

Santa Clara Elections – Getting Involved

The City of Santa Clara and Santa Clara WEEKLY have partnered in a series of four articles outlining what it means to serve in office, how to file to run for office, the basic elements of a political campaign and other community involvement options. The City will also show a series of video vignettes on cable channel 15 and on the City's website in the next few weeks.

Public Service in Santa Clara: What Does It Mean to Serve? Part 1 in a series of 4

There has been significant discussion recently regarding the civic engagement of Santa Clarans. One of the barriers to public service has been the inherent complexity of the process of seeking election to municipal office.

The policy purview of the City Council includes public safety, land-use and housing, water and public power, labor negotiations and fiscal policies, and other issues that affect Santa Clarans. These can be broad-ranging, but are limited to municipal affairs. The Council appoints the City Manager, who is the chief executive officer and head of the administrative branch of City government, responsible for the day-to-day administration of all affairs of the city.

City Council is a part-time position with an average time commitment of around 75 hours per month. Council Meetings are usually held twice per month in addition to various committee assignments and public events. The Council stipend is \$770 per month with various authorities

bringing the total pay to around \$1000.

Councilmembers are elected citywide, by seat. The seats do not represent a geographical area and can be thought of as a "slot" for which candidates run and serve. Any registered voter in the City of Santa Clara is eligible to seek election.

Service on a local, small-city Council is one of the highest callings in government. The commitment of time, nominal compensation, and direct accountability to your neighbors are a few of the sometimes daunting obligations. But, for someone who is service-minded, there are few places that yield greater dividends for the community than shepherding their trust, resources, and tax dollars in a responsible manner.

While the bulk of the discussion, and therefore the content of these articles focus on the City Council, it is important to recognize that the Mayor, Chief of Police and City Clerk are also elected offices in Santa Clara. More information regarding

these, as well as City boards and commissions, can be found by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220.

This series provides a summary that pertains to most candidates, but certainly will not cover all of the complex nuances of the process. The City and Santa Clara WEEKLY do not provide political or legal advice. It is the obligation of the candidate to learn and adapt as required for each effort's unique needs.