

Form Name:
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Boards and Commissions Application
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By: MH

Colin Ford
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Applicant Information

Name	Colin R Ford
Are you a Sunnyvale resident?	Yes
How long have you lived in Sunnyvale?	20+ years
Description Area	Residence Notice:Unless otherwise noted, your principal place of residence must be in Sunnyvale. You must live in Sunnyvale at the time of appointment and at all times during service on a board or commission.
Current Main Residence	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Are you currently a registered voter in Sunnyvale?	Yes
When was the last time you voted? Month/Year	November 2024
Have you ever served on a City of Sunnyvale board or commission?	No
Have you attended a meeting of the City Council, or a board or commission?	No
Have you attended meetings of the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying?	No

Board or Commission Selection

First Choice	Sustainability Commission
Apply for another board or commission? ¹	Yes
Second Choice	Housing and Human Services Commission

Applicant Qualifications

What motivated you to apply for this board or commission?

While growing up in Sunnyvale, I have been deeply passionate about sustainability and affordable housing, which I believe are two of the most urgent and complex challenges the city faces today. My interest in solving these issues led me to a career in public service, where I've seen firsthand how impactful public policy can be when driven by thoughtful, community-centered leadership.

I'm especially interested in serving on the Sustainability and Housing & Human Services Commissions because I want to actively contribute to solutions that are equitable, forward-looking, and grounded in lived experience. Young adults are often underrepresented in civic decision-making, and I feel a strong responsibility to contribute my unique perspective and long-term vision to the Commissions. Sunnyvale is a city that has shaped me, and as a prospective member of the Commissions, I aim to help ensure the city remains a place where people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels can thrive.

What skills or attributes can you bring to this board or commission?

As an Environmental Services Specialist for the City of San José's Integrated Waste Management Division, and through my previous internship with the City of Sunnyvale's Water and Sewer Division, I bring a strong understanding of municipal operations. I'm familiar with the internal processes that support departmental decision-making, including how staff develop and prepare items for review. My direct experience with Sunnyvale's Environmental Services programs also provides valuable context for contributing meaningfully to commission discussions.

In addition to my technical and operational expertise, I bring strong communication and community engagement skills. In my current role with the City of San José, I regularly interact with residents and take pride in listening to community concerns, answering questions, and helping people navigate city services. Serving on a commission would be a natural extension of this work-allowing me to apply my knowledge and experience in support of thoughtful, community-centered policy decisions.

The primary role of a board or commission member is to provide advice to City Council on policy issues that are within the scope of the board or commission. What steps would you take to effectively exercise this specific board or commission role?

To effectively serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council, I would take a proactive and research-driven approach. I already stay up to date on sustainability and environmental policy at both the state and federal levels-something I do regularly through my professional work and personal interest. I would build on this routine by closely monitoring how broader policy trends intersect with Sunnyvale's specific challenges and opportunities.

In this role, I would prioritize three key actions: (1) conduct targeted research and benchmarking on issues relevant to the commission's scope, (2) engage with community stakeholders to better understand local perspectives, and (3) collaborate with fellow commission members to develop thoughtful, well-informed recommendations. My goal would be to ensure that any advice provided to the City Council is timely, practical, and grounded in both a strong policy foundation and a deep understanding of the community's needs.

Education - List college degrees, majors and any relevant training or experience that demonstrates your ability to effectively serve on this board or commission.

I hold dual degrees in Environmental Earth Science and Public Health, along with a minor in Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship from Tulane University. This interdisciplinary background has equipped me with a strong foundation in environmental sustainability, public health, and social equity-core areas that directly align with the missions of both the Sustainability and Housing & Human Services Commissions.

In addition to my academic training, I bring practical experience at both the state and municipal levels. Prior to my current role with the City of San José, I interned with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, a California state agency, as well as the City of Sunnyvale's Environmental Services Department. These roles gave me a strong understanding of how local and regional agencies implement meaningful, community-driven solutions.

Together, these experiences have prepared me to contribute effectively as a commission member by bridging policy expertise, systems thinking, and a deep commitment to equitable and sustainable public service.

Describe your involvement in community activities, volunteer and civic organizations.

I've always enjoyed serving local communities in Sunnyvale and have participated broadly in community service activities throughout my life. I've volunteered with several local organizations, including Village Harvest-where I help pick fruit for food banks-Second Harvest Food Bank, and El Camino Hospital. In college, I co-founded and served as secretary of the Circle K club, a collegiate community service organization. I also served as Vice President of Administration and Finance for my dorm community, where I was responsible for planning and budgeting events for approximately 500 residents. In addition to community service, I've stayed civically engaged by volunteering with the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters as a courier, transporting ballots from vote centers and drop boxes back to the Registrar's office during elections in the past.

Description Area

The City has a Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials and an Attendance Policy (7.2.19), 2 G (II) that appointed members are required to follow.

Do you have any concerns related to the above code and policy?

No

Are you willing to accept a temporary appointment for the remainder of an unexpired term?

Yes

Board or Commission-Specific Questions

Housing and Human Services Commission

Evaluate the quality and adequacy of the housing programs that serve the Sunnyvale community.

Sunnyvale offers a range of housing programs-including the Below Market Rate (BMR) Home Ownership and Affordable Rental Housing programs-that play a critical role in promoting housing stability and fostering a more inclusive community. These programs are especially valuable for moderate-income individuals and families who might otherwise be priced out of the local housing market.

That said, I believe there is room for improvement, particularly in better serving Sunnyvale's lowest-income residents. For instance, I received a City email listing "affordable" rentals for moderate-income applicants, yet a one-bedroom apartment was priced at over \$3,000 per month. While this may be below market rate, it remains out of reach for many, including seniors on fixed incomes, individuals with disabilities, and those in lower-wage jobs.

To more fully address housing insecurity and displacement risk, Sunnyvale would benefit from studying how these programs could be sustainably expanded. Given limited resources, it's essential to explore how other cities are providing deeper affordability across a broader range of income levels. Strengthening partnerships with nonprofit housing developers and increasing investment in extremely low-income housing options could help close this critical gap.

Evaluate the quality and availability of the human services programs that serve the Sunnyvale community.

Sunnyvale offers a range of high-quality and innovative human services programs that play a vital role in supporting community well-being. Programs like using the public library as a cooling and warming center and Dignity on Wheels, which provides free mobile hygiene stations, show the City's creative and compassionate approach to meeting basic needs.

Sunnyvale Community Services (SCS), which I've personally participated in, is another excellent resource. It stands out for its accessibility, the variety of services it offers, and the way those services are interconnected. For example, a resident might begin by accessing temporary housing or rental assistance through Homelessness Prevention Services, receive fresh groceries through SCS, and then transition to job support through NOVAworks. This step-by-step structure allows individuals and families to move forward with the help of a coordinated, wraparound support system.

While these programs are impressive in both scope and design, continued investment and outreach are key to ensuring all residents-especially those most vulnerable-can access the support they need.

Share your thoughts on how the City might better improve housing affordability, prevent displacement and serve our unhoused residents.

To improve housing affordability, prevent displacement, and better serve unhoused residents, the City could explore a combination of policy tools, community partnerships, and targeted investments. One idea worth considering is implementing a vacancy tax, similar to the one enacted in the City of Vancouver in 2017. This type of tax can help discourage property owners from leaving units empty and instead incentivize making them available for rent or sale. It also addresses the growing concern of homes being treated primarily as investment properties rather than livable spaces for residents. In addition to policies like a vacancy tax, the City can expand its efforts in preserving existing affordable housing, increasing funding for deeply affordable and supportive housing developments, and strengthening tenant protections to prevent displacement.

For our unhoused community members, continued investment in wraparound services-including mental health support, case management, and transitional housing-is essential. Collaboration with regional partners and nonprofits will also be key to ensuring a coordinated response that meets individuals where they are and helps them stabilize and thrive.

Description Area	View Unhoused Community Support
Have you read Unhoused Community Support?	Yes
What are your thoughts on Sunnyvale's support for the unhoused community?	<p>Sunnyvale does a lot to support the unhoused community, and the City's efforts are commendable. Programs like Safe Parking (passed in Nov 2024), partnerships with local nonprofits, and access to case management and emergency assistance demonstrate a strong commitment to addressing homelessness with compassion and practical solutions.</p> <p>That said, more support is always needed. Homelessness is a complex and growing issue, and ongoing investment in both short-term services and long-term solutions-such as transitional and permanent supportive housing-is essential. Expanding access or improving integration of existing services such as mental health services, substance use treatment, and employment support can also help individuals regain stability and move forward.</p>
Sustainability Commission	
Category One: I'm a Sunnyvale resident.	Yes

Sustainability is a new and emerging concern in many communities. What do you think are the primary sustainability policy issues this commission will be addressing over the next few years?

One of the primary sustainability policy issues I believe the commission will be addressing in the coming years is transportation and the role of cars in our community. With California's 2035 deadline to phase out the sale of new gas-powered vehicles quickly approaching, cities like Sunnyvale will need to play an active role in supporting this transition. This includes addressing the affordability and accessibility of electric vehicles (EVs) by incentivizing the development of more public charging infrastructure throughout the city.

Additionally, as demand for gasoline declines, it will be important to plan for the future use of existing gas station sites in partnership with business owners, exploring how they might be repurposed in ways that align with the City's sustainability goals.

At the same time, the shift toward remote and hybrid work means fewer residents are commuting daily—a trend that should be encouraged. Reducing reliance on personal vehicles not only cuts emissions but also supports broader sustainability and livability goals. Innovative programs like the Peery Park Rides initiative, which offers free connections to CalTrain and downtown Sunnyvale, have the potential to make car-free commuting a viable option for more residents and could serve as a model for expanding sustainable transportation alternatives citywide.

Description Area

[View the Climate Action Playbook](#)

Have you read the above version of the Climate Action Playbook?

Yes

What are your thoughts on the Playbook? How might the actions ("Plays") be improved?

The Sunnyvale Climate Action Playbook is a strong and comprehensive framework, with a wide variety of "plays" organized under six strategic focus areas. The structured approach and emphasis on measurable, greenhouse gas (GHG)-reducing actions are commendable and necessary for tracking real progress toward climate goals.

That said, there's room for improvement-particularly under Strategy 5: Empowering Our Community. Community empowerment is not a one-time initiative, but an ongoing process that must adapt to new ideas, technologies, and outreach strategies. It's disappointing to see on the Climate Scoreboard that the grassroots community engagement pilot, originally scheduled for FY 24-25, has been delayed. Grassroots efforts have consistently shown strong potential to drive behavior change and strengthen local climate resilience.

While the strategy does mention collaboration with youth groups to empower students, it's unclear whether the City is actively partnering with local school districts. Establishing direct partnerships with teachers and schools could open the door to climate-focused assignments or curriculum-aligned projects that leverage the City's own environmental data. This would not only engage students in meaningful, real-world climate conversations, but also foster a deeper sense of community connection by using data that reflects their own neighborhoods and lived experiences.

Moving forward, I'd like to see a stronger emphasis on innovative, inclusive methods of public engagement-particularly those designed to reach underrepresented and historically underserved communities. Empowering the community means meeting people where they are and making climate action accessible, relevant, and collaborative.

Additionally, while it's important that the Playbook focuses on measurable actions tied directly to GHG emissions, I believe there's also value in supporting initiatives that contribute indirectly to climate resilience. For example, incorporating cool pavements in road repaving and encouraging reflective materials in new construction can help mitigate the urban heat island effect and reduce demand for air conditioning. This idea is included in Appendix B's Ideas Roster under Strategy 4, but it hasn't been integrated into the main Playbook. Piloting efforts like this-even if outcomes are harder to quantify in the short term-can contribute meaningfully to long-term adaptation and community well-being.

Fair Political Practices Commission Statement of Economic Interests

Description Area

If you are appointed to the Arts Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Human Services Commission or the Planning Commission, you must electronically file the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), which will be a public record. Statement of Economic Interests - Form 700 Understanding of Filing Requirement I understand and agree that if I'm appointed to the Arts Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Human Services Commission or Planning Commission I must electronically file the Fair Political Practices Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700). This form reports my economic interests and those of my spouse or domestic partner, if applicable. I understand this will be a public record.

Radio Button

Yes

Demographic Information

Your age

Your gender

Description Area

LGBTQIA+ Identity

Race or Ethnicity (select all that apply)

Do you speak a language other than English?

Household Income

Residence - Are you a

Short Answer

Do you live in a

Your Agreement

Description Area

IMPORTANT NOTICE – READ BEFORE SIGNING:By selecting both “Yes” and “Submit Form” below I am adding my digital signature to this application. I am also agreeing with the following statements:All statements I have made on this application are true and correct.I authorize the City of Sunnyvale (City) to investigate the accuracy of this information.I release the City from all claims and liabilities arising from such investigation.I acknowledge that any false statement on this application will be grounds for the City to deny my appointment. A false statement discovered later, will be grounds to dismiss me from my appointment at any time.I acknowledge that any false statement on this application could lead to criminal charges. Charges could fall under California Penal Code, Section 115 or other applicable law.

I agree

Yes

Your full name

Colin Ford

Date

Apr 23, 2025
