

From: [Planning Public Comment](#)
To: [REDACTED] [PlanningCommission](#); [Lance Saleme](#); [Mario Bouza](#); [Yashraj Bhatnagar](#); [Qian Huang](#); [Priya Cherukuru](#); [Nancy Biagini](#); [Eric Crutchlow](#); [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing](#); [Lesley Xavier](#); [Manager](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: RE: Public Outreach Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:29:34 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Good Morning Mr. Houston,

Your email has been received in the Planning Division and will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your input.

Regards,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II
Community Development Department | Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

From: Jeff Houston [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2025 5:17 PM
To: [PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov); [Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>](mailto:LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov); [Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov); [Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov); [Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov); [Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>](mailto:PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov); [Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>](mailto:NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov); [Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov); [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:SheldonAhSing@santaclaraca.gov); [Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:LXavier@santaclaraca.gov); [Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:Manager@santaclaraca.gov); [Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov)
Subject: Public Outreach Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners,

I care deeply about Santa Clara having an inclusive, collaborative, constructive community engagement policy.

That's why I support Catalyze SV's call for you to return this policy to staff for refinement

before approving it, rather than sending it to the Council now.

I believe the policy is majorly lacking in 4 main areas:

1. It does not specifically speak to equity. Traditionally, the community engagement process has left out the voices of marginalized communities. Santa Clara has an opportunity to right that inequity. Community engagement policies should specify how they will connect with hard-to-reach communities. For instance, community meetings must include efforts like interpretation and translation, children's activities or childcare, online options for participation, and food.
2. The proposed policy should include stronger provisions about mobilizing the existing community to assist developers with community engagement. One way to do this is for Santa Clara to create a "bench" of community engagement contractors, especially local nonprofit organizations, that can be easily enlisted to assist developers in reaching the community.
3. The policy should be improved to reflect the number one piece of feedback from Catalyze SV members: more developments should take in early feedback from community members about what they'd like development to bring to their neighborhoods.
4. The policy needs to create a transparent feedback loop that emphasizes how community feedback will be documented and shared publicly, as well as what ideas from the community developers will or will not be able to implement and why. Community engagement is a lot more meaningful when government and developers reflect back on what they learned and how it improved their plans.

The Planning Commission needs to direct staff to make major revisions based on my input above and to solicit a wider variety of nonprofits to provide input on the policy. Only then should the policy return to the Planning Commission for approval.

Sincerely,
Jeff Houston, resident

From: PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:47 AM

To: J'Carlin [REDACTED] PlanningCommission
<PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; [REDACTED] Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: RE: Public Outreach Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

Good Morning J'Carlin,

This is to confirm that your email has been received in the Planning Division and that your comments will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

From: J'Carlin [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2025 2:33 PM

To: PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow

<ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; [REDACTED] Sheldon Ah Sing
<sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager
<Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment
<PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: Public Outreach Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners, I care deeply about Santa Clara having an inclusive, collaborative, constructive community engagement policy. That's why I support Catalyze SV's call for you to return this policy to staff for refinement before approving it, rather than sending it to the Council now. I believe the policy is majorly lacking in 4 main areas: 1. It does not specifically speak to equity. Traditionally, the community engagement process has left out the voices of marginalized communities. Santa Clara has an opportunity to right that inequity. Community engagement policies should specify how they will connect with hard-to-reach communities. For instance, community meetings must include efforts like interpretation and translation, children's activities or childcare, online options for participation, and food. 2. The proposed policy should include stronger provisions about mobilizing the existing community to assist developers with community engagement. One way to do this is for Santa Clara to create a "bench" of community engagement contractors, especially local nonprofit organizations, that can be easily enlisted to assist developers in reaching the community. 3. The policy should be improved to reflect the number one piece of feedback from Catalyze SV members: more developments should take in early feedback from community members about what they'd like development to bring to their neighborhoods. 4. The policy needs to create a transparent feedback loop that emphasizes how community feedback will be documented and shared publicly, as well as what ideas from the community developers will or will not be able to implement and why. Community engagement is a lot more meaningful when government and developers reflect back on what they learned and how it improved their plans. The Planning Commission needs to direct staff to make major revisions based on my input above and to solicit a wider variety of nonprofits to provide input on the policy. Only then should the policy return to the Planning Commission for approval. Sincerely,

Carlin Black

Aka J'Carlin

From: [Planning Public Comment](#)
To: [REDACTED] [PlanningCommission](#); [Lance Saleme](#); [Mario Bouza](#); [Yashraj Bhatnagar](#); [Qian Huang](#); [Priya Cherukuru](#); [Nancy Biagini](#); [Eric Crutchlow](#); [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing](#); [Lesley Xavier](#); [Manager](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: RE: Reworking of Public Outreach Policy needed Before Moving Forward
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:24:44 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Good Morning Ms. Lusebrink,

Your email has been received in the Planning Division and will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your input.

Regards,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II
Community Development Department | Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

From: Anita Lusebrink [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2025 8:23 PM
To: [PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov); [Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>](mailto:LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov); [Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov); [Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov); [Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov); [Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>](mailto:PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov); [Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>](mailto:NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov); [Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov); 'Catalyze SV' [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:SheldonAhSing@santaclaraca.gov); [Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:LXavier@santaclaraca.gov); [Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:Manager@santaclaraca.gov); [Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov)
Subject: Reworking of Public Outreach Policy needed Before Moving Forward

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners,

I care deeply about Santa Clara having an inclusive, collaborative, constructive community engagement policy.

That's why I support Catalyze SV's call for you to return this policy to staff for refinement

before approving it, rather than sending it to the Council now.

I believe the policy is majorly lacking in 4 main areas:

1. It does not specifically speak to equity. Traditionally, **the community engagement process** has left out the voices of marginalized communities. Santa Clara has an opportunity to right that inequity. Community engagement policies **should** specify how they will **connect with hard-to-reach communities**. For instance, community meetings must include efforts like interpretation and translation, children's activities or childcare, online options for participation, and food.

2. The proposed policy should include stronger provisions about mobilizing the existing community to assist developers with community engagement. One way to do this is for Santa Clara to create a "bench" of community engagement contractors, especially **local nonprofit organizations**, that **can be easily enlisted to assist developers in reaching the community**.

3. The policy should be improved to reflect the number one piece of feedback from Catalyze SV members: more **developments should take in early feedback from community members about what they'd like development to bring to their neighborhoods**.

4. The policy needs to create a transparent feedback loop that emphasizes how community feedback will be documented and shared publicly, as well as **what ideas from the community developers will or will not be able to implement and why**. Community engagement is a lot more meaningful when government and developers reflect back on what they learned and how it improved their plans.

The Planning Commission needs to direct staff to make major revisions based on the input above and to solicit a wider variety of nonprofits to provide input on the policy. Only then should the policy return to the Planning Commission for approval.

As a resident and invested member of our Santa Clara County community, I thank you for your consideration.

Anita Lusebrink

From: [Planning Public Comment](#)
To: [REDACTED] [Planning Public Comment](#); [Lesley Xavier](#); [Nimisha Agrawal](#)
Subject: RE: Public comment, Wed. February 19, 2025, Freedom Circle (#2. 24-1188)
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:27:13 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

Good Morning Ms. Hinton,

Your email has been received in the Planning Division and will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your input.

Regards,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II
Community Development Department | Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

From: Susan Hinton [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 15, 2025 12:40 PM
To: Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>
Subject: Public comment, Wed. February 19, 2025, Freedom Circle (#2. 24-1188)

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Subject: Public comment, Wed. February 19, 2025, Freedom Circle (#2. 24-1188)

Dear City of Santa Clara Planning Commission Members:

The Commission and the City of Santa Clara should revisit plans for the outdoor areas in Freedom Circle, and should replace all petroleum-based “Flex” turf, “Flex” fields, and pour-in-place synthetic rubber planned for Freedom Circle outdoor areas. “Flex” is the 'new' word for plastic turf, which likely includes a separate petroleum-based tire crumb or plastic or synthetic rubber layer beneath.

It's a fact that mixed chemicals and plastics cannot be sustainably recycled at end-of-life (8-10 yrs). They add to the worldwide plastics burden, and they come with substantial public health risks, for example, by adding to plastic found in our brains. Plus plastic heats in sunlight, so those outdoor areas, including picnicking spots and playgrounds may not be comfortable or safe. ([Source](#)) ([Source](#)) ([Source](#)) ([Source](#))

There are living drought tolerant alternatives, for example Common Lippia (Phyla nodiflora). At least a few universities, including Washington State University and Cornell, have experimented with walkable mostly-or-all native grasses, so there are other sources of inspiration as well. ([Source](#)) ([Source](#))

There are three (3) key reasons to not use synthetic petroleum derived surfaces, such as plastic (“Flex”) grass, or pour-in-place synthetic rubber as outdoor surfaces or play areas for children.

1) Synthetic rubber and plastic (“Flex”) grass are hot in bright sun, especially on warmer days. No one, especially children, should be on surfaces reaching these temperatures. The picture on the left was taken in Central Park, while the picture following was taken at Reed and Grant Sports Park in Santa Clara. ([Source](#))

Santa Clara's Central Park
on July 30, 2024

Air temperature: 78°F

PIP temperature: 147.9°F





2) **The warranties for synthetic surfaces are typically 7 - 10 years**, which means that the top layer, and possibly other layers, will need to be disposed of and replaced fairly soon. But because synthetic rubber is a petroleum product, disposal is not straightforward. Every time it's reused it loses some of its durability so eventually it will need to be added to landfill. If it's taken to an "advanced recycling" site, where high temperatures are used to break apart polymers, the process puts more pollution into the air and water than was generated while making the original product - and this leads to chemical and micro plastics pollution. ([Source](#))

3) When people think of a "disabled person," wheelchairs inevitably come to mind. **However there are many kinds of disabilities.** For example anyone with a cochlear hearing device may have trouble on a synthetic based surface.

Central Institute for the Deaf ([source](#)):

"What precautions can be taken to avoid device damage?"

Current cochlear-implant design limits the risk of damage from static electricity by adding numerous protections within the devices themselves, and while the risk is very low in life's everyday run-ins with static electricity, there are precautions to consider to reduce the risk even further.

- 1. Avoid plastic playground equipment.** Metal slides are a great, inclusive option. If plastic slides are unavoidable, remove the external processor completely from the child's head while using plastic equipment.
- 2.** Consider using static guard or fabric softeners on clothing, carpets or car seat covers. If you notice a shirt or sweater is staticky, take off the external processor before the child dresses or undresses.
- 3.** Ground yourself before directly touching the child's device. This can be done by touching something else such as metal, wood or a different part of the body first. Doing this will eliminate the static electricity.
- 4.** Van de Graaff generators, as seen at the St. Louis Magic House, pose a risk to both the external processor and internal device, even without the external processor on, so it is better to look and not touch."

And people with hip or knee replacements, or individuals with prosthetic lower limbs may find a surface that is too bouncy difficult to navigate. Plus sometimes the best aid is not about changing a surface but lies in providing the best device. For example there are specialized wheelchairs for sand or mulch or uneven areas, for example see [here](#).

It makes no sense to cater to a particular disability over another, such as placing a higher value on wheelchair bound over deaf children. Instead one might want to provide the healthiest surfaces for everyone and then providing assistance to those who need a particular aid. Another solution might be to keep engineered wood fiber - which is not the same as mulch (see chart at bottom) - but also include a boardwalk over the mulch that leads to key playground equipment for those who need a completely flat, non static electricity generating surface.

If you care about our global environment and everyone in it, including children here in Santa Clara, help by providing healthy surfaces.

Sustainably yours,

Susan Hinton
Chair, Plastic Pollution Prevention Committee
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

<https://www.sierraclub.org/loma-prieta/plastic-pollution-prevention>

P.S. See below on ADA Compliant Surfaces, from the TURI (Toxic Use Reduction Institute) Report 2018-003 Playground and Surfacing.pdf

https://www.uml.edu/docs/Playground_surfacing_report_Dec2023_tcm18-377890.pdf

Table 4. Summary of health, environmental, and performance criteria

Materials are listed in order of least concern (green) to greatest concern (orange) to playground users based on chemical hazard criteria only. TURI has attempted to identify the key concerns for each material.

Material (color coding based on chemical hazards)	Health & Environmental Hazard Criteria				Performance Criteria	
	Possible chemicals of concern	Health effects associated with chemicals of concern	Other human health concerns ^a	Environmental concerns	Fall protection	ADA compliant
EWF, wood chips, bark mulch Tested for absence of CCA	— ^e	— ^e	Mold growth possible ^b	— ^e	High	Yes (EWF only)
Sand Tested for absence of crystalline silica dust	— ^e	— ^e	— ^e	— ^e	Low	No
Pea gravel	— ^e	— ^e	— ^e	— ^e	Low	No
EWF, wood chips, bark mulch Not tested for absence of CCA	Traces of CCA possible. ²	Arsenic exposure can increase risk of certain types of cancer. ¹⁹	Mold growth possible ^b	Possible runoff contamination	High	Yes (EWF only)
Sand Not tested for absence of crystalline silica dust	Traces of crystalline silica dust. ²⁶	Inhalation of crystalline silica dust can cause respiratory disease, including lung cancer. ¹⁷	— ^e	— ^e	Low	No
Bonded EWF	Binding substances can contain hazardous chemicals (such as MDI) before they have been cured. ²⁷	Respiratory issues, skin sensitization, development of asthma and possible carcinogenicity. (Primarily an occupational exposure concern.) ¹⁶	— ^e	Possibility of impervious surface ^d	Depends on installation design	Yes
Artificial grass	PAHs, VOCs, heavy metals, phthalates, and others found in some infills; binding substances can contain hazardous chemicals (such as MDI) before they have been cured; grass blades can pose concerns as well. ^{5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14}	Carcinogenicity, endocrine disruption, respiratory irritation or skin irritation. ^{7, 9, 10}	Heat hazard	Possible runoff contamination, migration of synthetic materials offsite	Depends on installation design	Yes
Rubber tiles, PIP	PAHs, VOCs, heavy metals, phthalates; binding substances can contain hazardous chemicals (such as MDI) before they have been cured. ^{5, 6, 8, 11, 12}	Carcinogenicity, respiratory irritation or skin irritation. (Substances in binder primarily present occupational exposure concerns.) ^{7, 9, 10}	Heat hazard	Possible runoff contamination, possibility of impervious surface, migration of synthetic materials offsite ^d	Depends on installation design	Yes
Loose-fill rubber	PAHs, VOCs, heavy metals, phthalates, and others. ^{c, 5, 8}	Carcinogenicity, endocrine disruption, respiratory irritation or skin irritation. (CPSC notes that children frequently pick up or pick at, mouth, chew, or fall on loose-fill surfacing.) ^{7, 9, 10, 28}	Heat hazard	Possible runoff contamination, migration of synthetic materials offsite	High	No

a. Information on abrasion hazards associated with playground surfacing was not included in this report.
 b. Mold growth is unlikely provided that drainage is adequate.
 c. Exposure is likely to be greater with loose-fill rubber as children may handle and play with the material.

d. Some installation designs include the addition of an impervious concrete sub-base.
 e. TURI did not identify any priority concerns for hazards covered in this report.

From: PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:56 PM

To: Gia Pham <gia@housingchoices.org>; PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; [REDACTED] Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: RE: Public Engagement Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

Good Afternoon,

This is to confirm that your email has been received in the Planning Division and that your comments will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

From: Gia Pham <gia@housingchoices.org>

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:49 PM

To: PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; [REDACTED] Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager

<Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment

<PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Subject: Public Engagement Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

You don't often get email from gia@housingchoices.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the current draft of the community engagement policy, and I hope my suggestions can help further enhance its effectiveness and inclusivity.

I respectfully urge you to **defer approval** of the current draft of the community engagement policy until it is revised to better support meaningful and inclusive community input.

The current policy doesn't provide enough focus on reaching underserved and marginalized communities—something that is crucial to building a more diverse and equitable city. The plan needs to include important provisions like mandatory interpretation and translation services, childcare, food/refreshments, and transportation for those with accessibility needs to ensure that everyone can participate.

Additionally, the policy should include a stronger commitment to working directly with local nonprofit organizations that can help connect developers with harder-to-reach communities. By creating a list of trusted local partners, the city can help developers engage more effectively and make sure their outreach is genuine and impactful.

The policy should also require a clear feedback loop, ensuring that community input is not only heard but shared publicly, with developers explaining how they've incorporated this feedback into their plans. This would make community engagement much more meaningful, as people would see how their voices are shaping the final development.

I encourage the Planning Commission to direct staff to revise the policy based on these suggestions and to gather input from a broader range of nonprofits before moving forward with approval.

I believe the policy needs to be more specific, prioritize strengthening relationships with nonprofits representing disadvantaged groups, and establish a more structured approach for using community feedback to guide project adjustments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm Regards,

Gia Pham

Gia Pham

Communication Coordinator

gia@housingchoices.org

phone: 510.963.9261

fax: 408.498.5242

Sobrato Center for Nonprofit

3460 W Bayshore Road, Suite 205

Palo Alto, CA 94303

www.housingchoices.org



Opening new doors for people with developmental disabilities



From: [Elizabeth Elliott](#)
To: [PlanningCommission](#); [PlanningCommission](#); [Lance Saleme](#); [Mario Bouza](#); [Yashraj Bhatnagar](#); [Qian Huang](#); [Priya Cherukuru](#); [Nancy Biagini](#); [Eric Crutchlow](#); [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing](#); [Lesley Xavier](#); [Manager](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: RE: Please adapt Policy for Community Engagement to ensure Genuine, Inclusive, and Meaningful Process
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 1:04:50 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Good Afternoon,

This is to confirm that your email has been received in the Planning Division and that your comments will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II
Community Development Department | Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Nicole Little [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 12:01 PM
To: [PlanningCommission](#) <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; [Lance Saleme](#) <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; [Mario Bouza](#) <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; [Yashraj Bhatnagar](#) <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; [Qian Huang](#) <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; [Priya Cherukuru](#) <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; [Nancy Biagini](#) <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; [Eric Crutchlow](#) <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing](#) <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; [Lesley Xavier](#) <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; [Manager](#) <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; [Planning Public Comment](#) <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>
Subject: Please adapt Policy for Community Engagement to ensure Genuine, Inclusive, and Meaningful Process

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)
<<https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>>

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners,

Community engagement is a powerful process that allows community members, with hyper-local and hyper-relevant insights, to weigh in on the future of the places they live. By recruiting diverse and representative voices, projects become much more reflective of people and place. For reasons too many to list here, I believe an inclusive and meaningful community engagement should be

integral to every urban development process.

I agree with Catalyze SV's call for you to return this policy to staff for refinement before approving it, rather than sending it to the Council now. Please find my additions to Catalyze SV's commentary in purple below:

1. It does not specifically speak to equity. Traditionally, the community engagement process has left out the voices of marginalized communities. Santa Clara has an opportunity to right that inequity. Community engagement policies should specify how they will connect with hard-to-reach communities. For instance, community meetings must include efforts like interpretation and translation, children's activities or childcare, online options for participation, and food. Please include policies that hold community engagement processes accountable for inclusivity. This can include the creation of LEP plans and Inclusivity plans for both event participation and event recruitment. For example, inviting local CBOs and suggested radii for noticing neighbors. (For affordable housing, the target population should also be included. (e.g. Low-income families, seniors, PSH, I/DD)

2. The proposed policy should include stronger provisions about mobilizing the existing community to assist developers with community engagement. One way to do this is for Santa Clara to create a "bench" of community engagement contractors, especially local nonprofit organizations, that can be easily enlisted to assist developers in reaching the community. It is our experience that the more closely designers and developers are to the engagement process, the better translated community values are into the design. The best way to encourage these relationships and ensure CE happens, in our experience, is to include the process in RFP requirements.

3. The policy should be improved to reflect the number one piece of feedback from Catalyze SV members: more developments should take in early feedback from community members about what they'd like development to bring to their neighborhoods. Community engagement is most successful when it starts before a project even begins to design. Listen to community values first, then use those themes to craft relevant design activities. Please encourage early community engagement as a part of the process.

4. The policy needs to create a transparent feedback loop that emphasizes how community feedback will be documented and shared publicly, as well as what ideas from the community developers will or will not be able to implement and why. Community engagement is a lot more meaningful when government and developers reflect back on what they learned and how it improved their plans. Accountability and transparency should be at the forefront of Community Engagement. We encourage sharing back raw data for those curious (such as a photo of a dot-voting board) in addition to the synthesized results.

Thank you for your time and consideration, members of the Planning Commission. We hope to see some changes that will benefit the community-at-large with a thoughtful and inclusive design process.

Sincerely,

<<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fh3.googleusercontent.com%2F-6M4fvsITxGM2x-9Ugzwi70ElaWDOgrcZyG54QFpNbM84ipKeYsc5MuA71B9nAhgy4JbtSRIr-qK4j2WdxiYOa81-15asROPqrgWyt4JR0Jc3cM7EN-uwOjWErFQaFuxCGRaLA&data=05%7C02%7CElliott%40santaclaraca.gov%7Cb556ccf386b24d162cbc08dd505f912c%7C28ea354810694e81aa0b6e4b3271a5cb%7C0%7C0%7C638755093557338386%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslAIiOjXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=elhXO47O7dTPaMONka%2BVpnc6Yhb%2FfYzsVDGlam7Rj9g%3D&reserved=0>>

Nicole Little / she/her

Associate / Community Engagement Lead / Visual Storytelling Specialist

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w: engagefora.com <<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.engagefora.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7CElliott%40santaclaraca.gov%7Cb556ccf386b24d162cbc08dd505f912c%7C28ea354810694e81aa0b6e4b3271a5cb%7C0%7C0%7C638755093557358124%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslAIiOjXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BBKxICUzYPR6h3Gc4NHHXOW%2ByjmNM7TrborU3VslaA%3D&reserved=0>> /

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We Engage FOR A - Just world / strong community / collaborative approach / restorative process / resilient future - for all

From: [Elizabeth Elliott](#)
To: [PlanningCommission](#); [Lance Saleme](#); [Mario Bouza](#); [Yashraj Bhatnagar](#); [Qian Huang](#); [Priya Cherukuru](#); [Nancy Biagini](#); [Eric Crutchlow](#); [REDACTED] [Sheldon Ah Sing](#); [Lesley Xavier](#); [Manager](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: RE: Public Engagement Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 1:08:29 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Good Afternoon,

This is to confirm that your email has been received in the Planning Division and that your comments will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II
Community Development Department | Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: aravind c [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 10:27 AM
To: PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; [REDACTED] Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>
Subject: Public Engagement Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]
Learn why this is important <<https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>>

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners,

I care deeply about Santa Clara having an inclusive, collaborative, constructive community engagement policy.

That's why I support Catalyze SV's call for you to return this policy to staff for refinement before

approving it, rather than sending it to the Council now.

I believe the policy is majorly lacking in 4 main areas:

1. It does not specifically speak to equity. Traditionally, the community engagement process has left out the voices of marginalized communities. Santa Clara has an opportunity to right that inequity. Community engagement policies should specify how they will connect with hard-to-reach communities. For instance, community meetings must include efforts like interpretation and translation, children's activities or childcare, online options for participation, and food.
2. The proposed policy should include stronger provisions about mobilizing the existing community to assist developers with community engagement. One way to do this is for Santa Clara to create a "bench" of community engagement contractors, especially local nonprofit organizations, that can be easily enlisted to assist developers in reaching the community.
3. The policy should be improved to reflect the number one piece of feedback from Catalyze SV members: more developments should take in early feedback from community members about what they'd like development to bring to their neighborhoods.
4. The policy needs to create a transparent feedback loop that emphasizes how community feedback will be documented and shared publicly, as well as what ideas from the community developers will or will not be able to implement and why. Community engagement is a lot more meaningful when government and developers reflect back on what they learned and how it improved their plans.

The Planning Commission needs to direct staff to make major revisions based on my input above and to solicit a wider variety of nonprofits to provide input on the policy. Only then should the policy return to the Planning Commission for approval.

Sincerely,
Nagaravind,
Resident of San Jose

From: Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 8:40 AM

To: Alex Shoor <alex@catalyzesiliconvalley.org>; PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme <LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Cc: Jhaid Parreno <jhaid@catalyzesiliconvalley.org>; Mayor and Council <MAYORANDCOUNCIL@SantaClaraCA.gov>

Subject: RE: Public Engagement Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

Good Morning Alex,

This is to confirm that your email has been received in the Planning Division and that your comments will be part of the public record on this item.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Elliott | Staff Aide II

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

O: 408.615.2450 | D: 408.615.2474

www.SantaClaraCA.gov

From: Alex Shoor <alex@catalyzesiliconvalley.org>

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 3:22 PM

To: PlanningCommission <PLANNINGCOMMISSION@santaclaraca.gov>; Lance Saleme

<LSaleme@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Mario Bouza <mbouza@Santaclaraca.gov>; Yashraj Bhatnagar <YBhatnagar@Santaclaraca.gov>; Qian Huang <QHuang@Santaclaraca.gov>; Priya Cherukuru <PCherukuru@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Nancy Biagini <NBiagini@SantaClaraCA.gov>; Eric Crutchlow <ecrutchlow@santaclaraca.gov>; Sheldon Ah Sing <sahsing@santaclaraca.gov>; Lesley Xavier <LXavier@santaclaraca.gov>; Manager <Manager@santaclaraca.gov>; Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov>

Cc: Jhaid Parreno <jhaid@catalyzesiliconvalley.org>; Mayor and Council <MAYORANDCOUNCIL@SantaClaraCA.gov>

Subject: Public Engagement Policy Needs Fixes Before Moving Forward

You don't often get email from alex@catalyzesiliconvalley.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

The logo for Catalyze SV features the word "CATALYZE" in a dark blue, sans-serif font, followed by "SV" in a larger, bold, orange font. The entire logo is enclosed in a thin grey rectangular border.

Dear Santa Clara Planning Commissioners,

By now, you probably have received a number of letters from Catalyze SV stakeholders via [our action alert](#) encouraging Santa Clarans and other community members to weigh in on the content of the City's public outreach policy.

First thing, let's dole out some deserved kudos to the City of Santa Clara for both having a public engagement policy in the first place and for making improvements to it through the proposal before you tomorrow. The policy adding visioning meetings for some bigger projects is a really encouraging, essential step.

Taking a step back, let me explain why Catalyze SV and our members are so passionate about this issue, as well as how the City of Santa Clara got to tomorrow's vote.

- Community engagement has been baked into Catalyze SV's recipe since we were first designed by community members over 8 years ago in response to the [Agrihood project](#) in Santa Clara.
- In June 2018, we led [our first visioning workshop](#), in Santa Clara.
- In April 2019, we outlined [14 ways government could improve community engagement policies and practices](#).
- Since then, Catalyze SV has been pushing the City of Santa Clara to strengthen its community engagement policy.
- Thankfully, the Council directed staff to enhance it at its 2020 priority setting session.
- In May 2021, six City of Santa Clara staff graciously met with a dozen Catalyze SV members experienced in community engagement to discuss the City's policy.

Catalyze SV then polled our stakeholders and shared back with the City our top priorities in a community engagement policy.

I want to reiterate to you Catalyze SV's dual frustration with City staff delaying updates to the policy for over 4 years (we can understand some delay may have been necessary because of the pandemic) and then quickly bringing forward a previously unseen new policy for a vote before obtaining community feedback on it.

Unfortunately, this is a really revealing example of how not to do community engagement.

Enough about the process of rolling out the policy, let's get back to the policy itself. As we've stated, Catalyze SV believes the policy is majorly lacking in 4 main areas:

1. It does not specifically speak to equity. Traditionally, the community engagement process has left out the voices of marginalized communities. Santa Clara has an opportunity to right that inequity. Community engagement policies should specify how they will connect with hard-to-reach communities. For instance, community meetings must include efforts like interpretation and translation, children's activities or childcare, online options for participation, and food.

2. The proposed policy should include stronger provisions about mobilizing the existing community to assist with community engagement. One way to do this is for Santa Clara to create a "bench" of community engagement contractors, especially local nonprofit organizations, that can be easily enlisted to assist developers in reaching the community. The City of San José has a similar model and we'd be happy to share our experiences with it to inform Santa Clara's approach.

3. The policy should be improved to reflect the number one piece of feedback from Catalyze SV members: more developments should take in early feedback from community members about what they'd like development to bring to their neighborhoods. Too often, developers fear community engagement because of past experiences with virulent opposition. Yet a well-organized, well-facilitated community engagement conversations where the community expectations are managed on what is open for discussion and input and what is not can be the perfect medicine to what's often afflicted community engagement. Doing so early can encourage greater creativity and build deeper trust.

4. The policy needs to create a transparent feedback loop that emphasizes how community feedback will be documented and shared publicly, as well as what ideas from the community developers will or will not be able to implement and why. Community engagement is a lot more meaningful when government and developers reflect back on what they learned and how it improved their plans. Nothing breaks trust easier with a community than poor or non-existent communication. So when we ask people to participate, we should always explain how their participation impacted the process and/or decisions.

Here's the bottom line:

1. Do not advance the public engagement policy tomorrow night.
2. It needs major revisions and its needs heavy input from community members who will be affected by it and community-based organizations who can help the City implement it.
3. Only then should the policy return to the Planning Commission for approval.

The basis of any good community engagement policy is the community. Santa Clara needs to bring the community more *into* this policy before it can approve a policy *for* the community.

As always, I'm happy to talk with any of you individually. Thanks for your consideration —
Alex

--

Alex Shoor
Executive Director | Catalyze SV
www.CatalyzeSiliconValley.org
[Get Catalyze SV apparel](#) | [Schedule time w/Alex](#)