

Sunnyvale City Council Summary - Tuesday, May 6, 2025

The Sunnyvale City Council meeting was held in person and online (Zoom) on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, starting at 6:01 PM.

The following council members were present at the meeting:

- * Mayor Klein
- * Vice Mayor Sell
- * Council Member Cisneros
- * Council Member Mellinger
- * Council Member Srinivasan (remotely)
- * Council Member Chang
- * Council Member Lay

I. Special Recognitions:

- Council recognized Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Jewish American Heritage Month, and Affordable Housing Month.
- Remarks were given by AAPI Silicon Valley and the Bay Area Jewish Coalition.
- Santa Clara County Housing Authority was recognized for the Orchard Gardens affordable housing project.
- May 2025 was proclaimed Affordable Housing Month.

II. Councilmember Srinivasan's Remote Participation:

- Councilmember Srinivasan participated remotely due to illness, complying with the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- He confirmed no one over 18 was present at his remote location.
- His remote participation was noted at the start of both closed and open sessions.

III. Public Comment on Closed Session Items:

- No public comments were received regarding closed session items.

IV. Closed Session:

- Council held a closed session to discuss agenda item 250427 (public employee performance evaluation of the city attorney).
- No report was given upon returning from the closed session.

V. Oral Communications and Public Comment:

- Public comment was limited to 15 minutes on non-agenda items (two-minute limit per speaker).
- Comments outside the council's jurisdiction were ruled out of order.
- Councilmember Mellinger announced Sunnyvale's EV Ride and Drive event.
- The Hands-on Arts Festival incident sparked debate about free speech, censorship, and discrimination, focusing on the removal of Palestinian art and reported harassment. Councilmember Mellinger later condemned hateful comments made during public comment targeting the Muslim and Palestinian community.

VI. Funding Request for Sunnyvale Pride Event:

- A \$5,000 funding request was made for Sunnyvale Pride to cover unforeseen permit fees and costs.
- Council reaffirmed its commitment to diversity and inclusivity while acknowledging the challenge of balancing free speech and community standards at public events.
- The motion passed 6-0, with Vice Mayor Sell abstaining due to an affiliation with the church hosting the event.

VII. Tasman Drive Safety Concerns:

- Numerous speakers presented evidence of accidents and near-misses on Tasman Drive, advocating for improved pedestrian and bike safety.
- Concerns included speeding, lack of bike lanes, and dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists; visual aids were used.

- A proposal to reduce Tasman Drive to one lane for cars, with dedicated bike and pedestrian lanes, was suggested.

VIII. Wells Fargo Site Development Project:

- A proposal for a 126-unit development at the Wells Fargo site was discussed.
- Concerns were raised about the building height (6 stories), insufficient parking (68 spaces), and density.
- Residents expressed concerns about increased traffic and parking; alternatives like senior housing were suggested.

IX. 2025-2030 HUD Consolidated Plan & 2025-2026 HUD Action Plan:

- The council reviewed draft 2025-2030 HUD Consolidated Plan and 2025-2026 HUD Action Plan, guiding HUD funding allocation. Sunnyvale receives CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA funding.
- Community engagement included virtual meetings, farmers' market pop-ups, and discussions with advisory boards. Key findings included housing shortages; top resident needs were affordable rental housing, rental assistance, and homeownership.
- Council discussed funding recommendations, the \$250,000 threshold for council approval on funding shortfalls, and inclusion of special needs communities. The rigid nature of HUD's reporting system and the need for flexibility were discussed.
- Council members debated the low survey response rate (54), assumptions in the plan, and the effectiveness of programs like WorkFirst and Boost. Concerns were raised regarding administrative costs and program outcomes.

X. Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program & WorkFirst Program:

- The TBRA program uses approximately \$1 million to assist up to 40 households simultaneously, providing rental subsidies, support services, and job training. 89% achieve self-sufficiency within two years.
- Council members discussed the program's cost-effectiveness (~\$25,000 per household).

- The WorkFirst program, in collaboration with the Downtown Streets Team, has supported 380 individuals over 12 years, with 176 maintaining employment for over 90 days and 133 moving into housing.

XI. Boost Program:

- The "Boost" program, a for-profit program aimed at increasing childcare availability, was extensively discussed. Concerns were raised about its for-profit nature and whether it truly increases *affordable* childcare access.
- Staff explained that the program helps existing licensed providers expand capacity, increasing childcare slots and stabilizing jobs. Upwards (the program provider) detailed benefits, including free childcare management software and teaching assistant subsidies.
- Council members questioned the vendor selection process and explored alternative funding strategies. The program's scalability and potential impact were discussed.

XII. Downtown Sunnyvale Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal:

- A public hearing was held to adopt a resolution confirming the annual report and levy for the BID for fiscal year 2025-2026.
- No protests were received before or during the hearing. The renewal was unanimously approved.
- Christina Kosinski (BID Director) presented an overview of the BID's activities and plans, including new events: a 1st Sunday Arts Festival (starting June 2025), an 8-week summer concert series, and the annual Halloween Pet Parade (taken over by the Sunnyvale Downtown Association).
- Council members expressed support for the BID's work in revitalizing the downtown area.

XIII. Redwood Dawn Public Art Project:

- The council reviewed the final artwork for the City Line development's public art component, "Redwood Dawn" by artist Sam Falls. A 30-foot tall I-beam sculpture with ceramic tiles depicting redwood trees and a forest floor transitioning to sky.
- Ellie Hunter (Cityline Art Advisor) detailed the artwork's creation, materials (high-fire ceramics,

steel), installation, and lighting plan (in-ground and spotlight lighting, dark sky compliant).

- Councilmembers questioned earthquake safety (engineered for seismic compliance), vandalism resistance (high-fire ceramics, potential graffiti-resistant coating), and the artwork's durability with potential touching by the public (glazed ceramics, resistant to wear).
- The Arts Commission recommended approval; the council approved the project unanimously.

XIV. Funding for Sunnyvale Pride Festival:

- Councilmember Mellinger moved to allocate up to \$5,000 from council reserves to Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church for the Sunnyvale Pride Festival. The motion was passed unanimously, with Vice Mayor Sell abstaining.
- Councilmember Cisneros highlighted the importance of a Pride celebration and the long-term sustainability of the event.

XV. Other Discussions and Council Comments:

- Council members expressed gratitude to city staff, particularly the city clerk and their contributions to smooth meeting operations, during Municipal Clerks Week and Public Service Recognition Week.
- Councilmembers discussed the Hands-on Arts Festival, acknowledging both positive feedback on the event itself and the need to address concerns raised about the handling of the Palestinian art removal incident. Further investigation was promised.
- The retirement of the DPS chief was acknowledged and celebrated.
- The 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon was noted, particularly in the context of Sunnyvale's Vietnamese population and AAPI Heritage Month.
- The city manager previewed the release of the fiscal year 25-26 recommended budget and upcoming budget briefings for council members. A full-day budget workshop was also scheduled for May 20th.

XVI. Other Discussions:

- The council's handling of the Hands-on Arts Festival incident and calls for anti-Palestinian racism training for city staff remained a focus. The city's Instagram response was also questioned.

- The council also discussed potential significant reductions in CDBG and HOME funding from HUD, outlining various response strategies and the need for backfilling funds. The need for sober living facilities was emphasized.
- Questions were raised about unencumbered funds from the 2019 CDBGcv program. Council members debated various funding allocation alternatives, prioritizing Sunnyvale Community Services, the Minor Home Repair Program, and the Upwards childcare program. Concerns about funding shortfalls and the need for flexibility in HUD reporting were discussed extensively.