

Linda Sell: Written Responses

Please provide a response of approximately 150 words to each of the below questions.

1. What can the City do to address hate?

These are programs that other cities have done to address hate as ideas to consider.

- Los Angeles County runs a Human Relations Commission that publishes annual hate crime reports disaggregated by race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation and operates "LA vs Hate," a multilingual confidential reporting and victim services hotline.
- Fremont adopted a formal Zero Tolerance for Hate policy, created a dedicated hate crimes page on the police department website with clear reporting steps, and has built institutional partnerships with religious and cultural community leaders for rapid response when incidents occur.
- Santa Clara County is developing a hate incident reporting system separate from 911, recognizing that many victims, especially immigrants and LGBTQ+ residents will not call law enforcement. The county's proposal includes a dedicated office to receive, track, and refer reports.
- California statewide CA vs Hate (833-8-NO-HATE / CAVsHate.org): a free, anonymous reporting portal and hotline operated by the CA Civil Rights Department.

2. Sunnyvale continues to have one of the lowest per capita sales tax revenues in the region. We continue to lose retail, especially neighborhood retail in North Sunnyvale. What can we do to support and preserve retail?

City Council unanimously approved an overhaul of the Village Center Master Plan in July 2025, rezoning seven aging shopping centers for commercial, residential, and mixed-use. The plan protects Lucky's Supermarket (the largest grocery store in North Sunnyvale) going forward — but did not stop two already-filed development proposals at Fair Oaks Plaza and Lakewood Shopping Center. In the future, the city can continue to use this incentive program which allows developers to trade affordable housing requirements for more retail space. It can develop more incentive programs to encourage retail in targeted areas where there is less retail.

Some additional solutions:

- "Define minimum grocery square footage (not just general retail) as a condition of village center mixed-use redevelopment
- Prioritize mixed-use projects that stack housing *above* ground-floor retail rather than replacing retail entirely
- Conduct an equity impact assessment before approving retail-eliminating developments in historically underserved areas
- Create a small business support fund or façade improvement grant program targeted

at neighborhood retail, especially in North Sunnyvale

- Engage existing small market and ethnic grocery operators as community anchor businesses worthy of direct city support”

<https://sanjosespotlight.com/north-sunnyvale-residents-fight-development-to-prevent-food-desert/>

<https://sanjosespotlight.com/housing-could-replace-north-sunnyvale-grocery-stores/>

3. What do you see your role is as a local elected official with democratic processes under attack? How will you defend Sunnyvale residents' right to self-government?

My duty as a local official is to protect the lives, health, and civil rights of the residents in Sunnyvale. I work together with the other council members, the community, and city staff. Our staff can coordinate with the local district attorneys, other cities and jurisdictions who can use legal means to deter illegal acts and civil rights violations by outside agents. The City of Sunnyvale, like other cities in Santa Clara County, passed ordinances not allowing the take over of non-municipal, non-county detention facilities Ideas from other cities and Sunnyvale. As further action the city can coordinate with other jurisdictions on joint legal and advocacy positions and continue to use the Legislative Advocacy Position process to take explicit public stances on federal or state actions threatening local programs.

4. After the removal of the Study Issue process, what role do you see Boards and Commissions playing in lending their expertise to City government?

The study issue process still exists but it has been combined with the formerly Budget Proposals and renamed as the Council Priority Projects Process. The councilmember may propose up to three projects per year and these ideas may have originated from Boards and Commissions, the community or the councilmember. Boards and Commissions could agree to a workplan in which one meeting in November is designated to discuss potential ideas for the Council Priority Projects Process and one idea is forwarded one year per year by majority vote to the city council. Councilmembers may decide to incorporate these ideas into their three projects per year. Boards and Commissions will continue as previously to provide council with their input on Council Priority Projects relevant to their particular Boards and Commissions.

5. Currently, Mountain View, Fremont, Cupertino, Saratoga and other neighboring cities have Safe Parking programs. How would you propose to deal with the number of RVs parked on City streets?

Sunnyvale does have the action related to the November 2024 ordinance in which the city began scouting for safe parking locations. The policy envisions small sites (2–10 vehicles) and large sites (up to 75 vehicles). The City of Sunnyvale Safe Parking Capital Grants Program (\$50,000 for site preparation, launched September 2025) to accelerate nonprofit-operated small sites on faith-based or institutional land still exists. In addition, recently I and other council members suggested that the city offer some ongoing funding for nonprofit-operated small sites on faith-based or institutional land to help them if they decide to host a small sites (2–10 vehicles) parking site. The city staff does ask WeHOPE (the city's outreach provider) to conduct intake and case management. Enforcement is paired with WeHOPE outreach and Family Tow as a last resort. Sunnyvale council in September of 2026 is scheduled to receive a report on the community outreach efforts related to the strategy to address homelessness in Sunnyvale and receive a report on the feasibility analysis for Safe Parking, interim housing, RV Buyback and permitted RV Street parking programs. In the coming 2027 to 2028 budget Sunnyvale plans to invest a proposed \$43M over twenty years from the Service Level Set Aside to support the unhoused community and homelessness prevention. \$145M is planned for future affordable housing projected over the next 20 years. Sunnyvale will continue to fund street outreach, case management, mobile hygiene service, and an inclement weather hotel program.

6. What do you think are the biggest equity issues facing Sunnyvale?

Sunnyvale has gaps in some groups that seem less engaged and feeling less included in Sunnyvale. These gaps relate to people with lower income, younger in age, race and non-English speaking. Sunnyvale has a Northern disproportionately with transportation barriers for students attending the public high schools. The City Council was presented with Connection and Belonging Recommendations that included expanding cultural celebrations, public art, bilingual programs, and community-based cultural activities. In addition, the study suggested increased flexible-use spaces for activities and community gathering, continuing investing in and supporting affordable housing development and infrastructural improvements and providing mobility options such as the shared rides shuttle that will be starting this Fall for all Sunnyvale residents.

7. *Affordability is a huge issue for people in Sunnyvale. Our neighboring cities, Milpitas, San Jose, and Mt View have rent stabilization ordinances for rentals. What steps would you suggest for the city of Sunnyvale to investigate the need for a rent stabilization ordinance in Sunnyvale?*

To investigate the need for a rent stabilization ordinance in Sunnyvale, we can examine how these strategies in Sunnyvale are compared to cities with rent stabilization ordinances for rentals. Sunnyvale will continue to invest in streamlining permitting so that new developments can have reduced approval times for residential development projects to lower holding costs for builders. Sunnyvale partners with nonprofits to

administer tenant based rental assistance type programs that provide direct housing subsidies to low-income tenants which can be coupled with housing, job and financial counseling so that these individuals will have more financial resiliency and sustainability in the future. Sunnyvale's inclusionary Housing policy requires most new residential developments to set aside at least 15% of the total units as below-market-rate (BMR) housing or alternatively developers must pay an in-lieu fee. In addition, Sunnyvale has tenant protection such as mandatory relocation assistance which requires landlords to pay a relocation of two months rent if a tenant is forced out due to major renovations, condo conversions, or high-percentage rent increases.

8. As we continue to densify our housing, how should we manage change and mitigate impacts (e.g. parking spillover) on existing neighborhoods even as we add much-needed housing?

To manage/mitigate impacts (e.g. parking spillover) on existing neighborhoods, Sunnyvale uses Transportation Demand Management (TDM) ordinances that can balance transportation and development. With new developments of 10+ residential units or commercial projects, these TDM restrictions in specific plans have a goal of reducing single-occupant vehicle trips by promoting transit use, bicycling, walking, and shared mobility. In addition, the City of Sunnyvale to plan ahead has officially designated Priority Development Areas in which it has placed mixed-use near major employment and transportation hubs which align local housing and jobs with high-frequency transit lines. Plans like these can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle travel. These mixed-use, transit-oriented growth near major employment and transportation hubs are a strategy to mitigate impacts (e.g. parking spillover) on existing neighborhoods.

Murali Srinivasan: Written Responses

Please provide a response of approximately 150 words to each of the below questions.

1. What can the City do to address hate?

Sunnyvale must remain a welcoming, safe, and inclusive city for everyone, regardless of identity. The City should make this commitment clear through education, community engagement, and consistent enforcement. We need to keep creating opportunities for residents to connect across differences through neighborhood associations, block parties, cultural celebrations, and citywide events that build understanding and trust. Partnering with our school districts, county agencies, and community-based organizations is essential to reaching all communities.

Sunnyvale enforces hate-crime laws and maintains a strong reporting and tracking system through DPS. When hate incidents occur, the City responds quickly and supports victims while bringing the community together to heal. Recent incidents affecting the Indian American (South Asian) community—such as jewelry-store burglaries, senior-targeted thefts, and vandalism of homes and temples—have understandably raised concerns. While the legal definition of a hate crime is determined by state law and prosecutors, the City must take these fears seriously, communicate clearly, and ensure every community feels protected and heard.

The 2019 Unity Meeting, held after a racial incident, showed how powerful it is when the community stands together. Going forward, the City should host these kinds of gatherings proactively, not only after harm occurs, but also to reinforce belonging, respect, and mutual understanding as core values of Sunnyvale.

2. Sunnyvale continues to have one of the lowest per capita sales tax revenues in the region. We continue to lose retail, especially neighborhood retail in North Sunnyvale. What can we do to support and preserve retail?

Sunnyvale's retail preservation and per-capita sales-tax revenue are only loosely connected. Sales-tax revenue is driven primarily by factors such as the number of corporate headquarters in a city, the presence of high-end retail centers, auto dealerships, and major destinations like universities or stadiums. Sunnyvale has few corporate headquarters, no university, and limited high-end retail or auto sales, which naturally limits revenue growth. In cities like Fremont and Mountain View, business-to-business sales from companies headquartered there make up a significant share of revenue. Palo Alto's largest contributors include restaurants, auto sales and leasing, and retail activity around Stanford.

Sales-tax revenue also depends on the tax rate and the portion retained by the city. Sunnyvale's rate (9.75%) is lower than San Leandro (10.75%), Campbell (10.5%), and San José (10%). Restaurants and retail provide only modest revenue, and grocery stores contribute very little due to sales-tax exemptions. Even so, Sunnyvale benefits from a diverse mix of tax sources that helps buffer the city from downturns in any single sector.

The loss of retail in North Sunnyvale is tied to state housing laws, delays in updating zoning, and broader economic conditions. The City has now adopted village-center zoning standards to help preserve neighborhood retail, and the State is considering legislation to better balance housing requirements with retail needs. Continued proactive zoning and economic-development efforts will be essential to restoring and maintaining retail vitality.

3. What do you see your role is as a local elected official with democratic processes under attack? How will you defend Sunnyvale residents' right to self-government?

I am a strong believer in democracy and civic participation. For our democratic system to stay healthy, residents need to understand both their rights and their responsibilities. To support that, I've led civic-education sessions for new immigrants, helping them learn how American democracy works and how federal, state, and local governments each play a role. Local government is the most accessible level of democracy, yet many residents don't participate in policy discussions. To make engagement easier, I created *Your Voice Sunnyvale* on Nextdoor, where I share Council agendas and provide clear summaries so people can stay informed without having to sift through lengthy documents.

I am also committed to social justice and equity. I will continue to stand up for unheard voices and underserved residents, defend Sunnyvale's right to self-governance, and oppose any unlawful detention or denial of services. Every resident deserves to have their rights protected and to feel included in the community.

4. After the removal of the Study Issue process, what role do you see Boards and Commissions playing in lending their expertise to City government?

Sunnyvale's Boards and Commissions are subject-matter experts who provide valuable insight and recommendations to the Council. Commissioners are appointed for their expertise and, together with staff, form the foundation for well-informed policy decisions. The Council relies on their guidance, for example, the Arts Commission's work on public-art selections and the Sustainability Commission's leadership on CAP 2.0 and community outreach. Commissions also play an important role in suggesting Council Priority Projects and offering feedback on proposed priorities. While the former Study Issue process was resource-intensive and heavily front-loaded, the new approach allows for more focused and meaningful collaboration. I believe our Commissions should continue advising the Council on key issues and be given more opportunities to engage with the public, bring forward ideas, and help shape Sunnyvale's long-term vision through their expertise and strong community connections.

5. Currently, Mountain View, Fremont, Cupertino, Saratoga and other neighboring cities have Safe Parking programs. How would you propose to deal with the number of RVs parked on City streets?

The growing number of RVs parked on Sunnyvale streets poses health and safety concerns for residents, employees, and the individuals living in the vehicles. Part of this increase comes from neighboring cities taking aggressive actions that push RVs into Sunnyvale. We need to address this challenge with both compassion and practicality by expanding safe-parking options. Because Sunnyvale has very limited open land, the City should partner with religious institutions, local businesses, and the County to use available lots. Staff analysis showed that costs per vehicle can be high due to case management and amenities, but we can tailor solutions, offering basic safe-parking for those who simply need a secure place to stay, and more comprehensive support for individuals who require additional services. We should also explore using parking spaces at affordable-housing sites where amenities and oversight already exist. A balanced, collaborative approach will protect public safety while ensuring that unhoused residents are treated with dignity and respect.

6. What do you think are the biggest equity issues facing Sunnyvale?

Sunnyvale’s biggest equity challenges are housing stability and access to essential services. Rising living costs are putting real pressure on long-time residents, seniors, and working families. Tenant-Based Rental Assistance helps, but it currently reaches only about 40 families. The City should work closely with the County to ensure Sunnyvale residents receive fair access to housing resources, including units designated for people who were previously unhoused, since countywide allocations often favor other cities.

Households are also strained by food, energy, and utility costs, and many residents are unaware of programs that can reduce electricity, water, and internet bills.

Transportation inequities add to the burden—especially in North Sunnyvale, where fewer than 25% of high-school students have access to VTA service. The City should partner with FUHSD and VTA to expand free bus passes and improve transit connections.

Sunnyvale should also strengthen food-recovery and distribution programs to support residents in need and build community resilience.

7. Affordability is a huge issue for people in Sunnyvale. Our neighboring cities, Milpitas, San Jose, and Mt View have rent stabilization ordinances for rentals. What steps would you suggest for the city of Sunnyvale to investigate the need for a rent stabilization ordinance in Sunnyvale?

California already has a statewide rent-cap law (AB 1482), which has been in effect since January 2020. Any additional rent-stabilization ordinance in Sunnyvale should only be considered after thorough, data-driven analysis and broad community engagement with both tenants and landlords. These policies require significant staff time and ongoing enforcement, so the City must fully understand the impacts before moving forward.

Research shows that cities with rent-stabilization ordinances often see a reduction in rental supply, lower levels of upkeep, and slower production of new housing. Berkeley, for example, experienced a notable decline in rental units after adopting rent control.

Sunnyvale should focus on expanding the overall housing supply across all income levels and affordability tiers. Building more homes—especially affordable and workforce units—will have a stronger long-term effect on stabilizing rents and preserving the diversity of our community.

8. As we continue to densify our housing, how should we manage change and mitigate impacts (e.g. parking spillover) on existing neighborhoods even as we add much-needed housing?

Sunnyvale should support denser housing through thoughtful planning and realistic parking requirements, especially for developments that are not well served by transit. Our city has limited and often unreliable public-transit options, which means many residents rely on cars, bikes, and other first-mile/last-mile solutions. This can lead to parking spillover, competition for spaces, and safety concerns in nearby neighborhoods. Residential permit parking can help reduce these impacts.

A recent *Mercury News* article about San José's Fay apartment tower noted that inadequate parking contributed to a 60% vacancy rate—underscoring the importance of balanced planning. Any effort to increase housing density must be paired with adequate parking and located along strong transit corridors.

Sunnyvale should continue encouraging well-planned denser housing, enforce realistic parking standards, and engage residents early to ensure growth enhances livability while maintaining neighborhood safety and accessibility.

Richard Mehlinger: Written Responses

1. **What can the City do to address hate?**

Addressing hate is a profoundly difficult challenge, especially at the local level. The primary tools we have to combat hate on a City level are education and enforcement. Education takes the form of public events: proclamations, festivals, library events. City employee training on Equity, Access, and Inclusion at the City is particularly valuable.

Unfortunately, in a city of our size some number of hate crimes is inevitable. It is thus critical that DPS show compassion to victims and treat such crimes with the seriousness they warrant. I will add that in my opinion bangle-snatching and jewelry store robberies need to be investigated and addressed as hate crimes, as they directly target our South Asian community.

Finally, each of us needs to reinforce in our day-to-day interactions that hate is not acceptable. And, when hate crimes occur, we all need to speak up and work toward healing.

2. **Sunnyvale continues to have one of the lowest per capita sales tax revenues in the region. We continue to lose retail, especially neighborhood retail in North Sunnyvale. What can we do to support and preserve retail?**

While growing sales tax revenue is important, the main goal needs to be expanding convenient and walkable resident access to retail services, especially in underserved areas like North Sunnyvale. I've done much in office to support this goal, such as:

- Zoning for substantial retail in Moffett Park while blocking townhouse development with minimum densities
- Authoring an adopted priority project to expand the services the Office of Economic Development offers to retail business and developing a citywide retail strategy
- Supporting colleagues' priority projects to study a city-funded grocery store and permit streamlining

That said, these measures may not dramatically strengthen sales tax revenue. Neighboring cities benefit from luxury shopping centers like Stanford and headquarters for companies like Google, Apple, and Nvidia. Meanwhile, much of what grocery stores sell is exempt from sales tax.

Finally, attracting retail and growing sales tax revenue must be major priorities for the General Plan update slated for 2027.

3. What do you see your role is as a local elected official with democratic processes under attack? How will you defend Sunnyvale residents' right to self-government?

Democracy is a verb, not a noun. It is something that we *do*. It is how we as a community come together to build a better future for all. As an elected official, it is my role to model responsible citizenship, to work for the public interest, stand up for our community, and demonstrate that democratic government *can* solve the issues our residents face.

While on Council, I've consistently supported measures to directly defend our community from federal abuse. I filed the Colleagues Memo to ban ICE from City property, which passed unanimously. I supported joining [Fresno v. Scott Turner](#), challenging Trump's attempt to ban federal grantees from promoting DEI, elective abortions, or "gender ideology". As a result, we are protected by a preliminary injunction banning enforcement against plaintiff cities. And just this week, Council unanimously approved my motion to consider filing an *amicus* brief in the County's lawsuit against ICE's proposed Gilroy detention center.

4. After the removal of the Study Issue process, what role do you see Boards and Commissions playing in lending their expertise to City government?

I initiated the Study Issue on Study Issues based on my experience as an advocate, commission chair, and councilmember. It had been plain for years that that process was badly broken, and I am proud to have driven its replacement.

When we were building the new Council Priority Project process, the City's consultant told us explicitly that few, if any, other cities allowed commissions to make proposals. However, I insisted that each commission be able to propose one CPP per year. I would also like to provide greater opportunity for commissions to provide feedback on Council's proposed priorities.

Beyond participating in the CPP process, the primary role of the commissions is to advise Council on key issues. I continue to believe that they should be given a greater role in interacting with the public and developing new ideas.

5. Currently, Mountain View, Fremont, Cupertino, Saratoga and other neighboring cities have Safe Parking programs. How would you propose to deal with the number of RVs parked on City streets?

No city can deal with homelessness alone. The growing number of RVs on Sunnyvale streets is partially a result of other cities, including those named above, pushing RV residents out. So while we cannot allow RVs to take over public streets, we must approach this problem compassionately and aim to solve it, not move it.

In 2024 Council directed Staff to establish a safe parking program on public land. I was disappointed to learn in April that Staff did not intend to move that idea forward. That is why I moved that Staff return promptly with a safe parking site; study adding tiny homes in my district under the Mathilda-Caltrain overpass, despite potential resident discontent; and ban “vanlording”. Council unanimously approved that motion.

Long term, we must continue to build housing, especially affordable housing, while strengthening tenant protections and our social safety net.

6. What do you think are the biggest equity issues facing Sunnyvale?

The cost of living and associated homelessness crisis is plainly the greatest equity issue facing our city. For decades, working class residents have been systematically displaced from Sunnyvale by the rising cost of living, caused by the state-wide failure to build enough homes dating back to the 1970s and segregationist policies dating back much further. This crisis has disproportionately impacted communities of color, women, and LGBTQ people.

This issue is also closely related to the lack of resources in North Sunnyvale. While wealthy neighborhoods South of El Camino Real enjoyed disproportionate representation on City Council and the school boards, the North faced systemic underinvestment. Our streets are less safe, we have less access to fresh food, and our children have to commute much longer distances to get to school. While the City has made strides in addressing these issues since 2010, that painful legacy lingers, and much more needs to be done.

7. Affordability is a huge issue for people in Sunnyvale. Our neighboring cities, Milpitas, San Jose, and Mt View have rent stabilization ordinances for rentals. What steps would you suggest for the city of Sunnyvale to investigate the need for a rent stabilization ordinance in Sunnyvale?

It is important to understand that under the Costa Hawkins Act, apartments built after 1995 are exempt from rent stabilization, as are single-family homes and condos. This severely limits its utility. At the same time, state law already limits rent increases on apartments built at least 15 years ago, as well as corporate-owned condos and single-family homes. Furthermore, rent stabilization risks serious unintended consequences, like in Mountain View, where it resulted in the demolition of older, rent-stabilized apartments.

Passing rent stabilization would require a substantial amount of scarce staff time and an extensive public engagement process. As such, I would need to see strong public support and clear evidence that it would substantially improve the lives of Sunnyvale residents to consider studying it. Otherwise, I would prefer to focus on proven measures

to improve affordability, such as building affordable housing and expanding tenant-based rental assistance.

8. As we continue to densify our housing, how should we manage change and mitigate impacts (e.g. parking spillover) on existing neighborhoods even as we add much-needed housing?

Addressing our housing crisis is *the* central challenge facing the City. Virtually all of our other problems stem directly from the severe regional housing shortage. That shortage drives megacommuters, worsening traffic congestion, street safety, and climate change. It drives homelessness, as families who are one emergency away from eviction struggle to make rent. And our low density development patterns make it harder to support the retail, educational, and governmental services that our residents need.

Solving this crisis will require change, like increasing density and moving away from car-dependent development patterns. We can mitigate impact from these changes by expanding the parking permit program, improving our active transportation infrastructure, and providing new transit options like the citywide shuttle rolling out in fall. We must ensure also that impacts are spread fairly, and do not fall excessively on any one neighborhood. But if we are to solve this crisis, we must all do our part.