

Board and Commission Study Issue Form



Sunnyvale

The Study Issues process is designed to assist City Council with setting priorities for the coming calendar year. Board and commission members have two roles in this process:

1. To advise Council regarding the identification of policy issues to study, within their relevant area of authority;
2. To advise Council on those issues Council has decided to study.

The study issues process should focus on considering a new or revised ordinance, new or expanded service delivery program, changes to existing Council Policy, or amendments to the General Plan. The Study Issues Form is designed to focus board and commissioner members' ideas on potential policy study issues, and provide the opportunity for staff feedback and guidance in a transparent process. *Board members or commissioners may only fill out a form for study issue ideas within their purview.*

Date Submitted to Staff Liaison:

Board/ Commission: Human Relations Commission

Submitted by: Paulina Zapata

Study Issue Working Title: Flag Raising Policy

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated this study?

I am proposing this study to promote greater inclusivity, diversity, and equity in our city. Nearly 50% of Sunnyvale residents are from another country, and I believe that recognizing their national independence days through ceremonial flag raisings at City Hall would make them feel valued, welcomed, and truly part of our community. I have seen similar programs in cities such as San Francisco, Milpitas, and San Jose, where this practice has strengthened civic pride and cross-cultural understanding.

Currently, Sunnyvale does not have a formal process or policy for such recognition, leaving a gap in how we honor the multicultural fabric of our population. A study is needed to explore key policy questions: What legal or policy frameworks govern the display of non-U.S. flags on public property? How should requests be submitted, evaluated, and scheduled? What guidelines will ensure fairness and equitable representation among all cultural groups?

2. Staff Summary of Scope and/or Comments: [Staff Use Only]

The City Council has previously considered requests to fly international flags on City-owned flagpoles and chose not to move forward. Sunnyvale has no policy that allows commemorative displays of international flags; under Council Policy 7.3.30, ceremonial flags may only be displayed through Council-adopted resolutions, which has guided past decisions to display the Pride, Transgender Pride, and POW/MIA flags. While some nearby cities allow international or cultural flags and others limit displays to U.S. and California flags, Sunnyvale has not adopted such a practice. If Council were to revisit this issue, several questions would need to be addressed, including whether international flag displays are consistent with the City's intent that flag displays constitute government speech, what criteria should guide recognition of countries,

and how to manage the logistical, fiscal, and staffing impacts. Larger cities such as San José and Fremont have greater resources for these type of events, whereas Sunnyvale would need to consider limits and prioritization to ensure feasibility.