



Date: November 2023

To: Mayor and Council

From: Jōvan D. Grogan, City Manager

Subject: City Council Inquiries and Requests to Staff

The cornerstone of a strong Council-Manager relationship is effective communication and cooperative efforts of both staff and elected officials. To that end, it is important to provide clear lines of communication between the City Council and the City organization. This memorandum is being provided as guidance for the City Council to consider when needing follow-up on inquiries and information from City staff.

My overall goal is to provide exceptional service to our constituents and support the City Council on issues that may arise during the course of your duties. To streamline communication and further solidify the communication framework, below are types of requests and methods for the City Council to reach City staff for specific issues.

Types of Requests	Communication Channel	Contact Info
Constituent Inquiries and Constituent Complaints	Mayor & Council Staff	Mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov
City Operational Questions <i>(from Councilmembers, not constituents)</i>	Manager Inbox	Manager@santaclaraca.gov
Councilmember Agenda Questions	Manager Inbox	Manager@santaclaraca.gov
Scheduling Inquiries, Travel arrangements, and Other Administrative Requests	Mayor & Council Executive Assistant	<i>Designated Staff Member</i>
Legislative Advocacy Policy <i>(requests for consideration)</i>	Mayor & Council Staff	<i>Designated Staff Member</i>
Media Inquiries and Interview Requests	Communications	General Matters: Communications@santaclaraca.gov Direct Support Needs: <i>Designated Staff Member</i>

City Clerk Operational Matters <i>(Council meeting scheduling/polling, meeting attendance items, and filing requirements)</i>	City Clerk's Office	General Matters: Clerk@santaclaraca.gov Direct Support Needs: <i>Designated Staff Member</i>
Council Committees and Outside Agency Committees Information	Board/Committee Liaisons	Mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov and/or assigned staff liaisons
Critical or Elevated City Matters	City Manager	Jövan Grogan, City Manager
Critical or Elevated Police Matters	Police Chief	Pat Nikolai, Chief
Legal Matters	City Attorney	Glen Googins, City Attorney
Elected City Clerk Information <i>(elections and lobbying information)</i>	City Clerk	Hosam Haggag, City Clerk

Many of the above email addresses are general distribution accounts because multiple staff monitor inquiries and the use of distribution accounts ensures that support is provided when specific employees are on vacation and during routine absences. Additionally, staff uses an internal software system to track Councilmember requests/inquiries. This allows staff and management to ensure that responses are provided, and follow-up is conducted for complex requests when a response cannot be immediately provided.

Further, Councilmembers can and should refer constituents to the [MySantaClara application](#), where they can submit their City service requests directly. Often, a direct submission by a resident or business through the MySantaClara application is received by the staff member in charge of the service faster than if a Councilmember submits it. A general service request submitted by a Councilmember on behalf of a constituent adds additional steps and can involve follow-up communications with the Councilmember to clarify the request.

Response to Constituent Matters Submitted by Councilmembers

Staff will strive to acknowledge all emailed inquiries within 48 hours or sooner (business days). Staff will also send a confirmation to the requesting Councilmember when a constituent inquiry has been completed. When it is appropriate to provide the Councilmember with a summary of the response that will be done. However, please know that in some cases it may not be appropriate to communicate the specific details of a constituent response to Councilmembers. For example, when a member of the public contacts a Councilmember on any given topic such as a code enforcement issue (e.g. fence issues, tree issues, signage), traffic sign safety issues, RV parking, utility billing, etc., and the Councilmember forwards the request to staff, staff will confirm receipt with the Councilmember and add the issue to our internal tracking system. Staff will then work directly with the constituent to resolve the issue without a copy to the

Councilmember. However, staff will acknowledge the Councilmember's request and inform the Councilmember when the matter has been addressed.

Councilmember Inquiries to the City Manager and Executive Staff

It is the role of the City Manager to ensure that the organization's resources are aligned to the workload. To that end, it is important that City Council inquiries or policy matters which may entail a greater amount of staff resources be directed to the City Manager, usually via Council Meetings or Priority Setting Sessions. There are however cases where Councilmembers may have questions or inquiries that can be addressed quickly. While some City Managers request that Councilmembers do not contact Department Directors and other executive staff, I understand that occasionally these types of brief requests for information are needed and, at times, I may not be immediately available. In those instances, I am comfortable with Councilmembers e-mailing Department Directors or other executive staff (Chief Operating Officer and Assistant City Managers). I ask that you be mindful of what I have referred to as a "10-minute Rule". This means that if a Councilmember request is brief in nature and will not require staff resources beyond ≈10 minutes, it is appropriate for the Councilmember to contact an executive staff person (by e-mail). I ask that you also please copy me directly on such requests. To the extent that the workload of such requests does not interfere with the regular duties of executive staff, I intend to maintain this practice.

Request/Inquiries of Other Staff

Please refrain from contacting staff not listed in this memorandum on City or Stadium Authority business items. The guidelines detailed in this memorandum will not only assist me to ensure proper resource allocation but they will also help prevent any perception of councilmanic interference, as referenced in the City of Santa Clara [Charter §807](#).

I would be remiss if I also did not mention that our staff that sit in the Mayor and Council Division of the City Manager's Office are always there to assist and serve the City Council. They do their best to balance their assigned workload while also trying to be responsive to Councilmembers who may be in the office and have questions.

In closing, thank you in advance for your efforts to ensure streamlined and effective City Council communication with staff. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or feedback.

This memorandum will be periodically reissued when staff members or assignments change. A copy of the latest version will also be available upon request or by emailing Mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov.

cc: City Attorney's Office
City Clerk's Office
Police Chief
Senior Leadership Team
City Manager's Office