

Policy 7.4.15 Council Advocacy

POLICY PURPOSE:

It is the purpose of this policy to establish guidelines and standards regarding City resources and support for Councilmembers. This policy is supplementary to and in no way intended to conflict with the City Charter. For further information on this subject, see:

- City Charter, Section 807
- Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials (available on the City's internal Web site or in the Office of the City Clerk)

POLICY STATEMENT:

I. Taking a Position on a Legislative Issue.

Councilmembers or staff wishing to take a position on a legislative issue must first determine whether an official City position already exists. If unsure, Councilmembers should consult the City Manager who will direct a staff search of existing policies. If a City position already exists, the Mayor is the official spokesperson for the City. Councilmembers must not express conflicting opinions unless they clearly identify the City's official position and clarify that theirs is a minority viewpoint in conflict with the City's position. If an official City position does not already exist, the Councilmember must first decide whether or not the issue warrants being agendized for Council consideration. If so desired, the Councilmember should alert the Mayor and the City Manager, who will agendize the issue for future Council consideration. Staff will prepare a Report to Council discussing the pending legislation and providing a staff recommendation to either support, oppose or take no position regarding the legislation.

II. Advocacy.

The Mayor or his/her designee shall make all advocacy telephone calls in cases when the City takes a position on a piece of legislation or issue and when a telephone call is deemed the most effective means of advocacy. Brief talking points may be prepared/coordinated by department IGR Liaisons that include: Specific information regarding who to call including name, title, and phone number(s); applicable existing City policy that supports taking an advocacy position; and a couple of brief talking points that include the specific action requested. Just as in the case of written IGR advocacy correspondence and before being routed to the Mayor, all telephone talking points in which the City takes a position on a piece of legislation or issue must be approved by the department director. A copy of all telephone talking points in which the City takes a position on a piece of legislation or issue shall be placed in the Mayor's Correspondence File (accessible to all Councilmembers for review). City Manager approval is required in cases when it is unclear if an official City policy supports performing advocacy. The originating department Director, City Manager and IGR Officer shall be copied on all IGR-related correspondence.

Upon request, staff may contact staff of federal, state or county elected or officials to perform advocacy on legislation or issues that may significantly impact the City of Sunnyvale and for which existing City policy exists.

III. Implementation.

The City Manager shall monitor those provisions of this policy within the City Manager's Charter responsibilities. Disagreement in interpretation shall be resolved by the City Council. The City Manager shall institute administrative policy to implement this policy. At the time a new Councilmember is seated, the Mayor and City Manager should review this policy with him/her.

Annually, the City Manager shall review the resource requirements necessary to support the level of service specified in this policy, and recommend as a part of the proposed budget necessary changes of budget resources.

(Adopted: Council Policy Update, RTC #14-0061 (November 25, 2014))

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager

For Reference, see also: 7.4.14 Legislative Advocacy Positions; 7.4.16 Ballot Measure Positions.