

Form Name: Boards and Commissions Application
 Unique ID: 1441499858

Date Received: 3/13/26
 Voter registration verified:
 On:
 By: MH

Applicant Information

Name Sharmita Samanta

Are you a Sunnyvale resident? Yes

How long have you lived in Sunnyvale? 3 years

Description Area Residence Notice:Unless otherwise noted, your principal place of residence must be in Sunnyvale. You must live in Sunnyvale at the time of appointment and at all times during service on a board or commission.

Current Main Residence

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Description Area Employment NoticeCity of Sunnyvale employees may not serve on a board or commission.

I am a current City of Sunnyvale employee. No

Have you ever served on a City of Sunnyvale board or commission? No

Have you attended a meeting of the City Council, or a board or commission? No

Have you attended meetings of the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying? No

Board or Commission Selection

First Choice Arts Commission

Apply for another board or commission?1 Yes

Second Choice Sustainability Commission

Apply for another board or commission?2 Yes

Third Choice

Parks and Recreation Commission (R)

Applicant Qualifications

What motivated you to apply for this board or commission?

My passion for public service began when I served on the Youth Commission of my hometown, Thousand Oaks, for four years (ages 14-18) - including one year as Chair. During that time, I learned how to provide City Council with well-researched, actionable recommendations, navigate the responsibility of having a public voice (we had televised/public meetings, published minutes, community workshops etc) and helped launch Thousand Oaks' first-ever Youth Master Plan - a strategic initiative designed to address the evolving needs of the city's youth.

Since then, I have continued to volunteer in various capacities, sustaining my commitment to public service. Now that I have settled in Sunnyvale and am raising my family here, I am ready to pursue a long-term commitment to my home - one where I can contribute consistently and meaningfully to the city's future.

1) Parks & Recreation Board

Sunnyvale's parks, trails, and recreational programs are at the heart of what makes this city feel like home to me. I've experienced firsthand how these spaces bring people together - fostering friendships, community pride, and a true sense of belonging. Since moving here, I've been inspired by the rapid growth of our downtown, the opening of beautiful new parks like Corn Palace Park right near my home, and the city's ongoing investment in open spaces. As a parent of two young children, I love watching them explore, play, and grow in such a vibrant environment. I'm motivated to give back by helping ensure our parks remain safe, welcoming, and thoughtfully designed so they can continue enriching the lives of Sunnyvale's families.

2) Sustainability Board

Sunnyvale's commitment to environmental stewardship is both visionary and measurable, reflected in its leadership on climate action, waste reduction, and transparent progress reporting. I am inspired by the city's ability to pair ambitious sustainability goals with clear communication and community engagement. I want to help advance these efforts by fostering partnerships, encouraging adoption of sustainable practices among residents and businesses, and ensuring Sunnyvale continues to be recognized as a model of innovation, resilience, and accountability in addressing environmental challenges.

3) Arts Board

Sunnyvale's diversity is one of its greatest strengths, and the arts are a powerful way to celebrate that. I'm motivated to support programs that showcase local talent, reflect our community's cultural richness, and make creative opportunities accessible to everyone. I believe the arts can deepen connections among residents and enhance Sunnyvale's vibrant identity.

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

Since moving to Sunnyvale and starting a family here, I've become even more passionate about the spaces, programs, and values that shape our community. I want Sunnyvale to be a place where families can connect in our parks, creativity can flourish through the arts, and sustainability is woven into daily life.

For over twenty years, I've combined my professional skills in building impactful programs with a lifelong dedication to service - from expanding access to fresh foods through community gardens, to advocating for women and families, to launching initiatives that improve quality of life. My corporate experience in leading diverse teams and forging partnerships has taught me how to listen, collaborate, and act in ways that serve everyone.

I care deeply about this city and would be honored to bring my energy, vision, and commitment to these boards to help ensure Sunnyvale remains inclusive, inspiring, and sustainable.

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

My early experience in civics taught me that City Council depends on recommendations that are thoughtful, inclusive, grounded in accurate information, and built through consensus.

To effectively exercise a board/commission role in Sunnyvale, I would:

- Actively engage with the community (when appropriate) to understand diverse perspectives and priorities.
- Conduct thorough research and analysis to ensure advice is fact-based, relevant, and well-founded.
- Collaborate closely with fellow commission members to build consensus and present unified recommendations.
- Communicate clearly and respectfully so City Council receives concise, actionable guidance that supports informed decision-making.
- Maintain accountability and transparency in the process to earn public trust and reflect the city's values.

I aim to help City Council make decisions that inspire trust and create lasting impact for Sunnyvale's residents today and in the years ahead.

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

University of Southern California - MBA

University of California, San Diego - BS, Microbiology, minor: Healthcare/Social Issues

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

Board Member , The Women's Building: Advocated for social services for 25,000+ women and children annually

Team Member , Optum CSR: Built business plan to expand health literacy for underrepresented communities, particularly women

Marketing, Fountain Community Gardens: Increased access to fresh foods for families; Designed new marketing strategies and secured funding

Volunteer , Comprehensive Research Center for Health Disparities: Researched effect of socioeconomic status on obesity for children

Description Area

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

Do you have any concerns related to the above code and policy? No

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

Board or Commission-Specific Questions**Arts Commission**

What role do you think public art plays in a city?

Public art, whether physical, literary, performing, or other, brings together communities and expands our horizons. It creates shared experiences, sparks conversation, and introduces new ideas into our everyday environments. In Silicon Valley's fast-paced, tech-focused world, it offers a tangible, human counterbalance to technology. Public art activates spaces, encourages curiosity, supports local artists, and makes cities more engaging and accessible for people of all ages.

For me, one big outlet is Sunnyvale's Public Art - especially downtown pieces. I watch my toddler engage with the art, drawn to its colors, textures, and scale. Each month his experience changes as he grows taller or develops new skills, seeing the same piece in a new way. My teenage stepdaughters view it through a social lens - capturing photos to share with friends and planning return visits because "this is SO cool." My partner and I often experience a piece differently, yet it sparks connection between us.

A city is not just buildings and infrastructure, but a living culture shaped by creativity and human expression. Public art humanizes our environment, fosters connection, and enriches civic life in ways policy alone cannot.

How might the City strengthen art programs in the community?

Public art has the power to connect people across ages, abilities, and backgrounds - something I see in my own family. That's why I believe the City can strengthen art programs by making them more inclusive, interactive, and accessible for all residents. I would be interested in focusing in 5 key areas. These are aligned to the guiding principles outlined in the Master Plan for Public Art.

Investing In Our Future/Increasing Youth Engagement

Ideas could include digital-meets-physical projects, art competitions, including social media with art pieces, partner with schools to integrate public art, and encourage student involvement in design and installation.

Sustainability in Art

Prioritize eco-friendly materials, renewable energy features (like solar lighting), and art that doubles as green infrastructure (e.g., living walls, pollinator gardens). Host workshops where youth and residents create art from recycled or reclaimed materials, turning environmental education into hands-on creativity.

Digital Innovation

Use augmented reality to layer interactive experiences onto public art, create virtual tours for homebound residents, and promote programs through both digital platforms and physical spaces - engaging tech-savvy residents while encouraging in-person participation.

Community-Led Art

Design projects where residents collaborate with artists - murals painted together, sculptures built from community-sourced materials, or installations based on local stories.

Partnerships

Work with schools, libraries, and local businesses to host workshops, exhibitions, and performances, ensuring art is accessible to all neighborhoods and income levels.

Sunnyvale can make public art a living, evolving force that inspires, teaches, and connects.

The Sunnyvale Public Art collection includes sculptures and other physical art. As an Arts Commissioner, how would you prioritize the inclusion of visual, literary, interactive and performing arts to embody the cultures of our diverse community?

Sunnyvale's public art collection has a strong foundation in sculptures and other physical installations. As an Arts Commissioner, my prioritization would be guided by three principles: Cultural Representation & Equity, Accessibility & Engagement, and Innovation & Sustainability.

Cultural Representation & Equity means actively identifying which cultures, languages, and traditions are underrepresented in our current collection, and commissioning projects that authentically reflect those voices.

Accessibility & Engagement means choosing projects and the right art medium, that invite participation and are physically, linguistically, and economically accessible.

Innovation & Sustainability means integrating eco-conscious materials, blending digital and physical mediums, and creating art that can evolve over time.

I would encourage cross-disciplinary projects that merge art forms to keep Sunnyvale's collection dynamic.

Using these principles, I would assess the collection to identify gaps and ensure growth across visual, literary, interactive, and performing arts in proportion to the needs and interests of our community. This approach creates a living, multi-sensory reflection of Sunnyvale's diversity, fosters community pride, and ensures our public art remains inclusive, engaging, and forward-thinking.

Park and Recreation Commission

Community demographics are constantly changing. What do you think are the principal issues the commission may be addressing over the next two years?

Over the next two years, I believe the Parks & Recreation Commission will focus on adapting services to meet the needs of a rapidly changing community. First, inclusive programming will be essential - offering events, classes, and recreational opportunities that reflect Sunnyvale's cultural diversity and are accessible across languages, abilities, and income levels. Second, we will need to balance intergenerational needs, expanding facilities and activities for both youth/families and older adults, and fostering spaces where generations can connect. Third, as housing density increases, maximizing limited park space will become critical, requiring creative multi-use designs and amenities. Finally, sustainability and climate resilience will guide facility updates and landscaping, ensuring parks remain safe, comfortable, and environmentally responsible. Addressing these issues will help parks and recreation continue to be a source of community pride and well-being for all residents.

How could we improve our parks and recreation infrastructure and programming to better serve our diverse community?

Sunnyvale already has a great parks and recreation program. But, to continue to drive more engagement, I would expand parks and recreation programming to reach more areas of Sunnyvale, bringing activities into different neighborhoods and park spaces across the city. Events and classes could be designed to reflect our community's cultural diversity - showcasing traditions, languages, food, music, and art from a wide range of backgrounds. By offering programs in multiple locations and formats, we can engage more residents, strengthen connections between neighborhoods, and make Sunnyvale's parks welcoming to everyone.

Sustainability Commission

Category One: I'm a Sunnyvale resident.

Yes

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

In the next few years, I think the commission will focus on reducing environmental impact and building climate resilience in our community. Key issues may include expanding renewable energy use, improving waste reduction and recycling programs, promoting water conservation, and encouraging sustainable transportation options. We'll also need to address how parks, public spaces, and city facilities can adapt to extreme weather and support biodiversity. By tackling these areas, Sunnyvale can protect resources, improve quality of life, and serve as a model for sustainable growth.

Description Area

View the Climate Action Playbook

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

What are your thoughts on the Playbook? How might the actions ("Plays") be improved? The Playbook is a strong, comprehensive plan with clear targets. With AI enhancing our ability to work smarter and faster, I'm curious how it could help Sunnyvale accelerate its "plays" - for example, by improving community engagement, enabling real-time tracking of progress, and optimizing resources to meet targets more efficiently, etc.

Fair Political Practices Commission Statement of Economic Interests

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

Radio Button Yes

Voter Registration Requirement

Description Area If you are applying for the Board of Library Trustee, Heritage Preservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Personnel Board or the Planning Commission, you must be a registered voter in Sunnyvale.

Are you currently a registered voter in Sunnyvale? Yes

When was the last time you voted? Month/Year 2024

Your Agreement

Description Area

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

I agree

Yes

Your full name

Sharmita Samanta

DateMar 13, 2026
