

# Making Public Comments During City Council or Planning Commission Meetings



The City of Sunnyvale's City Council and Planning Commission Meeting agendas include opportunities for members of the public to address the Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners. Use this checklist to help prepare and deliver public comments.

## 1 Select the Appropriate Speaking Opportunity

*Oral Communications* – Portion of the meeting agenda following Roll Call/Special Orders of the Day which provides an opportunity for members of the public to address Council on matters not listed on the agenda, including announcements related to community events, programs or recognition. This section is limited to 15 minutes with a maximum of up to three minutes per speaker. The Brown Act (Open Meeting Law) does not allow Councilmembers to take action on an item not listed on the agenda. Individuals are limited to one appearance during this section.

*Public Hearing/General Business* –The public is invited to speak following the City staff presentation on each item.

- **Tailor speech to three minutes** – Speakers are allotted three minutes for each item. Small lights in front of the lectern turn green when the time begins, yellow with 30 seconds remaining and red when the time concludes. The Councilmembers and Commissioners may ask follow-up questions.

For land use items, the project applicants are limited to a maximum of 10 minutes for opening comments and five minutes for closing comments.

## 2 Create Effective Presentation Materials

While not necessary, speakers may use presentation materials to support their public comments. In most cases, presentation materials will appear on the television monitors in the Council Chambers and on KSUN-15, the City's government access cable channel, when the meeting is being broadcast. To ensure materials display with the highest quality, follow these guidelines:

- **Presentation Slides** –
  - Use an easy-to-read font such as Arial and a minimum of a 28-point font size
  - **Do not fill slide to the edges** – leave a border at least three-quarters of an inch on all sides
  - Graphics and charts should contain data and labels that are easy to read
  - Use 4:3 aspect ratio for slides to accommodate standard definition broadcast
- **Projected Material** – A digital document camera is available to display three-dimensional objects and printed papers of any type (transparencies are not necessary).
  - When possible, use a landscape (horizontal) format for optimum display on monitors
  - Use up to an 8 ½" x 11" paper size for optimum display on the digital document camera
  - Ensure handwritten information is legible and lettering is at least half an inch high
  - Photographs: Non-glossy finishes reduce glare; tape multiple photographs to a horizontal 8 ½" x 11" piece of paper
- **Video (e.g., CDs, DVDs, Blu-ray, .mpeg, .wmv)** – Videos are generally used for special presentations only. The video length is included in the total allotted speaking time.

### 3 Submit Presentation Materials in Advance

Speakers must submit presentation materials in advance to ensure they display properly and meetings run smoothly. Speakers **cannot** use their own computer or projection equipment for displaying presentation material. Submit materials to the following offices within the timeframes listed below:

- *City Council Meeting* – Communications Division, (408) 730-7535, [communications@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:communications@sunnyvale.ca.gov)
  - *Planning Commission Meeting* – Planning Division, (408) 730-7440, [planning@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:planning@sunnyvale.ca.gov)
  - If submitting by email, call the appropriate office above to confirm receipt.
- 
- **Presentation Slides** – Submit electronic presentation slides, such as a PowerPoint presentation, **no later than noon on the day of the meeting**, to be loaded onto the City's equipment. Submit the presentation via email, CD or USB flash drive.
  - **Projected Material** – Provide material for the digital document camera to the City Clerk or Recording Secretary **15 minutes prior to the start** of the meeting.
  - **Video** – Submit video material **at least three working days prior** to the meeting.
  - **Handouts** – Provide 12 copies to the City Clerk or Recording Secretary **15 minutes prior to the start** of the meeting. These will be distributed to the Councilmembers or Planning Commissioners.

### 4 Request to Speak with a Speaker Card

Members of the public must fill out a speaker card to address the City Council or Planning Commission during their meetings.

- **Complete a Speaker Card** – Speaker cards are available on the tables by the entrance to the Council Chambers. Write the speaker's name and agenda item legibly.
- **Turn in Speaker Card** – Give completed cards to the City Clerk at a Council Meeting or the Recording Secretary at a Planning Commission Meeting. The card should be turned in prior to the agenda item. Speakers will be invited to the lectern by the Mayor or Planning Commission Chair at the appropriate time.

### 5 Deliver the Presentation

- **Be prepared to run the presentation equipment** or have an assistant. The City provides a wireless computer remote control to advance electronic presentation slides from the lectern. City staff is **not** available during meetings to assist with operating the presentation equipment.
- **Speak clearly into the microphone** by adjusting its height to just below speaker's mouth. The City can also provide a hand-held microphone or lapel microphone for those unable to come to the lectern.