

Sunnyvale City Council Meeting Summary: January 28, 2025

The Sunnyvale City Council meeting took place on **January 28, 2025**.... The meeting was held both **in person and online**.... Details on location and online meeting access were available on the council agenda1.... The online meeting platform was Zoom1....

The meeting included a **special closed session** which began at **5:03 PM**1.

The **outdoor sports assessment study session** started at **6:00 PM**1.

The **regular council meeting** started at **7:26 PM**3.

The following council members were present at the meeting:

Mayor Klein1...

Vice Mayor Sell1...

Council Member Cisneros1...

Council Member Mallinger1...

Council Member Srinivasan1...

Council Member Chang1...

Council Member Lay1...

I. Park Renovations and Funding

- **Focus on Community Outreach:** The council emphasized the importance of conducting thorough neighborhood outreach before commencing any park renovations. The initial survey was considered "very broad," and more specific feedback from residents in affected areas is required. As one councilmember stated, "we want to do a lot more outreach in those areas to make sure that's really what that community needs."
- **Integration with Existing Projects:** The park renovation discussions are being integrated with existing projects, such as the Los Palmas renovation.

- **CIP Budget Integration:** Funding for park renovations will be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. The timing of the meeting in January is advantageous for this process, allowing the council to review potential projects for inclusion.
- **Initial Step:** The meeting was considered a "1st step" to identify projects the Council wants to pursue. The city will then analyze how these projects fit within the budget.

II. Cricket Pitch Development

- **Proposed Locations:** The council discussed the possibility of improving the cricket pitch at Ortega Park and adding a new pitch at Las Palmas. There is also discussion of a potential cricket pitch at Baylands Park, though Baylands is owned by the County. There is broad agreement of the "tremendous demand for cricket in the community."
- **Baylands Park Consideration:** Baylands Park was not initially evaluated in the park assessment, as it's leased from the county. The council agreed to include Baylands Park in future considerations for a cricket pitch, with ongoing communication with the county about possible options. The City is exploring "various options around cricket at Baylands."
- **Semi-Pro or Community Use:** There was some discussion around whether the cricket pitch at Baylands would be a semi-pro practice facility or simply a community cricket pitch, leading to discussion about possible changes to the park.
- **Community Feedback:** Council members acknowledged that "community's needs have not been well met by the City for many years now." and that improving cricket facilities "is something I've been hearing about needs for that from our community for many years now."
- **Lighting Not a Priority:** Public speakers emphasized that lighting is not a critical need for cricket pitches, with one speaker saying that matches are typically played during the day. Lighting was estimated at \$1 million, a cost that they suggested can be removed from the budget. One speaker also pointed out that some international grounds don't have lighting.
- **Need for Proper Facilities:** Speakers mentioned that current facilities in nearby areas lack proper clay pitches and other necessary amenities, which prompted a plea for at least one or two proper facilities in Sunnyvale. One resident said, "most of these facilities doesn't even have a clay pitch. So actual grounds where we play are not appropriate."

III. Community Needs Assessment and Survey Bias

- **Concerns about Survey Focus:** Several council members raised concerns about the survey's "laser focus" on a few sports, particularly the underrepresentation of needs for sports like little league and soccer. It was suggested that specific outreach to local organizations for those sports needs to be done.
- **Data Analysis:** There was discussion about analyzing the survey data to avoid "selection bias" and to get a more holistic view of what each community needs, stating that, "there's a lot of ways that can happen in a survey." The need for qualitative answers to understand and validate the data is also highlighted.
- **Usage of Facilities:** One council member highlighted the need to understand how the community uses the space, particularly with regards to private instructors taking up court time, to properly plan for the use of any new sites.
- **Current Conditions:** Instead of focusing on "top sports to add or expand," the Council emphasized gathering information on "current conditions and how to improve" the amenities.

IV. Tennis and Pickleball Upgrades

- **Tennis Center Upgrades:** A request was made to understand how proposed tennis and pickleball additions in various parks interact with previously discussed tennis center upgrades, for a "more holistic" understanding.
- **Free Service:** For pickleball, the goal is to provide a free service, as with tennis, where people can just show up and play.

V. Public Comments on Cricket

- **Youth Participation:** Speakers emphasized the importance of cricket for youth development, noting that the sport is growing rapidly in the US, and is now an Olympic sport. They are eager for the opportunity for youth to practice in local facilities, "so that they can proudly represent our community in the upcoming Olympics and related world level global performances."
- **Professional Opportunities:** The potential for local youth to reach professional levels through participation in cricket was also highlighted. One speaker noted that "there's a lot of great talent in the youth level. There is a franchise team that is based out of San Francisco here, and a lot of talent is being fed to that team."
- **Community Growth:** Speakers stressed the idea that sports in general "brings a sense of, you know, playing together" and helps communities grow and "welcome more people."

VI. Recognition of Cultural Heritage Months

- **Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month:** The council declared January as Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, honoring those who combat modern-day slavery. They also acknowledged that this month culminates in National Freedom Day on February 1st.
- **Muslim American Heritage Month:** The council acknowledged the accomplishments and contributions of the Muslim American community during Muslim American Heritage Month. They specifically recognized trailblazers like Keith Ellison, Mahereshela Ali, and their own council member, Omar Deen.

VII. Discussion on Housing Density and Zoning

- **Low-Income Housing:** Concerns were raised about the placement of multiple high-density, low-income housing projects in one neighborhood, noting that it is not an ideal way to integrate them with the rest of the community.
- **Downtown Specific Plan (DSP):** A concern was raised that proposed housing projects do not meet the standards set by the DSP, which calls for lower density, and that "all the zoning work we do is out of the window".
- **Parking and Trash:** Speakers also brought up issues with parking and trash related to existing high-density housing.
- **Long-Term Impact:** The point was made that "new projects change the neighborhoods for a hundred years to come" and that they are significant changes requiring support from the council.

VIII. Public Comments on Parking and Speeding

- **Action over Analysis:** A resident expressed frustration with "endless studies" on parking, stating that "citizens are being struck by vehicles" and the city needs to prioritize action over analysis.
- **Need for Speed:** The need for immediate traffic-calming measures is emphasized over long-term studies.

IX. Zoning Amendments and General Plan Alignment

- **Non-Conforming Residences:** The city is looking to amend zoning for 27 "legal nonconforming" single-family and two-family residences that are located in non-residential areas, specifically those zoned as office. The aim is to align these with the General Plan and residential land-use designations.
- **ITR District:** A desire to rezone some industrial zoned areas into ITR (Industrial to Residential), is also being undertaken, which is intended to allow for potential future residential redevelopments while also allowing current commercial and industrial to stay conforming.
- **Environmental Concerns:** The city acknowledged that a small number of sites are located in areas with potential environmental contamination. It was highlighted that the city will review the applications in accordance with requirements from environmental and regional water quality control boards.
- **ITR Zoning Restrictions:** An action is being taken to update the zoning code to prevent ITR-zoned sites that have transitioned to residential use from being returned to industrial.

X. Additional Notes

- The council is working to streamline the process for citizens who have needed zoning changes on their own properties, as seen with a 5-year process described by one resident.
- The City is exploring how to work with residents to consider "senior housing" options and find "better ways to integrate the housing in the neighborhood."