

Neighborhoods Commission Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is this new commission and what is its focus and purpose?

The Neighborhoods Commission shall integrate the voice of neighborhoods into the City's decision-making processes; study issues, courses of action, policies, and programs that affect neighborhood quality of life; make recommendations to Council and Redevelopment Agency; and empower neighborhoods. The Commission will make regular reports to the San José City Council, City Staff, and Neighborhood Groups. The Neighborhoods Commission work plan will be developed in coordination with, and approved by, the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee. Annual reports will be provided by Commissioners at the yearly Neighborhood Caucus by Council district.

2. What is a Neighborhood Group?

As defined in Planning Outreach Policy 6-30, a "Neighborhood Group" is a group or organization that is representative of its specific neighborhood, and whose primary purpose is the improvement of that neighborhood. The neighborhood group is self-identified and provides an annual update of its' contact information to the City. Additionally, for the purposes of this process, a Neighborhood Group must be registered with the City of San José, be acting in good faith to meet the criteria outlined above, and be composed of multiple members from different households in its geographic area.

3. Are there rules for the Delegates?

A Delegate must reside in the District in which he or she is casting a ballot on behalf of their neighborhood group. Each Neighborhood Group must register in advance (deadline April 18, 2008) and select one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate that will attend the District Caucus, whose purpose is to select three (3) commissioners and two (2) alternates who will represent the District on the Commission. No individual delegate shall represent (or cast a ballot on behalf of) more than one Neighborhood Group in the District Caucus. The delegate registration deadline is seven (7) days prior to the District Caucus. If this date falls on a weekend, the deadline shall be the end of business (5:00 PM) the Friday prior.

4. Are there rules for Applicants for the Commission?

An individual who meets the City requirements to serve on a Board or Commission may apply as a candidate to be considered for the position of Neighborhoods Commissioner. All Candidates for Neighborhoods Commission must reside within the boundaries of the City of San José and live within that District, apply through the City Clerk's office, and meet all City requirements for appointment to a Commission (availability to attend meetings, and legally required disclosure of economic interests through Form 700). The Neighborhoods Commissioner Applications submission deadline is April 18, 2008.

5. What are the anticipated time commitments?

The neighborhoods Commission is initially authorized for a two-year pilot. During this time, it will define its charter, workplan, and schedule, to support emerging and established neighborhood groups, as well as be a resource to City Leadership and Departments on neighborhood quality of life issues. The Commission will hold regular scheduled monthly meetings of at least several hours. Additionally, it is anticipated that there will be additional meetings and sub-committee work

and/or tasks that will occur between regularly scheduled Commission meetings. As a result, it is estimated that Commissioners will be involved on this work for up to twenty (20) hours a month.

6. Are there term limits?

Each District shall designate three Commissioners and two alternates through a Neighborhoods Caucus process, which will be forwarded to the City Council for appointment. In the initial two-year pilot, Commissioners will serve two year terms. It is intended that if the Commission is granted permanent status, Commissioners will be elected and serve for staggered two and three-year terms, and that an individual Commissioner may serve a maximum of four two-year terms.

7. How are commission members selected?

Commissioners shall be selected through a caucus process in which neighborhood groups meet and through an established process facilitated by a neutral moderator, go through rounds of public balloting to choose their Commissioners. The caucus shall be attended by candidates who have been vetted through the San José City Clerk's office, interested members of the community, a neutral Caucus Moderator/ Facilitator and assistants and interpreters (as needed and requested in advance).

Candidates are encouraged, as part of their application process, to prepare and submit beforehand a written statement of up to two hundred and fifty (250) words explaining their candidacy, skills/experience, and prior service to the community. Neighborhood Commission Candidates Statements and information will be posted on the Neighborhood Development Center website, as soon as this is available. All Neighborhood Caucuses will be held between May 17 and June 14, 2008 in each of the 10 Council Districts.

8. How will this caucus work?

A Neutral Moderator/ Facilitator will provide welcome, introductions, ground rules, and explanation of the caucus process to all in attendance in each of the ten (10) respective Council District caucuses. Candidates will have the opportunity to make a two-minute opening statement (chosen in random order). All Candidates will have the opportunity to briefly respond (one minutes answers) to four (4) questions provided by Delegates, The questions shall be received, reviewed, and asked to the Candidates by the neutral Moderator/ Facilitator. Each Candidate shall be provided with time for a one (1) minute closing statement prior to the balloting.

There will then be a caucus period provided (time for Delegates to talk one-on-one with the Candidates and members of the community in attendance). Additional caucus time may be requested and provided by the Moderator/ Facilitator during the process as needed to promote dialogue and resolve "ties" in the balloting process.

There will be successive rounds of public balloting in which designated Delegates in each of the ten (10) respective Council District caucuses select three (3) Commissioners and two (2) Alternates. To be elected to a Commissioner seat, a Candidate must receive a majority vote of the delegates in attendance at the Caucus.

In the initial (first) round of balloting, each Delegate shall choose five (5) Candidates. Any candidate who receives a majority of votes cast by all Delegates voting shall be elected. If on the initial ballot fewer than three (3) Commissioners and two (2) Alternates are elected by majority vote, successive rounds of balloting shall occur with the single lowest ranking candidate eliminated on each successive round until such time as three (3) Commissioners and two (2) Alternates have been elected by a majority of votes cast by all Delegates voting.

The two candidates elected by a majority of votes cast by all Delegates voting who received the

lowest number of votes or who were elected in the latest of successive rounds of voting shall be considered Alternates. As between the two Alternates, the Alternate with the higher number of votes or who was elected earlier in successive rounds of voting shall be considered the First Alternate. The other Alternate shall be considered the Second Alternate.

In the event that not all five Neighborhood Commissioner and Alternate seats are filled during the caucus process for a given Council District, the status of open seats shall be reviewed and resolved by the Neighborhoods Commission once the group is seated.

9. What are the dates and deadlines to be aware of?

Neighborhood Group Registration submission deadline: April 18, 2008

Neighborhood Group Delegate Designation deadline: seven (7) days prior to the District Caucus. If this date falls on a weekend, the deadline shall be the end of business (5:00 PM) the Friday prior.

Neighborhoods Commissioner Applications will be accepted starting: March 3, 2008

Neighborhoods Commissioner Applications submission deadline: April 18, 2008

District Neighborhood Caucus Period: May 17, 2008 through June 14, 2008

Neighborhoods Commission seated: Fall 2008

10. Where can I find more information?

For further information about this Commission, you may review information posted on the website of the San Jose City Clerk: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/Clerk/commissionboard/NC/NC.asp> , or contact the San Jose Neighborhood Development Center, at (408) 723-4114. The NDC is also in the process of posting a webpage, which will be available shortly.