b>	Conforming to acceptable standards of behavior
<b>protocol</b>	The courtesies that are established as proper and correct
<b>respect</b>	The act of noticing with attention; holding in esteem; courteous regard

**E. IMPLEMENTATION**

As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the City, the Sunnyvale Code of Ethics and Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. For this reason, this document shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for City Council, applicants to board and commissions, and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they read and understood the City of Sunnyvale Code of Ethics and Conduct. In addition, the Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be annually reviewed by the City Council, boards and commissions, and the City Council shall consider recommendations from boards and commissions and update it as necessary.

(Adopted: RTC 08-113 (4/8/08), Update: RTC 09-036 (2/3/09); Updated: RTC 09-047 (2/24/09); Approved with no changes: RTC 10-078 (3/23/10); RTC 11-058 (3/29/11); RTC 12-067 (3/20/2012); Updated: RTC 13-060 (3/19/13); Approved with no changes: RTC 14-0211 (3/18/14); RTC 15-0050 (3/24/15); RTC 16-0360 (4/5/16); RTC 17-0161 (3/28/17); RTC 18-0036 (1/9/18); RTC 19-0185 (2/26/2019); RTC 20-0021 (3/17/20); RTC 21-0383 (3/16/21); RTC 21-0985 (10/26/21); RTC 22-0303(3/1/2022); RTC 23-0238 (2/14/2023); RTC 24-0201 (1/9/2024)); RTC 24-0284 (2/6/2024), RTC 24-0313 (2/27/2024); RTC 25-0094 (2/25/2025))

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager

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APPENDIX A - Model of Excellence Member Statement

**MODEL OF EXCELLENCE**

**Sunnyvale City Council, Boards and Commissions**

**MEMBER STATEMENT**

As a member of the Sunnyvale City Council or of a Sunnyvale board or commission, I agree to uphold the Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials adopted by the City and conduct myself by the following model of excellence. I will:

- Recognize the worth of individual members and appreciate their individual talents, perspectives and contributions;
- Help create an atmosphere of respect and civility where individual members, City staff and the public are free to express their ideas and work to their full potential;
- Conduct my personal and public affairs with honesty, integrity, fairness and respect for others;
- Respect the dignity and privacy of individuals and organizations;
- Keep the common good as my highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit;
- Avoid and discourage conduct which is divisive or harmful to the best interests of Sunnyvale;
- Treat all people with whom I come in contact in the way I wish to be treated;

***I affirm that I have read and understood the City of Sunnyvale Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials.***

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Signature

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Date

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Name

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Office/Meeting Body

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# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

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**25-1123**

**Agenda Date:** 12/11/2025

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Community Needs Assessment Update