

# 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, 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: Public Service Options Part 4 in a series of 4**

In the past few weeks, this series has covered the role of a City Councilmember, paperwork to run for office and basic campaign elements to be successful. While it is a significant amount of work, there are also great personal rewards.

To be clear, these rewards are not monetary. But, service-minded individuals can receive great personal fulfillment from setting priorities for Santa Clara's \$570 million annual budget in a manner that best meets the needs of the community. The satisfaction of conceiving projects and seeing them in use by the public, or hearing positive feedback from neighbors can be highly validating.

However, seeking public office is not for everyone and you may want to serve without standing for election. Or, you may want to test the waters first while building a record of community involvement for a future run. If either is the case, there are numerous other options available.

There are several commissions that serve as advisory bodies to the City Council. Boards pertaining to the library, parks and recreation, civil service, cultural and international exchange, historical and planning issues, senior and youth policies, and housing rehabilitation all have members appointed by the City Council.

The City also sponsors a number of academies. The Leadership Santa Clara program provides a broad perspective on civic affairs. The Citizens Police Academy offers an in-depth view into public safety. And, the fire department's Home Emergency Assistance Teams (HEAT) program fosters disaster and emergency preparedness.

There are also numerous civic-related groups. The Citizens Advisory Committee, Santa Clara Library Foundation and Friends, and Sister Cities Association are all independent organizations with a tie to municipal programs. And, traditional service organizations

such as the Santa Clara Women's League, Soroptimist, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and other clubs continue to do valuable work for the community.

Regardless of your time commitment, there are opportunities to serve for those who have the desire. If you are so inclined, it is hoped that you will engage in the process and work hard to foster "government at its best." Please contact the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220 if you have questions or would like additional information.

*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.*