



**City of Santa Clara
City Council Governance Workshop
Held September 5, 2019**

September 10, 2019

**Management
Partners**



Table of Contents

Workshop Report	1
Workshop Overview	1
Opening Comments	3
Experience with Districts	3
Council Principles, Commitments/Norms, and Procedures	5
<i>Principles</i>	5
<i>Commitments/Norms</i>	5
<i>Procedures</i>	8
Wrap Up and Next Steps	10
Attachment A – City Manager Slides	11
Attachment B – Santa Clara Governance Slides	16

Workshop Report

The City of Santa Clara held a City Council governance workshop on Thursday, September 5, 2019 from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm at the Santa Clara Central Park Library Redwood Room.

The workshop provided an opportunity for Councilmembers and the City Manager to review their experience with districts, strengthen Council-staff teamwork, and create a consensus on Council principles, norms, and protocols. This report contains a summary of the results of the retreat.

Jan Perkins, Vice President with Management Partners, facilitated the workshop with assistance from Mandy Brown, Management Advisor, with Management Partners.

Workshop Overview

Objectives

- Review experience with districts and norms since December 2018.
- Determine modifications needed to principles, commitment/norms, and protocols.
- Strengthen the teamwork of Council, City Manager and staff.

Agenda

- Welcome by the Mayor
- Public comments
- Comments from the City Manager
- Discuss experience with districts
- Governance principles, commitments/norms, and procedures
- Wrap up and next steps

Participants

Councilmembers

**Mayor
Lisa Gillmor**



**Vice Mayor Patricia
Mahan**



**Councilmember
Kathy Watanabe**



**Councilmember
Raj Chahal**



**Councilmember
Karen Hardy**



**Councilmember
Teresa O'Neill**



**Councilmember
Debi Davis**



Executive Staff

- City Manager Deanna Santana
- City Attorney Brian Doyle
- Assistant City Manager Nadine Nadar
- Assistant City Manager Ruth Shikada
- Assistant City Clerk Nora Pimentel

Workshop Ground Rules. At the start of the workshop, the facilitator suggested several ground rules to help the group have a successful workshop.

- Listen to understand each other's point of view
- Seek consensus
- Assume good intent
- Speak up if we need course correction
- Stay focused

Bike Rack. The facilitator explained that items that were brought up but would not receive immediate attention would be added to a “bike rack.” It was used as a placeholder for later discussions during the session.

Workshop Preparation. In preparation for the workshop, Jan Perkins held individual interviews with each Councilmember, and discussed the workshop with the City Manager. An agenda and PowerPoint presentation were prepared.

Opening Comments

The workshop kicked-off with a welcome from Mayor Lisa Gillmor.

The City Manager Deanna Santana offered additional opening comments about why the session was important, and what she hoped the group would gain from the workshop. Ms. Santana explained that the City had eight months of experience with districts and emphasized that staff is focused on serving the entire community.

The slides presented by the City Manager are included as Attachment A.



Experience with Districts

Jan led the group in establishing a shared understanding of what the Council and staff have been experiencing now that the City has spent eight months with a district system. Participants discussed their experience with districts so far, both the challenges and benefits. A range of comments were offered by members of Council. A summary of the discussion about districts is provided below.

What has been our reality of working with districts?

- It is not all that different (in meetings with all community members, we refer them to the Councilmember in their district)

- People see Councilmembers as city representatives
- Some have a recognized district structure, but not all
- District 1 is the busiest
 - Stays on top of citywide issues
 - Has strong identity, social media posts
- People are contacting their Councilmember on district-specific issues (mostly developments)
- Still in an educational phase with the public
 - Some confusion between districts and at-large
 - People are just starting to understand the district form
 - Most common question is ‘*who is my district representative?*’
- Many people are happy they have a district representative; some want more representation
- Mayor is getting complaints about non-responsiveness from other districts
- New, positive recognition efforts in districts
- Council efforts strengthen district identity

How have districts changed the way we communicate?

- Social media
 - NextDoor, which does not structure neighborhoods by district, hinders communication efforts
 - Keeping personal social media (NextDoor) postings separate; need to identify as Councilmember when acting in that capacity
 - Need to find balance with social media use - communicating with public while not being dragged into “he said, she said”
 - Creates workload
- No formal policies around communication – we need some
- Calendars update community on council activities help the public see what we are doing

What has the Mayor had to do differently?

- More responsibility as people understand the district system/format
- The Council is very active and generates a lot of email; it is challenging to get messages to the right Councilmember
- Being responsive while acknowledging that the district boundaries may change

Council Principles, Commitments/Norms, and Procedures

Each of the principles, commitments/norms, and procedures were discussed, starting with the feedback received by Jan in her interviews with members of Council.

Principles

A summary of what was discussed is provided below.

Council agreement: The Council agreed to keep all three principles as written.

Table 1. *Council Principles*

Principles	Notes
1. We all care about and will govern for the entire Santa Clara community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Desire to avoid fragmented/disconnected council in other large cities with large districts</i>• <i>Districts – voting system vs. governance system</i>• <i>Link district-specific issues to citywide policy initiatives/goals</i>• <i>Development proposals create pressure on district-specific Councilmembers</i>
2. We will follow our Santa Clara ethical values.	<i>Follow up:</i> <i>Governance and Ethics Council Committee will review current Santa Clara Code of Ethics & Values and discuss.</i>
3. We will follow our Council-Manager form of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>This provides a service-oriented focus</i>• <i>Procedures will be discussed</i>

Following the discussion of principles, a few slides on the Santa Clara governance structure were presented (see Attachment B).

Commitments/Norms

The group reviewed a handout that listed Council's ***current*** commitments, and discussed ***new*** commitments proposed by Council.

In addition to the 12 commitments listed below, Council agreed that they will communicate the outcome of regional meetings to the entire Council.

A summary of the updated commitments, and notes from the discussion, are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Updated Commitments/Norms

Updated Commitments/Norms	Notes / Discussion
1. City Manager and Council will plan strategically city-wide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change from previous language
2. City Manager and staff will surface issues where plans, processes, resources, and other areas impacted may not be conducive to a district-focused response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change from previous language
3. City Manager will work with the City Council on governance issues that advance the goals and priorities of Santa Clara.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council priority setting will involve consolidated department updates, implementation activities at a glance; a process discussion regarding priority setting is being brought to the Council Governance and Ethics Committee in October; the intention is to revise the process to get entire council buy-in/support to agreed-upon priorities; there will be a new process in February 2020 Referrals are currently tracked; the City Manager will bring the current referral policy to the Council Governance and Ethics Committee for review
4. City Manager will work with the City Council on issues that may limit our ability to establish policy and achieve goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Clarification from previous language that said: "City Manager will work with the City Council on governance issues that may constrain our growth."</i>
5. City Manager will continue to provide the same information to all members of Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding questions and answers about Council agenda items, the City Manager has a new process with providing answers to questions (non-attributed) to all Councilmembers prior to the Council meeting. Regarding information about City events/activities: an email is sent out to all Councilmembers
6. City Manager will manage citywide, advise the Council about capacity and speak up when issues arise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Clarified commitment language; original said: "City Manager will manage citywide and speak up where there is tension, lack of resources, or other issues to be addressed."</i> Council is interested in understanding staff capacity, who is doing what on staff Pertaining to Public Records Act requests, Council would like increased transparency/education on what is driving this workload and how it impacts staff capacity Regarding recruitment and retention, it is challenging in a very competitive environment; important to understand why people are leaving; concerns about burnout; improved systems needed (e.g., recently implemented NeoGov for recruitments)
7. Council will work through the City Manager.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Clarification and combination of two commitments in previous version. One of the prior items said, "Staff will work through the City Manager." The other commitment said, "Councilmembers may communicate either directly with the City Manager or speak to Directors on specific issues. When the latter occurs, Directors are advised to let the City manager know as soon as practical on</i>

Updated Commitments/Norms	Notes / Discussion
	<p><i>the communication exchange. This enables the City Manager to track what is important to each Councilmember and for the City Manager to remain accountable."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council determined that their preference is to work directly through the City Manager and City Attorney rather than lower in the organization • City Manager noted that department heads understand to keep her informed when Councilmembers contact them; she asks Councilmembers to copy her on any emails to department heads • When Councilmembers are on regional committees, the staff assigned by the City Manager will assist them and keep the City Manager informed.
<p>8. City Manager and Councilmembers will hold one-on-one meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion around how to schedule/reschedule these meetings • Establish process to ensure consistency • Addition of support staff and outreach should improve consistency moving forward
<p>9. City Council will consult with the City Manager to ensure that Council direction and intentions are consistent with available resources and administrative procedures, and Councilmembers and City Manager will keep each other informed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The original commitment wording said, "City Council will consult the City Manager often to ensure the Council's actions align to administrative resources, protocols, and values."</i>
<p>10. City Manager and City Council will have an effective means of communicating with the public, including social media and other forms of communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is a new commitment.</i> • Regarding media calls, define a central location for Council obtain accurate information from city staff (e.g., City Manager, PIO) before disseminating • Important to improve communication out to the public from official City staff (easy to understand, timely, accurate) • Will work with communications office to obtain the scheduled communications and strategy and include in bi-weekly communication to council • Need general guidelines for all social media • Understand existing protocols/limitations
<p>11. All items discussed in closed session will remain confidential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is a new commitment.</i> • City Attorney will provide a refresher course on the Brown Act as pertains to confidentiality and what can be covered in closed session, and will include options regarding a "signed pledge"; this course will be in open session to also be useful to the public
<p>12. Council members will ask their questions about agenda items in advance to enable staff to answer the questions and be well prepared for the Council meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be one way to strengthen the partnership between Council and staff. • Questions asked in public should focus on items that members of the public be interested in rather than details that micromanage staff work.



Procedures

A list of the procedures that were agreed upon is provided below, along with a summary of comments.

1. Routing calls from residents

- High volume of calls; additional staff in the Mayor/Council office will help with this
- Most people know which department to call or the use the app
- Staff do not route calls to Councilmembers on issues affecting their district; staff handles these calls
- Councilmembers each receive emails that go to the entire Council and it is up to each individual to determine when/how they will respond

2. How staff prioritizes requests from Councilmembers

- City Manager reviews the requests at her weekly executive team meetings; establish deadlines, milestones
- Councilmembers expressed concern about timeliness of responses; City Manager will have staff develop a reporting method to keep Council better informed
- System improvements needed (e.g., CRM system to track requests; My Santa Clara app)

3. Information provided to the Mayor

- Due to discussions about upcoming Council meetings, sometimes information is provided to the Mayor first
- Media often wants to talk to the Mayor, rather than staff, and staff coordinates with the Mayor on information

4. Councilmembers responding to questions from another district

- Yes, any Councilmember can respond to questions from the public from anywhere
- Where possible, Councilmembers can let each other know when a constituent has contacted them (e.g., copy each other on emails)

5. Town halls and Councilmembers' district meetings

- State of the City town halls will be refined as to location and time
- Individual Councilmembers can conduct meetings (monthly or otherwise) open to anyone in the community, and can hold them anywhere in the community (not just in his/her specific district) – without any City staff resources or support being provided
- Councilmembers can speak with the City Manager about a particular need for a town hall on a topic and the City Manager will evaluate the resource request (e.g., after a public safety incident or other major occurrence)
- City staff will continue to hold public meetings on regional topics, projects and issues, as has always been the practice
- Some Council interest in being able hold their meetings in City facilities at reduced rate
 - *Follow up: City staff will look at this from a policy and staffing perspective*

6. NextDoor

- Regarding communicating with people on NextDoor, Councilmembers can reach out to anyone (staff can find out from NextDoor on how they set their boundaries)

7. District Facebook pages

- Councilmembers can have an individual Facebook page for their district, and it is their responsibility to keep it updated

8. City Manager's blog information

- Where feasible, the City Manager will include the district designation (e.g., major issues or developments); the idea is to keep this simple

9. At Council meetings, whether a Councilmember is called on by the Mayor first pertaining to an issue in his/her district depends on the individual Councilmember's preference.

10. Mayor can be of assistance to individual Councilmembers by attending events, being accessible to Councilmembers.

11. Councilmembers can ask the City Manager for assistance with issues in their districts and the City Manager will provide advice on what can be done.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

The Council's discussion was concluded by Council agreeing to refer a future governance check-in to the Council's Governance Committee to determine how best to proceed. The Council agreed that it has been useful to have these sessions to ensure everyone is on the same page as we get started on elections by districts.

To conclude the workshop, Jan Perkins reviewed upcoming milestones and key dates. She explained that Management Partners would produce this summary report on the day's discussion. Participants were asked to provide a closing comment or key take away from the governance workshop. A summary of the comments that were provided are listed below.

Comments from City Council

- There was good communication between council and staff
- We identified improvement areas
- It was good to hear input and spend time with Council and staff
- Appreciate candid conversation about understanding how to manage effectively, given resource limitations
- Still in "district denial" – figuring things out
- Enjoyed spending time together, committing to goals collectively
- We clarified issues identified at first session

Comments from Staff

- We had an honest conversation about how districts are going
- We acknowledged resource limitations
- There is a great dynamic between Council and staff
- Good to see commitment of Council
- Strong desire to have collaborative working relationships

Attachment A – City Manager Slides

Comments from City Manager Deanna Santana

- **Eight months** of experience with districts
- Our staff focus is on **serving the entire community** of Santa Clara and preparing strategically for the City's future well-being
- Our strategies, resource allocation, systems, and service delivery models are structured **citywide**

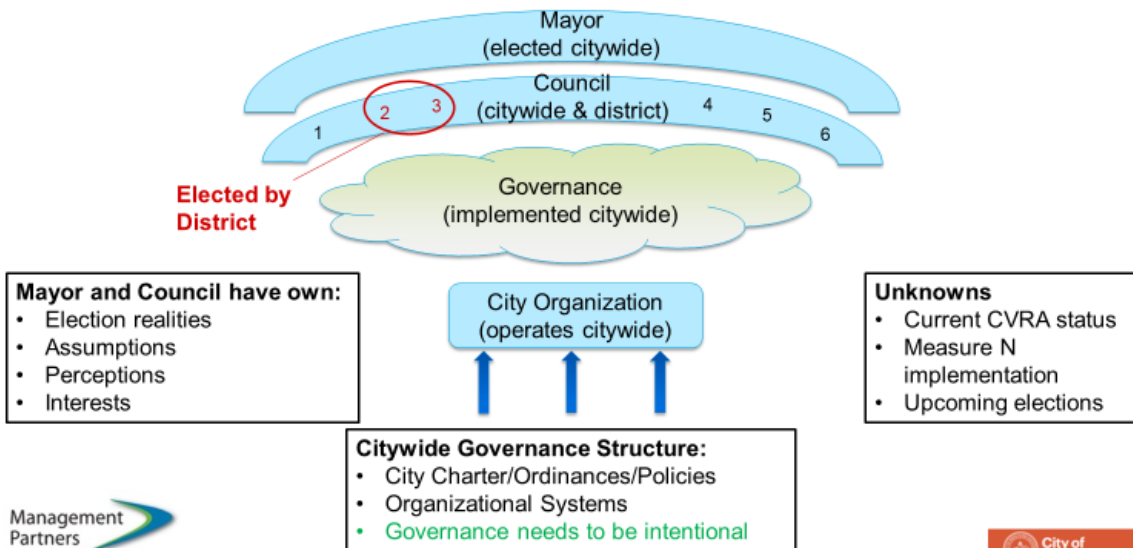


The City of Santa Clara is a "full service" city – one of only a few communities in the Bay Area that has its own police, fire, library, recreation, and electric, water, and sewer utilities, as well as all of the other departments and civic amenities expected in a thriving community.



8

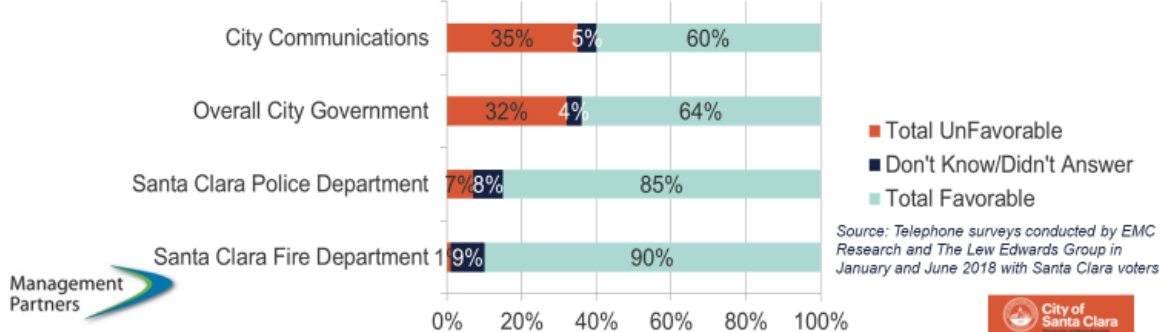
Current Governance/Organizational Structure



9

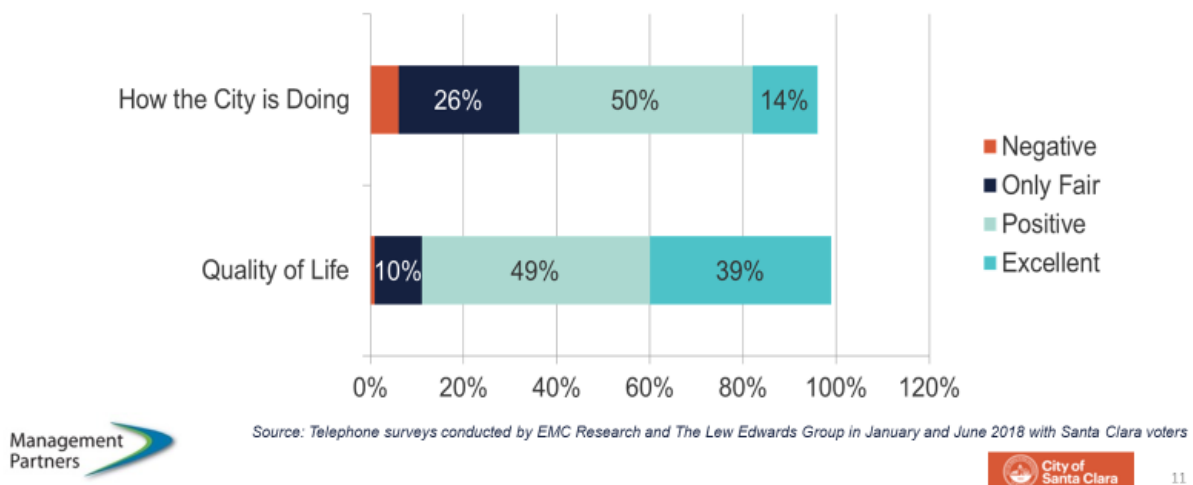
Impacts of Current Governance/Org Structure

- High levels of **community satisfaction** and **quality of life**
 - 64% of respondents believe the City is doing an excellent or positive job, and
 - 88% of respondents believe that quality of life in Santa Clara is positive or excellent
- Over half of those polled believe the City is **headed in the right direction**
- Overall, voters rate City Services **very positively**, especially public safety:



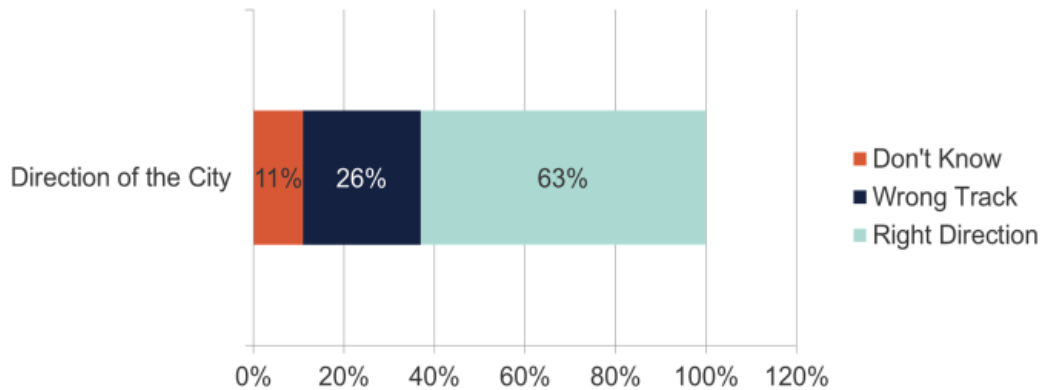
Impacts of Current Governance/Org Structure

- High levels of **community satisfaction** and **quality of life**



Impacts of Current Governance/Org Structure

- 63% of those polled believe that the City is headed in the right direction



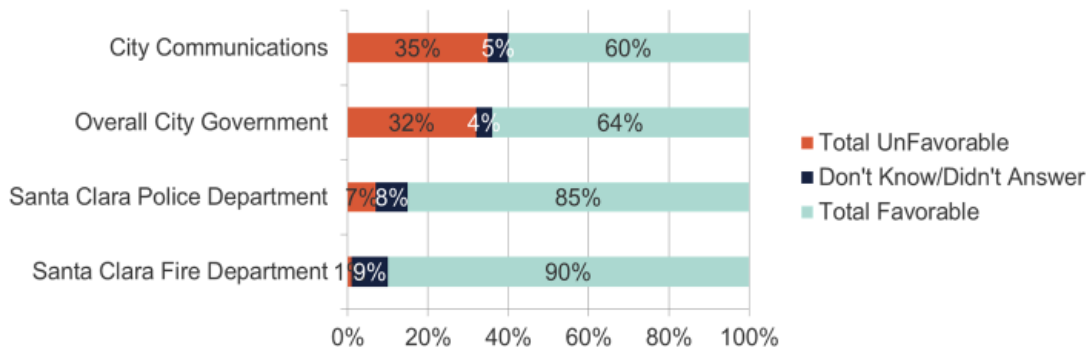
Source: Telephone surveys conducted by EMC Research and The Lew Edwards Group in January and June 2018 with Santa Clara voters



12

Impacts of Current Governance/Org Structure

- Overall, voters rate City services very positively, especially public safety:



Source: Telephone surveys conducted by EMC Research and The Lew Edwards Group in January and June 2018 with Santa Clara voters



13

Impacts of Current Governance/Org Structure

- Results of first ever Employee Survey are largely positive
- Results support initial assessments made by City Manager:
 - Workforce is committed to their work, despite heavy workload and manual processes
 - Lack of enterprise-wide workforce development and training opportunities
- Employees feel their jobs support the work of the City and that the City plan an important role in the community
- They believe that their direct supervisors and coworkers do excellent work and enjoy working with them



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14

Impacts of Current Governance/Org Structure

- Areas identified for growth:
 - Improved communication throughout the organization, including Council action, new projects, upcoming events, etc.
 - Address concerns about unsustainable workload (not enough staff, competing priorities, etc.)
 - Employee Wellness: Better work/life balance

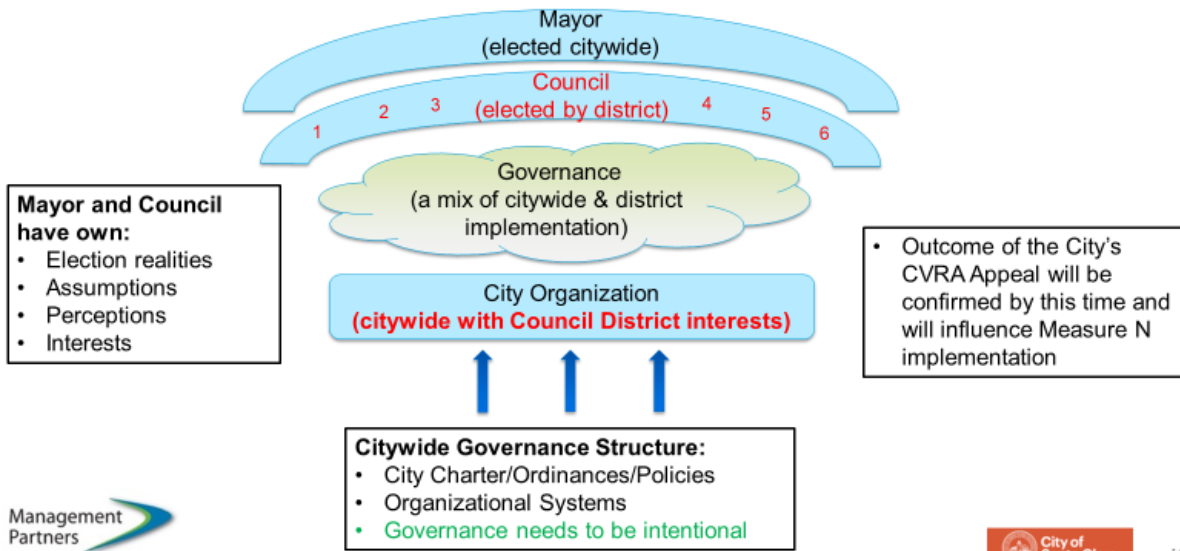


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15

November 2020 Governance/Organizational Structure



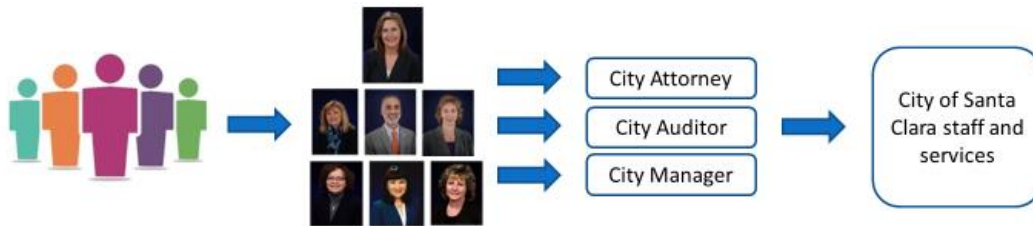
Organizational Environment



Attachment B – Santa Clara Governance Slides

Refresher on Santa Clara Governance Structure

- Santa Clara has a **Council/Manager** form of government



The **People** elect the **City Council** who appoints the **City Attorney**, **City Auditor**, and **City Manager**. These appointees hire **staff**, put the Council's policy into **action**, and provide necessary **City services**.



25

Refresher on Santa Clara Governance Structure

- Santa Clara isn't like other cities – it is a **vibrant** and **complex** organization with **unconventional lines of service**



26

Refresher on Santa Clara Governance Structure

Council Appointees:

City Attorney

- Represent and advise the City Council and all City officers in all legal City matters
- Provide legal advice or opinion when requested by the City Council
- General Counsel to SCSA



City Manager

- City Manager
- Chief Executive Officer of Silicon Valley Power
- Executive Director of Stadium Authority
- Oversight of Santa Clara Convention Center

City Auditor

- First professional City Auditor
- Manage annual financial audit contracts for the City and Stadium Authority
- Perform financial, operational and performance audits for the City and SCSA

27

Refresher on Santa Clara Governance Structure

➤ The City Manager is responsible for Santa Clara's four lines of business:



City of Santa Clara



Silicon Valley Power



Stadium Authority



Convention Center



28