

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office of the Mayor 408-535-4800
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GUIDE TO COUNCIL MEETINGS



SAN JOSE CITY GOVERNANCE

The City of San José operates under the Council/Manager form of government. The City Council, as the legislative body, is empowered by the City Charter to formulate citywide policy that provides overall direction to City administration.

Ten Councilmembers are elected by district by city voters to serve four-year terms. The City Charter limits Councilmembers to serving two, consecutive terms.

Voters throughout the City of San José elect the Mayor. The Mayor represents all the people of San José and also has a seat on the City Council. The City Charter limits the Mayor to serve two, four-year terms.

The City Manger is responsible for day-to-day administrative duties and implementation of Council policies. The City Attorney advises and represents the City and Council in all legal matters. The City Clerk prepares and maintains the City Council agenda and minutes. The City Clerk is also responsible for the retention and retrieval of official records.

The San José Redevelopment Agency oversees redevelopment activities in the City of San José. The Redevelopment Agency is a separate body whose policy board is comprised of all City Councilmembers sitting as the Agency Board with the Mayor serving as chairperson.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

City Council Meetings are held every Tuesday beginning at 1:30 p.m., and on the first and third Tuesdays beginning at 7 p.m. Most land use items are considered during evening sessions. With a few exceptions specified by state law, all City Council meetings are open to the public. Council meetings are televised live on CivicCenter TV (Cable Channel 26) and are replayed on Thursdays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. Meetings are also webcast live and archived for review on the City's website. Go to www.sanjoseca.gov and click on "Meeting Broadcasts" in the "Media" box on the right side for an archive of all Council and Committee meetings back to August of 2005. Meetings are searchable by keyword and include all agendas and reports for review and download.

The **Consent Calendar** section of the agenda is comprised of items that require routine approval by the Council and only one motion is needed for the adoption of all items listed on that portion of the agenda. Any Councilmember, staff or member of the public can request that specific items be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion and action.

Land Use/Public Hearings are a major portion of evening Council meetings and are generally devoted to review of planning issues such as the General Plan, zoning changes, special development permits, and land-use permits.

Items to be Continued/Deferred are agenda items where the Council has received a request for continuation of the discussion to a future meeting.

Items that are Dropped from the agenda are no longer going to be considered or acted upon by the City Council at that meeting.

Motions are the least formal of Council actions and can be adopted to establish Council policy and procedures. It is the most common Council action for dealing with an agenda item.

Resolutions are formalized Council actions and are filed by number in the Office of the City Clerk. Resolutions generally become effective immediately upon adoption.

Ordinances are Council actions that adopt laws, authorize expenditures or determine land use. With the exception of emergency ordinances and tax/appropriation ordinances, all ordinances must have two "readings" at two separate Council meetings. Those ordinances do not become effective until 30 days after Council adoption at the second meeting. Ordinances are subject to voter referendum.

A **quorum** of six Councilmembers is needed to convene a meeting for formal action on agenda items. Six votes of the City Council are needed to approve most motions.

Study Sessions are public meetings to provide Council with an opportunity to review a special issue or project in depth. Generally no formal actions or decisions are made at this time.

Closed Sessions are meetings where the Council addresses specific personnel matters, real estate negotiations, or litigation. For reasons of confidentiality specified by state law, a closed session is the only Council meeting not open to the public.

Parking validation for the City Hall Parking Garage for those attending Council meetings is available in the Council Chambers.