

City of Sunnyvale
2025 Charter Review Committee
Final Report and Recommendations

December 4, 2025



Sunnyvale

2025 Charter Review Committee Final Report and Recommendations

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I. Introduction

Background

On November 28, 2023, the City Council discussed a **Colleagues Memorandum (RTC 23-1070, Attachment 1)** proposing several changes to the City's charter. The Council placed three of the proposed changes on the November 5, 2024, ballot (Measure F):

1. Replacing gendered references throughout the charter with gender-neutral language;
2. Requiring twenty-four regular Council meetings per year versus two per month for greater scheduling flexibility; and
3. Eliminating the voter registration and citizenship requirements for all boards and commissions

Voters did not approve the proposed amendments.

One item addressed in the Colleague Memorandum was implemented by amending City Council Policy 7.3.4, Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers, to add language communicating that Sunnyvale Councilmembers represent the entire City and encouraging Councilmembers to make decisions that are in the interests of the entire community.

On June 4, 2024, (Resolution 1239-24; RTC 24-0030) the City Council voted to form a Charter Review Committee to review the entire charter for potential updates, including the remaining issues identified in the Colleagues Memorandum:

- Allowing Councilmembers appointed to fill vacancies to serve until the next feasible November general election, as opposed to the next feasible
- Examining City Council salary and compensation (including compensation for the Mayor and family, medical, and military leave for Councilmembers)
- Evaluating whether to adopt an alternative voting system, such as ranked-choice or approval voting, or retain the existing first-past-the-post system for districts and mayoral elections
- Establishing rules for empaneling Redistricting Commissions

Charter Review Committee ("CRC") Members and Staffing

The Council established a CRC composed of eleven members. The Council appointed members on December 3, 2024, following a public application and interview process. A minimum of one member was required from each Council District, all members were required to be Sunnyvale residents, and a minimum of six members were required to be registered voters in Sunnyvale. The CRC members are:

Barry Vickrey (District 3)

David Newswanger (District 1)

Gail Rubino (District 6)

Galen Davis (District 3)

Gustav Larsson (District 2)

Kathryn Filley (District 1)

Ken Olevson (District 3)

Kristel Wickham (District 2)

Martin Pyne (District 5)

Timothy Oey (District 1)

Paulette Saldanha (resigned effective Feb. 20, 2025, seat remained vacant)

Gustav Larsson served as chair and Kristel Wickham served as vice chair.

Deputy City Manager Connie Verceles, Senior Assistant City Attorney Melissa Tronquet, Deputy City Clerk Sandra Barajas, and City Clerk David Carnahan staffed the committee.

Meetings

The CRC held sixteen public meetings between February and December 2025, with the goal of providing a final report to the City Council in early 2026, in time for the Council to consider the recommendations, pursue polling, and make decisions about issues to place on the November 2026 ballot. Changes to the charter must be submitted to City voters for approval and require a majority vote to pass.

Public Outreach

The sixteen public meetings were agendized and held in accordance with the Brown Act and included ample opportunity for public comment. Two members of the public attended every meeting and provided detailed comments and analysis. Staff maintained a CRC webpage on the City's website that was regularly updated with information about the CRC's work. In addition, the CRC developed a community survey on three issues: how City Council vacancies are filled, how much the City Council and the Mayor are paid, and the City Manager's authority to settle legal claims. The survey was posted on Sunnyvale Open City Hall between October 6 and 20, 2025, and received 302 responses. The CRC discussed the survey results on October 23, 2025 (**Attachment 2**; RTC 25-2018).

CRC Review Process

The CRC held its first meeting on February 6, 2025, and completed a section-by-section review of the charter at its February 27, March 6, and April 3 meetings. The review resulted in **a list of 23 potential Charter amendments (Attachment 3)**.

Recognizing that the list of potential amendments required narrowing in order to complete review and analysis within the Council's timeframe for the CRC, and because the number of measures the City could reasonably place on the ballot is limited, the Committee **dropped certain items (Attachment 4)**, and **prioritized the remaining potential amendments (Attachment 5)** at its May 1 meeting:

On June 3, 2025, City Council held a joint meeting with the CRC (RTC No. 25-0212), reviewed the CRC's list of potential amendments, and directed the CRC to study the following issues:

1. **Charter Section 605 (Compensation)**: Increase City Council salaries and compensation, including for the Mayor, without modifying the role of the Mayor.
2. **Charter Section 606 (Vacancies)**: Modify the current rule that councilmembers appointed to fill a vacancy serve until the next general municipal or consolidated statewide election to the next feasible November general election.
3. **Charter Section 611 (Regular Meetings)**: Change the Charter provision that requires two Council meetings per month to instead require at least twenty-four meetings per year.
4. **Charter Article 8 (City Manager)**: Add a provision to allow the City Manager to settle claims against the City in an amount greater than \$50,000.
5. **Charter Section 1309 (Contracts on Public Works)**: Amend the Charter to allow other project delivery methods besides design-bid-build (lowest responsible bidder after notice of publications for bids).

The CRC's subsequent work focused on research and analysis of options for charter revisions related to these five topics, recommendations to the council on whether to amend the charter in these areas, and the content of proposed charter amendments.

II. Summary of CRC Recommendations

The CRC discussed each of the five potential Charter amendments during its October and November 2025 meetings. After review and analysis of each issue, the CRC reached the following recommendations, which are discussed in detail in the analysis section below:

1. **City Council and Mayor Compensation (Charter Section 605):** Increase salaries to \$6,000.00 per month for City councilmembers and \$9,000.00 per month for the mayor, and retain the existing annual increase. The CRC further recommends that the Council conduct and analyze polling prior to placing a measure on the ballot and if warranted by polling results, decrease the proposed salary amounts.
2. **City Council Vacancies (Charter Section 606):** Modify the current rule that councilmembers appointed to fill a vacancy serve until the next general municipal or consolidated statewide election to the next feasible November general election.
3. **City Council Meeting Schedule (Charter Section 611):** Do not amend the Charter related to City Council meetings.
4. **City Manager Authority to Settle Claims (Charter Section 1314):** Amend the Charter to allow the City Manager to settle claims against the City in an amount greater than \$50,000, and provide that the amount be set by ordinance adopted by the Council to establish a specific limit. Concurrently with placing this measure on the ballot, adopt an ordinance setting the City Manager's settlement authority at [to be added based on CRC determination at 12/4/2025 meeting], to be effective if voters adopt this measure.
5. **Public Works Contracting (Charter Section 1309):** Amend the Charter to allow other public works project delivery methods permitted by state law in addition to the existing method of design-bid-build (lowest responsible bidder after notice of publications for bids).

Attachment 6 contains a summary of the CRC's recommended changes to Charter Sections 605, 606, 1314, and 1309.

III. CRC Analysis

1. City Council and Mayor Compensation (Charter Section 605)

A. Introduction

The compensation of elected officials has long been a subject of civic debate, balancing the need to attract qualified candidates with concerns about appropriate use of public funds. In Sunnyvale, this discussion takes on particular significance given the City's unique position as a charter city operating independently across a comprehensive range of services that many neighboring communities contract out or rely on county government to provide.

The City's current compensation structure for the mayor and city councilmembers was established through Measure B in 2011, which tied salary increases to inflation with a 5% annual cap. While this system provided predictability and transparency, it did not account for the broader economic changes that have transformed Sunnyvale since then. The gap between council

compensation and the economic reality faced by Sunnyvale residents has widened considerably, raising questions about whether the current structure adequately serves the community's interests.

This analysis examines the evolution of council compensation, the scope of responsibilities required of elected officials in a full-service city, and the practical implications of compensation levels on governance. The workload of Sunnyvale's elected officials extends far beyond attending public meetings, encompassing extensive preparation, intergovernmental responsibilities, and community engagement that together constitute a substantial time commitment.

Drawing on data from the American Community Survey and community input gathered through public surveys, this document presents the CRC's recommendations to ensure that compensation remains appropriate and aligned with the economic conditions in Sunnyvale while maintaining public trust and fiscal responsibility.

B. Background

The last time compensation language in Section 605 of the Sunnyvale City charter was modified was 2011 with Measure B. This measure tied the rate of council salary increase to official inflation measures and capped increases at 5%. The actual ballot measure states that salaries were set in 1992 and increased 5% annually. State requirements for general law city salaries were used in 1992.

Perhaps in 1992, the scope of Sunnyvale government was similar to a general law city. That is not the case in 2025. The neighboring general law city to the south is dependent on the county or private companies for garbage services, library services, law enforcement, fire protection, and wastewater services. Meanwhile, the City of Sunnyvale is independent in all these areas and its transfer station also serves Mountain View and its wastewater treatment plant also covers part of Cupertino.

C. Current Charter Language

Charter Section 605 currently sets monthly city council and mayoral salaries at \$2,088.64 and \$2,784.86, effective in 2012. Annual increases tied to inflation are automatically applied with a cap of 5%. In 2025, after automatic increases, city council and mayoral monthly salaries are \$3,113.88 and \$4,151.84. The imputed rate of increase from these figures is 2.2%. Meanwhile, average full-time wages in Sunnyvale during the same time period have increased roughly 4.4% annually, or twice the rate that council salaries have increased.

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

This topic generated considerable discussion and public comment during CRC meetings. The CRC believes that service on city council should not be an act of charity. The city council and mayoral

service is worthy of more than token compensation and the CRC is unanimous in preferring a data-driven determination of appropriate compensation.

Table S2001 of both the 1- and 5-year American Community Surveys, published by the Census Bureau, include statistics for both mean and median earnings for full time workers in Sunnyvale. The CRC prefers the median to the mean. The mean can be skewed by a few very large or very small figures, especially very large figures. For example, the average of one person earning \$400,000 per year, a not unusual number in Sunnyvale, and four \$30,000 earners would be \$104,000 while the median would be \$30,000.

The following table shows ACS figures for both mean and median earnings for full-time workers over age 16:

	2024 1-Year ACS	2023 1-Year ACS	2023 5-Year ACS
Median (S2001_C01_013E)	\$136,857	\$151,093	\$142,721
Median Standard Error (S2001_C01_013M)	\$14,434	\$11,863	\$4,259
Mean (S2001_C01_14E)	\$181,522	\$181,568	\$175,793
Mean Standard Error (S2001_C01_14M)	\$10,762	\$9,986	\$4,706

The 1-Year ACS figures, largely due to smaller sample sizes, will always have relatively large standard errors. The 5-Year ACS is generally a more stable dataset and preferable for decision making. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that the federal government has been inconsistent on ACS publication dates. This is especially true with federal government shutdowns.

When considering the workload of a city councilmember, Chair Larsson's experience as a city councilmember has been highly instructive. He looked at his calendars from the past and estimated that an average week entailed eight to ten meetings related to his council duties. This meeting volume is similar to a slightly heavy day for a manager in tech. However, government meetings, even unofficial ones, typically last at least three times as long as business meetings. Consequently, just the meeting time in a week for a city councilmember is similar to half of a work week for a tech manager.

Preparation and review time for a city councilmember is similarly heavy. The amount of material a city councilmember must review often runs over 1000 pages per council meeting. Most city councilmembers also have intergovernmental appointments. The meetings of these organizations are less frequent, but have similar document loads to city council meetings. The CRC did not attempt to quantify this time. It is clear that to do a minimally competent job on city council, a member will average at least twenty hours per week. The CRC is compelled to point out that Sunnyvale has generally not had the problem of our councilmembers showing up to meetings unprepared.

All that has been written about city councilmembers also applies to the mayor, but more so. Meeting and event volume is higher. There are more intergovernmental obligations. The ceremonial and publicity requirements are much higher. These are minimal requirements. It is almost certainly true that most Sunnyvale voters want the mayor to do more than the minimum. It is the CRC's view that most Sunnyvale voters want an active mayor who is energetic in advocating for and publicizing the City. For these reasons, the CRC has concluded that the salary premium for the mayor over city councilmembers should increase from 33% to 50%.

The online survey conducted by the City asked a number of questions related to this issue. The CRC understands fully that online surveys are best used only for directional purposes. As another CRC member described, it's best considered as a large collection of public comment. The sampling skew for such a survey is just too large for it to be used as a prescriptive tool.

Considering the limitations of the survey, there are still interesting data points to consider. First, there is broad support for increasing council and mayoral salaries. Next, most respondents were more comfortable with tying increases to inflation rather than another statistical figure. Furthermore, many responses specifically called out that city councilmembers should be compensated at a level that would allow them time to do the job well. Finally, 50% and 75% of median full-time wages in Sunnyvale are within the wage bands that garnered significant support on the survey. These results signaled to the CRC that its work and conclusions are neither radical nor extreme.

E. Recommendation

The CRC recommendation is to explore a ballot measure that would effect the following changes in the City charter:

- Councilmember and mayoral monthly wages are to be \$6,000 (\$72,000 annually) and \$9,000 (\$108,000 annually.) These are slightly higher than 50 and 75% of the median wages as published in the 2023 5-Year American Community Survey. However, that data is now two years old and median wages are very likely higher.
- The effective date of the wage change would be 1 January 2027.

- Leave the language tying annual increases to inflation unchanged.

The proposed revisions to Charter Section 605 to implement this recommendation are as follows:

§ 605 Compensation.

In addition to reimbursement for necessary traveling and other expenses actually incurred when on official duty in or out of the City on order of the City Council, commencing January 1, 2012, each member of the City Council shall receive as salary \$2,088.64 per month, and the Mayor shall receive as salary \$2,784.86 per month. Commencing January 1, 2027, each member of the City Council shall receive as salary \$6,000.00 per month, and the Mayor shall receive as salary \$9,000.00 per month.

In order to provide a cost of living adjustment, commencing on January 1, 2013, and annually on January 1 thereafter, the compensation of the Council and Mayor shall increase by a percentage equal to the percentage increase in the preceding October's twelve-month rolling average of the Consumer Price Index-Urban(CPI-U), or successor index, for San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, as determined by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Consumers. In no event shall the CPIU compensation adjustment exceed five percent per year, or result in a compensation decrease. The CPI-U base index year shall be calendar year 2012.

If a member of the City Council does not attend all meetings of the City Council called on order of the City Council and held during the month, his/her salary for such month shall be reduced by the sum equivalent to twenty percent of the month's salary for each meeting not attended unless he/she is absent on official duty with the consent of or on order of the City Council or is granted an excused absence by the City Council, or unless he/she is on personal leave. A member of the City Council shall be permitted four personal leave days per calendar year.

The CRC further recommends that city council consider councilmember compensation changes prior to placing a measure on the ballot with the following process:

- Commission professional polling to gauge public opinion on the charter changes as described later.
- Accept the polling report and deliberate on the meanings of the data.

- Consider changing the proposed ballot measure only if the changes lower the suggested wages. The CRC expects that it would be unseemly for council to be debating an increase in compensation above the recommendation.
- Make a determination as to the placement of a ballot measure.

F. CRC Vote and Conclusion Regarding City Council and Mayor Compensation

The CRC, by a vote of **[vote to be filled in after discussion at CRC meeting]**, approved the recommendation on this issue. The CRC concluded that the proposed changes fairly consider public opinion, the economic realities of Sunnyvale, and the workload associated with serving as mayor or councilmember.

2. City Council Vacancies (Charter Section 606)

The CRC considered three issues related to Charter Section 606 (City Council Vacancies):

1. If a vacancy is filled by appointment, at what election should a successor for the position be elected?
2. How many Councilmembers may serve by appointment at any one time?
3. Whether the duration of appointments should be limited?

Issue 1: If a vacancy is filled by appointment, at what election must a successor for the position be elected

A. Introduction

The City Charter currently requires that appointees to vacant City Council seats be replaced at the time of the next state election. The next state election could be a primary election taking place shortly before the end of the vacant term. This might be followed in five to eight months by a general election during which the seat would be filled again for the next term. This could cause an awkward transition with a loss of efficiency as well as increased cost. The City Council directed the CRC to study this issue and recommend a possible remedy.

The CRC recommends that appointments be filled at the next regularly scheduled statewide general election rather than at the next primary election.

B. Background

In 2018 a previous Charter Review Committee fully studied the process of filling vacancies on the City Council. A resulting new Section 606 of the City Charter was approved by 71% of the voters.

C. Current Charter Language

Currently the charter requires that an appointee be replaced by election at the next general or special municipal election consolidated with the next statewide election. The 2018 CRC chose this

option because it was a balance between democratic principles and reasonable cost when compared to stand-alone special elections.

There are some disadvantages of the current Charter language. An election for a council seat might be held twice in rapid succession – either March and November or June and November of the same year. That would occur if an appointee was replaced during a primary election, then the same district held a regular election for the next full term of the same seat in the November general election. As a result:

1. The City would incur the cost of two elections, which are expensive
2. A candidate might have to run two expensive campaigns
3. The winner of the first election would serve a very short term: eight or five months depending on whether the primary election was in March or June.
4. The first election during the primary would likely have lower voter turnout, in which case the winner of the first election might not represent the consensus of the district's entire voting population and yet that first winner would have an incumbency advantage in the next election.

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

The CRC used the following table to assist in evaluating these variables:

Special Election Option	Cost for City	Cost for Candidates	Voter Turnout	Appointment Required	Appointment Duration
Consolidated with a November even-year election (general election)	Lowest Cost	Lowest cost	Highest voter turnout (~60%)	Most likely	Longest (5-8 months longer than a March or June election)
Consolidated with a March or June even-year election (primary election)	Intermediate, highly variable cost depending on whether two elections are required in one year	Depends on whether two elections are required in one year	Higher voter turnout (~40%)	More Likely	Longer
Standalone special election	Highest Cost	Depends on whether the candidate completes a partial or whole term	Lowest voter turnout (~25%)	Least Likely	Shortest

The CRC used information from staff to estimate the cost of various types of elections. (Exhibit 2). Predicting exact costs of elections is not possible because there are many variables. Even so, it is likely that costs of holding special municipal elections held without consolidation, and even special municipal elections consolidated with primary elections, can be much higher than holding elections during a general election in November.

There are several advantages to using only November elections for the replacement of appointees:

1. This eliminates the possibility of holding two elections for the same seat in rapid succession, with these benefits:
 - a. Much less cost for the City
 - i. Only one election
 - ii. A general election is less expensive than a primary election
 - b. Much less cost for candidates
 - c. Much higher voter turnout at the general election results in the winner better representing the will of the entire voting population
2. This eliminates the inefficiency caused by turnover if there is a short-tenured elected councilmember.

There are some disadvantages of using only November elections for the replacement of appointees:

1. Appointments would be more likely because of the longer time of the vacancy before the November election
2. Appointments would be longer
 - a. 8 months longer if the next primary is in March
 - b. 5 months longer if the next primary is in June
3. Appointed and thus unelected Councilmembers may reflect the views of the other Councilmembers more than the views of their constituents.

The CRC considered a hybrid option in which the primary election would be used to replace appointees if the next primary election would not require two elections for the same seat in the same year (i.e. if it is more than two years before the seat's term ends). The advantages of replacing an appointee during a primary election are: (1) a reduced chance of needing an appointment, and (2) a reduction in the time of the appointment by five or eight months depending on the time of the primary election. The disadvantages are: (1) the higher cost of holding the election during a primary, and (2) the lower voter turnout in that election. The CRC noted that requiring different types of election in different years would require more complicated wording in a charter amendment but would be the least change in policy compared to the existing charter.

The CRC considered the results of the public survey, which included this question: "How should Sunnyvale City Council vacancies be filled?" A majority of the survey respondents (65%) preferred filling the position at the next feasible November election, while a minority (23%) favored a special election.

The survey did not include an option to select a hybrid option, so the results do not provide much guidance on respondents' opinions on this option. It should be noted that 7% of respondents selected "other" and wrote in a hybrid option and another 5% of respondents checked "other" and wrote in a different comment.

Even without the concern for two elections in one year, the potentially much lower cost and much higher voter turnout of the general election compared to a primary election outweighs the disadvantages of a longer appointment duration or increased chance of requiring an appointment. Using only the November election is a better option than using primary elections to fill vacant seats even when the use of a primary election would not result in two elections in the same year.

The estimates of the cost of stand-alone special elections provided by staff (**Attachment 7**) indicate that a stand-alone election may cost the City ten times more than a November election.

This cost varies because of many factors, including whether the special election can be consolidated with a State or County election. The CRC considered an option that would eliminate free-standing special elections by requiring that all vacancies be filled at a November election whether there is an appointee or not. As indicated in the table above, the advantages include lower cost and higher voter turnout, but disadvantages include the higher likelihood of requiring an appointment that is of longer duration.

The CRC used a graph (**Attachment 8**) to assist in evaluating the duration of vacancies and appointments depending on when a vacancy is declared. The graph shows that the duration of an appointment varies dramatically depending on when the vacancy begins in the election cycle.

An additional disadvantage of requiring that all elections be held in November is that it removes flexibility that the City Council has in determining when the election should be held. City Council flexibility was a key factor in the deliberations of the 2018 CRC. As an example, we cannot know now if a future special election can be consolidated with another State or County election, what the City's financial situation will be at the time, or how the future political climate might affect the decision. At the time of the vacancy, the Council may know some of these variables. If the Council has flexibility, it could still choose to avoid a free-standing special election, but it could also choose to hold a special election consolidated with another municipal election if that better serves the City's needs at that time. The CRC concluded that it is best to leave discretion in choosing an election type and time up to the City Council, so no change in the charter is recommended for this matter.

The CRC concludes that the advantages of replacing appointees only at the next general election outweigh the disadvantages. The CRC does not recommend the hybrid option (using primary elections when they would not result in two elections in the same year) or removing discretion from the City Council regarding the choice of election type to fill vacancies.

Issue 2: How many councilmembers may serve by appointment at any one time?

A. Introduction

Filling vacancies with appointees eliminates the cost of a special election but degrades the democratic process as described in the "CRC Considerations" section below. The 2018 CRC limited the number of appointees to two at any one time to strike a balance between the financial cost versus the democratic cost of the two methods.

The CRC recommends no change in the current Charter language on this topic.

B. Background

In 1975 the Charter was amended in part specifically to limit the number of appointees to the City Council. In the words of the 2018 CRC report: "Prior to 1975, with no term limits, an

incumbent councilmember could resign shortly before retiring, allowing the remaining Council to appoint a replacement. The appointee would have a significant advantage of incumbency in the next election and, therefore, it was extremely rare for an appointee incumbent to be defeated prior to 1975. In April 1975, this practice resulted in four of the seven councilmembers originally joining the Council as appointees.”

The 1975 Charter revision was approved by 51% of voters. Opponents of the 1975 charter revision were concerned about the considerable costs of special elections that were required in order to limit appointments.

The 2018 Charter revision allowed for more appointments and reduced the likelihood of special elections, along with many other changes. The 2018 Charter revision was approved by 71% of voters.

Currently, the Charter does not allow the City Council to “make an appointment to fill a vacancy if the appointment would result in more than two Council members or one Council member and the Mayor currently serving on the Council as appointees.”

Members of the public commented at this year’s CRC meetings that:

1. Two simultaneous vacancies are too many
2. If there are already two appointees and an additional councilmember is called to military duty, then the Council is obligated to appoint a temporary replacement that would result in a third appointee

C. Current Charter Language

Charter Section 606(g) provides, “Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the City Council shall not make an appointment to fill a vacancy if the appointment would result in more than two Council members or one Councilmember and the Mayor currently serving on the Council as appointees, and shall call a Special Municipal Election to be held within one hundred and eighty days from the date the Council declares the vacancy.”

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

The major argument against reducing the limit to one is that this would increase the likelihood of having to hold special elections, which are costly and have low voter turnout. The major argument for a limit of one appointee is that this reduces the likelihood that four councilmembers (the required number for approval of an appointee) could capture the Council through appointments and also bestow the advantages of incumbency on appointees who then run for election.

The CRC asked for and received information from staff about the cost of elections (**Attachment 7**). The cost information that is available is not conclusive, because Sunnyvale has not conducted a special election for a single Council seat.

The majority of respondents to the public survey (51%) indicated they would rather keep the number of appointed councilmembers at two.

The CRC recommends no change to the Charter on this topic.

Issue 3: Whether the duration of appointments should be limited?

A. Introduction

Term limits for appointees might increase the democratic fairness of the City Council. The CRC does not recommend a limit to the duration of appointments.

B. Background

To the knowledge of the CRC, term limits for appointed city councilmembers have not been previously discussed.

A member of the public recommended that appointments be limited to ten months or less in order to decrease the potential cost of increased benefits if the appointee also completed one term as a councilmember, and decrease the incumbency advantage of the appointee

C. Current Charter Language

Section 604 of the City Charter contains this language: "Any Mayor or member of the Council elected or appointed to a term of two years or more shall constitute a four-year elective term for the purposes of this section." Accordingly, in the rare situation in which Section 606 would result in an appointive term of two years or more, that Council member would be limited by Section 604 to the appointive term plus two successive four-year elective terms. Section 606 does not contain any language limiting the duration of an appointment to fill a vacancy.

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

The CRC considered that a short appointment might decrease both the likelihood that the appointee would be controlled by the other Councilmembers and the incumbency advantage in a future election but might result in inefficiency because of turnover.

The CRC concluded that changing appointees in the middle of a term would be disruptive and inefficient and that this disadvantage outweighs the possible advantages. The CRC does not recommend a limit to the duration of appointments.

Recommendation Regarding Amendments to Section 606

The CRC recommends a ballot measure amending Section 606 of the Sunnyvale City Charter to address the following issues:

(1) Amend Section 606(d) to provide that appointed councilmembers serve until the next General Municipal Election or regularly scheduled Special Municipal Election consolidated with the next statewide general election, rather than the next Special Municipal Election consolidated with the next statewide election; and

(2) Include a non-substantive revision to Section 606(c) to avoid ambiguity about whether the Mayor may vote on filling vacancies. The current language of Section 606(c) is: “(c) Within sixty days of the date the office is officially declared vacant, the City Council shall, by affirmative vote of at least four of the remaining Councilmembers, elect to fill the vacancy by appointment or by calling an election.” Charter Section 600(b) defines “City Council” and “Council” to include the Mayor and six City councilmembers. Section 606(b) provides that “the Council shall officially declare the office vacant” when a vacancy occurs “in the office of Mayor or Councilmember.” Based on the definitions in Section 600(b), the Mayor and the six City councilmembers would vote to declare the vacancy. Section 606(c) provides that “the City Council shall ... elect to fill the vacancy by appointment or by calling an election.” But the supermajority provision of this sentence (“by affirmative vote of at least four of the remaining Councilmembers”), when used in the context of the earlier reference to “City Council,” arguably creates a negative implication that only votes of “remaining Councilmembers” and not the Mayor may constitute the supermajority. While this interpretation is nonsensical, the potential ambiguity can be corrected with a simple amendment.

The proposed revisions to Charter Section 606 to implement these recommendations are:

§ 606. Vacancies.

(a) In addition to any other cause from which vacancies in the City Council may occur, the office of the Mayor or Councilmember shall become vacant when that official:

(1) Resigns or dies;

(2) Is absent from all regular meetings of the Council for a period of sixty days consecutively from and after the last regular Council meeting attended by such member, unless by permission of the Council expressed in its official minutes;

(3) Is convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude;

- (4) Ceases to be an elector of the City of Sunnyvale;
- (5) Ceases to maintain his/her principal place of residence within the City limits, and/or within the applicable District boundaries for a member elected by District, during such official's term of office; or
- (6) Is involuntarily removed pursuant to Article II of the Constitution of the State of California, as may be amended from time to time.
- (b) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Mayor or Councilmember, the Council shall officially declare the office vacant within thirty days of the commencement of any vacancy.
- (c) Within sixty days of the date the office is officially declared vacant, the City Council shall, by ~~affirmative vote of~~ at least four ~~of the remaining Councilmembers~~ affirmative votes, elect to fill the vacancy by appointment or by calling an election.
- (d) If the vacancy is filled by appointment, the appointee shall hold office until the next General Municipal Election or regularly scheduled Special Municipal Election ~~consolidated with the next~~ statewide general election, whichever occurs sooner, and a successor is elected and qualified. The Councilmember then elected shall serve for the remainder of any unexpired term, and until a successor is elected and qualified.
- (e) The City Council shall adopt an ordinance establishing a public process for appointment.
- (f) If the City Council elects to fill the vacancy by election or fails to fill the vacancy by appointment, it shall call an election to be held within two hundred and forty days of the date the vacancy is declared.
- (g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the City Council shall not make an appointment to fill a vacancy if the appointment would result in more than two Council members or one Councilmember and the Mayor currently serving on the Council as appointees, and shall call a Special Municipal Election to be held within one hundred and eighty days from the date the Council declares the vacancy.

CRC Vote and Conclusion Regarding City Council Vacancies

The CRC, by a vote of ***[vote to be filled in after discussion at CRC meeting]***, approved the recommendation on this issue.

3. City Council Meeting Schedule (Charter Section 611)

A. Introduction

Charter Section 611 requires the City Council to hold regular meetings at least twice each month. The CRC recommends that the current language of Section 611 not be revised.

B. Background

At the first meeting of the CRC on February 6, 2025, the staff provided a report entitled “Review of Scope for Charter Review Committee and Discussion of Work Plan” (File #25-0035). “Based on a November 2023 City Council Colleagues Memo ... and Council direction,” the staff included the following among nine potential issues for the CRC to study: “Consider changing the Charter provision that requires two council meetings per month to instead require at least 24 meetings per year. The City Council placed this issue on the ballot in November 2024 in a combined question that included removing the citizenship requirement for board and commission members and implementing gender neutral language throughout the Charter. . .The measure did not pass.”

C. Current Charter Language

Charter Section 611 currently reads:

The City Council shall hold regular meetings at least twice each month, at such times as it shall fix by ordinance or resolution and may adjourn or readjourn any regular meeting to a date certain, which shall be specified in the order of adjournment and when so adjourned, each adjourned meeting shall be a regular meeting for all purposes.

(Amended effective December 21, 1976 and May 7, 2020: previously Section 707)

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

At the CRC meeting on June 30, 2025, the subcommittee assigned to review Section 611 reported its concern that any revision might be mistakenly perceived by some citizens as an effort by councilmembers to work less. This misconception could undermine public trust and be detrimental to a potential Charter revision to improve compensation for councilmembers and the mayor.

If the Council wants to create a break to accommodate vacations or holidays, this could be done through the schedule that is set, in the language of Section 611, “by ordinance or resolution.” Within this language, a break of four or five weeks could be created by scheduling meetings on the first and second Tuesdays of a month and then the second and fourth Tuesdays of the next month. A break of five or six weeks could be created by meeting on the first and second Tuesdays of a month and then the third and fourth Tuesdays of the next month. Months that have five Tuesdays offer the most flexibility. It should be noted that meetings in consecutive weeks may

create meeting preparation difficulties for the staff, especially in June, when the next fiscal year's budget is being considered. Holidays may also make it difficult to meet in consecutive weeks.

The Council is currently meeting approximately 40 times a year. With that number of meetings, it seems that a break of more than six weeks is not feasible even if it were permitted by revised Charter language. If the Charter were revised to require a minimum of 24 meetings per year, with at least one per month, meetings could be scheduled to permit an eight-week break. But the current workload that results in 40 meetings per year makes an eight-week break seem infeasible.

The Council's workload, not the Charter language, is the major impediment to scheduling breaks. A Charter revision that provides the appearance but not the reality of a remedy is not worth the potential political cost of undermining public trust and jeopardizing other needed revisions.

During the review of this issue, a subcommittee member surveyed city council meeting schedules of nearby localities (**Attachment 9**).

E. Recommendation

The CRC recommends that no revisions be made to the current language of Section 611.

F. CRC Vote and Conclusion Regarding City Council Meeting Schedule

The CRC, by a vote of 8 yes, 0 no, and 2 absent at the August 7, 2025, meeting, approved the recommendation that the current language of Section 611 not be revised.

4. City Manager Authority to Settle Claims (Charter Article 8)

A. Introduction

The CRC studied whether the City Charter should be amended to allow the City Council to establish by ordinance the City Manager's authority to settle legal claims against the City. Currently, California state law limits this authority to \$50,000, and any increase requires a charter provision. The CRC recommends amending the Charter to authorize the City Council to set the settlement limit by ordinance, providing greater flexibility and administrative efficiency while maintaining appropriate oversight and accountability.

B. Background

California Government Code Section 935.4 establishes that settlement authority for claims against a local public entity is limited to \$50,000 unless a charter provision authorizes a higher amount. The statute specifically provides that "only a charter provision may authorize that employee to allow, compromise, or settle a claim against the local public entity if the amount to be paid pursuant to the allowance, compromise or settlement exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)."

The \$50,000 threshold has been in effect since at least 1989 and has not been adjusted for inflation over the intervening decades. In today's economic environment, this limit means that relatively routine claims and settlements must come before the City Council for approval, consuming staff time in preparation and Council time in closed session deliberations.

Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 2.04.030 (Claims Against City) currently reflects the \$50,000 limit. This code section cannot be changed to authorize a higher settlement amount unless the City Charter first provides the authority to do so.

Several California charter cities have already adopted similar provisions allowing their city councils to establish settlement limits by ordinance. These cities include Pasadena, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles, with settlement limits up to \$100,000. This approach provides cities with the flexibility to adjust settlement thresholds through the normal ordinance process, which includes public input, rather than requiring repeated charter amendments.

C. Current Charter Language

The City Charter does not currently contain specific language addressing the City Manager's settlement authority. The City Manager's powers and duties are outlined in Charter Article 802, but settlement authority above \$50,000 is not explicitly addressed, resulting in the default application of state law limits.

Under the current framework, the City Manager may settle claims up to \$50,000. Any claim or settlement exceeding this amount must be brought to City Council for approval, typically in closed session. This requires:

- Staff preparation of materials for Council review
- Scheduling of closed session items
- Council deliberation and action
- Processing of additional administrative documentation

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

Settlement Authority by Ordinance - Administrative Efficiency, Flexibility and Responsiveness

A primary benefit of increasing the City Manager's settlement authority is increased administrative efficiency, which aligns with City Council's strategic goal of a responsive, transparent, and efficient City government. Routine claims that currently require Council action could be resolved more quickly by the City Manager. This would:

- Reduce the frequency of closed session items related to modest settlements
- Allow faster resolution of claims, potentially reducing costs

- Free up staff time currently spent preparing lower-value matters for Council review
- Enable the City Manager to respond more nimbly to time-sensitive settlement opportunities

Establishing settlement authority by ordinance, rather than in the Charter itself, provides important flexibility. Economic conditions, litigation costs, and the nature of claims against cities evolve over time. An ordinance-based approach allows the City Council to adjust the threshold as needed without requiring a charter amendment and ballot measure.

This is particularly important given that the current \$50,000 limit has remained unchanged for over three decades. The Consumer Price Index calculator provided by the State of California's Department of Industrial Relations indicates that \$50,000 in 1989 is equivalent to approximately \$140,000 today based on San Francisco Bay Area CPI. Medical and legal costs—two significant components of many claims against the City—have likely risen even more.

Based on the CRC's review of other California charter cities that have settlement authority limits up to \$100,000 and considering inflation since the State established the default \$50,000 limit over three decades ago, a new limit in the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000 would be appropriate.

As a comparison, Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 2.08.040 designates contract approval and spending authority to the City Manager up to \$250,000. This amount is five times higher than the current settlement authority limit.

Maintaining Accountability and Oversight

The proposed charter amendment maintains robust accountability measures:

- The City Council retains complete authority to set the limit through the public ordinance process
- The Council can adjust the limit up or down as circumstances warrant
- All settlements would continue to be subject to existing requirements for multiple levels of internal review
- The City Council would retain authority over all settlements exceeding the limit established by ordinance

Comparison with Other Jurisdictions

Several California charter cities have adopted approaches similar to the CRC's proposal. Of particular note is the City of Pasadena, which recently passed a Charter Amendment, Measure S, with similar provisions. Pasadena City Charter Section 1014, which passed in 2024 with 86.44% of the vote, now reads:

"The City Council shall prescribe by ordinance, exclusive of court costs, the monetary limits for an employee or employees to: (i) commence any action on behalf of the City, or (ii) settle any claim or action against the City, or any officer, employee, board or department thereof in his or her or its official capacity. No claim or action for more than the amount set forth in the ordinance shall be commenced or settled without the prior approval of the City Council."

This language provides a proven model that emphasizes Council control while enabling administrative efficiency.

E. Recommendation

The CRC recommends a ballot measure amending Section 1314 of the Sunnyvale City Charter to authorize the City Council to approve alternative public works procurement processes permitted by California state law for appropriate projects.

The proposed revisions to Charter Section 1309 to implement this recommendation are as follows:

§ 1314 Claims Against City.

(1) Except as otherwise required by the provisions of State law applicable to chartered cities, claims and demands against the City shall be presented and audited as prescribed by ordinance.

(2) The City Council shall prescribe by ordinance the monetary limits for an employee or employees to settle any claim or action against the City, or any officer, employee, board or department thereof in their official capacity. No claim or action against the City shall be settled for more than the amount set forth in the ordinance without the prior approval of the City Council.

The CRC also recommends that, in conjunction with placing this Charter amendment measure on the ballot, that Council adopt an ordinance setting a specific settlement authority limit and procedures that would take effect only upon passage of the ballot measure. Such an ordinance would give the voters more clarity on the settlement authority limit.

The CRC recommends a settlement authority limit in the range of **[to be filled in after discussion at CRC meeting]**.

This recommendation aligns with Council's strategic goal of a responsive, transparent, and efficient city government. Legal costs have risen significantly since the State established the

current \$50,000 authority limit over three decades ago. A higher limit also enables the City Manager to respond more nimbly to time-sensitive settlement opportunities.

F. CRC Vote and Conclusion Regarding Settlement Authority

The CRC, by a vote of [**vote to be filled in after discussion at a CRC meeting**], recommends a ballot measure to amend Section 1314 of the Sunnyvale City Charter to authorize the City Council to establish by ordinance the City Manager's authority to settle legal claims against the City in amounts exceeding \$50,000, and adoption of an ordinance that will be effective if voters approve this charter measure setting the City Manager's authority to settle claims .

5. Public Works Contracting (Charter Section 1309)

A. Introduction

The CRC studied whether to amend the City Charter to authorize alternative project delivery methods, specifically design-build (DB), for public works projects. After reviewing the current Charter provisions, researching how other California jurisdictions handle capital improvement projects, and analyzing potential benefits and impacts, the CRC recommends amending Section 1309 of the Sunnyvale City Charter to grant the City Council authority to authorize use of any public works procurement process permitted by California state law.

This amendment would update Sunnyvale's approach to delivering large, complex capital improvement projects while maintaining appropriate oversight, transparency, and accountability. The change would provide City Council with flexibility to select the most appropriate project delivery method based on the specific characteristics and requirements of each major capital project.

B. Background

Section 1309 of the Sunnyvale City Charter currently requires competitive bidding for public works contracts, with award to the lowest responsible bidder following public notice and competitive bidding procedures. This traditional "Design-Bid-Build" (DBB) approach has been the standard method for municipal construction projects for decades.

Under the current DBB process, the City first contracts with architects and engineers to complete design work, then advertises the completed design for construction bids, and finally awards a construction contract to the lowest responsible bidder. While this method provides a well-established framework, it separates the design and construction phases, which can lead to communication gaps, change orders, cost overruns, and extended project timelines.

Under a DB process, design and construction phases are bundled into a single contract. A single entity is responsible for both design and construction, creating a unified project team from the beginning. The City would select a DB team through a qualifications-based competitive process, known as “best value”, rather than solely on lowest price.

The lowest bid requirement in Section 1309 of the Sunnyvale City Charter prevents using a best value approach like DB for a bundled design-and-construction contract.

Federal and state laws have evolved significantly since Section 1309 was adopted. California legislation passed in the 1990s and expanded in subsequent years now authorizes local agencies, including cities, to use alternative project delivery methods for appropriate projects. In 2014, SB 785 specifically authorized California cities to use DB delivery. These alternative methods have been codified in the Public Contract Code and are widely used by state agencies, school districts, and other municipalities.

California school districts are authorized to use DB for projects exceeding \$1 million. Charters of several California cities allow DB, including Pasadena, San Jose, Los Angeles, Glendale, and Santa Cruz. Pasadena voters approved a Charter Amendment, Measure T, in 2024 with strong support, authorizing alternative project delivery methods like DB for significant capital projects.

D. Current Charter Language

Section 1309 of the Sunnyvale City Charter establishes the competitive bidding requirement for public works contracts. The section requires that contracts be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder after public notice and competitive bidding, except for specific enumerated exceptions such as emergency work, contracts with other governmental entities, and professional services.

Sunnyvale Municipal Code Chapter 2.09 provides additional detailed requirements for public works contracting that implement the Charter's competitive bidding mandate. The City Council has established dollar thresholds by ordinance that determine when contracts require Council approval.

The current Charter language reflects traditional DBB methodology and does not explicitly authorize alternative project delivery methods such as DB, even though these methods are now permitted by California state law and commonly used by other public agencies.

Under existing Charter provisions, the City must complete all design work before soliciting construction bids and cannot consider factors beyond price and responsibility when awarding construction contracts. This limits the City's ability to foster collaboration between designers and builders, which can be particularly valuable for complex projects.

D. CRC Considerations and Analysis

Evolution of Project Delivery Methods

The construction industry has evolved significantly over the past several decades, with alternative project delivery methods becoming standard practice for many large and complex projects in both the public and private sectors. These methods recognize that early collaboration between design and construction professionals can lead to better outcomes.

Traditional DBB remains appropriate for many projects, particularly smaller or straightforward construction work. However, for large, complex capital projects, alternative methods offer substantial advantages while maintaining appropriate transparency and accountability.

California legislation for DB continues to evolve, such as recent legislation authorizing “progressive design-build” where construction costs are negotiated after completing design with off-ramps if agreement cannot be reached on price. The CRC recommends flexibility in the proposed Charter amendment to accommodate additional alternative project delivery methods authorized by future federal and state laws.

Design-Build Delivery Method

DB is the primary alternative method the CRC studied. A DB team typically includes architects, engineers, general contractors, and other necessary professionals. This team works collaboratively with City staff throughout the project, developing designs that are constructible, cost-effective, and meet the City's requirements.

Key features of DB include:

Unified Responsibility: A single point of accountability for both design and construction eliminates the potential for disputes between separate design and construction contractors about responsibility for problems.

Accelerated Delivery: Design and construction phases can overlap, with early construction activities such as site preparation or demolition beginning while final design details are completed. This can significantly reduce overall project duration.

Reduced Change Orders: Because constructability is considered throughout design, and because the design-builder is responsible for both design and construction, projects typically experience fewer change orders and disputes.

Innovation and Collaboration: Early involvement of construction expertise during design can lead to innovative solutions, value engineering, and more efficient construction methods.

Quality and Performance: DB teams are selected based on qualifications, experience, and approach, not just price, allowing the City to prioritize quality and performance.

Maintaining Oversight and Accountability

The proposed Charter amendment would maintain appropriate oversight while providing flexibility:

City Council Authority: The City Council would retain authority to authorize use of alternative delivery methods for specific projects, ensuring elected officials make key decisions about major capital projects.

Future Ordinance: The City Council would adopt ordinances establishing procedures, requirements, and safeguards for alternative delivery methods as it has for DBB. This approach provides detailed requirements regarding transparency, public input, local labor preferences, and other policy priorities.

Competitive Selection Plus: Alternative delivery methods still involve competitive processes, but selection is based on qualifications, experience, technical approach, and price rather than lowest price alone.

E. Recommendation

The CRC recommends a ballot measure amending Section 1309 of the Sunnyvale City Charter to authorize the City Council to approve alternative public works procurement processes permitted by California state law for appropriate projects.

The proposed revisions to Charter Section 1309 to implement this recommendation are:

1309. Contracts on public works.

(a) Lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Unless an alternative project delivery method is authorized as provided in this section 1309, Every projects involving an expenditure of more than an amount to be determined from time to time by ordinance of the City Council, for the construction or improvement (excluding maintenance and repair) of public buildings, works, streets, drains, sewers, utilities, parks and playgrounds, shall be let to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder after notice of publication in the official newspaper by one or more insertions, the first of which shall be at least ten days before the time for opening bids.

The City Council may reject any and all bids presented and may readvertise in its discretion.

The City Council, without advertising for bids, or after rejecting bids, or if no bids are received, may declare and determine that, in its opinion, the

work in question may be performed better or more economically by the City with its own employees, and after adoption of a resolution to this effect by at least four affirmative votes it may proceed to have said work done in the manner stated, without further observance of the provisions of this section. Such contracts likewise may be let without advertising for bids, if such work shall be deemed by the City Council to be of urgent necessity for the preservation of life, health or property, shall be authorized by motion passed by at least four affirmative votes and containing a declaration of the facts constituting such urgency.

(b) Public Utility Projects. No advertising for bids or awarding of a contract based thereon shall be required when the improvement or work is to be furnished or performed by a public utility subject to the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in the California Public Contracts Code, this Charter, or any other law or regulation of the City of Sunnyvale, the use of best value alternative project delivery methods including, but not limited to, progressive design-build, construction manager at risk, fixed-price design-build, and design-build-operate contracts is authorized for all public works projects. The City Council shall establish, by ordinance, regulations for the award, use, and evaluation of, and authority to approve, such contracts.

F. CRC Vote and Conclusion Regarding Public Works Contracting

The CRC, by a vote of [vote to be filled in after discussion at CRC meeting], approved the recommendation of a ballot measure to amend Section 1309 of the City Charter to authorize alternative public works project delivery methods as described above.

This Charter amendment would update Sunnyvale's approach to delivering major capital improvement projects, providing the City Council and staff with contemporary tools to deliver high-quality projects efficiently and cost-effectively. The amendment maintains appropriate oversight while enabling the City to adapt to evolving industry best practices and utilize methods that other California public agencies have successfully implemented.

By authorizing alternative delivery methods permitted by state law, Sunnyvale would join other California cities in utilizing proven approaches that can save taxpayer money, accelerate project delivery, reduce disputes and claims, and produce better outcomes for the community. The amendment preserves traditional competitive bidding for projects where it remains most

appropriate while adding valuable options for complex projects where alternative delivery methods can provide significant advantages.

The CRC believes this amendment serves the public interest and recommends that the City Council place this measure before Sunnyvale voters for their consideration.

IV. Conclusion

The members of the Charter Review Committee respectfully submit these recommendations to the City Council.

[add signatures of all members]

V. Attachments

1. 2023 Colleagues Memo Regarding Potential Charter Changes
2. CRC Community Survey and Results
3. CRC List of 23 Potential Charter Amendments, May 2025
4. List of Dropped Potential Amendments
5. Prioritized List of Amendments
6. Summary of CRC's Proposed Charter Amendments
7. Graph -Varying Durations of Appointments
8. Estimates of the Cost of Stand-Alone Special Elections
9. Survey -City Council Meeting Schedules of Nearby Localities

Honorable Colleagues,

We write to request that a meeting be agendized to empanel a Charter Review Commission (CRC) to conduct a full review of the Sunnyvale City Charter, with the goal of placing proposed amendments on the November 2024 ballot.

The last major review of the Sunnyvale City Charter was conducted in 2007, with a smaller review in 2012. In 2018, a CRC was empaneled to review provisions for filling vacancies, leading to a successful charter amendment, while in 2020 the Charter was amended to switch to district elections for councilmembers (without a CRC). Given that it has been more than 15 years since the full charter has been reviewed, and given the substantial changes introduced by the switch to district elections, we believe that empaneling a CRC to conduct a general review of the charter may be in order.

While the proposed CRC would have scope to review all provisions in the charter and to freely propose amendments, the following are some specific items we would like to have the proposed CRC examine if empanelled:

- Allowing Councilmembers appointed to fill vacancies to serve until the next feasible November general election, as opposed to the next feasible election (i.e., appointees could no longer go up for election in a primary)
- Changing the charter provision that requires two council meetings per month to instead require at least 24 meetings per year
- Examining citizenship requirements and member counts for charter-defined commissions
- Examining the role of the mayor, including whether the position of mayor should be considered full-time
- Examining Council salary and compensation
- Updating language to be gender neutral, e.g. using "they" instead of "he/she"
- Evaluating whether to adopt an alternative voting system, such as ranked-choice or approval voting, or retain the existing first-past-the-post system for districts and mayoral elections
- Evaluating whether to include a statement on the role of district councilmembers, and to explicitly bar the concept of "district prerogative" and emphasize representing "all of Sunnyvale"
- Establishing rules for empanelling Redistricting Commissions
- Other items proposed by Council or raised by the Charter Review Commission

Respectfully submitted,

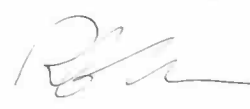
Alysa Cisneros



Larry Klein



Richard Mehlinger





Charter Review Community Survey

October 20, 2025, 11:37 AM

Contents

i.	Summary of responses	2
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Charter Review Community Survey
Sunnyvale is looking at potential changes to the City Charter and wants to hear your feedback.

Summary Of Responses

As of October 20, 2025, 11:37 AM, this forum had:		Topic Start	Topic End
Attendees:	425	September 30, 2025, 9:05 AM	October 20, 2025, 8:00 AM
Responses:	302		
Hours of Public Comment:	15.1		

QUESTION 1

How should Sunnyvale City Council vacancies be filled?			
		%	Count
Hold a special election so voters decide, even if it costs much more and turnout is much lower	<div></div>	22.8%	68
Fill by appointment until the next feasible November general election, even if the appointment is for a long time	<div></div>	65.1%	194
Other	<div></div>	12.1%	36

QUESTION 2

Right now, no more than two appointed Councilmembers can serve at the same time. What limit do you prefer?			
		%	Count
No limit—appointments allowed as needed (appointments only last until the next feasible November general election)	<div></div>	16.6%	50
Limit of two appointed members (keep the current rule)	<div></div>	50.8%	153
Limit of one appointed member (reduce the current rule)	<div></div>	16.3%	49
Zero appointed members (all vacancies should be filled only by elections)	<div></div>	12.6%	38
Not sure	<div></div>	3.7%	11

Charter Review Community Survey

Sunnyvale is looking at potential changes to the City Charter and wants to hear your feedback.

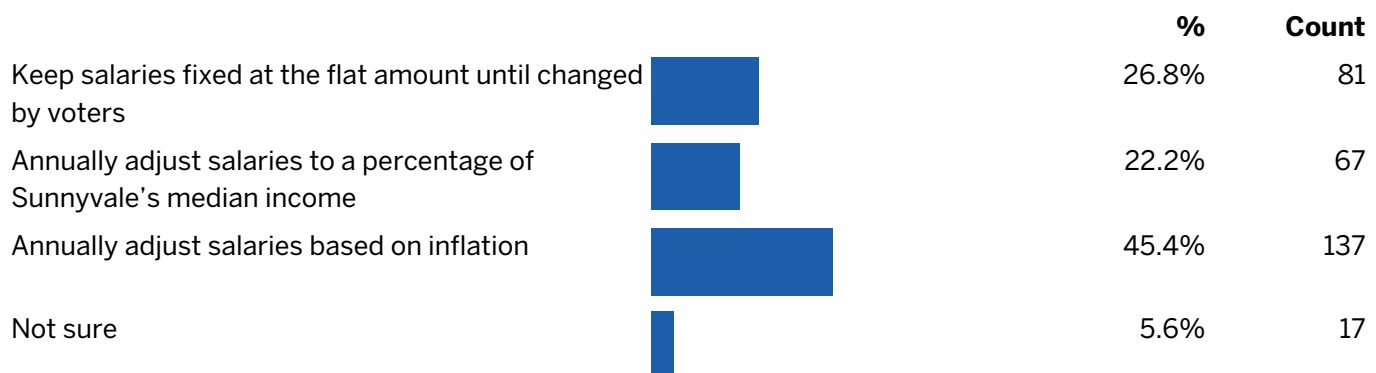
QUESTION 3

How well do you think the current pay matches the responsibilities and time required?



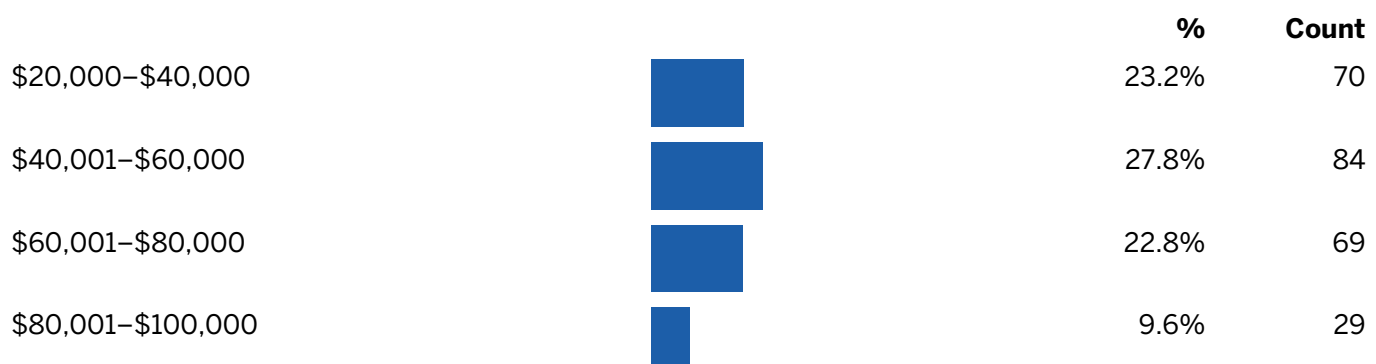
QUESTION 4

Which way of setting Councilmembers and Mayor pay do you prefer?



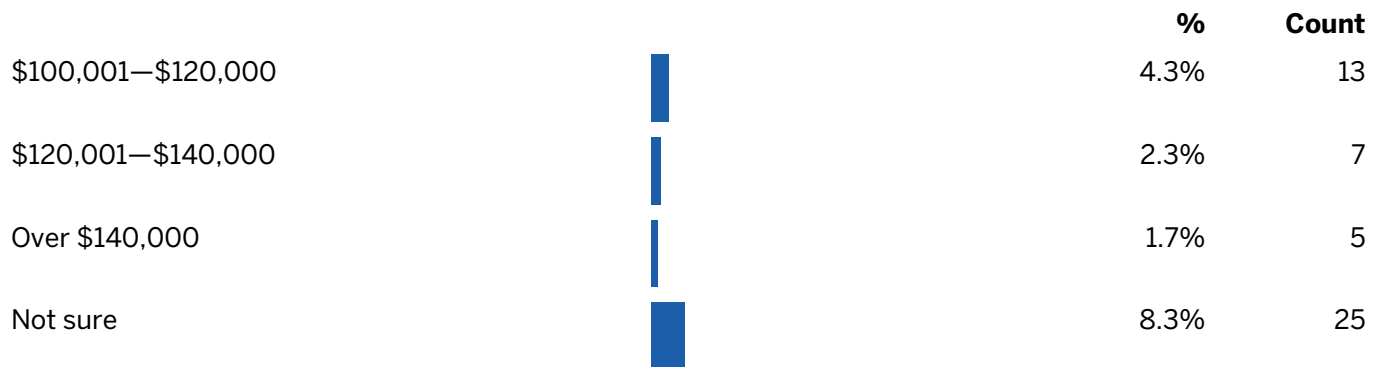
QUESTION 5

Which salary ranges for Councilmembers feel most reasonable for Sunnyvale?



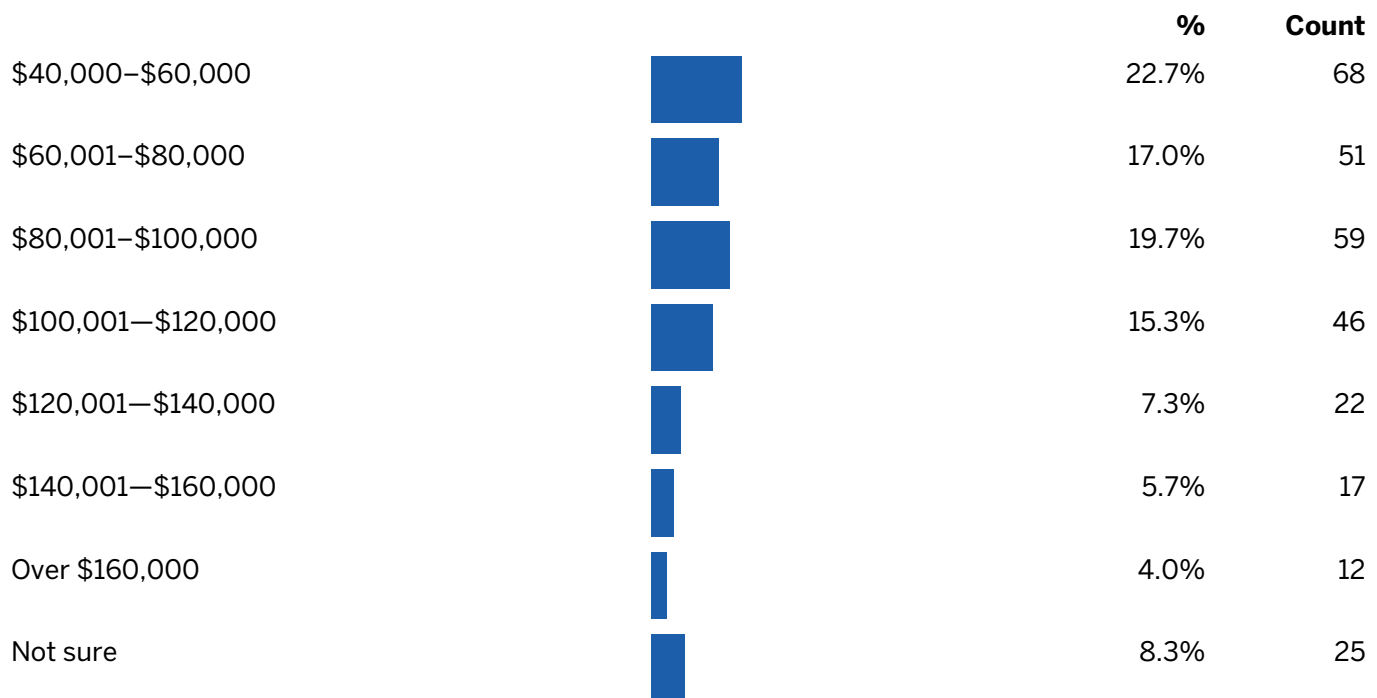
Charter Review Community Survey

Sunnyvale is looking at potential changes to the City Charter and wants to hear your feedback.



QUESTION 6

Which salary ranges for the Mayor feel most reasonable for Sunnyvale?



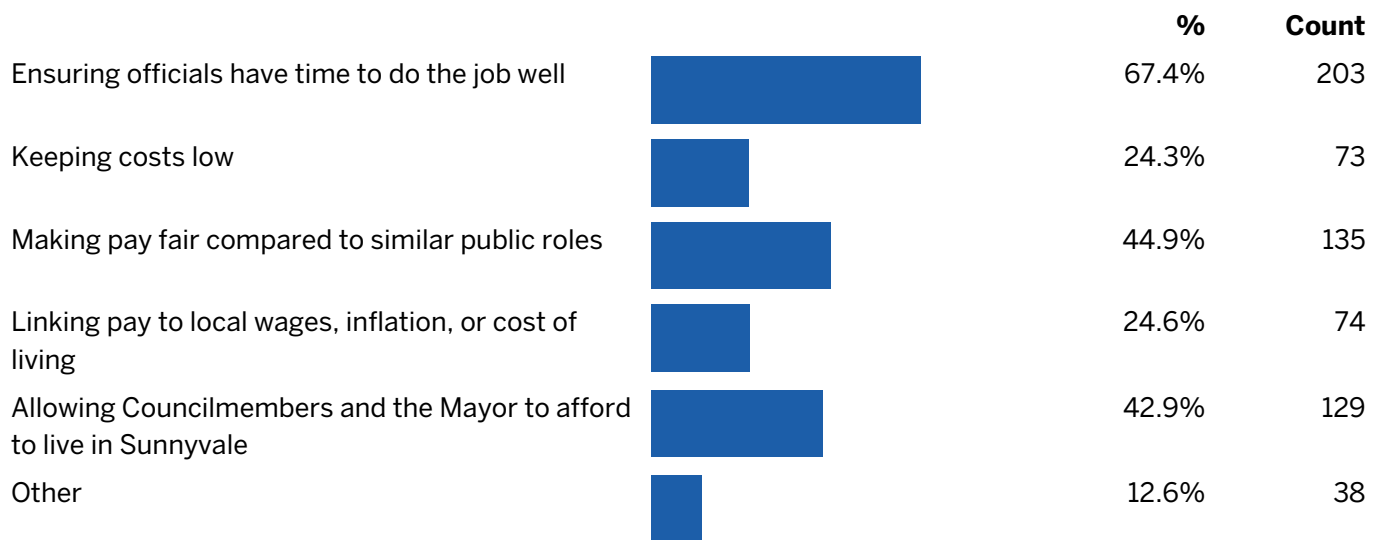
QUESTION 7

When setting pay for Councilmembers and the Mayor, what factors should matter the most? (Select up to 3)



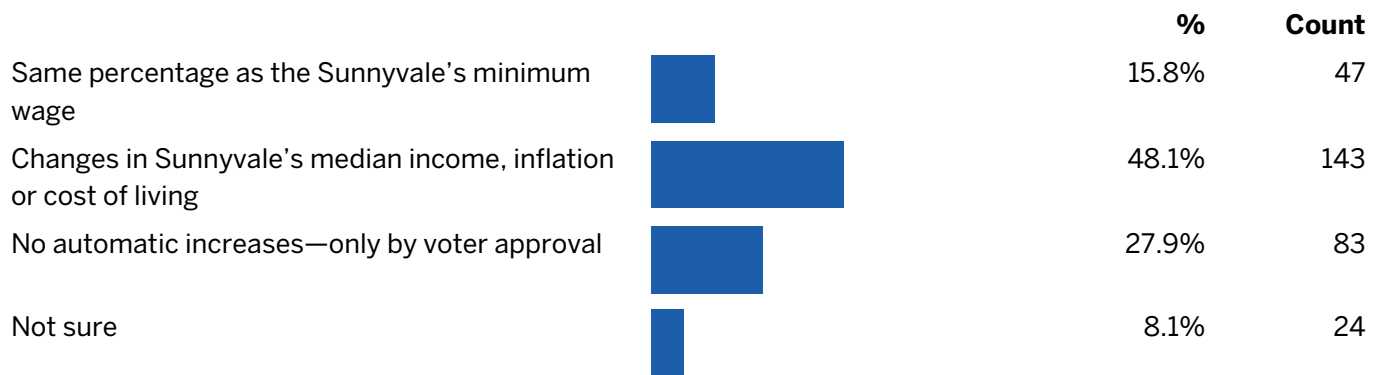
Charter Review Community Survey

Sunnyvale is looking at potential changes to the City Charter and wants to hear your feedback.



QUESTION 8

If pay is adjusted automatically each year, what should it be based on?



QUESTION 9

Besides pay, what other reasons might discourage people from running for Mayor or City Council? (Optional)

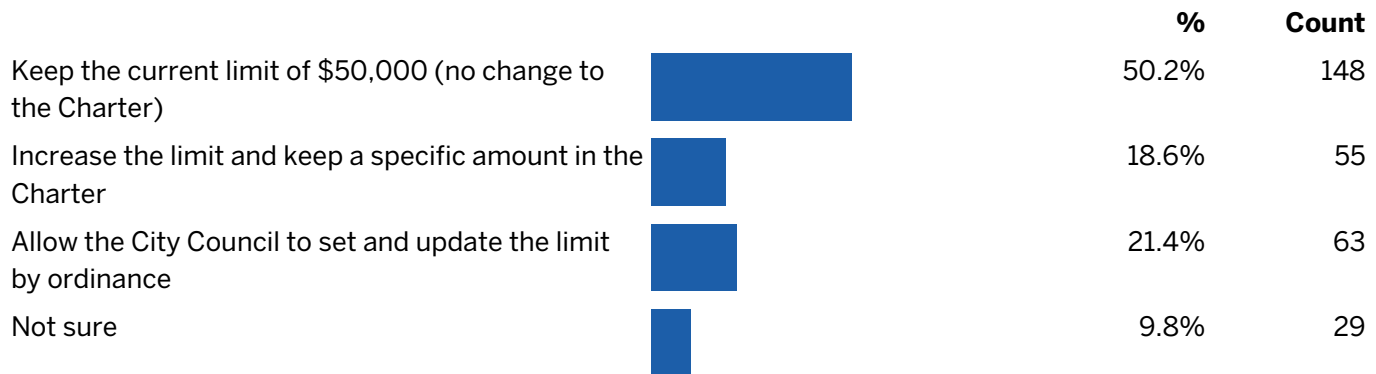
Answered	85
Skipped	217

QUESTION 10

Charter Review Community Survey

Sunnyvale is looking at potential changes to the City Charter and wants to hear your feedback.

How should Sunnyvale handle the City Manager's settlement authority?



QUESTION 11

If the limit were increased, what amount would be reasonable?



QUESTION 12

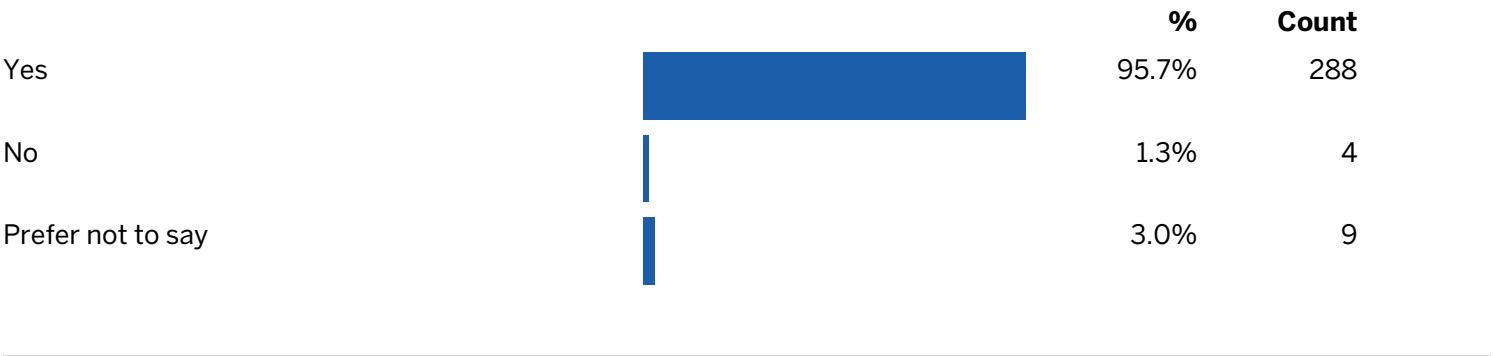
Are you registered to vote?



Charter Review Community Survey
Sunnyvale is looking at potential changes to the City Charter and wants to hear your feedback.

QUESTION 13

Did you vote in the last election?



Besides pay, what other reasons might discourage people from running for Mayor or City Council? (Optional)

Answered

85

Skipped

217

Meetings too long. Consider also for survey: SV Council / Mayor roles are part-time and not considered livelihood or career roles. Compensation also include significant city sponsored benefits, including medical/dental for self / family, maternity & family leave, life insurance, CalPERS Pension etc.

Time commitments; hard work; politics

Long hours attending Council Meetings, City events, School events, and other events, County and State events.

Frankly unless you already have a home in Sunnyvale or something else that can help keep your costs manageable (e.g., a spouse who can support you/your family), it just doesn't make sense to take on these jobs. Especially if you can get more money taking a city job or another job.

Lack of knowledge on job.

Political violence now prevalent in the country

Corruption, time required.

The city council should know the answer to this.

The time committment if they are working in a full time job.

Excellence of City services and city finances

Lack of familiarity with job needs.

Time commitment, lack of true authority to effect meaningful changes, overly bureaucratic study process for changes

Having to deal with the public. The meetings that go on forever. Listening to the mis-guided public who whine.

Hostile work environment, council members who slack off and don't pull their weight. Pay should be based on accomplishments.

Conflict of interest.

It is a time-consuming job and sometimes it is difficult to see/measure the impact you have, especially when state/national conditions trump local influence.

Lack of knowledge about detailed job description.

Experience and time needed to do the job. Lack of REAL outreach to minority groups. Bad experience of council NEVER getting back to them ESPECIALLY in District 2.

It's probably a pain in the neck

Cost of running a campaign, abuse over social media

Pay should match actual performance and ability to deliver for Sunnyvale and NOT be based on some estimated number of hours of showing up.

Safety

Social media - negative reactions or harassment

Experience

cost of campaigning

Political atmosphere today—fear

Work climate

No interest in the city and its issues

The time commitment and becoming a public figure.

Late hours, political pressure, frustration of beauracracy.

People don't run for office because of the toxic comments from the residents.

Lack of information on what the council directly does and how people can practically affect change

Threats from the public.

Balancing resident needs and commercial growth is a really difficult job. There is a lot of research time looking at the current future plans already in place and new Council members being pressured to be ready to make long term decisions quickly will need confident, detailed oriented people.

Council members not listening to the public's voices.

Invasion of privacy

Dealing with cranky members of the public

Other council members.

People running for council should be interested in helping the city. Salaries should not be part of t.

Sunnyvale Mayor is the 2nd highest paid mayor in Santa Clara county. There is more to compensation than pay. There is the CalPERS pension and generous amount the city pays for medical. If someone running for mayor wants to get paid the median salary for Sunnyvale they need to get a job in high tech.

the tasks at hand to prepare effectively to voice their constituents and not only their own

Contentious or extraordinarily long meetings, lack of clarity of what is expected once in the role, lack of progress

Politics are a mess.

Not knowing exactly what is involved in the role

Whether they can keep their regular job and hence career moving forward

Political pressure from special interest groups and/or ethnic groups

Time and money needed to campaign; not understanding job requirements; long, boring meetings

Not sure

Politics is a nasty business

Not knowing what to expect in terms of their duties and responsibilities

We all saw how the council and mayor bullied council member Melton. Districting has given us career politicians more concerned with getting paid than with what is good for the city.

Non-essential, feel-good "obligations" not related to actual policy work (glad-handing, schmoozing, social events). Further, Councilmembers' compensation should not take ANY of that into account since it's not substantively related to their work outlined by the Charter.

Districting brought problems. Career politicians, whose only agenda is get reelected and increase their own pay. The mayor works behind scenes to promote his agenda. They are bullies and they serve special interests. Sad day for long term residents.

social media

People should not be running BASED ON PAY but in best for community. "Sweet gig where a make a big paycheck creating up hare-brain policies for others to implement" is a bad bad Councilmember. What discourages good people from running - having to put up with uncivil gadflies and colleagues.

It's hard to hold down a regular job *and* put in enough time to be a councilmember.

Safety reasons. There probably isn't a lot of security available for the mayor of Sunnyvale. Unfortunately, political assassinations seem to be getting more common.

The time it takes to fulfill these roles is daunting for most people, unless they're retired. But we don't want only old people in office.

Politics within politics ,meetings in late evening

Current political climate

It is a very time consuming job. You can't please everyone, so some people will be very unhappy with you. Council meetings run too late at night.

Commitment of time. Lack of interest. Hostile council.

Political hostility, financial & personal burdens, time commitment, public scrutiny

Right now running for public office isn't open to people on SSDI, so people with disabilities are grossly underrepresented. Changing appointments to 1yr may open it up to this demographic.

This is for the above question. Please add Other or none of the above in selection. The survey is very badly designed to favor the increase. Corrupted.

Too many scheduled / overly long / too late meetings. Staff should help reduce number of meetings council are needed at. Council members should limit their own comment and question times to help shorten meetings. City business time should be Councilmember 15-20 hrs /wk and Mayor 20-25 hrs /wk Max.

mayor and council member must be a resident of sunnyvale

Time commitment necessary

This survey is a poorly done without context. This role is not meant to be a full time role, we already have a highly paid city manager. How will we fund this? How are similar cities structured? What additional improvements will the citizens get? To do this without that context is unethical..

Most meetings are in the evenings, which are hard for families

Meetings that run too long into the night // Already working two jobs, so no time to serve on council // Belief that they really can't change anything, e.g., because of a sense that there are entrenched interests or disagreeable internal politics in city government

Cost of getting on the ballot and informing voters of candidate's platform and qualifications

Feeling disenfranchised

Rent and housing costs; property taxes

A

The time commitment of the role

Not knowing how to "get started" in politics. Animosity from public and family safety.

The fact that council meetings run very late into the night sometimes would discourage certain people from running for council.

public support

political advertising costs. I feel that the amount of money spent advertising is obscene and should be limited to create a fair election.

With Districts now it should not be a problem for anyone to run.

Time required. Assume council members have full-time jobs

Campaigning and the cost of running a campaign.

Lack of interest in serving is probably the main one. Also, there are benefits to serving in city government beyond salary, and these should be considered in deciding if/how much higher salaries should be.

High cost of running for office



Attachment 3
Charter Review Committee
Potential Charter Amendments

Number	Title
A-1	Section 601(City Council Term and Election): Study whether to adopt an alternative voting system, such as ranked-choice or approval voting, or retain the existing first-past-the-post system for districts and mayoral elections
A-2	Section 605 (Compensation): Study City Council salaries and compensation.
A-3	Section 606 (Vacancies): Study whether the current rule providing that councilmembers appointed to fill a vacancy serve until the next general municipal or consolidated statewide election should be changed to the next feasible November general election.
A-4	Section 607 (Presiding Officer. Mayor): Study the role of Mayor, including whether the position should be full time.
A-5	Section 609 (Redistricting): Study establishing rules for empaneling redistricting commissions.
A-6	Section 611 (Regular Meetings): Consider changing the Charter provision that requires two council meetings per month to instead require at least 24 meetings per year.
A-7	Article X (Appointive Boards and Commissions): Study removing citizenship/voter eligibility requirements for Charter board and commission members.
A-8	General Issue (throughout Charter): Update language to be gender neutral, e.g. using "they" instead of "he/she."
B-1	Section 1309 (Contracts on Public Works): Study amending the Charter to allow other project delivery methods besides design-bid-build (lowest responsible bidder after notice of publications for bids).
B-2	Section 802 (City Manager Powers and Duties): Study adding a provision to City Manager's powers and duties to permit settlement of claims against the city in an amount greater than \$50,000.
C-1	New Issues: CRC discussed studying potential new provisions including (a) a diversity statement, (b) native land acknowledgment, and (c) emergency provisions.
C-2	Section 603 (City Council Qualifications): Study whether the thirty-day residency requirement for city council candidates is appropriate.
C-3	Section 708 (Publishing of Legal Notices): Study whether existing Charter provisions provide effective public noticing.
C-4	Article X (Appointive Boards and Commissions): Study potential changes to Charter boards and commission structure, including: (a) What commissions should/should not be in the Charter (currently 5 of 10 are listed in the Charter)? (b) Add alternate or advisory members? (c) Revise term limits for board and commission members? (d) Change the number of members on each Charter board/commission (e) Address process for sitting board/ commission members to apply for another board/commission when they are currently on one or term is expiring.
C-5	Section 1100 (Merit Principle): Consider modernizing competitive examination language to better reflect current considerations for examining applicants for employment.
C-6	Section 1104 (Pay Plan): Consider language cleanup to reflect that City publishes a pay schedule for all positions, not just classified.
C-7	Article XII (Retirement): Correct outdated reference to "State Employees Retirement Act" without "as amended" language.
C-8	Section 1302 (Budget. Submission to City Council.): Study Sunnyvale's unique 20-year budget and whether it continues to be a useful tool.
C-9	Sections 1313 and 1315 (Petty Cash Funds; Registering Warrants): Study whether these provisions are needed in the charter.
C-10	Section 1318 (Independent Audit): Study whether more detailed audit requirements should be added.
C-11	Section 1320 (Revenue Bonds): Study whether language could be clearer and more detailed.
C-12	Section 1405 (Campaign Disclosure): Study whether this section should be updated, relevant law included, and whether having it in the Charter adds value or should simply reference general laws related to campaign disclosure.
C-13	Article XVI (Franchises): Study potential revisions to franchise authority.

Attachment 4
Charter Review Committee
Dropped Charter Amendments



Number	Title
A-7	Article X (Appointive Boards and Commissions): Study removing citizenship/voter eligibility requirements for Charter board and commission members.
C-1	New Issues: CRC discussed studying potential new provisions including (a) a diversity statement, (b) native land acknowledgment, and (c) emergency provisions.
C-2	Section 603 (City Council Qualifications): Study whether the thirty-day residency requirement for city council candidates is appropriate.
C-4	Article X (Appointive Boards and Commissions): Study potential changes to Charter boards and commission structure, including: (a) What commissions should/should not be in the Charter (currently 5 of 10 are listed in the Charter)? (b) Add alternate or advisory members? (c) Revise term limits for board and commission members? (d) Change the number of members on each Charter board/commission (e) Address process for sitting board/ commission members to apply for another board/commission when they are currently on one or term is expiring.
C-6	Section 1104 (Pay Plan): Consider language cleanup to reflect that City publishes a pay schedule for all positions, not just classified.
C-7	Article XII (Retirement): Correct outdated reference to “State Employees Retirement Act” without “as amended” language.
C-8	Section 1302 (Budget. Submission to City Council.): Study Sunnyvale’s unique 20-year budget and whether it continues to be a useful tool.
C-10	Section 1318 (Independent Audit): Study whether more detailed audit requirements should be added.
C-11	Section 1320 (Revenue Bonds): Study whether language could be clearer and more detailed.
C-12	Section 1405 (Campaign Disclosure): Study whether this section should be updated, relevant law included, and whether having it in the Charter adds value or should simply reference general laws related to campaign disclosure.
C-13	Article XVI (Franchises): Study potential revisions to franchise authority.

Attachment 5

Charter Review Committee

Priorization of Potential Charter Amendments



Meeting Date	5/1/2025
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Count of Items to Prioritize	12
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Number	Title	Vickrey	Rubino	Davis	Wickham	Larsson	Olevson	Pyne	Newswanger	Oey	Filley	Average Ranking
B-1	Section 1309 (Contracts on Public Works): Study amending the Charter to allow other project delivery methods besides design-bid-build (lowest responsible bidder after notice of publications for bids).	1	1	2		1	1	2	6	2	2	2
A-2	Section 605 (Compensation): Study City Council salaries and compensation.	4	2	4		2	2	1	3	1	4	2.56
A-5	Section 609 (Redistricting): Study establishing rules for empaneling redistricting commissions.	2	5	3		4	8	3	2	4	5	4
A-8	General Issue (throughout Charter): Remove gender specific language.	3	8	1		5	6	4	9	3	3	4.67
A-4	Section 607 (Presiding Officer. Mayor): Study the role of Mayor, including whether the position should be full time.	5	4	6		8	3	6	4	9	9	6
A-3	Section 606 (Vacancies): Study whether the current rule providing that councilmembers appointed to fill a vacancy serve until the next general municipal or consolidated statewide election should be changed to the next feasible November general election.	10	3	10		3	5	7	5	7	7	6.33
A-6	Section 611 (Regular Meetings): Consider changing the Charter provision that requires two council meetings per month to instead require at least 24 meetings per year.	11	9	5		6	4	5	7	12	6	7.22
B-2	Section 802 (City Manager Powers and Duties): Study adding a provision to City Manager’s powers and duties to permit settlement of claims against the city in an amount greater than \$50,000.	7	6	11		7	7	9	8	10	1	7.33

Charter Review Committee

Priorization of Potential Charter Amendments

Meeting Date	5/1/2025
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Count of Items to Prioritize	12
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Number	Title	Vickrey	Rubino	Davis	Wickham	Larsson	Olevson	Pyne	Newswanger	Oey	Filley	Average Ranking
C-3	Section 708 (Publishing of Legal Notices): Study whether existing Charter provisions provide effective public noticing.	6	7	7		10	11	10	10	5	10	8.44
A-1	Section 601(City Council Term and Election): Study whether to adopt an alternative voting system, such as ranked-choice or approval voting, or retain the existing first-past-the-post system for districts and mayoral elections	8	12	12		9	9	8	1	8	11	8.67
C-9	Sections 1313 and 1315 (Petty Cash Funds; Registering Warrants): Study whether these provisions are needed in the charter.	12	11	9		12	10	11	12	6	8	10.11
C-5	Section 1100 (Merit Principle): Consider modernizing competitive examination language to better reflect current considerations for examining applicants for employment.	9	10	8		11	12	12	11	11	12	10.67

**Attachment 6
Summary of CRC's Recommended Charter Amendments**

(proposed changes to existing language shown in underline and strikeout)

§ 605 Compensation.

In addition to reimbursement for necessary traveling and other expenses actually incurred when on official duty in or out of the City on order of the City Council, commencing January 1, 2012, each member of the City Council shall receive as salary \$2,088.64 per month, and the Mayor shall receive as salary \$2,784.86 per month. Commencing January 1, 2027, each member of the City Council shall receive as salary \$6,000.00 per month, and the Mayor shall receive as salary \$9,000.00 per month.

In order to provide a cost of living adjustment, commencing on January 1, 2013, and annually on January 1 thereafter, the compensation of the Council and Mayor shall increase by a percentage equal to the percentage increase in the preceding October's twelve-month rolling average of the Consumer Price Index-Urban(CPI-U), or successor index, for San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, as determined by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Consumers. In no event shall the CPIU compensation adjustment exceed five percent per year, or result in a compensation decrease. The CPI-U base index year shall be calendar year 2012.

If a member of the City Council does not attend all meetings of the City Council called on order of the City Council and held during the month, his/her salary for such month shall be reduced by the sum equivalent to twenty percent of the month's salary for each meeting not attended unless he/she is absent on official duty with the consent of or on order of the City Council or is granted an excused absence by the City Council, or unless he/she is on personal leave. A member of the City Council shall be permitted four personal leave days per calendar year.

§ 606. Vacancies.

(a) In addition to any other cause from which vacancies in the City Council may occur, the office of the Mayor or Councilmember shall become vacant when that official:

- (1) Resigns or dies;
- (2) Is absent from all regular meetings of the Council for a period of sixty days consecutively from and after the last regular Council meeting attended by such member, unless by permission of the Council expressed in its official minutes;
- (3) Is convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude;

- (4) Ceases to be an elector of the City of Sunnyvale;
- (5) Ceases to maintain his/her principal place of residence within the City limits, and/or within the applicable District boundaries for a member elected by District, during such official's term of office; or
- (6) Is involuntarily removed pursuant to Article II of the Constitution of the State of California, as may be amended from time to time.
- (b) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Mayor or Councilmember, the Council shall officially declare the office vacant within thirty days of the commencement of any vacancy.
- (c) Within sixty days of the date the office is officially declared vacant, the City Council shall, by ~~affirmative vote of~~ at least four ~~of the remaining Councilmembers~~ affirmative votes, elect to fill the vacancy by appointment or by calling an election.
- (d) If the vacancy is filled by appointment, the appointee shall hold office until the next General Municipal Election or regularly scheduled Special Municipal Election consolidated with the next statewide general election, whichever occurs sooner, and a successor is elected and qualified. The Councilmember then elected shall serve for the remainder of any unexpired term, and until a successor is elected and qualified.
- (e) The City Council shall adopt an ordinance establishing a public process for appointment.
- (f) If the City Council elects to fill the vacancy by election or fails to fill the vacancy by appointment, it shall call an election to be held within two hundred and forty days of the date the vacancy is declared.
- (g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the City Council shall not make an appointment to fill a vacancy if the appointment would result in more than two Council members or one Councilmember and the Mayor currently serving on the Council as appointees, and shall call a Special Municipal Election to be held within one hundred and eighty days from the date the Council declares the vacancy.

§ 1314. Claims Against City.

(1) Except as otherwise required by the provisions of State law applicable to chartered cities, claims and demands against the City shall be presented and audited as prescribed by ordinance.

(2) The City Council shall prescribe by ordinance the monetary limits for an employee or employees to settle any claim or action against the City, or any officer, employee, board or department thereof in their official capacity. No claim or action against the City shall be settled for more than the amount set forth in the ordinance without the prior approval of the City Council.

§ 1309. Contracts on public works.

(a) Lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Unless an alternative project delivery method is authorized as provided in this section 1309, ~~Every~~ project involving an expenditure of more than an amount to be determined from time to time by ordinance of the City Council, for the construction or improvement (excluding maintenance and repair) of public buildings, works, streets, drains, sewers, utilities, parks and playgrounds, shall be let to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder after notice of publication in the official newspaper by one or more insertions, the first of which shall be at least ten days before the time for opening bids.

The City Council may reject any and all bids presented and may readvertise in its discretion.

The City Council, without advertising for bids, or after rejecting bids, or if no bids are received, may declare and determine that, in its opinion, the work in question may be performed better or more economically by the City with its own employees, and after adoption of a resolution to this effect by at least four affirmative votes it may proceed to have said work done in the manner stated, without further observance of the provisions of this section. Such contracts likewise may be let without advertising for bids, if such work shall be deemed by the City Council to be of urgent necessity for the preservation of life, health or property, shall be authorized by motion passed by at least four affirmative votes and containing a declaration of the facts constituting such urgency.

(b) Public Utility Projects. No advertising for bids or awarding of a contract based thereon shall be required when the improvement or work is to be furnished or performed by a public utility subject to the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in the California Public Contracts Code, this Charter, or any other law or regulation of the City of Sunnyvale, the use of best value alternative project delivery methods including, but not limited to, progressive design-build, construction manager at risk, fixed-price design-build, and design-build-operate contracts is authorized for all

public works projects. The City Council shall establish, by ordinance, regulations for the award, use, and evaluation of, and authority to approve, such contracts.

Attachment 7 Summary of Cost of Stand-Alone Special Election



Connie Verceles

RE: election cost

To: David Newswanger, Cc: David Carnahan

Inbox - D...@gmail.com June 17, 2025 at 6:26 PM

[Details](#)

Hello David,

Thank you for your patience as we gathered this information.

Staff is unable to provide exact costs—only estimates based on past expenses. Sunnyvale has not held a standalone special election since the Aug. 16, 2016 Special Election for At-Large Council Seat 4, which cost \$794,978.

Following former Councilmember Fong's resignation from Council ([RTC No. 21-0937](#)), the Registrar of Voters provided these estimates:

- April 12, 2022, estimated cost between \$1,937,773 and \$3,148,882
- June 7, 2022, estimated cost of \$227,188

Recent Registrar of Voters costs for Sunnyvale elections:

- Nov. 5, 2024, \$629,998 – Districts 2, 4 and 6, Office of Mayor, two Ballot Measures (E & F)
- Nov. 8, 2022, \$76,727 – Districts 3 and 5
- Nov. 3, 2020, \$262,201 – Districts 2, 4 and 6, Office of Mayor
- March 3, 2020, \$236,292 – Measure B – transition to district based elections
- Nov. 5, 2018, \$257,805 – Seats 1, 2 and 3
- Nov. 8, 2016, \$375,987 – Seats 4, 5, 6 and 7, two Ballot Measures (M & N)
- Aug. 16, 2016, \$794,978 – At-Large Seat 4

Please note that an election for the at-large mayor's office costs significantly more than any of the district council seats due to the large number of voters citywide versus in each council district.

For more precise estimates, the Registrar of Voters will need the specific office (mayor or council district) and proposed election date. The Registrar of Voters can take up to six weeks to prepare an estimate, although typically responds sooner than 6 weeks.

Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Thanks,
Connie

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules (Charter Section 611)

The goal of this survey was to determine if cities that are similarly situated with Sunnyvale arrange their meeting schedules to accommodate the personal vacation schedules of the council members or make other arrangements to provide more time off from the frequently scheduled meetings.

This preliminary survey looked at the current published schedules of city councils, city published budgets and population size.

This survey of city council meeting schedules focused upon SF Bay Area cities because all or nearly all are members of various regional wide administrations such as Bay Area Air District, Valley Transportation Authority, Bay Area Rapid Transit, etc.[see fuller list at end of this memo], and those cities' council members have assignments to participate in several of these regional organizations. Thus, besides the size and scope of each council member's city duties, the council member is also participating in these regional organizations. This may not be as true for more rural California council members or those in other regions of California.

This survey is still collecting data for the expenditures of each city. Financial management is considered a fiduciary responsibility of each council member, so the weight of this responsibility may factor into the need for accommodating personal time-off schedules.

Collecting financial data is challenging because the published reports for each city are not uniform. Most of the data herein has been validated by two sources, but further study, if warranted, should be done to validate all entries.

For example, some finance departments use a "Letter of Transmittal" from the finance department to the city council to provide a 'broad brush' overview of income and expenses. Other jurisdictions only post the budget documents which reflect the methodology used by the jurisdiction – some break income and expense in city-wide categories, while others, like Sunnyvale, match income with the expense – so grant money expenditures are separately accounted from general fund expenditures.

Therefore, some cities only publish to the public expenditures from their general fund, with expenditures from grants somewhat hidden from view. Also, the annually required ACFR – Annual Consolidated Financial Report" is very detailed and very complete but made for the accounting profession, not the general public.

In summary, it appears that meeting schedules are customized for the convenience of the public, rather than for the convenience of the council members. Several of the councils schedule time off for specific dates at the time the annual meeting schedule is published, while others seem to skip meetings ad hoc.

In short, this survey does not provide clear direction to the committee to guide recommendations that would conform to theoretical best practices.

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules (Charter Section 611)

Summary information

- 27 Bay area cities were surveyed to determine their city council meeting schedules.
- 21 of the surveyed cities regularly meet two times a month, typically two weeks apart and on the same day of the week each month.
 - 21 cities that meet 2X/month had smaller populations than Sunnyvale.
- 6 cities meet either 3 times a month or weekly.
 - Except for Palo Alto, these 6 cities had a larger population than Sunnyvale.
 - Population size does not correlate with the number of meetings/month
- We recorded the number of council members each city elected and the population of each city. Population size does not strictly relate to meeting frequency
 - Population size ranged from 9,947 to 969,655.
 - The number of elected city council members ranges from 5 to 11.
 - The number of elected city council members did not correlate with city population

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules
(Charter Section 611)

City	Scheduled Regular Meetings	Special Meetings	Comment	# of Council Members	Population	Annual Budget
Alameda	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Tuesday @ 1900 hrs		Schedule published on city website Charter specifies regular meetings to be set by City Council	5	75,353	\$260M
Belmont	2X/month on 2 nd & 4 th Tuesdays @ 1900 hrs		Schedule published on city website Belmont is a General Law city.	5	27,174	\$94M
Berkeley	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays @ 1800 hrs		Schedule published on city website. Special & closed sessions outnumber regular open sessions Charter specifies meetings to be set by City Council	9	118,962	\$793M
Burlingame	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Mondays @ 1900 hrs		Schedule published on legistar Burlingame is a General Law city	5	30,317	\$160M
Corte Madera	2x/month on 1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays @ 1830 hrs		Corte Madera is a General Law city	5	9,947	\$24M
Cupertino	2X/month on 2 nd & 4 th Tuesday @ 1845 hrs	Ad Hoc	22 meetings scheduled for calendar 2025 Cupertino is a General Law city	5	57,285	\$147M
Fremont	3X/month on first 3 Tuesdays each month.	Ad Hoc	No meetings in August. Fremont is a General Law city.	7	226,208	\$423M
Gilroy	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Monday.		Only 1 meeting in July Charter specifies Council will schedule at least one meeting/month	7	58,250	\$207M
Hayward	3X/month on 1 st , 3 rd & 4 th Tuesdays @ 1900 hrs		May add or cancel meetings on 1 st and 5 th Tuesday of each month. Charter specifies meetings schedule set by Council	7	162,954	\$417M

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules
(Charter Section 611)

City	Scheduled Regular Meetings	Special Meetings	Comment	# of Council Members	Population	Annual Budget
Los Altos	2X/month on Tuesdays @ 1900 hrs	Scheduled 1 special meeting each in November & December	Schedule published on city website Los Altos is a General Law City	5	29,990	\$65M
Menlo Park	2X/month on 2 nd & 4 th Tuesdays @ 1800 hrs	Ad Hoc	Schedule published on city website Menlo Park is a General Law City.	5	35,790	\$78M
Milpitas	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays @ 1900 hrs	Tuesdays @ 1730 hrs	Schedule published on city website Milpitas is a General Law City.	5	77,321	\$250M
Morgan Hill	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Wednesdays @ 1800 hrs.	Ad Hoc on 4 th Wednesday	Schedule published on city website Morgan Hill is a General Law city	5	44,478	\$109M
Mountain View	2X/month on 2 nd & 4 th Tuesday @ 1700 hrs	Ad Hoc, with 24 hr notice	Schedule published on legistar No Meetings in July & August Charter not found	7	81,785	\$649M
Oakland	2X/month on Tuesday @ 1730 hrs	Ad Hoc	Schedule published on city website Charter specifies meetings schedule to be set by "local bodies" and be held in the evening..	8	440,686	\$2.2B
Palo Alto	3X/month on 1 st 3 Mondays of each month @ 1730 hrs	Ad Hoc	Adopted a 5-week summer break in 2024 & 3-week winter break in 2023-2024 Charter specifies meetings schedule to be set by Council	7	65,882	\$1B
Redwood City	2X/month on 2 nd & 4 th Mondays @ 1800 hrs	Ad Hoc on 1 st Monday	Schedule published on city website Charter specifies meetings schedule to be 2x/month and set by Council	7	80,996	\$201M
Richmond	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays @ 1530 hrs	Ad Hoc special meetings on other Tuesdays	No meetings in August Charter specifies meetings schedule to be set by Council.	7	114,106	\$644M

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules
(Charter Section 611)

City	Scheduled Regular Meetings	Special Meetings	Comment	# of Council Members	Population	Annual Budget
San Francisco	3X/month @ 1400 hrs		City & County Board of Supervisors Charter specifies one meeting on the January 8 th each year and thereafter regular meetings to be scheduled by resolution	11	808,988	\$16B
San Jose	Weekly on Tuesday at 1330 hrs, unless cancelled	Scheduled evening meetings 2X per month	2025-2026 Calendar has 36 planned regular Tuesday meetings Charter specifies meetings schedule to be set by Council	11	969,655	\$6B
San Carlos	2X/month on 2 nd & 4 th Mondays @ 1900 hrs	Ad Hoc	San Carlos is a General Law City.	5	29,864	\$129M
San Mateo	2X/month @ 1900 hrs	Ad Hoc	3 meetings in 2025 cancelled for holiday observance. Schedule on city website Charter specifies Council shall meet on 1 st & 3 rd Monday of each month.	5	101,327	\$80M
San Rafael	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Mondays	Ad Hoc study sessions	Schedule published on city website Charter not found	5	59,555	\$112M
Santa Clara	2X/month on Tuesdays @ 1900 hrs.		Schedule published on legistar Charter specifies meetings schedule is 2X/month set by Council	7	131,062	\$2B
Santa Rosa	Usually weekly, at least 2X/month, typically on Tuesday @ 1600 hrs.		Schedule published on legistar Charter specifies meetings schedule is 2X/month on Tuesdays.	7	175,845	\$554M
Saratoga	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Wednesdays @ 1900 hrs		Schedule published on city website Saratoga is a General Law city	5	26,607	\$30M
Sunnyvale	2X/month on 1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays @ 1900 hrs.		Schedule published on legistar Charter specifies 2X/month as set by Council	5	151,967	\$780M

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules
(Charter Section 611)

Attachment 9

Sunnyvale Charter Review Committee Survey on Meeting Schedules (Charter Section 611)

Major San Francisco Regional Governmental Organizations

- [Association of Bay Area Governments \(ABAG\)](#): Serves as the region's council of governments, focusing on regional planning, collaboration, and providing services to local governments.
- [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) : Works to protect air quality in the region.
- [Bay Conservation and Development Commission \(BCDC\)](#): Regulates and plans for the San Francisco Bay and its shoreline.
- [Bay Area Rapid Transit District \(BART\)](#): Operates the BART regional rapid transit system.
- [Bay Area Regional Collaborative \(BARC\)](#): A collaboration of ABAG, MTC, BABAY AREA AIR DISTRICT, and BCDC, working together on regional issues.
- [Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency](#): Provides regional water resource planning
- [Caltrans \(California Department of Transportation\)](#): Oversees transportation infrastructure and services across the state, including the Bay Area.
- **Community Choice Energy Agencies**: [SVCE](#) and [PCE](#) provide electricity distribution
- [Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District](#): Manages the Golden Gate Bridge and related transportation services.
- [Metropolitan Transportation Commission \(MTC\)](#): Responsible for planning, financing, and coordinating transportation in the Bay Area
- [Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board \(Caltrain\)](#): Operates the Caltrain commuter rail service.
- [San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority \(WETA\)](#): Provides ferry service in the Bay Area.
- [Transbay Joint Powers Authority](#): Manages the Salesforce Transit Center.
- [Valley Transportation Authority \(VTA\)](#): Provides regional public transportation