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Keeping Our City Attractive, Safe, Healthy and Active

We began this special edition of *Horizon* with a simple premise.

Everyone deserves to know what they get for what they pay to their City. When you shop, you have choices. And what you pay for what

you get in return is clear, whether it's a car, shoes or haircut. Valuing City services is not as straightforward. There is value in having a service available even though you may never need it, like the ability to call 911. There is value in meeting unique

needs in our community such as those for our seniors and at-risk youth. There is value in contributing today toward future costs. This ensures a safe, well-planned community with parks to enjoy and maintained infrastructure.

The City provides its tax-funded services as a bundle regardless of which ones you use or how much you pay in taxes. This is because we all value how these services keep our City attractive, safe, healthy and active.

Horizon Spring 2023

Sunnyvale City Council

Larry Klein, Mayor
Omar Din, Vice Mayor
Russ Melton
Alysa Cisneros
Richard Mehlinger
Murali Srinivasan
Linda Sell

City Manager Kent Steffens

Editor, Communications Officer Jennifer Garnett, APR

Design Studio Scott, San Francisco

Contact for this publication:
Communications Officer
City of Sunnyvale
P.O. Box 3707
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707
408-730-7535
communications@
sunnyvale.ca.gov

Follow us:

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Our City. Our Future.

Horizon

SPRING 2023 SPECIAL EDITION

You Pay Taxes. Sunnyvale Provides Services.

But do you really know how much you pay compared to what you get in return?

The fact is, Sunnyvale only gets 13 cents of every property tax dollar and 1 cent of sales tax from every dollar of taxable sales in the City.

On average, Sunnyvale receives just \$1,025 a year in property tax from each single-family household. That's comparable to or less than your average annual bill for broadband, cell phone service or auto insurance

What do you get from the City in return?

24/7 police, fire and emergency medical services; clean and maintained roadways; parks and open spaces; the library; traffic and street lights; and more. Read this Special Edition of *Horizon* to learn more.

A Day in the Life...

Meet Concha the Golden Retriever. On a typical day, her family uses a variety of City services. They pay for them with fees and taxes. Concha's pet license is an occasional fee. The City uses that revenue to help offset the cost of responding to animal complaints. Buying her dog food generates sales tax. The City uses this and other taxes to maintain the park where she takes her daily walks.

**Curious about other services the family uses?
Follow them starting on page 2...**

The City issues
over 2,000
pet licenses
each year.



Horizon

SPRING 2023 SPECIAL EDITION

The Value of City Services

City Manager's Message



I'm sure you like to receive good value for your money when you purchase goods or services.

I also like to think City services are a good value to you, especially compared to the price you pay for them.

Many people compliment us on the level of service we provide. But we also get complaints. And some people feel they are paying too high

a price for City services.

Of course, you must know two things to determine if you've gotten a good deal – how much you paid and what you received. That sounds simple enough. But how many of us know all the services our local government provides or how much we pay for them?

This special edition of *Horizon* attempts to

answer those questions in straightforward terms. Then you can decide whether we're providing you good value.

Please let me know what you think.

Kent Steffens

Kent Steffens
citymgr@sunnyvale.ca.gov
408-730-7480

How You Pay For City Services

You pay for City services in essentially two ways – user fees and taxes.

With user fees, you get a clear bill for the service. You see what you pay for water, garbage, recycling and sewer on your utility bill. You pay a user fee to play golf at Sunken Gardens Golf Course or take a class at the Community Center.

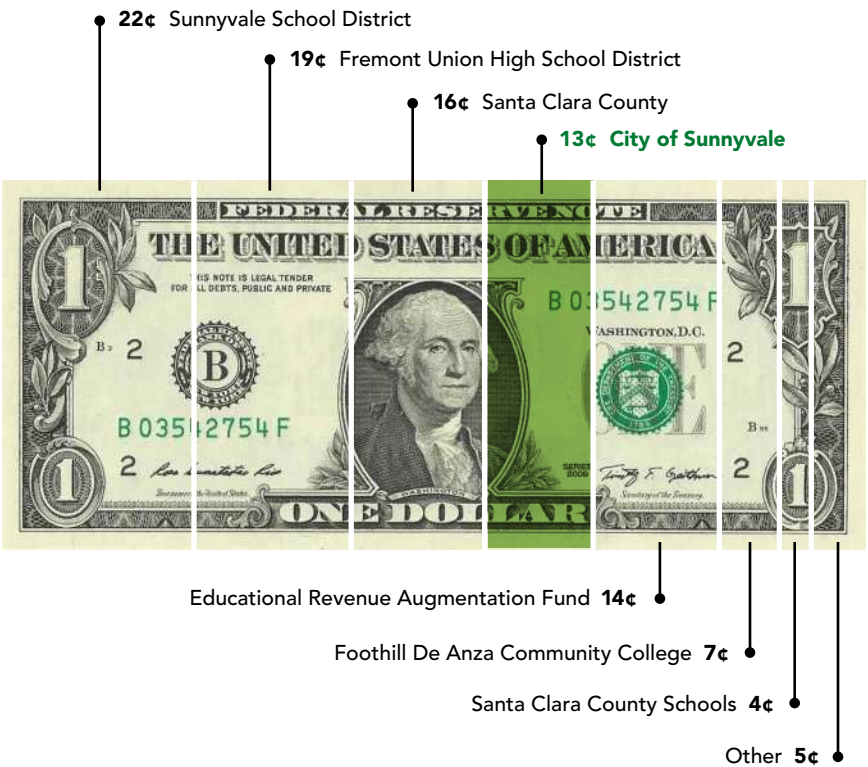
With taxes, the connection between what you pay and receive is not as obvious. That's because the City combines the income into a general revenue pool. This pays for services like tree trimming, park maintenance and public safety. As a result, no matter what you paid in taxes, you can visit City parks once or 100 times without ever receiving a bill.

There's another point to remember. The City receives only a small portion of what you pay – 13 cents of every dollar of property tax and one cent of the sales tax for every taxable dollar spent in Sunnyvale. Most of your taxes go to other agencies as shown here.

Sunnyvale Receives a Small Portion of Property and Sales Tax

Property Tax:

How \$1 of Property Tax is Distributed



Sales Tax:

How 9.125 cents of Sales Tax are Distributed





User Fees

Funding the Services You Use

User fees are the biggest way you pay for City services. They account for about half of the City’s total revenue, or income, each year. They fall into two basic categories – utility fees and service fees. The City will collect about \$271 million this year in user fees. We’ll use 60% (about \$164.1 million) to provide utility services. Unlike a business, the City does not operate its services to make a profit. We base our user fees on what it costs to provide the service and how much you use. If you use less water, for example, you get a lower bill.



Senior Water Distribution Worker Manuel Hernandez checks water pressure and chlorine levels at the City’s pump stations.

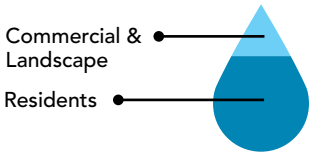
Utility Fees

Water, garbage and sewer services are such a routine part of our lives that we hardly think about them. We expect water to be there, clean and flowing for a cold drink or hot shower. That water flows through miles of underground pipes after leaving our homes and businesses. It reaches the wastewater treatment plant where City staff work around the clock to clean it. And once a week, trucks come to our homes, collecting everything from leaves and diapers to cans and chicken bones. Our utilities are reliable, essential services that keep our community clean and healthy. So, what do you pay for all that?

Water Supply and Distribution

Residents pay an average of \$68 per month for water service.

- Residents are the largest users of water. They contribute about 65% of the revenue. Commercial and landscape uses make up the other 35%.
- The City collects about \$57.2 million in revenue. We use most of it (66%) to buy water from Valley Water and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The rest pays for operating the system that delivers the water. This includes repairing and replacing equipment and infrastructure such as pipes and pumps.



Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Residents pay an average of \$57 per month for wastewater collection and treatment.

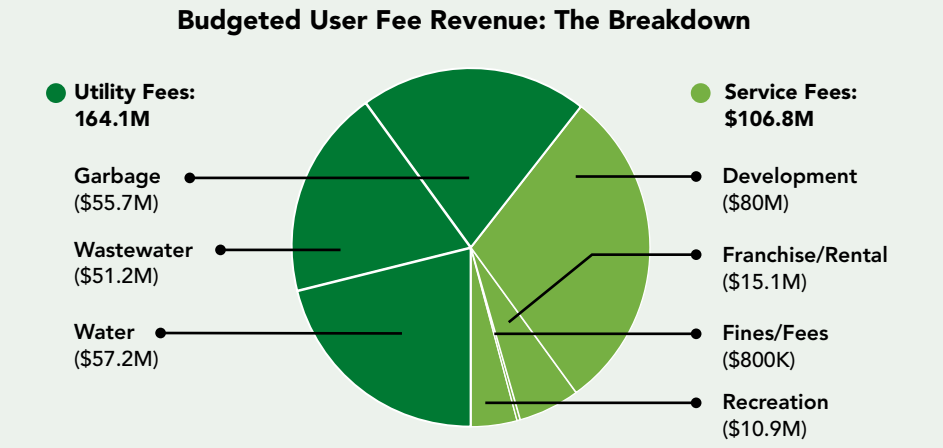
- Residents are the largest users of sewer service. They contribute about 70% of the \$51.2 million annual revenue. Commercial and industrial uses are 30%.
- Two-thirds of the City’s costs go to collecting and treating wastewater. The remaining expenses are to follow regulations and renovate aging infrastructure. For example, the City’s Cleanwater Program is rebuilding our treatment plant, one of the oldest on the West Coast.

Garbage and Recycling Collection & Disposal

Residents pay an average of \$42 per month for weekly garbage, food scraps, recycling and yard trimmings collection. This includes street sweeping every other week.

- Business customers contribute about 70% of the City’s annual revenue of \$55.7 million. Residents contribute 30%.
- The City contracts with Specialty Solid Waste and Recycling for waste collection. They sort and bale recyclables for sale and take garbage to the landfill. They also prepare food scraps to be reused as fertilizer or animal feed.
- We use about 90% of the revenue to collect and dispose of garbage and recyclables. Remaining expenses include street sweeping and maintaining the closed Sunnyvale Landfill.

Unlike a business, the City does not operate its services to make a profit. We base our user fees on what it costs to provide the service and how much you use.



Service Fees

Specific transactions generate another type of user fee called service fees. The City provides the service and covers its costs with these payments. For example, we use the fees you pay at our golf courses to operate and maintain the grounds and facilities. We also set aside some payment types to fund future costs. Park Dedication In-lieu Fees are an example. When developers pay those, we use them later to develop new or update existing parks. Broadly categorized, service fees relate to development, rentals, fines and recreation. Of these, development-related fees are the largest revenue source. They make up a majority of the \$106.8 million the City is projecting to collect in service fee revenue this year.

Development-related

The City estimates collecting about \$80 million this year in development-related fees.

- These fees can vary widely based on the status of private development projects.
- The City uses these fees to pay for planning and engineering review for building plans and construction inspection. We also use them to mitigate future service costs, such as those related to traffic and housing.

Franchise/Rental Fees

The City will collect about \$15.1 million this year from franchise and rental fees.

- The City collects rent or franchise fees from other utilities or industries. This gives them permission or access rights to provide a service. For example, PG&E pays the City a franchise fee to use the City’s property for their equipment.

Fines and Fees

The City will collect about \$800,000 this year from fines.

- User fees can also be fines such as those the City charges for violations of the municipal code. Or, fees for false security and fire alarms that help recover the cost of responding to the incident.

Recreational Services

The City will collect about \$10.9 million this year from its two municipal golf courses, the Tennis Center and other recreational services.

- The City uses these funds to operate, maintain and improve recreation facilities.



The Parks Master Plan is the City’s roadmap to enhance all of our parks within 20 years. City engineer Matt Brunnings (left) helped complete a \$17 million renovation of Fair Oaks Park last year. The project used \$13 million in Park Dedication Fees.

A Day in the Life

Talia and Victor Martinez live in a single-family home in Sunnyvale. They have two young children and a dog named Concha. Victor’s mother, Marina, also lives with them. Victor works downtown and Talia runs a small business out of their home. They are about to remodel one of their bathrooms. Let’s follow them on a typical day to see how they pay for and use City services.



We pay for City services with:

User Fees: Utility / Service

Taxes

Grants



User Fees: Utility

The family wakes up.

They use water to brush their teeth, shower and flush the toilet. The City treats and distributes water and collects and treats wastewater. We also upgrade infrastructure.

The City maintains over 300 miles of water pipes, nine wells, and several water storage facilities throughout the city.

We treat about 12 million gallons of sewage each day at the wastewater treatment plant.



User Fees: Utility

Victor puts the garbage and recycling carts at the curb.

The City collects and disposes of garbage and processes food scraps and recyclables for reuse.

The City’s SMaRT Station® earns about \$1.1 million a year from selling recyclables. This helps offset the cost to collect and dispose of garbage.



TAX

On his way to work, Victor passes a street resurfacing project and stops for gas.

The City maintains the roads with tax revenue. Our portion of the State’s Gas Tax offsets street maintenance costs.

The City maintains 260 miles of City-owned streets and resurfaced about 13%, or 34 miles of roadway, last year.



User Fees: Utility

Talia calls the City to schedule a special curbside garbage pickup.

The City manages the billing, call center and service contracts for garbage and recycling services.

The Utility Call Center processes 40,000 calls annually with a wait time of less than a minute.



TAX

Marina walks the children to school. Sunnyvale Public Safety Officers are nearby watching for speeders. The children mention a school assembly about cyberbullying.

The City provides law enforcement and crime prevention services.

In an average 24 hours, Public Safety Officers respond to 137 calls for service. They also investigate 11 crimes and issue 6 traffic citations.



User Fees: Service

A neighbor stops by to tell Talia that a City Animal Control Officer picked up a stray dog she had reported.

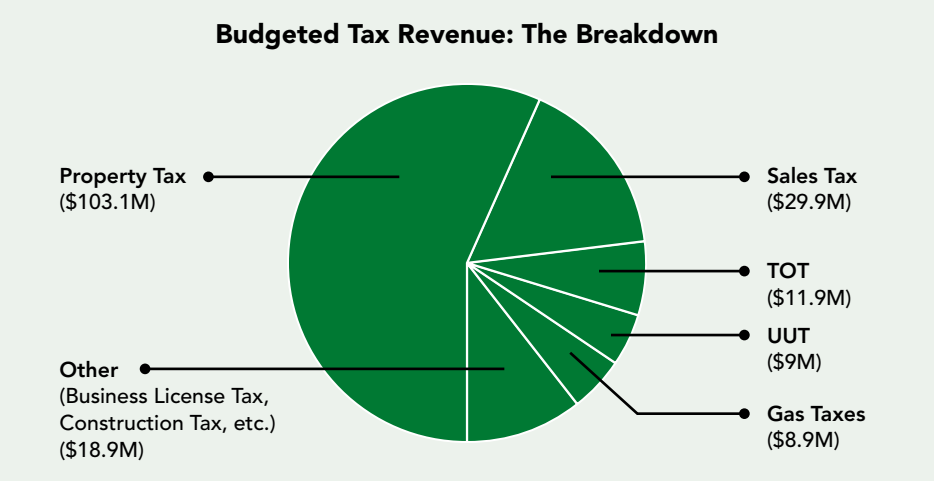
The City uses pet license fees to offset the cost of animal complaint response and investigation services.

The City’s Animal Control Officers respond to over 1,200 calls a year.

TAX Taxes

Funding the Services You and Others Use

About a third of the City’s revenue (\$181.7 million) comes from taxes. Taxes are important because they fund the services that the general community uses. This includes police and fire response, traffic lights, park maintenance, and the library. Property Tax and Sales & Use Tax are by far our two largest sources of tax revenue. They’re a quarter of our total revenue and three quarters of our tax revenue. Most people don’t realize that we only receive a small part of what you actually pay in these taxes. Let’s take a closer look at the five main types of taxes collected and how they’re distributed.



Property Tax

The City will receive about \$103.1 million this year in Property Tax.

- The County assesses property tax every year and collects and distributes the revenue.
- Only 13% of the property tax you pay goes to the City.
- Most of the property tax goes to school and community college districts and the County. Special districts for open space and air quality also receive this funding.



Our Street Operations team – including Eric Cervantes, Adam Leros, Ray Hernandez, Justin Driscoll and Rick Diaz – perform pavement maintenance on over 260 miles of Sunnyvale streets.

Sales & Use Tax

The City will receive about \$29.9 million this year in Sales & Use Tax.

- The State collects and distributes sales tax revenue.
- Only 11% (1 cent) of the sales tax collected from every taxable dollar spent in Sunnyvale goes to the City.
- Most of the sales tax revenue goes to State and County agencies.
- The State establishes the California tax rate which is currently 7.25%. There is some local flexibility to increase it, subject to voter approval. The current rate with local additions is 9.125%.
- Retail sales of tangible items such as furniture, toys, and clothes are subject to sales tax. Services and some goods, including most groceries, are not subject to sales tax.

Transient Occupancy Tax

The City will receive about \$11.9 million this year in TOT.

- Hotel and short-term rental operators collect TOT and send it directly to the City.
- The City retains 100% of the TOT revenue.
- Local voters set the tax rate. The current rate is 12.5% added to the room rate when you stay at a hotel.



Officer Robin Smith poses with Doc, a specialty K9. Doc’s duties include finding missing people, sniffing out potential arson chemicals at fire investigations, and being an ambassador for Sunnyvale’s Public Safety Department.

Utility Users Tax

The City will receive about \$9 million this year in UUT.

- Utility companies collect UUT from their customers and send it directly to the City.
- The City retains 100% of the UUT revenue.
- Local voters set the tax rate. The current rate is a 2% tax on electricity, natural gas and intrastate telephone services.

Gas Taxes

The City will receive about \$8.9 million this year in Gas Tax.

- The State collects and distributes this revenue to state, county and local agencies. It assesses the tax as a flat rate per gallon of gas.
- The City receives a small part of the revenue based on State formulas.
- The City earmarks Gas Tax revenue for roadway maintenance.



Property Tax

Big Bang for Your Buck

California voters approved Proposition 13 in 1978 which brought certainty to property tax rates. Rates were fixed at 1% of the property value in 1975. Annual increases were restricted to no more than 2% per year. The County reassesses property to its current value when you sell it to a new owner. They also reassess if you remodel or complete new construction.

Sunnyvale’s current average assessed value of a single-family home is about \$788,500¹. This means the average property tax payment to the County is about \$7,885. Of that amount, Sunnyvale receives 13% or \$1,025. For about \$85 a month, you receive many City services. They include public safety, library programs, park and street maintenance, and City management.

Property Tax Compared to Other Typical Services

	Broadband Internet Service ²	\$75/Mo.
	Property Tax (portion Sunnyvale receives)	\$85/Mo.
	Cell Phone ³	\$104/Mo.
	Car Insurance ⁴	\$132/Mo.

Sources:
1. Santa Clara County Assessor
2. Consumer Reports, 2022
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021
4. AAA, 2022

The Effect of Proposition 13

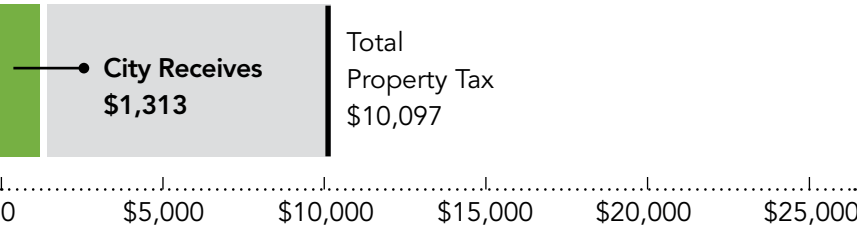
You can pay much different property tax amounts than your neighbors depending on when you buy a home. As a result, you each pay different amounts for City services.

A Tale of Two Taxes

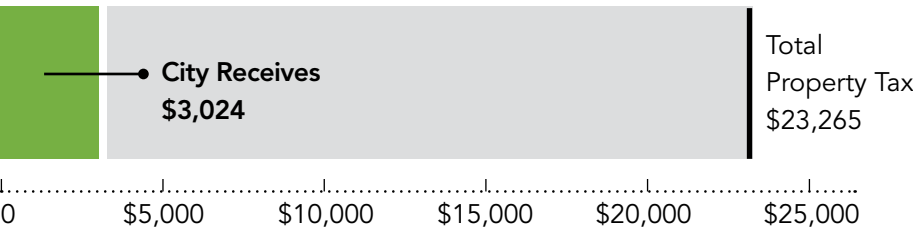
The Agarwals purchased their house on Sunny Street in 2010. Their neighbors, the Moores, purchased the same style house in 2022. Let’s assume the families each paid the median sale price in Sunnyvale at the time of purchase. The Agarwals paid about \$795,000 and the Moores paid \$2,326,500. The median home values in Sunnyvale increased by 193% between 2010 and 2022. But the assessed value for the Agarwal’s home only increased 27% at most. For property tax purposes, the assessed value of the Moore’s home is \$2,326,500 in 2022. The Agarwal’s assessed value would be \$1,009,650, even though the market value for both homes is \$2,326,500. As a result, the Agarwals will pay \$10,097 in property tax while the Moores will pay \$23,265, or 130% more.

Remember that the City receives only 13% of the property taxes collected by the County. So, the Agarwals will pay \$1,313 of their property tax to Sunnyvale, while the Moores will pay \$3,024. Clearly, you receive greater value for City services the longer you own your home.

Agarwal Home (purchased in 2010)
2022 Assessed Home Value: \$1,009,650



Moore Home (purchased in 2022)
2022 Assessed Home Value: \$2,326,500



The property tax examples in this section represent property tax costs based on the 1% of assessed value rate mandated by Proposition 13. Local agencies within each county are permitted to levy additional tax rates for debt, subject to voter approval, which can increase a property tax bill above the 1% amount. For example, a school district could levy a parcel tax for capital improvements.

Source: Santa Clara County Assessor

A Day in the Life (continued from page 3)



Talia goes to a tennis lesson at the Sunnyvale Tennis Center.

The City uses class registration fees to help fund classes and maintain the facilities.



Talia learns that her tennis partner's brother is buying a Below Market Rate house. It's close to the elementary school where he teaches.

City planners guide development. City requirements help expand affordable housing options. Developers building seven or more units must sell or rent some of them below market rate.



Talia stops at the hardware store to pick up new bathroom fixtures.

The City receives a portion of the Sales Tax as general revenue for services.

Companies that sell building materials generated about \$1.75 million in sales tax for the City last year. This would fund a year of the City’s crime prevention activities or two months of maintenance for the City’s parks.



Some of Victor's coworkers flew in for company meetings. They'll stay at a local hotel and play golf at the Sunnyvale Golf Course.

The City will use the Transient Occupancy Taxes collected by the hotel to provide City services. We'll use the golf course fees to operate and maintain the course and facilities.

About 150,000 rounds of golf are played annually at the two municipal golf courses owned and operated by the City.



Talia, Victor and Marina take full advantage of their lunchtime.

Marina meets a friend at Sunnyvale’s Heritage Park. They volunteer to help maintain the gardens. Victor supports local businesses by going to lunch at a restaurant on Murphy Avenue. Downtown businesses

Restaurants generated over \$3.3 million in sales tax for the City last year. This would fund about two years of Library services for children and teens.

generated over \$735,000 in sales tax revenue for the City last year. Talia returns books and movies at the Library. She also attends a free class about borrowing e-books. The City uses tax revenue and grants for services like Library programs.

Customers checked out or used over 2 million books and materials from the Library last year.



Marina and her friend have lunch at the Senior Center.

The City uses general tax revenue and Senior Center membership fees to provide more than 34,000 affordable nutritious meals for seniors each year.

Volunteers for the City served almost 12,000 hours last year. That’s about 1,500 work days!



On his way to meet a client, Victor sees a City crew working on a traffic signal.

The City uses general tax revenue and grants for street lights and traffic signals.

The City maintains almost 9,400 street lights throughout the city. We also control the timing of traffic signals at 135 signalized intersections.

Grants

Grant-Funded Services

Grant funds are another important source of City income. Some of these funds come from state and federal agencies. And we are always applying for competitive grants. We use the funds to provide services and complete projects in a variety of areas. This includes affordable housing, transportation and public safety.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Grant

Sunnyvale is home to **NOVAworks**, the recipient of this grant.

This employment and training agency helps job seekers looking for work in the region. They also help businesses seeking talent. Their services are free. NOVAworks serves San Mateo County and seven cities in northern Santa Clara County. The agency is entirely funded by federal, state and local grants.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

CDBG funds are federal grants focused on helping lower-income residents or neighborhoods.

They also assist the elderly, people with disabilities, and lower-income families with children. Services include hot nutritious meals for seniors at the Senior Center and job training for people experiencing homelessness. We also provide food, clothing and emergency financial help through Sunnyvale Community Services.



This affordable housing development is under construction near Sunnyvale's downtown. It will create new housing for lower-income and developmentally disabled community members. The City has contributed the land and HOME grant funds toward the project.

HOME Grant

The City receives these federal funds to provide affordable housing services to lower-income households.

For example, the City's Tenant Based Rental Assistance program uses these funds. The program helps people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We use the funds to help them get or maintain rental housing for up to two years. HOME funds also go toward building new affordable housing developments.

State Shared Revenue Grants

The City receives state funds for a variety of projects.

The funds help pay for park and trail improvements, public safety programs, employment development for NOVAworks and more.

**The City also applies for competitive grants each year. In the last fiscal year, we received almost \$24 million. These funds helped pay for roadway improvements, emergency equipment, library materials and more.*

Sunnyvale Businesses At-a-Glance

20 Largest Employers (As of Dec. 31, 2022)

- Google
- Apple
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Intuitive Surgical
- Amazon
- Lockheed Martin Space Systems
- Cepheid
- Walmart
- Synopsys
- Northrop Grumman Systems
- Fortinet
- Proofpoint
- Nokia
- Costco Wholesale
- Trimble
- Dionex
- Mercedes-Benz Research & Development
- Sierra Proto Express
- Juniper Networks

20 Largest Sales Tax Producers* (As of July 2021 – June 2022)

- Bon Appetit at LinkedIn
- Cepheid
- Cerebras Systems
- Costco
- Home Depot
- Intuitive Surgical
- iHealth Labs Inc.
- Juniper Networks
- Larry Hopkins Honda
- LinkedIn
- Lockheed Martin
- Lowes
- Pine Cone Lumber
- Safeway
- Sunnyvale Ford
- Sunnyvale Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram
- Sunnyvale Volkswagen
- Target
- Tesla Motors
- Toyota Sunnyvale

*Listed alphabetically to protect sales tax confidentiality

Businesses Making a Big Difference

Sunnyvale's 7,000 diverse businesses make significant contributions to our community. That diversity is also a reason our City can withstand economic volatility. When some sectors are in a downturn, we have others that continue to thrive. And thriving businesses generate direct and indirect benefits. This helps expand the City's ability to provide necessary services for the community.

Direct Benefits

Businesses provide direct benefits to the community by offering goods and services. They also create jobs and generate tax and fee revenue.

These tangible benefits help us remain a stable, desirable City that sustains services. Businesses generate a significant amount of revenue for the City. They account for 26% of all Sales Tax we receive and 39% of the Property Tax. Businesses also develop new or update existing properties. They then pay development-related fees that help the City maintain or build infrastructure such as roads and parks.

Indirect Benefits

Indirect benefits are more difficult to measure but we know they create a multiplier effect.

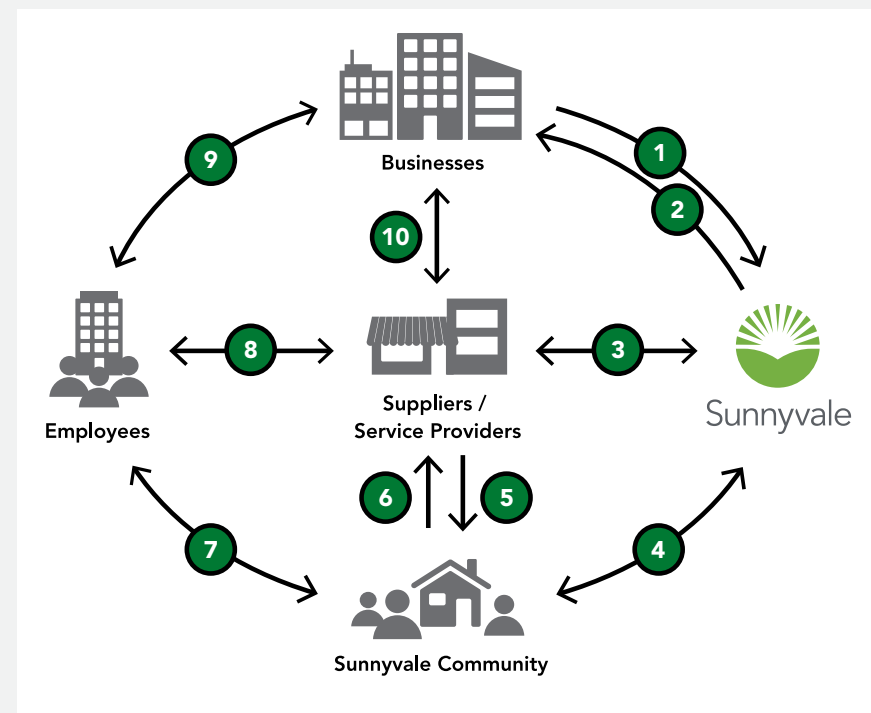
For example, we can calculate the direct revenue we receive when a business pays Sales Tax. But the Sales Tax their employees pay when shopping in Sunnyvale is an indirect benefit. The same is true when businesses buy goods from other Sunnyvale businesses. We can't calculate it precisely, but it generates revenue and supports other businesses. Another indirect benefit is when businesses volunteer in our community. Like our residents, they donate significant time and resources to local organizations. Bottomline, when businesses are doing well, we all benefit.

Local nonprofit Sunnyvale Community Services works to prevent homelessness and hunger in our community. These LinkedIn employees packed up 600 bags of groceries for residents in need. LinkedIn also sponsors SCS's fundraising events and donated \$1 million for their new building.



The Multiplier Effect

Businesses bring about transactions that generate revenue or provide community benefit. Let's look at what happens when a business builds a new building to replace an obsolete one.



- 1 Business** submits permit application to the City to have building plans reviewed. → Pays permit fees for plan review and construction inspection. → Increases City's property tax revenue from the new property value assessment. → Pays business license tax. → Pays utility user fees.
- 2 City** ensures building meets design standards. → Inspects construction to ensure it meets building codes. → Provides utility and other services.
- 3 Businesses** pay taxes and fees to City in exchange for services.
- 4 City** uses tax and fee revenue to provide services to residents and businesses.
- 5 Businesses** provide goods, services and jobs.
- 6 Consumers** use goods and services.
- 7 Businesses and Employees** donate time and money to local organizations.
- 8 Employees** eat, shop and use services in Sunnyvale.
- 9 Business** generates design and construction jobs. → Moves employees into new building.
- 10 Businesses** buy and sell goods and services. → Generate 26% of the City's Sales Tax and 39% of the Property Tax revenues.

A Day in the Life (continued from page 5)



Talia pays to renew her Business License at City Hall.

The City uses Business License fees as general revenue for services.

Of the 7,000 businesses in Sunnyvale, 95% of them are small businesses with 25 or fewer employees.



User Fees:
Service

Talia also visits the City's One-Stop Permit Center with the plans for their bathroom remodel.

The City uses permit fees to review building plans and issue construction permits. We also inspect construction to make sure it meets building code standards.

The City's One-Stop Permit Center received more than 8,000 visits and 42,000 calls from customers last year.



User Fees:
Service

At the Senior Center, Marina does online research for a day trip she saw in the City's Activities guide.

The City provides affordable activities for seniors using the Senior Center membership and activity fees.

The City has 24 parks totaling about 188 acres and maintains almost 775 acres of parks, trails, open space and boulevard landscaping.



User Fees:
Service

Talia picks up the children from school. She takes them to the Community Center for gymnastics and goes to the grocery store. Marina will take the children home after their class.

The City provides affordable recreation classes for children using class registration fees.

Grocery stores generate over half a million dollars in sales tax annually for the City. This would fund about nine police patrol vehicles.



User Fees:
Service



Talia sees that a new business is renovating the space next to the grocery store.

The City uses tax revenue to provide economic development services for existing and prospective businesses. We also use taxes and permitting fees to notify and get input from the public about development projects.

Last year, the City completed over 17,000 building inspections to ensure construction meets building codes.



On her way home, Talia pulls over to let a fire truck pass by on its way to a call.

The City uses tax revenue to provide fire protection and emergency medical services.

The City's Public Safety dispatchers handle more than 115,000 calls each year. They coordinate the assignment of more than 50,000 police and 7,000 fire and emergency medical events.



User Fees:
Service



Marina and the children arrive home. They walk with Concha to meet some school friends at the park.

Developers pay Park Dedication Fees. The City reserves these funds to build new or update existing parks. We use revenue from taxes to maintain the parks.

The City prunes about 38,000 City street trees on a 7-year cycle.



After unpacking the groceries, Talia sees the Horizon newsletter in the mail.

The City uses tax revenue to inform the public about its programs and services.