

Living Our Values

How the City of Santa Clara incorporates its Code of Ethics & Values into everyday operations and decision-making

City of Santa Clara's Code of Ethics & Values:

*Ethical * Professional * Service-Oriented * Fiscally Responsible
Organized * Communicative * Collaborative * Progressive*

The Code of Ethics & Values is designed to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct by all elected and appointed officials, City employees, volunteers, and others who participate in City government. The Code is a constant reminder of what this community values, and what makes it such a special place to live and work.

The 2005 Annual Report/2006 Calendar for the City of Santa Clara, distributed to every residential and business address in the City, focused on how the City is using its Code of Ethics & Values. Here are excerpts from that publication, and some additional information, which demonstrate how Santa Clara is incorporating its Code of Ethics & Values into everyday operations and decision-making.

Living Our Values -- Ethical

One definition of "ethical" is acting as if every action and word has an effect on those around you. The City of Santa Clara is fortunate to have many individuals and organizations whose actions have positively impacted others in the community, and there are dozens of recognition programs in place to acknowledge and honor them. These programs thank residents, businesses and community organizations for sharing their expertise, time and resources, and for serving as leaders who daily demonstrate how the quality of life in a community is the result of broad-based actions and concern. In 2005, the inaugural Neil Henry Award, which honors residents for exemplary long-term service to the community, was presented to JoAnn Silva, who for more than 20 years has volunteered about 1,200+ hours annually to Santa Clara activities. Honoring and celebrating community and City achievements is a priority goal for the City.

The City of Santa Clara has launched an innovative program to make ethics one of the criteria voters use to make judgments about candidates and issues on the ballot. For the 2004 and 2006 elections, a Vote Ethics Guide was published and distributed to every address in Santa Clara to give the public information and ideas to consider as they listen to opposing points of view and, sometimes, conflicting data. The publication has become a model for other communities that want to help residents think about tough ethical situations, as well as helping voters to identify behaviors they expect City leaders will practice.

Living Our Values -- Professional

What does it mean to be professional if you are a municipality? Most would agree that efficiency and economy are prime characteristics.

A national survey of U.S. cities rated the City of Santa Clara as one of the best places in which to operate a business. The City's dependable and well-maintained infrastructure, outstanding public safety record and low utility costs were praised.

The City continues to seek ways to reorganize departments and programs for increased efficiency. For example, in 2005 the Communications Division that handles all 9-1-1 calls and dispatching for the City's emergency services shifted to become part of the Police Department. Dispatchers receive more than 250 hours of training and, in addition to fielding calls and dispatching police, fire and medical personnel, dispatchers research computer databases for information to assist emergency personnel in the field.

Improved facilities can also positively affect the delivery of service, such as the new Fire Station 6, corner of Agnew Road and Sun Fire Way, which opened in 2005 to replace the old Fire Station 6 on De La Cruz Boulevard. The \$3.5 million project is better able to serve the new Rivermark neighborhood as well as older homes and businesses north of the Bayshore freeway.

Living Our Values – Service-Oriented

Santa Clara has a long tradition of being a service-oriented community. Volunteerism abounds (tens of thousands of hours of volunteer time is donated annually for City projects) and with volunteer assistance, residents and businesses enjoy an even wider range of municipal services.

2005 was the 110th anniversary of the City's water utility, which started with four wells, 45 fire hydrants and 400 service connections, and as of 2005, has 27 production wells, 295 miles of potable distribution mains, 3,135 hydrants and 25,131 service connections. Santa Clara customers pay the lowest combined rates for water and sewer service in the nine Bay Area counties (out of 105 jurisdictions and agencies).

Another anniversary in 2005 was the 50th birthday of the Mission Library. It served as the main City Library from 1955-67, and then became a branch operation. It was renovated and reopened in 2000 as the Mission Library Family Reading Center to focus on adult and family literacy, including the Read Santa Clara program that works to increase literacy by teaming volunteer tutors and adult learners.

Living Our Values - Fiscally Responsible

The City of Santa Clara budget process is comprehensive, complex and strenuous. Each year expenses and revenues – what it costs the City to carry out its work and what level of income is anticipated -- are thoroughly examined. The slowdown of the local economy since the dot-com implosion in 2000, followed by 9-11 in 2001, challenged Santa Clara leaders to look at every possible way to bridge the gap between revenues and expenses as it experienced the most severe budget crisis in City history. Fortunately the City had reserves set aside for this type of economic crisis, and they have been tapped in order to balance the budget.

The economy is improving, but slowly. A budget gap is projected for the next five years and City departments are working hard to find new ways to trim expenses without tremendous

impacts on services delivered to the community, and ways to generate new revenues without creating too much of a burden on taxpayers and businesses.

Philosophers like to debate whether the phrase “may you live in interesting times” is a blessing or a curse. In 2005, the City of Santa Clara described itself as in the midst of “interesting times.” The Code of Ethics & Values is helping City leadership to navigate the rough waters of the economy, and to set the right course for the community’s future.

Living Our Values - Organized

Being organized means planning ahead. Cities have to keep an eye on the horizon even as they focus on the delivery of services to their residents today. Several projects are underway in Santa Clara that are investments to meet the needs of tomorrow.

Extensive expansion of the Santa Clara Senior Center got underway in 2005 in preparation for the anticipated growth of the number of older residents as the Baby Boomer generation nears retirement. The \$10.9 million project more than doubles the space and adds many features including indoor swimming and therapeutic pools. Construction is expected to be complete in early 2007.

Two new sections of San Tomas Aquino/Saratoga Creek Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail opened in 2005, and a third section in 2006. When complete, trail segments in Santa Clara will extend from the Bay Trail at Highway 237 through the entire community and beyond, running all the way to Prospect Rd. in San Jose.

Plans are being finalized for an expansion of the Santa Clara Convention Center Ballroom that will add 24,000 square feet of space and allow the facility to accommodate more people. The enlarged Ballroom will improve the marketability of the Santa Clara Convention Center, especially for large events that boost the economy. Construction is projected to be completed in 2007 - 2008.

Living Our Values - Communicative

There are many ways for a City to communicate with its residents, and Santa Clara tries to explore them all. Technology helps.

Last year the City’s website was redesigned to include a new visual look, updated navigation system, and expanded content including more detailed information on the Police Department web pages including crime statistics and crime prevention tips. During 2005, the City’s website was receiving about 150,000 page views per month, and in 2006, it was in excess of 220,000 distinct site visits monthly.

Silicon Valley Power, the municipal Electric Utility, also enhanced its online information, so that customers can quickly and easily access account information, rebate offers, energy efficient product descriptions, and report street light outages or obstructive tree branches online.

Another huge project in the works is the scanning of 40 years of building permits so that the public can access documents such as drawings, soil reports, inspection letters and final affidavits. As of November 2005, more than 51,000 permits were in the system and more were being added every month.

Old-fashioned communication is still in the mix, such as the Agnews Historical Information Center that opened in 2005 in the 14.5 acre historic park on the Santa Clara campus

of Sun Microsystems. Commemorative panels showcase the history of the Agnews Hospital West Campus with maps, historic photos, illustrations and text.

Living Our Values - Collaborative

The City of Santa Clara collaborates in multiple ways with nonprofit organizations and other public agencies in order to leverage resources and better serve the needs of the community.

The most visible example of collaboration in 2005 was completion of the new Mission City Center for Performing Arts, a joint project of the City of Santa Clara and the Santa Clara Unified School District, which opened in February. The 350-seat facility is located on the campus of Wilcox High School and available for use by both school and community groups.

Affordable housing is another focus area for collaborations. Gateway Santa Clara Senior Apartments opened in 2005 and includes 42 units for very low and low-income seniors. The complex is owned and operated by EAH, a nonprofit housing corporation, but it was built with the help of a \$4.93 million loan from the City of Santa Clara's Redevelopment Agency.

Collaboration with Habitat for Humanity will result in six more of these homes in the community. Another collaboration between the City and two local nonprofit organizations is under discussion and may generate 165 units of affordable senior housing on six acres of a 17-acre parcel of surplus land previously owned by the State of California.

Living Our Values - Progressive

One of the most progressive aspects of the City of Santa Clara is its national leadership in electric power utility innovation and management. The year 2005 was a banner one for Silicon Valley Power, the municipal Electric Utility, in several ways.

The new Donald Von Raesfeld Power Plan opened in June 2005. This 147-megawatt power plant features state-of-the-art technology and is the largest capital project in the history of Santa Clara. It directly satisfies about one-third of the City's power needs and adds to Silicon Valley Power's diverse power portfolio of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Also opening that year was a new four-mile-long combination of overhead and underground lines between Silicon Valley Power's Northern Receiving Station and PG&E's Los Esteros Substation. The lines add more points of entry for electricity coming into Santa Clara and increase the utility's already-exceptional reliability.

Silicon Valley Power is equally proud in achieving high marks in customer service, reliability, and communication in an independent study of electric utilities in California.