

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

Policy 7.4.12 Council Appointments to Intergovernmental Agencies, Council Subcommittees, and Council or Mayor-Created Task Forces

POLICY PURPOSE:

This policy provides clarity around the appointment of Councilmembers and non-Councilmembers to intergovernmental (IGR) assignments, including appointment criteria, appointment process, and term length. The policy also addresses Council subcommittees and task forces.

POLICY STATEMENT:

I. City Councilmember Appointments to Intergovernmental Agencies

- The City Council appoints members to a variety of intergovernmental agencies in order to represent the City's interests and to influence policies and regulations of other agencies.

In general, appointments are governed by the following principles:

- A. For those IGR assignments where the City's representative serves at the discretion of the Council, the City Council will nominate members to fill vacancies on IGR bodies as part of a noticed agenda item at a regular meeting.
- B. For appointments made by outside bodies (for example, the Cities Association or the League of California Cities), the City Council must ratify the appointment of a Councilmember as part of a noticed agenda item at a regular meeting. No further Council ratification is needed for subcommittee appointments if the appointing committee assignment has already been ratified by Council.
- C. The term of office for the Sunnyvale representative shall be in accordance with the by-laws of the intergovernmental agency to which they were appointed. For agencies with no defined terms, the appointments shall be made annually in January. Notwithstanding, in all cases, Councilmember assignments and appointments shall terminate automatically when a Councilmember leaves office, effective upon the Councilmember's last day of service.
- D. In the event a vacancy occurs during a term, the Council will select a member to serve the remainder of that term as part of a noticed agenda at a regular meeting. Councilmembers shall notify the City Manager of any changes to IGR assignments.
- E. Council shall appoint a member to serve as an alternate to IGR bodies at the request of the agency or when the nature of the assignment requires a representative always be present.

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

- F. Staff support is provided to Councilmembers serving on IGR bodies as directed by the City Manager and in accordance with this Policy.
- G. When representing the City on an intergovernmental committee, Councilmembers must vote in accordance with the official City position on an issue, regardless of the Councilmember's individual position.
- H. City Council Appointment of a Non-Councilmember to an IGR Assignment

The City Council may, on occasion, appoint a non-Councilmember to represent the City's interest on an intergovernmental body. These appointments must be made as part of a noticed agenda item at a regular meeting. In those circumstances:

- 1. Staff support is not provided to non-Councilmembers who serve on an intergovernmental body, although a staff member liaison will be designated by the City Manager.
- 2. Non-Councilmembers serving on intergovernmental bodies shall provide a summary written report to the entire City Council and the City Manager after each intergovernmental agency meeting they attend.

II. Mayoral Appointments to Intergovernmental Agencies

The Mayor appoints members to a variety of intergovernmental agencies in order to represent the City's interests and to influence policies and regulations of other agencies.

In general, appointments are governed by the following principles:

- A. The Mayor may appoint himself.
- B. For those IGR assignments where the City's representative serves at the discretion of the Mayor, the Mayor will appoint members to fill vacancies on IGR bodies.
- C. Mayoral appointments include appointments to the US Conference of Mayors' Policy Committees; Cities Association of Santa Clara County's Board of Directors, City Selection Committee, and Legislative Action Committee; Sourcewise (formerly the Advisory Council to the Council on Aging); and Council voting delegates and alternates for annual League of California Cities and National League of Cities conferences.
- D. As vacancies occur to the Mayoral appointment to Sourcewise, the Mayor may direct staff to recommend individuals for consideration.

III. Council Subcommittees

The City Council and/or Mayor may establish Council subcommittees as stated below. Subcommittees usually comprise less than a quorum of the Council and are generally used to provide more detailed review and analysis of complex issues. Subcommittees make

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

recommendations to the Council but cannot take formal action on behalf of the Council.

For purposes of the State's open meeting law (the "Brown Act") there are two types of council subcommittees: standing committees and ad hoc advisory committees. Under the Brown Act, "standing committees of a legislative body, irrespective of their composition, which have a continuing subject matter jurisdiction, or a meeting schedule fixed by charter, ordinance, resolution, or formal action of a legislative body" are subject to all open meeting requirements.

Ad hoc advisory committees are composed of less than a quorum of the Council and are created for a limited time for a particular purpose. Under the Brown Act, ad hoc committees are not required to comply with open meeting requirements.

A. Standing Committees

1. All Council standing committees shall be established by the Council and the membership will be appointed by Council.
2. Standing committees exist, with the set membership, unless and until modified by the Council.
3. Standing committees shall select their own chair. If the committee is unable to select a chair, or if the timing requires immediate action, the Council will appoint the chair.
4. Standing committees are subject to open meeting requirements. Any action to create or modify the committee must be placed as an item on the Council agenda.

B. Ad Hoc Advisory Committees

1. The Mayor may create ad hoc committees of the Council to assist in particular matters as they arise. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the Mayor. Council may request the creation of an ad hoc committee through the Mayor.
2. Ad hoc committees have a fixed, limited assignment.
3. No more than three Councilmembers may serve on an ad hoc committee. Ad hoc committee meetings are not subject to open meeting requirements, unless the Mayor directs otherwise when they are formed. The findings and recommendations of the ad hoc committee must be presented to the entire Council at a noticed meeting.
4. Any action to create or modify the committee must be placed as an item on the Council agenda.

IV. Community Member Advisory Task Forces

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

There are two types of community member advisory task forces – those that are created by action of the Mayor, and those that are created by the Council.

A. Mayor Created Task Forces

From time to time the Mayor may wish to establish advisory task forces of members of the public, or so-called “blue ribbon panels,” to address specific issues of the day. The task force may be composed solely of community members, but may also include Councilmembers. The Mayor may create an advisory task force at his or her discretion. So long as there are only two Councilmembers included on the task force, they are not considered “legislative bodies” within the meaning of the Brown Act and do not need to comply with open meeting requirements. (This of course does not preclude the task force from holding open and publicly noticed meetings, it simply does not require it.)

Basic principles governing these task forces are:

1. Members are appointed by the Mayor, and may include both Councilmembers (no more than two) and non-Councilmembers.
2. The advisory task force presents its findings and recommendations to the Mayor; at their discretion the Mayor may or may not direct that the findings and recommendations be brought forward to the Council. Any action resulting from advisory task force recommendations must be directed and approved by the Council at a noticed meeting.
3. An advisory task force exists until its work is concluded or it is terminated by the Mayor; in all cases the term is limited to the term of the appointing Mayor.
4. A task force chair shall be selected by the task force unless the Mayor directly appoints a person to serve as chair.

B. Council Created Task Forces

The City Council may take action to create a temporary, community member task force to consider and advise on defined issues or topics. These commissions, created by formal action of the Council, are considered “legislative bodies” for purposes of the Brown Act, and must comply with open meeting requirements.

The following applies to these task forces:

1. Members of the task force are appointed by the Council, or Council’s designee, and may include Councilmembers (no more than three). Any action creating such a task force must be taken at a noticed meeting. The Council may choose and utilize relevant criteria for making such appointments.
2. The findings and recommendations of the task force shall be brought forward to the Council at a noticed meeting; likewise, any action resulting from the task force recommendations must be directed and approved by Council at a noticed

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

meeting.

3. The task force exists until it accomplishes its mission or is otherwise terminated by the Council.
4. The task force chair shall be selected by the task force unless the Council directly appoints a person to serve as chair.

V. Staff Support to IGR Assignments

Staff assistance shall be provided to Councilmembers serving on intergovernmental bodies when the Council has approved the appointments of a member to that body, or in the case when the Council is not the approving body, if the Council has consented to that member sitting on that body. Unless officially approved by the Council, no staff support shall be provided once a Councilmember leaves City office. The City's Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Program is coordinated within the Office of the City Manager. The Office of the City Manager is responsible for assisting Council with applications for IGR committees, determining levels of staff support, presenting Reports to Council to ratify IGR appointments, and maintaining the Council IGR committee database.

For purposes of this policy, intergovernmental bodies are broadly defined to include committees of intergovernmental agencies or organizations. Staff support shall be consistent with the following guidelines:

- A. Assignments will be made by the City Manager.
- B. If the intergovernmental body has its own professional staff, such staff should be utilized to the greatest practical extent, rather than City staff.
- C. Assigned staff shall meet with newly assigned Councilmembers regarding the expected level of support.
- D. Staff shall request that the Councilmember be placed on the committee's email/mailling list to receive all required information.
- E. Assigned City staff shall not attend the intergovernmental meeting unless the Councilmember requests such attendance from the City Manager, and the Manager approves.
- F. The primary responsibility of assigned staff is to review issues before the intergovernmental body as they may affect the City, and to advise and assist the Councilmember in presenting issues before the full Council. Staff is encouraged to communicate with Council in writing to avoid miscommunication. IGR information provided to Council shall be consistent with adopted City policies (consider General Plan Sub-elements, adopted legislative advocacy positions, or past Council practice).
- G. In the absence of adopted policy, staff should determine whether the issue is

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

significant enough to warrant a Council adopted position. If so, the City Manager should be notified in a timely manner so that the issue can be placed on a Council agenda.

- H. Councilmembers shall not direct staff to conduct major research. Major research shall occur only upon the direction of the City Manager.
- I. As directed by the City Manager, assigned staff may prepare formal IGR correspondence on behalf of Councilmembers only on issues arising from a Councilmember's IGR committee assignment. Always copy the originating Department Director, and City Manager on all IGR-related correspondence (see Council Policy 7.4.1 "Provision of Staff/Administrative Support to Councilmembers" Section V.A).
- J. Council may provide updates on their IGR assignments during the Council Updates on Intergovernmental Activities section of the Council agenda.
- K. Legislative Briefings. Staff prepares talking points for Councilmembers attending conferences and meetings as directed by the City Manager. Such talking points include up-to-date information on the issues at hand. When the subject is to be discussed with specific legislators, their position (if known on the matter) should be included in the report.

VI. Implementation.

The City Manager shall monitor those provisions of this policy within the City Manager's Charter responsibilities. Disagreement in interpretation shall be resolved by the City Council. The City Manager shall institute administrative policy to implement this policy. At the time a new Councilmember is seated, the Mayor and City Manager should review this policy with him/her.

Annually, the City Manager shall review the resource requirements necessary to support the level of service specified in this policy, and recommend as a part of the proposed budget necessary changes of budget resources.

(Adopted: RTC 81-602 (10/6/1981); Amended: [No RTC] (6/21/1994); [No RTC, Budget workshop] (5/20/1997); Amended by RTC 05-163 (6/7/2005); Amended: [No RTC] (4/19/2006); Amended: RTC 08-089 (4/1/2008); Amended: RTC 09-001 (1/6/2009); Amended: RTC 12-006 (1/10/2012); Updated for clarity (8/21/12); Clerical update (1/25/2013); Adopted: Council Policy Update, RTC 14-0061 11/25/2014) ; Amended RTC 25-0912 (11/18/2025))

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager

For Reference, see also: 7.4.14 Legislative Advocacy Positions; 7.4.15 Council Advocacy