

# CRC Subcommittee #2 Report

## 2A2 Compensation 605

### Study City Council salaries and compensation.

#### **Staff Comment for 4/3/25**

The Council requested that the CRC study this item and CRC discussion did not indicate any objection.

#### **Impact (problem being solved, nature and degree of public benefit, consequence of not changing)**

Sunnyvale's budget is about \$750 million/year and serves 152,000 people. We need very high quality council members with enough time and energy to make good decisions on policy and budget for our city. To get high quality people, we should pay our council members fairly. We should not expect council members to "donate" a lot of their time to the city.

The consequence of not changing is that we do not get many candidates competing with each other and many highly skilled people are excluded from consideration because they cannot afford to be council members due to the amount of time it requires and it not paying enough to live in Sunnyvale. We have had 2 recent council races where there was only 1 candidate. We were lucky that these were both excellent candidates but we have also not that long ago had an extremely poor candidate get onto City Council who would not sign Sunnyvale's code of ethics and repeatedly violated that code. It would be best to have many well qualified candidates running for our council.

#### **Major alternatives to explore (bullets)**

1) Tie council member pay to the median household income for the City of Sunnyvale according to the most recent figures from the US Census Bureau. From <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sunnyvalecitycalifornia/INC110223> as of 2023 the median is \$181,862 and if the job of a council member is 1/2 a full time job, this would make their salary for the current year about \$90K. If the role of mayor is 3/4 time or full time, pay that fraction of the median household income. Or maybe use the county median.

2) Adjust council member pay to a new base rate and have it adjust with inflation.

3) Tie to the median department head salary (1 level down from City Manager) or some number derived from the classified salaries.

## **Key issues, questions, clarifications needed from Council**

- 1) How much time do council members spend doing their job?
- 2) What do council members think a fair rate of pay is?
- 3) What are the additional council responsibilities outside their 24 council meetings?
- 4) What do council members think their job description should be?
- 5) Can we do some polling, focus groups, or other public discussion on this issue?

## **Priority (High, Med., or Low)**

High

## **Rationale for selected Priority**

Being a council member can be very stressful. Our council members set the direction of our city and how the city spends money. This is an extremely important job.

Who can afford to be a council member?

## **Where is this topic already covered in city muni code, policies, or website?**

It exists only in the city charter which is part of the city muni code.

## **Background, Research, References, Discussion**

It is unfortunate that there is a trend where people distrust our government. Yet for our government to function well we need a government for and by the people so that people DO trust our government and are willing to fairly pay those we elect to make decisions on our behalf.

Sunnyvale Council members seem to work about half time and the mayor 3/4 to full time.

As of 2023 Sunnyvale's Mayor has a salary of \$43,847/year (retirement and health contribution \$38,689) and council members approximately \$34,000/year (retirement and health contribution approximately \$24,000)

As of 2023 Berkeley has a pop 119K, budget \$724 million -  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2023-2024-Adopted-Budget-Book.pdf>.  
Berkeley's Mayor has a salary of \$123,681/year (retirement and health contribution \$13,022) and council members approximately \$81,000/year (retirement and health contribution approximately \$40,000). Reference:  
<https://publicpay.ca.gov/Reports/PositionRpts.aspx?year=2023&rpt=1&entityid=61>

The City of Hayward in Alameda County as of 2024 has a population of 162,000 and a budget of \$400 million/year. In 2023, it gave a raise to its mayor \$41,958 to \$69,288 and council members \$26,224 to \$43,305 because it wanted "to enable individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds to serve on the council by removing compensation as a barrier" (<https://eastbayecho.com/2023/11/07/hayward-city-council-gives-itself-a-raise/>)

All California government salaries are available for review at <https://publicpay.ca.gov/>

## 2A4 Presiding Officer. Mayor 607

Study the role of Mayor, including whether the position should be full time.

### **Staff Comment for 4/3/25**

The Council requested that the CRC study this item. CRC discussion indicated interest in studying whether mayor is/should be a full-time role, considering the City's size and regional importance.

### **Impact (problem being solved, nature and degree of public benefit, consequence of not changing)**

Charter reference: **607. Presiding Officer. Mayor.**

The Mayor shall be the presiding officer of the City Council and have a voice and vote in all its proceedings. He/she shall be the official head of the City for all ceremonial purposes. He/she shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this Charter or as may be imposed by the City Council consistent with his/her office.

- Has the City of Sunnyvale outgrown a part time Mayor role?
  - As our community continues to expand in complexity and population, dedicated leadership is needed to maintain responsive governance and ensure accountable representation
- Increased demands for the role as the city grows and more complexity is added
  - Development, affordable housing, infrastructure and community engagement
  - Would engagement improve if the Mayor role was full time?

- Does a part time Mayor role enable the person to attend all the responsibilities and fulfill the current job?
- A full time mayor could be more accessible and engaged
- Added value of a full time Mayor would be more time to lobby on behalf of Sunnyvale at State and Federal levels
  - Should that be a mayoral role or a hired city employee?
- Would ensure availability during business hours
  - More accessible to Staff, Council members, citizens and public.

### **Major alternatives to explore (bullets)**

- Leaving the role part time - The authority of the Mayor is currently tempered as we are a City manager run city.
  - Would there need to be any increase in the role, authority of the Mayor?
- Fiscal Impact of a full time Mayor and support staff
- Leaving Mayor role at part time and hiring full time staff as State and Federal Lobbyist to work for Sunnyvale

### **Key issues, questions, clarifications needed from Council**

- Need a job description for the role of Mayor with set expectations for what a full time role will be responsible for.
- What is the fiscal impact of a full time Mayor?
  - Cost benefit
- What is the fiscal impact of the support staff necessary for a full time Mayor?

### **Priority (High, Med., or Low)**

High

### **Rationale for selected Priority**

The job of Mayor is a lot of work, a lot of diplomacy and responsibility. The City of Sunnyvale is growing and has grown. Determining if a full time Mayor is necessary to properly represent the City and citizens is important.

**Where is this topic already covered in city muni code, policies, or website?**

Not covered

**Background, Research, References, Discussion**

Discussions with previous council people in Sunnyvale and other Santa Clara County cities.  
Discussions with business representatives about the impact to them with a full time or part time Mayor

# 2A5 Redistricting 609

## Study establishing rules for empaneling redistricting commissions.

### **Staff Comment for 4/3/25**

The current Charter provides that the Council shall adopt an ordinance establishing a public process for redistricting. The ordinance is codified in Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 2.31. CRC comment indicated interest in studying whether the requirements for redistricting commissions should be changed and/or moved into the Charter. Links to the SMC and the City's website for the redistricting process following the 2020 census are on the resource list.

### **Impact (problem being solved, nature and degree of public benefit, consequence of not changing)**

Previous legislation only covered the 2020 Redistricting and was designed only for that period. It was part of the plan to introduce a more permanent solution with a charter amendment before the 2030 census. Unfortunately, American politics in the last 15 years have shown that fair and just districting is fundamental to democracy. Without well designed districting processes, there is temptation to create bespoke district lines that advantage specific groups. We have broad consensus that Sunnyvale aspires to fairness and justice in all areas. It begins with how we choose our leaders. Having a process in place for redistricting that is approved directly by the voters is the best practice for redistricting.

### **Major alternatives to explore (bullets)**

- Sunnyvale's 2020-2021 process was largely successful. The inclusion of alternates and their participation was slightly unusual.
- Berkeley has detailed provisions for redistricting in their charter with a selection process that includes city council appointing members and then those members appointing more members.
- San Francisco has detailed provisions for redistricting in their charter. An unusual provision worthy of examination is that redistricting only occurs if current district maps are no longer legal.
- Santa Clara County has a provision for selecting some members randomly from a pool of qualified candidates. The commission was chaired by a well-known Sunnyvale resident.

### **Key issues, questions, clarifications needed from Council**

- A declaration of intent and principles from the Council would be helpful. This could look like "City Council would like to enshrine the principle of voters choosing their representatives through fair and transparent elections, not the other way around."

- The level of independence from elected bodies is always a major point of discussion when designing redistricting processes. A lack of independence can lead to at least a perception of politicians choosing their voters. Too much independence risks denying the cover of democratic legitimacy to the body. Finding the right balance is key.

### **Priority (High, Med., or Low)**

High

### **Rationale for selected Priority**

In a time of skepticism and cynicism towards government, it is even more important than usual to have rock solid structures and processes that are beyond reproach. Redistricting is fundamental to both fair elections and voter rights. City council recognized this in 2019 and included a section in the charter titled 'Transition to City Council Districts.' The transition is complete and the charter should be updated to include redistricting.

### **Where is this topic already covered in city muni code, policies, or website?**

Municipal Code 2.31 covers redistricting. Section 602 of the charter is titled "Transition to City Council Districts." This section does not reference redistricting specifically and could be construed to only apply to the 2020 election.

### **Background, Research, References, Discussion**

Berkeley Charter: <https://berkeley.municipal.codes/Charter>

San Francisco Charter:

[https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san\\_francisco/latest/sf\\_charter/0-0-0-52610](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_charter/0-0-0-52610)

Santa Clara County 2021 Redistricting:

<https://ceo.santaclaracounty.gov/2021-redistricting-process>

## 2A6 Regular Meetings 611

Consider changing the Charter provision that requires two council meetings per month to instead require at least 24 meetings per year.

### **Staff Comment for 4/3/25**

This issue was on the November 2024 ballot in a combined question with gender-neutral language and removing voter registration requirements for board and commission members. The measure failed. CRC indicated interest in studying this issue, and staff also continues to support this change, which would provide greater scheduling flexibility while maintaining the same minimum number of meetings per year. Ballot information is available in the resources list.

### **Impact (problem being solved, nature and degree of public benefit, consequence of not changing)**

The current requirements of having two meetings per month are inflexible and do not conform to the needs of the city. This inflexibility makes council member absences more likely and also means work is distributed between meetings less consistently. Relaxing the requirements to just 24 meetings per year offers flexibility that will serve the city better.

### **Major alternatives to explore (bullets)**

- Change the requirement from bimonthly meetings to 24 meetings per year

### **Key issues, questions, clarifications needed from Council**

None foreseen

### **Priority (High, Med., or Low)**

High

### **Rationale for selected Priority**

This is a small technical change. It should be non-controversial

### **Where is this topic already covered in city muni code, policies, or website?**

Charter Article VI, Section 611

### **Background, Research, References, Discussion**

none

## 2C13 Franchises Article XVI

### Study potential revisions to franchise authority.

#### **Staff Comment for 4/3/25**

Some CRC members expressed interest in revisions to the franchise provisions in the Charter to preserve more flexibility for Sunnyvale. Historically, the City has adopted ordinances addressing details of granting specific types of franchises, pursuant to the authority set forth in the Charter. The SMC provisions for certain types of franchises are linked in the resource list.

#### **Impact (problem being solved, nature and degree of public benefit, consequence of not changing)**

Investigation of other city charters and state law around franchises leads to the conclusion that there is little to no benefit to be gained by substantively changing this section of the charter.

#### **Major alternatives to explore (bullets)**

None – suggestion is to drop this as a topic of deliberation

#### **Key issues, questions, clarifications needed from Council**

None

#### **Priority (High, Med., or Low)**

Low

#### **Rationale for selected Priority**

Sunnyvale's charter is not particularly unique on franchises. Surveying California city charters, it is apparent that cities with more competition on telecommunications services or other franchises do not have unique charter provisions. A close reading of Sunnyvale's charter section on franchises likewise does not indicate that any provisions are hindering competition in franchise areas.

#### **Where is this topic already covered in city muni code, policies, or website?**

Charter Article XVI

#### **Background, Research, References, Discussion**

Santa Monica Charter: <https://ecode360.com/42743285>

Loma Linda Charter: <https://ecode360.com/print/LO4960?guid=42464270>

Los Altos Hills Community Fiber: <https://lahcommunityfiber.org/>