

CITY OF SAN JOSE  
YOUTH COMMISSION

# ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY

SAN JOSE CITY COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

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## Directive 1

Determine whether the Youth Commission (YC) should be expanded to include voices of those ages 21 –25.

## Directive 2

Identify which additional City of San José Commissions would benefit from including a dedicated position for youth.

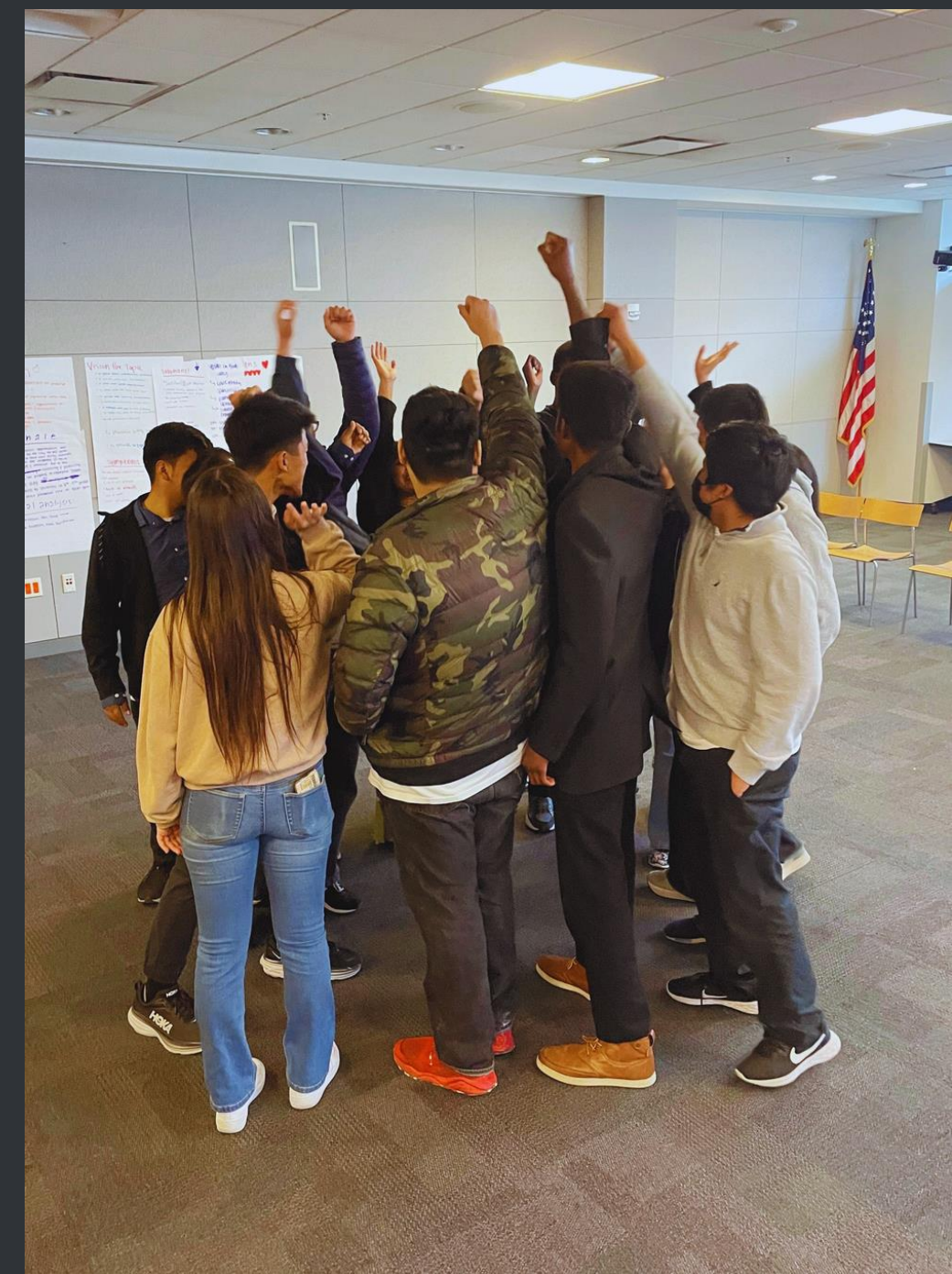
- Create a procedure for selecting youth members for the chosen commissions.
- Direct staff to report the Youth Commission's findings to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE) by the spring of 2023.

# The Memo





"Not about us,  
without us."





# AGE RECOMMENDATION

The Youth Commission does not recommend expanding the age eligibility requirements to be appointed to the Youth Commission.

- The closeness of ages and experiences of current members is essential to how the Youth Commission functions.
- It would be challenging to offer tailored support to youth of a wide range of ages.
- Including young adults could create challenging social dynamics.
- It might create unbalanced leadership dynamics.
- Many San José boards and commissions already have vacancies, many of which young people ages 18 and over can apply.

To further open the door to include more youth and young adults who can be strong advocates for how we might better serve target population groups, **the Youth Commission recommends adding a statement that is inclusive and representative of the city in the special eligibility requirements.**





# MUNICIPAL CODE

## **2.08.4840 Special eligibility requirements.**

**A. All members shall, at the time of appointment, be at least fourteen years old and under twenty-one years old.**

**B. The Commission shall have members representative of the residents of the City of San José, and with experience related to programs and services with school or community activities for children and youth.**



# COMPENSATION

**We believe youth commissioners should receive paid compensation for their service.**

- This is a mechanism to include more economically diverse voices on the commission.
- It incentivizes prioritizing Youth Commission work and events with the goal of increasing engagement and participation.
- A model for paid meetings allows for flexibility for Youth Commissioners and the ability to still earn needed volunteer hours for any additional duties.

To codify this provision in the San José Municipal Code, staff recommends leveraging the existing language in 2.08.120 – Members – Compensation, which provides the terms of compensation for all appointed Commissioners, and adding an additional provision to the Youth Commission section of the Municipal Code.





# MUNICIPAL CODE

## 2.08.4835 - Special provisions

**Commencing November 1, 2023, each member who serves on the Youth Commission shall be paid the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200) per meeting if they have attended. This compensation shall be in addition to any reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of the Commissioners' duties and functions under Section 2.08.120(B).**



# EXPANSION OF DUTIES

## Why Add Youth Seats to Other Commissions?

- It would increase the number of seats for a quorum on other commissions when we are already looking at a possible increase in commission vacancy due to a return to in-person (AB 2449).

## Functions, Powers, and Duties

The YC already has established the power:

- "To select and designate members of the commission, youths or other persons to act as commission representatives to all other city boards and commissions, and to agencies, authorities, boards, and commissions the city has participated in creating in conformance with guidelines approved by the council."





# EXPANSION OF DUTIES

## Bill of Rights for Children and Youth

- Article 5 revolves around youth having a voice in local government. While the City has certain initiatives in place, such as the Youth Commission, it is unclear how the City meets the other elements in the article. Examples to address the gap are:
  - Creating space for youth to provide input on boards, commissions, and committees
  - Doing more to inform youth about laws that impact them

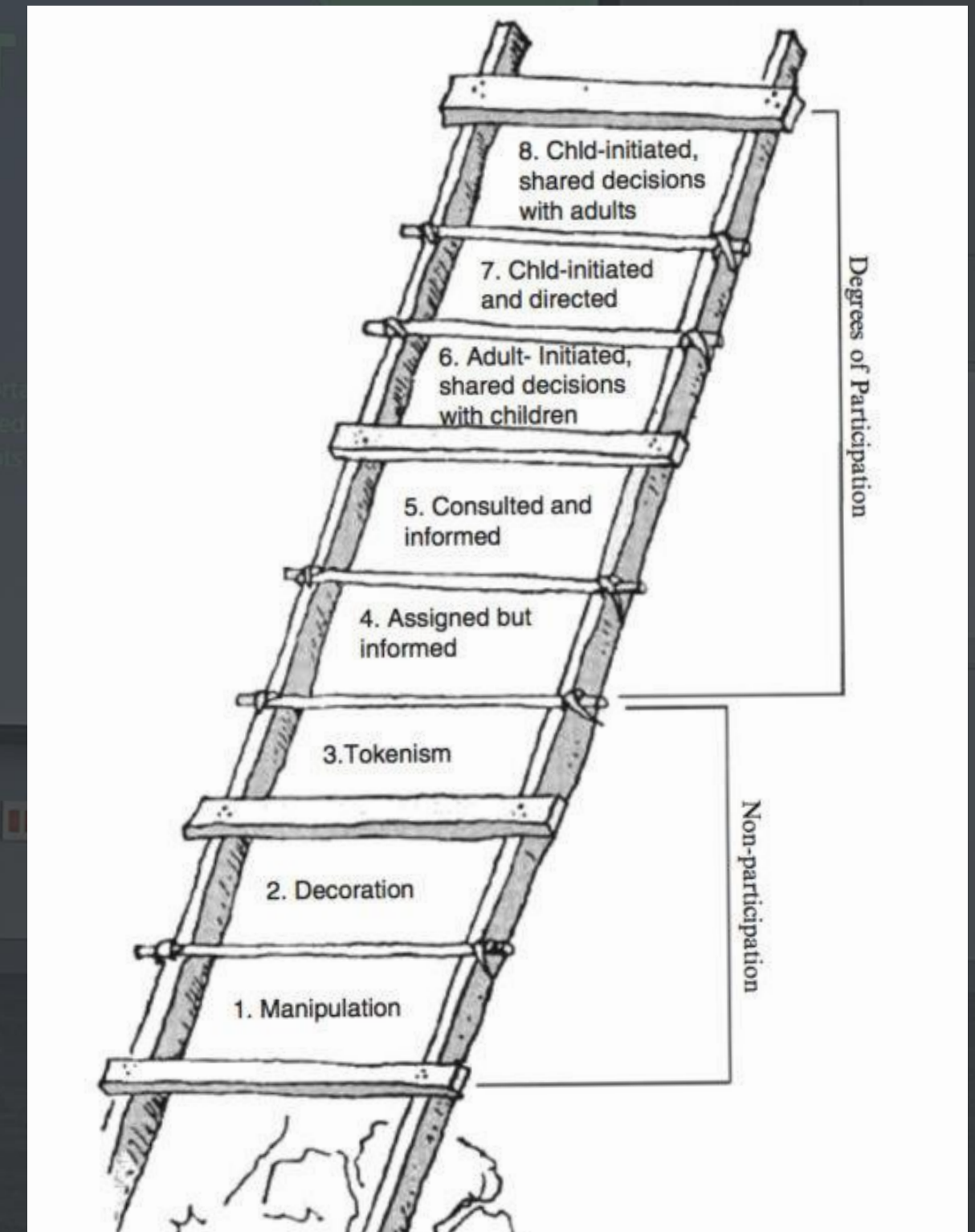




# EXPANSION OF DUTIES

## Roger Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation

- Using Roger Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation to frame the current charge of the Youth Commission, the question loomed, why tokenize youth voice in other city advisory and decision-making bodies rather than strengthen the Youth Commission's role and duty to provide the City Council and the Mayor with "comment and recommendation" on all proposed legislation "that primarily affect the children and youth" of San José?





# MUNICIPAL CODE

## **2.08.4850 Functions, powers, and duties.**

**The commission shall have the following functions, powers, and duties:**

- A. To foster greater involvement of youth in municipal government and civic affairs, especially in the City of San José.**
- B. To comment and make recommendations to the City Council and the City Manager's Office on matters within the Commission's workplan, and the City of San José Children and Youth Master Plan.**
- C. To study, review, evaluate, advise and submit recommendations to City Council or the City manager pertaining to the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets any problems, activities and concerns of youth as they relate to municipal policies, programs or projects of the city.**
- D To hold and conduct forums on such problems, activities and concerns of youth in which various governmental and nongovernmental agencies and other community organizations, fraternal and benevolent associations may be invited to participate, to the extent the commission deems such desirable.**
- E. To select and designate members of the Commission, youths or other persons to act as commission representatives to all other city boards and commissions, and to agencies, authorities, boards and commissions the city has participated in creating in conformance with guidelines approved by the council.**
- F. To make such recommendations to the council as the commission may find necessary and desirable to carry out the purposes for which the commission is established.**



# RECOMMENDATIONS



Amend Section 2.08.4840 of Chapter 2.08 of the San José Municipal Code to ensure the Youth Commission is inclusive and representative of the City of San José.



Add Section 2.08.4835 of Chapter 2.08 of the San José Municipal Code to compensate appointed youth commissioners to encourage the participation of economically diverse youth, increase engagement among commissioners while maintaining fulltime student status, and align with the citywide policy to reduce financial barriers to serve on boards.



Amend Section 2.08.4850 of Chapter 2.08 of the San José Municipal Code to revise and expand the advisory and recommendation powers of the Youth Commission to City Council and the Mayor and, following the revised municipal code power and duties, designate youth representatives to other San José Commissions.



# THANK YOU!

## WEBSITE

[www.sjpl.org/youth-commission](http://www.sjpl.org/youth-commission)

## EMAIL ADDRESS

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