

Form Name: Boards and Commissions Application  
Unique ID: 1451251710

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Voter registration verified:  
On: \_\_\_\_\_  
By: MH

## Applicant Information

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<b>Name</b>	Nilraj Kumar
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<b>Are you a Sunnyvale resident?</b>	Yes
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<b>How long have you lived in Sunnyvale?</b>	9 years
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<b>Description Area</b>	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.
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<b>Current Main Residence</b>	[REDACTED]
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<b>Email</b>	[REDACTED]
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<b>Phone</b>	[REDACTED]
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<b>Description Area</b>	Employment NoticeCity of Sunnyvale employees may not serve on a board or commission.
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<b>I am a current City of Sunnyvale employee.</b>	No
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<b>Have you ever served on a City of Sunnyvale board or commission?</b>	No
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<b>Have you attended a meeting of the City Council, or a board or commission?</b>	Yes
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**Briefly describe what you learned by watching or attending a meeting of the City Council, board or commission. What improvements would you suggest?**

I attended a sustainability meeting in Sunnyvale where the city shared its plans to address climate change. Out of about 20 attendees, my brother and I were the only youth present. This shows that there is a need to involve more youth in these discussions. The city could improve youth participation by doing more outreach and by explaining topics in simpler, more accessible language so that everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas.

I have also watched several housing and human services, human relations, and planning commission meetings. While these meetings are very detailed, the information can sometimes be difficult for the general public to understand. The city already provides summaries, but they could go further by using AI tools to create clearer, more simplified summaries. These summaries should be easy to find and accessible for people watching on Zoom, YouTube, or attending in person. Making information easier to understand would help more residents stay informed and engaged in local decision-making.

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**Have you attended meetings of the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying?** Yes

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**How many meetings have you attended?** 3+

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### **Board or Commission Selection**

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**First Choice** Housing and Human Services Commission

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**Apply for another board or commission?1** Yes

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**Second Choice** Arts Commission

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**Apply for another board or commission?2** Yes

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**Third Choice** ~~Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission~~

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**Applicant Qualifications**

Applicant removed the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission from their selection on April 16.

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**What motivated you to apply for this board or commission?**

I am motivated to apply for a commission because I have a strong interest in local government and its impact on the community. In the future, I hope to pursue a career in law or politics, and I believe this opportunity will provide valuable, firsthand experience in public service.

Through my leadership as the Program Lead for The Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce 2025 Summer Internship, I learned that many local businesses are struggling financially and often operate on very limited margins. This experience gave me insight into the real challenges faced by business owners in our community. Additionally, I founded Pluto Youth Internships, an organization that connects high school students with local businesses. Through this work, I help businesses address areas where they need support while also creating meaningful internship opportunities for students.

Serving on a commission would allow me to apply what I have learned to help address community challenges. I am particularly interested in promoting inclusivity in the arts, ensuring that youth voices are considered in decisions related to housing and human services, and improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. I believe my perspective as a young community member would bring fresh ideas and valuable insight to the commission.

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

I bring leadership, community engagement, marketing expertise, and strong initiative. As the founder of Pluto Youth Internships, I connect high school students with local businesses to support them in marketing, web design, digital strategy, etc. I have also demonstrated these qualities through my experience as the Founder and Marketing Officer of Kidzrw.com (2020-2021), a blogging platform for children to write and read articles during the COVID-19 pandemic. The site featured kid-safety tools and grew into a national community with over 1,000 articles written by young contributors from across the United States. In my role, I led marketing initiatives, recruited over half of the participating writers, and organized weekly meetings that encouraged collaboration and creativity. We also got the chance to interview Mayor Larry Klein about initiatives he was working on during COVID-19. After this, we wrote multiple articles about the interview.

Additionally, my extensive involvement in Speech and Debate (since 2020) has strengthened my communication, leadership, and perseverance. Competing primarily in Congressional debate and Declamation, I have earned multiple distinctions, including three bronze medals at Nationals, fourth place at the State level, two golds at the National Online Forensics competition, and top placements at prestigious tournaments such as James Logan, Dempsey Cronin, and Stanford. I have also received the annual Director's Award three times, an honor reserved for the top 8 percent of debaters at my institute, Athens Debate.

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**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?**

If I were part of the Housing and Human Services Commission, I would focus on supporting unhoused individuals in our community by making sure their opinions are seen and accounted for. I would focus on two things:

1. Gathering data and stories from affected people to understand core reasons for homelessness and how to improve our current programs. Segment the data so the core problems are available to the City Council. City Council needs to understand this to make changes or implement new housing/human service programs
2. I will organize community events that provide homeless individuals with resources, services, and opportunities to improve their lives. These events could provide access to food, housing assistance, job resources, and support programs while also bringing the community together to show care and compassion. My goal would be to create opportunities that help people move toward stability and feel supported by their community.

If selected to serve on the Arts Commission, I would focus on helping residents connect more deeply with Sunnyvale's public art. While many people enjoy the artwork throughout the city, they often don't know the stories behind it. Understanding the artist's perspective and the meaning behind a piece can greatly increase its impact and help residents feel a stronger connection to their community. I would do this in 2 ways

1. I would work on creating a system that shares the stories behind Sunnyvale's public art through QR codes placed near each piece. When residents scan the code, they can quickly learn about the artist, the inspiration behind the artwork. This would make public art more interactive and educational for the community.
2. I would also prioritize creating opportunities for residents to showcase their own art. Many people in Sunnyvale are passionate about creating art, even though it is not their full-time profession. I would organize community art events where residents can display their work, share their creativity, and engage with others. These events would help celebrate local talent and strengthen Sunnyvale's artistic community. Through these efforts, I hope to make art in Sunnyvale more accessible, meaningful, and community-centered.

If selected for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission, I would prioritize improving pedestrian safety throughout the community. I am especially interested in supporting safer street design, including well-marked crosswalks, better lighting, and traffic-calming measures in high-risk areas. I would also advocate for improvements near schools, parks, and busy intersections where pedestrians are most vulnerable. In addition, I believe community awareness and education are important, so I would support outreach efforts that help residents better understand safe walking practices and traffic rules. By focusing on both

infrastructure and education, I hope to help create a safer, more accessible environment for all pedestrians in Sunnyvale.

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

I am a high school student in Sunnyvale, where I strive to contribute to my community through leadership, academic excellence, and service. I currently serve as the President of the Lost in a Poem Club, a book and poetry club that explores literature addressing global and social issues such as racism, war, death, and peace. At each meeting, I lead group discussions analyzing how the selected work conveys its central themes and guide related creative activities. For example, during National Poetry Month, our club read a poetry collection about loss and then wrote original poems reflecting our own experiences. In addition to this role, I serve as a Student Ambassador, representing my school and helping to welcome new students into our community. I have also maintained placement on the Honor Roll since middle school, reflecting my dedication to academic achievement and consistent effort across all areas of study.

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

As the Program Lead for the Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce Internship (2025), I played an active role in fostering community engagement and supporting local businesses. During the summer program, I led a team of over 24 interns who collaborated with local businesses to gather valuable data and create community-focused content. Together, we produced more than 60 videos highlighting local enterprises and spearheaded a project to redesign the Chamber's website. The internship concluded with a formal presentation that I led, where I shared our findings, creative work, and overall impact with councilmembers and community leaders. Building on this experience, this year, I founded my own business, Pluto Youth Internships. I have provided internship opportunities to over 15 students and supported the growth of five businesses I plan to continue expanding this program to reach more students and help a greater number of businesses thrive, while further strengthening connections within the Sunnyvale community.

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**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.

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

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

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## Board or Commission-Specific Questions

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### Arts Commission

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

Public art in Sunnyvale brings so much more than just something nice to look at-it brings life, color, and a sense of connection to the community. Walking past murals or sculptures can instantly make someone happy. Art has always been a big part of who I am, not just something I observe but something I actively create. I love painting and drawing because they give me a way to express ideas and emotions that are sometimes hard to put into words. But more than anything, poetry (literary art) is where I feel most connected to myself and others. There's something powerful about being able to capture a feeling or moment through words and knowing someone else might read it and feel understood. I have a poetry club in my school-to create a space where people, especially young writers, can share their voices without fear. It's a place where creativity feels safe and where everyone's story matters. Through this, I've seen how art can bring people together in a really genuine way. Poetry has also been a huge part of my journey personally. I've won many poetry awards in school and have been published in the book A Celebration of Poets.

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**How might the City strengthen art programs in the community?**

The City can strengthen its arts programs by sharing the stories behind the art that make our community unique. There is a wide range of public art in Sunnyvale, but many residents are not aware of the meaning, message, or artists behind these works. If appointed to the Arts Commission, I would prioritize making these stories more accessible-highlighting both the artists and the inspiration behind their work. The art commission is currently working on Hands-on arts and humanities programs. This is a great idea to foster creativity and fun among Sunnyvale residents. I would recommend marketing this more through social media and working with other organizations to get the word out about this program.

One idea I would implement is incorporating QR codes alongside public art pieces, allowing residents to scan and learn more about each installation easily. This simple addition would create a more interactive and educational experience, helping people feel more connected to the art around them.

Additionally, I would focus on increasing opportunities for local artists to showcase their work. Sunnyvale is home to many talented artists, but many have full-time jobs and limited time or resources to organize exhibitions. I would propose hosting a community "Art Day," where local artists can present their work in a professional, welcoming space. This event would not only support artists but also foster greater community engagement and provide residents with a meaningful and enjoyable cultural experience.

Finally, I believe strongly in the role art plays in supporting mental well-being. Studies have shown that engagement with the arts can positively impact mental health. I would advocate for expanding access to arts programs in schools, including free or low-cost classes and creating safe, non-judgmental spaces where students can express themselves creatively.

Overall, my goal would be to make art more visible, accessible, and impactful throughout the Sunnyvale community.

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**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?**

Being on the Arts Commission, I would prioritize ensuring that all communities in Sunnyvale are represented across visual, literary, interactive, and performing arts. Our city's diversity should be reflected not only in public art displays but also in the types of artistic experiences available to residents.

One way to achieve this is by organizing inclusive art shows and interactive community events that highlight different cultural perspectives. These events would provide opportunities for residents to engage directly with artists and their work, fostering a deeper sense of connection and understanding.

While Sunnyvale has a strong presence of visual art, I would work to expand the visibility of literary arts, such as poetry and storytelling, by incorporating them into public programs and events. Additionally, I would support greater access to performing arts by promoting local theater, drama, music, and dance performances that reflect the cultural richness of our community. By broadening the range of artistic expression and ensuring inclusive representation, we can create a more vibrant, engaging, and culturally reflective arts environment in Sunnyvale.

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## ~~Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission~~

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~~Category One: I am a bicyclist or pedestrian residing in Sunnyvale.~~ Yes

Applicant removed the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission from their selection on April 16.

~~Like many Santa Clara County cities, Sunnyvale is faced with problems stemming from traffic congestion and air pollution. Suggest ways the City can improve facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. Also, how might the City improve education and safety programs for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians?~~

Bicycle and Pedestrian Commissions have historically focused on supporting both cyclists and pedestrians; however, at this time, there is a clear and urgent need to place greater emphasis on pedestrian safety and accessibility. Pedestrians represent some of the most vulnerable road users, and current conditions indicate that more targeted attention is necessary to ensure their protection.

Personally, I love biking with my friends and walking my dog, but a significant concern, particularly among parents, is the safety of students biking or walking. Many families are reluctant to allow their children to walk or bike due to the risk of traffic-related accidents. There have been multiple instances where my friends commuting by bicycle have been injured in collisions with vehicles, underscoring the seriousness of this issue.

To address these challenges, the Commission should prioritize pedestrian-focused initiatives while continuing to support broader multimodal transportation goals. This includes expanding education for all road users-motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. Special attention should be given to driver awareness, particularly in school zones, where students are at increased risk. Additionally, the City should implement accessible educational programs, such as interactive online workshops and community outreach efforts, to promote safe practices and shared responsibility on the road. By prioritizing pedestrian safety and strengthening public education, the Commission can help foster a safer, more inclusive environment that encourages walking, biking, and other forms of sustainable transportation.

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~~Description Area~~

View the Active Transportation Plan

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~~Have you read the Active Transportation Plan?~~

Yes

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~~What are your thoughts on the  
Active Transportation Plan?~~

The Active Transportation Plan includes bicycle improvements, pedestrian improvements, and Safe Routes to School programs. I like how clearly it prioritizes safety, connectivity, and making walking and biking accessible for all ages and abilities. It focuses on building a connected, low-stress network across the city rather than isolated projects.

A key challenge is implementation speed, since projects depend on funding and can take years to complete. In addition, some areas may not yet feel fully safe or comfortable for new or younger cyclists, and community awareness of long-term transportation plans could be improved.

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~~Description Area~~

View the Vision Zero Plan

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~~Have you read the Vision Zero  
Plan?~~

Yes

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~~What are your thoughts on the  
Vision Zero Plan?~~

The Vision Zero approach is a strong and well-designed strategy for improving road safety because it prioritizes eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Its focus on data-driven decision-making helps the city identify high-risk corridors and target improvements where they are most needed, rather than relying on guesswork. The plan also does a good job emphasizing practical safety upgrades like protected bike lanes, safer crosswalks, and traffic calming measures, which directly make streets safer and more comfortable. In addition, its attention to Safe Routes to School shows a clear commitment to protecting students and encouraging safer walking and biking habits from a young age. Overall, it is a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to building a safer, more connected transportation system.

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**Housing and Human Services Commission**

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**Evaluate the quality and adequacy of the housing programs that serve the Sunnyvale community.**

Sunnyvale offers a range of housing programs, including Below Market Rate (BMR) and Affordable Rental Units (ARUs), Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Sunnyvale is also planning a 5-year strategic plan to address homelessness. These programs serve low-income individuals, working low-income households, and people experiencing chronic homelessness.

According to the Sunnyvale city's website, the city is currently developing new housing projects to expand capacity. Ira D. Hall Square, which is under construction, will house 176 individuals and has received \$26.5 million in funding. Another project at 1171 Sonora Court is in the planning stage and is expected to accommodate 172 individuals. Additional developments include Orchard Gardens and 295 S. Mathilda Avenue. These housing units are designed to provide necessities such as a bed, bathroom, and a safe living environment.

While Sunnyvale has many resources available, there are still significant challenges. Waitlists are often long, new housing developments take years to complete, and demand exceeds the number of available units. Many programs require separate applications, and information is not always centralized or easy to access, which can make it difficult for individuals to navigate the system. Additionally, many people are placed in short-term housing through Rapid Rehousing rather than permanent solutions.

If selected for this commission, I would prioritize expanding access to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) by directing more funding toward PSH programs and accelerating the approval and construction of new housing. I would also support increasing rental assistance and subsidies, which provide immediate relief to community members without the long timelines required to build new housing. Currently only a small population of unhoused individuals are placed in these long-term solutions. I would also focus on improving accessibility to services by increasing outreach efforts, such as hosting events and providing resources directly in locations where unhoused individuals are already staying.

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**Evaluate the quality and availability of the human services programs that serve the Sunnyvale community.**

Sunnyvale has a wide range of human service programs that support residents with the cost of living, food access, healthcare, senior services, and homelessness response. For example, Sunnyvale Community Services supports over 11,500 residents annually through food assistance, financial aid, and case management. Additionally, programs like WeHOPE connect individuals to housing, healthcare, and hygiene services, providing critical support for unhoused individuals.

The city offers comprehensive services, including access to food, financial assistance, school supplies, hygiene resources, emergency shelter connections, housing support and waitlists, and mental health services. Key providers include Momentum for Health through La Selva Community Clinic, Bill Wilson Center's Here4You Hotline, Our Daily Bread, Dignity on Wheels, and Sunnyvale Community Services. These programs demonstrate a strong and coordinated effort to address a wide range of community needs.

Sunnyvale's human services system is high-quality because it is comprehensive and includes both immediate support and preventative programs. Initiatives such as rental assistance, job programs like WorkFirst, and housing subsidies help prevent homelessness before it occurs. In addition, federal funding sources such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME funds help expand services for low-income residents, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

However, despite their quality, these programs face significant challenges in availability. There is a high demand for services, especially in a high-cost area like Sunnyvale, and many programs have limited capacity. Additionally, access remains a barrier, particularly for unhoused individuals and seniors who may not have access to the internet, phones, or transportation. Increasing outreach and making services more accessible—especially through in-person engagement and lower barriers to entry—would help ensure that more residents can benefit from these programs. Overall, Sunnyvale's human services programs are strong and impactful, but expanding capacity and improving accessibility are necessary to better meet the community's growing needs.

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**Share your thoughts on how the City might better improve housing affordability, prevent displacement and serve our unhoused residents.**

Through both research and direct work with low-income residents in Sunnyvale, I have gained insight into the financial hardships many community members face and the gaps in access to housing and support services. I believe the city can improve its approach to affordable housing by making services more accessible to unhoused residents. Many individuals experiencing homelessness do not have reliable access to the internet, computers, or phones, which makes it difficult for them to even learn about available housing programs and services. The city should take more proactive steps to reach and inform this population directly.

Additionally, substance use can be a significant barrier to accessing support. According to the American Addiction Centers, approximately one-third of people experiencing homelessness struggle with alcohol and/or drug use, and many have long-term histories of substance use disorders. This highlights the need for supportive, non-judgmental outreach that addresses both housing and recovery.

The commission should also consider hosting community events aimed at building trust and connection with unhoused residents. These events would provide access to food, housing assistance, job resources, and support programs, while also strengthening community connection and trust. Most importantly, these efforts should demonstrate that the city is committed to supporting and advocating for unhoused individuals. This year, I did service in Tecate, Mexico, where I had the opportunity to help build a home and form meaningful relationships with families facing financial challenges. Through this experience, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of stable housing and the powerful emotional impact it has on an entire family. Being on this commission would allow me to apply what I've learned by supporting policies and programs that expand access to housing and strengthen the well-being of families in my community.

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**Description Area**

[View Homelessness Response](#)

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**Have you read Homelessness Response?**

Yes

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**What are your thoughts on Sunnyvale's support for the unhoused community?**

The homelessness response shows that Sunnyvale's support for the unhoused community is very beneficial. The city has allocated funding and resources to address homelessness, which shows a strong commitment to supporting the homeless populations. Sunnyvale has developed a range of programs and facilities that provide both immediate assistance and long-term housing solutions. It is also good that the city asks for community feedback on its website, so residents can stay informed and share their input. These efforts help create a more inclusive and supportive community.

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**Fair Political Practices Commission Statement of Economic Interests**

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**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.

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**Radio Button**

Yes

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**Your Agreement**

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**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

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**Your full name**

Nila Rajkumar

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**Date**

Apr 13, 2026

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