

# Citizens' Advisory Committee Handbook

of Guidelines & Responsibilities

<b>ID #</b>	BRD-022
<b>Rev</b>	6
<b>Date</b>	12/12/2019
<b>Reso</b>	19-54
Revised	12/13/2018
Revised	9/8/2016
Revised	7/14/2011
Revised	8/10/2006
Revised	2/24/2005
Adopted	8/9/2001



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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Mission of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority**

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority conserves the natural environment, supports agriculture, and connects people to nature, by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations.

### **B. Background on the formation of the Citizens' Advisory Committee**

The Authority's enabling legislation states:

*"The Authority shall review and assess the needs for acquisition, preservation or maintenance of open-space lands. As part of this review and assessment, the Authority shall solicit proposals from the cities in the county within the boundaries of the Authority and from a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the membership of which shall be determined by the Authority based upon criteria, which provides a broad representation of interest within the Authority's jurisdiction. The membership of the CAC shall reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the population within the Authority's jurisdiction. The Authority shall adopt a procedure for evaluating these proposals in consultation with the cities and the CAC in the Authority's jurisdiction."*

## **II. Responsibility of Members**

### **A. As a CAC member you will be expected to:**

- i. Attend all regular meetings. If you cannot attend a meeting, contact the CAC Chair prior to the meeting to announce your absence. If you cannot reach the Chair, contact the Staff Liaison. Two unannounced absences indicate an inability to serve and could result in removal from the CAC. For further information refer to Section IV, Guidelines for CAC Membership, item E, Term of Appointment. Regular attendance is important to ensure a robust discussion of agenda items and that multiple perspectives are considered before making a decision. A poor attendance record may prevent continued service or re-appointment to the CAC.
- ii. Participate in meeting discussions. Read your packet before each meeting and come prepared to discuss every topic requiring an action, even those not related to your subcommittee. If you have clarification questions, contact the Staff Liaison or CAC officers before the meeting. You may express a need for more time for any item at the meeting.

- iii. In formulating recommendations on agenda items, keep an open mind and be willing to base your position on information and discussion at the meeting, as well as experience and other knowledge. If a member is affiliated with an outside organization, the member should be willing to formulate his or her own position on issues after CAC deliberations and not automatically represent the viewpoint of the outside organization.
- iv. Be alert to issues, problems, and needs that are expressed by the general public, neighbors, and special interest groups as related to open space. Bring these matters to the attention of the CAC Chair.
- v. Choose or be assigned to a subcommittee and participate in it by attending subcommittee meetings and contributing to the subcommittee's work.
- vi. Stay abreast of the Board's activities and decisions. In service of this goal, members are encouraged to regularly read the Board and Board Committee packets and attend at least one Board and Board Committee meeting per year as members of the public.
- vii. Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the CAC Handbook.

### **III. Communication between Authority Board and CAC**

- A. Agendas and Minutes of all CAC meetings shall be distributed to Authority Board members, and agendas and minutes of Board meetings shall be distributed, with announcements of Board committee meetings, to CAC members.
- B. Time will be reserved at each committee meeting for a Board Liaison to report on upcoming Board issues or action items.
- C.
- D. The Chair and/or the Vice Chair shall meet with the Authority Board Chair or Staff Liaison as necessary to assure coordination between CAC activities and the Board's priorities.
- E. All recommendations from the CAC to the Board of Directors must be agendized and passed by a simple majority of CAC members present at a meeting.
- F. All CAC recommendations to the Board shall be in the form of written communications, which will include background information justifying the recommendation. A designated member of the CAC may attend the meeting of the Board committee or full Board when the recommendation is being considered, to provide additional background, as appropriate. The CAC Chair will be notified when the recommendation will be considered to enable a CAC member to attend.

#### **IV. Guidelines for CAC Membership**

##### **A. Membership of the Committee**

- i. There shall be 13 members on the Committee. They include: seven District Representatives (the boundaries are the voting districts of each of the Directors elected to serve on the Board of Directors), and six At Large members.
- ii. Two Board members, appointed by the Board of Directions, shall serve as liaisons to the CAC.

##### **B. Qualifications for Membership**

- i. The persons to be selected shall have an interest in developing, implementing and furthering an open space program within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.
- ii. The candidate(s) shall reside in the Authority's jurisdictional boundaries.
- iii. The candidate(s) for District representative shall be a resident of the district within which the appointment is to be made.
- iv. The candidate(s) who apply to fill one of the six At Large positions may demonstrate general knowledge of and involvement in the activities of priority interest areas that support the Board's focus for the CAC. These areas may include, but are not limited to Agriculture, Business, Civic Organizations, Development Community, Parks, Public Health and Safety and/or Trails. The Board may consider additional areas of expertise based on the current and near-term focus of the CAC.
- v. The candidate(s) should have a general knowledge of, or a desire to learn about, city and/or county government processes, elected officials and community organizations, and have experience working on a team, in a group and/or with a community committee.
- vi. The candidate(s) should have a working knowledge of issues facing land conservation and public access.

##### **C. Public Notification of Vacancy**

- i. Staff communicates all new vacancies and positions with expiring terms on the CAC to the Board, Staff and the CAC. Anticipated vacancies due to term expiration will be communicated at least 90 days prior to the expiration date. Unanticipated vacancies will be announced as soon as reasonably feasible.
- ii. To encourage recruitment, Staff prepares, distributes and makes public, announcements for recruitment of open positions on the CAC, which

may assist in recruiting participants from a wide range of interests and who represent the diverse populations served by the Authority.

- iii. The application period for a vacancy shall be open for a minimum of 45 days.

**D. Process of Selection and Appointment**

- i. The Director of the district having the vacancy shall recommend a District Representative who shall be subject to confirmation by the Board.
- ii. The Administration and Budget Committee of the Board shall review all applications for At Large Representatives, may interview the applicants and shall recommend nominations for consideration and appointment by the Board.
- iii. Appointments to the CAC shall be officially approved and introduced at a Board of Directors meeting.

**E. Term of Appointment**

- i. Terms shall be for two years, beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30. Existing members in good standing who wish to serve another two-year term and members of the public wishing to join the CAC will have the opportunity to submit applications to the Board. Representatives of Districts One through Four and three At Large members shall be appointed in even years. Representatives of Districts Five through Seven and the remaining three At Large members shall be appointed in odd years.
- ii. CAC members with expiring terms will be notified by Staff at least 90 days prior to the expiration date.
- iii. A member of the CAC shall be subject to removal at any time by a vote of five members of the Board of Directors.
- iv. If a member of the Committee does not attend two meetings per year, unless excused by the Chair of the CAC, the CAC Chair shall make reasonable efforts to contact that member and inform them of these sections of the CAC Guidelines. If the member does not attend a third meeting within the year without being excused by the CAC Chair, the CAC Chair shall notify the Authority Board Chair so that the Board may take appropriate action, including termination of the member's appointment.
- v. CAC members whose terms have expired may continue to serve until the Board reappoints the member or appoints a replacement.



**F. Election of CAC Officers**

The election of CAC officers shall be scheduled for January of each year, or as soon thereafter as it is practical to do so. The CAC election of officers shall be conducted according to an adopted election procedure.

**G. Purpose and Role of the CAC**

The purpose of the Citizens' Advisory Committee is to provide many avenues of input to and from the Open Space Authority's diverse communities.

The Citizens' Advisory Committee is established by and serves the Open Space Authority's governing board. Membership provides a broad representation of interests within the Authority's jurisdiction. Each CAC member brings a unique community perspective based on the geographic region and/or area of expertise he or she represents. The CAC aids in fostering a positive public image of the Authority. Members:

- i. Serve as community liaisons for the Open Space Authority and educate members of the community about the Authority's mission, goals, purpose, initiatives and projects.
- ii. In coordination with the Board and Staff, make public presentations and attend community events on behalf of the Authority.
- iii. Serve as a communication and feedback portal for the community; share community trends, insights and ideas that are relevant to the Authority's mission with the Committee members and Board as appropriate.
- iv. Participate in the Authority's grant programs by reviewing and providing input on eligible grant applications and making recommendations to the Board.
- v. Work on special projects assigned or approved by the Board of Directors.

**H. Duties and Responsibilities of the CAC**

- i. As directed by the Board, the CAC in coordination with Staff, may study issues, advise on subjects and make recommendations or reports of findings to the Board. The Staff, on behalf of the Board, may bring matters to the CAC, and the CAC may also initiate projects with the approval of the Board.
- ii. The CAC solicits input from affected stakeholders.
- iii. In coordination with the Board and Staff, CAC members make public presentations and attend community events and public events on behalf of the Authority.

- iv. After Staff review and recommendation, the CAC shall review all applications for 20% Funding submitted by Participating Jurisdictions and make a recommendation to the Board on the applications.
- v. The General Manager may seek review of and comment from the CAC on items that will be considered by the Board's Use and Management Committee.
- vi. By February of each year the CAC will prepare a list of recommended work proposals for the upcoming fiscal year, and the Board and CAC will hold a joint meeting for discussion to set the framework for these proposals for work. The CAC Chair will then consult with the Board Chair and the General Manager to finalize the recommended CAC work plan for the year. The work plan shall be considered by the Board and finalized. The Board may modify the work plan at any time and may ask the CAC to undertake other specific assignments, appoint Special Committees, or comment on particular issues.
- vii. CAC recommendations submitted to the Board shall include the number of votes for and against the recommendation.
- viii. The CAC may form subcommittees from within its membership, as it deems necessary to carry out its assigned responsibilities. Subcommittees shall consist of fewer members than a simple majority of a quorum of currently appointed CAC members.
- ix. CAC member communications to Staff shall be directed through the General Manager.

**I. Education**

- i. The Board of Directors shall provide an annual budget for CAC member education. All paid education must align with the Authority's mission and the Chair and Vice Chair will be given priority for this budget. In the event that funds remain after the Chair and Vice Chair have selected their education options, the Chair may allow additional CAC members to use the remainder of the CAC education budget, as long as the education is mission-related.

**V. Guidelines for Emeritus Advisors**

**A. Emeritus Advisory Committee Composition**

- i. There may be an unlimited number of retired CAC members in the Emeritus Advisory Committee.

**B. Qualifications for Selection**

- i. The persons to be selected shall have demonstrated engagement while serving on the CAC through good attendance and participation on committees and projects approved by the Board of Directors.

**C. Process and Selection of Appointment**

- i. Retiring CAC members may request an Emeritus status by contacting the CAC Chair in writing.
- ii. The CAC Chair may also consider requests from retired CAC members who meet the qualifications for selection.
- iii. The CAC may recommend to the Board that Emeritus status is granted to the retiring or retired member and shall provide a brief overview of the CAC member's contributions and successful fulfillment of CAC duties.

**D. Term of Appointment**

- i. Emeritus Advisors shall serve indefinite terms.

**E. Purpose and Role of Emeritus Advisors**

- i. The Emeritus Advisors are past CAC members and serve the agency by imparting institutional knowledge, relevant experience, and expertise to sitting members of the CAC, as well as to new Board members. These members facilitate smooth and thoughtful succession for the CAC and Board, allowing new members to join these bodies while preserving and sharing the wealth of experience from prior members.
- ii. Emeritus Advisors shall serve in a non-voting capacity and on an as-needed basis on special projects and other areas as directed by the CAC or Board.
- iii. Advisors will share institutional knowledge and the history of the Authority, helping new CAC and Board members understand the reasons why decisions were made, how past CAC projects were accomplished, and impart insight into the evolution of the CAC and its role over time.
- iv. At the request of the CAC Chair, Emeritus Advisors may participate in subcommittee meetings, provide public comment, or give more thorough reports to CAC members in public meetings.

## **VI. Meeting Procedures**

### **A. Meetings**

The CAC will normally meet monthly on the fourth Monday of the month, every other month, except in December. Other special meetings may be scheduled as deemed necessary by the CAC Chair. Meetings shall be conducted according to an adopted meeting procedure.

### **B. Responsibility of the Officers**

- i. Chairperson
  - a. Supervises the conduct of the CAC's business and activities in coordination with the General Manager.
  - b. Serves as ex officio on all CAC committees.
  - c. Presides at meetings.
- ii. Vice Chairperson
  - a. Acts in place of the Chairperson when necessary and presides at meetings when the chairperson temporarily vacates the chair. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chair should not change rules, cannot fill vacancies required to be filled by the Chairperson and does not serve as an ex officio member of committees.
- iii. The presiding officer (Chairperson or Vice Chairperson) should:
  - a. Be ready to call the meeting to order at the set time.
  - b. Follow the agenda and clarify what is happening and what is being voted on at all times.
  - c. Facilitate the Committee's discussion and progress to a decision.

### **C. Quorum and Action**

- i. In order to conduct business at a meeting, a quorum shall be present. A quorum shall be defined as a majority of the currently appointed members. Actions taken by the CAC shall require a simple majority of those members present at a meeting.
- ii. The presiding officer should determine that there is a quorum before beginning the meeting.

### **D. Order of Business, Agendas and Minutes**

- i. The standard agenda shall normally include the following order of business:

- a. Call to order and roll call.
- b. Public comments - relating to items not on the agenda, and limited to 3 minutes, if any.
- c. Written communications.
- d. Approval of minutes. Corrections are requested. If there are none, the Minutes stand approved as presented.
- e. Opening report (CAC Chairperson)
- f. Old business (items left over from the previous meeting).
- g. New business.
- h. Informational Reports.
  - Board Liaison report
  - Authority General Manager/Staff reports
  - CAC Member reports and announcements
  - CAC Sub-Committee reports, if any
- i. Adjournment.
- ii. The agenda will be prepared by Staff in consultation with the Chair and/or the Vice Chair. Agendas and minutes will be prepared by Staff and distributed to CAC members. The minutes shall include, in addition to other information about the meeting, a record of every motion, the maker and person seconding the motion, whether the motion passed or failed, and the votes for and against.

#### **E. Motions**

The rules of parliamentary procedure are meant to help, not hinder. Applied with common sense, they should not frustrate the meeting or entangle it in red tape. The presiding officer should retain control at all times, give clear explanations, and keep things as simple as possible. Good advice from the Chair as to the wording of motions and the best way to proceed will avoid needless complications.

Business is conducted by acting on motions. A subject is introduced by a main motion (I move that...). Once a motion has been seconded and restated by the presiding officer, nothing else should be taken up until the motion is disposed of.

While a main motion is being considered, other parliamentary motions, which affect either the main motion or the general conduct of the meeting, may be made.

**Roberts Rules of Order** shall generally govern motions and procedure. A member who feels the rules are not being followed may call attention to the

breach by saying, "point of order." The chair responds, "state your point of order". Upon hearing the persons concern, the chair may say, "your point is well taken", or "your point is not well taken".

**F. Adjournment**

If the time set for adjournment has arrived or there is no further business, the presiding officer declares the meeting adjourned without waiting for a formal motion.

**VII. Resources**

- A. At the minimum the following items shall be provided to each new member at their first meeting.
- i. CAC Handbook
  - ii. Authority Enabling Act
  - iii. Authority 5-Year Plan
  - iv. Santa Clara Valley Greenprint
  - v. Minutes of previous three (3) CAC meetings
  - vi. Nameplate consistent with other CAC members
  - vii. Current Authority Annual Report
  - viii. Current Audit
  - ix. Volunteer Handbook