

San José Charter Review Commission  
Recommendation Memo  
*Drafted April 19th, 2021; Revised July 2nd, 2021*

### 1) Proposal Name

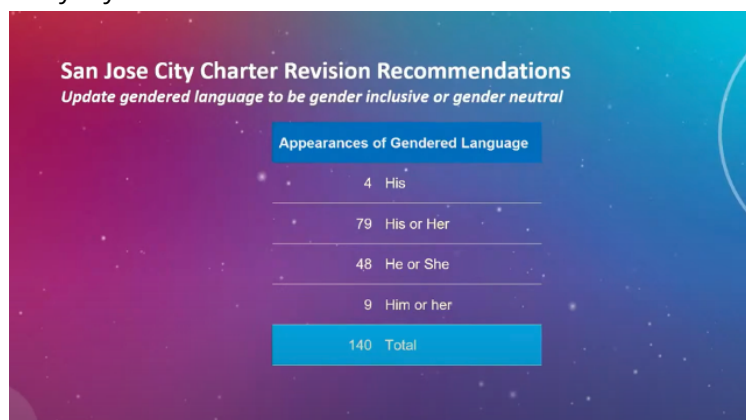
<b>Proposal Name:</b>	<i>Use of gender-inclusive language on All of the City of San Jose documents.</i>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<i>Commissioner Veronica Amador, Magnolia Segol, Rick Callender, Sherry Segura, Jenny Zhao</i>
<b>Date submitted:</b>	<i>10/29/2021 No Revisions</i>

### 2) Proposal Details

<p><b>1) What problem(s) are you trying to address?</b> <i>Before suggesting a solution, it is important to be clear about the problem you aim to solve.</i></p>	<p>This proposed amendment seeks to promote and improve accountability, representation, and inclusion under a racial equity lens at the City of San José. By promoting and supporting gender inclusive language in all city documents.</p> <p>Per Council, the Charter Review Commission has been tasked with the following directives, specifically the following directives pertain to the Commission's work:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“(5) Consider additional measures and potential charter amendments, as needed, that will improve accountability, representation and inclusion at San José City Hall.”</p> <p>Additionally, this recommendation aligns with the City of San José's newly created Office of Racial Equity in advancing systems change through a citywide racial equity framework that will examine and improve San José's internal policies, programs, and practices to eradicate any structural and/or institutional racism in the City of San José.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“This includes a focus on enabling the organization, at all levels and in all departments, to identify ways to improve outcomes for Black, Indigenous, LatinX, and People of Color.”</p> <p>Violence and discrimination born of intolerance and marginalization continue to take lives and create barriers to equity and opportunity for LGBTQ+ people and their families.</p> <p>Language is also gendered and plays a central role in human cognition and behavior as one of the most common mechanisms</p>
--	---

by which gender is constructed and reinforced. Some languages do not mark gender distinctions systematically, some use pronouns to distinguish between male and female, and some go even further, extending the gender distinction to inanimate nouns through a system of grammatical gender. Gendered language is essential as it frames the understanding of equality.

Language is a reflection of the attitudes and norms within a society. It also shapes our worldview and, over time, people's attitudes as to what is "normal" and acceptable. The way language is used not only reflects social structures and biases. However, it may also reinforce preconceptions and inequalities related to gendered roles in everyday life and the work environment.



### Section 1704. Definitions:

(h) The masculine gender includes the feminine and neuter.

Do not make gender visible when it is not relevant for documents and communications.

Update gendered language to be gender inclusive or gender neutral.

**2) How has this problem possibly benefited or burdened people, especially BIPOC, low-income, undocumented and immigrant, those experiencing homelessness, etc.?**

*Is there data that speaks to the impact of this problem?*

Gender-inclusive language in all of the City of San Jose's Documents. This would support the writing and speak in a way that does not discriminate or marginalize based on gender and does not promote or perpetuate gender stereotypes. Therefore, using gender-inclusive language proactively and consistently is imperative for furthering gender equality in the workplace and creating an inclusive working environment for all staff members. Using plural forms can be an easy gender-neutral alternative to gendered pronouns. This technique is to be preferred as it is inclusive and avoids complicated sentence structures. (They/Them) (Theirs).

What does the disaggregated data tell us?

Exclusive terms	Inclusive/neutral terms
Chairman	Chair (or Chairperson)
Chairmanship	Chairpersonship
Businessman	Businessperson
Policeman	Police officer
Cleaning lady	Cleaner
Spokesman	Spokesperson
Fireman	Firefighter
Statesman	Political leader/Head of state/Diplomat/Political figure
Handyman	Technician/Repairer
Camerman	Videographer
Removal man	Mover
Waiter/Waitress	Server

### 3) What change are you proposing?

Describe the revision to San José's Charter that you are proposing. Include relevant Charter section numbers.

Yes, **Section 1704. Definitions:**

(h) The masculine gender includes the feminine and neuter. (remove and replace with the following):

h (i) Gender. The gender neutral pronoun includes the feminine, masculine, and non-binary genders.

h(ii) Pronoun Singularity. "They/them" shall indicate a singular individual, unless the context indicates the contrary. In most cases, the singular number includes the plural and the plural includes the singular.

h(iii) "Gender." Whenever a personal pronoun is used in the neutral gender, it shall be deemed to include the feminine and masculine also. "They/them", shall indicate a singular individual, unless the context indicates the contrary.

h(iv) Update pronouns when appropriate and also includes the updating of future documents, applying only to official documents like ordinances, resolutions, and City policies. by making changes such as the following:

Gendered subject (he, she, etc.), object (him, her, etc.) and possessive (his, hers, etc.) pronouns shall be replaced by a gender-neutral description of the pronoun referent's title of office, employment or descriptor.

	<p>Do not make gender visible when it is not relevant for documents and communications.</p> <p>Update gendered language to be gender inclusive or gender neutral.</p>
<p><b>4) Is this change feasible?</b> <i>Think through the revision you are proposing. Is it legally possible? Is it practical? If there are questions you cannot answer, list them here.</i></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>5) Who might benefit from or be burdened by this change?</b> <i>Is there data that speaks to the potential impact of this change? What are the potential unintended consequences of this change?</i></p>	<p><b>BENEFITS:</b> Everyone</p>
<p><b>6) What are the arguments against this proposal?</b> <i>Summarize the arguments you expect or data you have found in opposition to this recommendation.</i></p>	
<p><b>7) Must this be a Charter revision?</b> <i>Can this problem be addressed without changing the charter (e.g., Council action, cultural change)? If not, should this be a policy recommendation to be included in the Commission's report?</i></p>	<p>It must be a charter revision to support language inclusivity to reflect on all of San Jose City's documents.</p>

### 8) Are there other examples of this change?

*If you have found other examples of this change, please share them and any outcomes that have been observed.*

Santa Clara County has supported these efforts into a policy change and has started a process in using inclusive language in all of their documents.

### 3) Proposal Research & Citations

List below the results of any research conducted to inform this memo.

#### List of citations

*All data must be cited so that Commissioners who are not part of the Subcommittee in question may locate the source of information as needed.*

Sera Fernando, guest speaker for our 9/9 study session, shared the free online training **Building a More Inclusive Workplace: LGBTQ** module, the presentation slide deck (attached), and links below.

#### Building a More Inclusive Workplace LGBTQ Training

The approaches you learn in this online module for intervening when you hear biased and discriminatory language against LGBTQ people is applicable within your organization as well as your day to day LGBTQ+ cultural competency. Instructions for taking the training below. You can also download the facilitator's guide to support you in hosting a post-training dialogue:

[https://go.kognito.com/rs/143-HCJ-270/images/InclusiveWorkplaceLGBTQ\\_Facilitator\\_Guide.pdf](https://go.kognito.com/rs/143-HCJ-270/images/InclusiveWorkplaceLGBTQ_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). To access the online training:

1. Go to [www.kognitocampus.com](http://www.kognitocampus.com)
2. Register for a free account
3. Use "sccatwork" as the enrollment key when prompted

#### Links Presented

TSER - The Gender Unicorn

<https://transstudent.org/gender/>

Williams Institute Report on Nonbinary LGBTQ Adults in the United States

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Nonbinary-LGBTQ-Adults-Jun-2021.pdf>

County of Santa Clara Human Rights Commission - Report on Gender Inclusive Language

[http://sccgov.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=SplitView&MeetingID=13126&MediaPosition=&ID=105051&CssClass=](http://sccgov.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=SplitView&MeetingID=13126&MediaPosition=&ID=105051&CssClass=)

Santa Clara County LGBTQ Older Adults Survey

	<p><a href="http://www.santaclarasurvey.org/">http://www.santaclarasurvey.org/</a></p> <p>Associated Press Stylebook <a href="https://www.apstylebook.com/blog_posts/7">https://www.apstylebook.com/blog_posts/7</a></p> <p>American Psychological Association <a href="https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they">https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they</a> <a href="https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/singular-they">https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/singular-they</a> <a href="https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they">https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/singular-they</a></p> <p>Merriam-Webster Dictionary <a href="https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/word-of-the-year-2019-they/they">https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/word-of-the-year-2019-they/they</a></p> <p>NATO Gender-Inclusive Language Manual <a href="https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pictures/images_mfu/2021/5/pdf/210514-GIL-Manual_en.pdf">https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pictures/images_mfu/2021/5/pdf/210514-GIL-Manual_en.pdf</a></p> <p>United Nations Gender Inclusive Language Guidelines <a href="https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml">https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml</a></p>
<p><b>Any speakers who presented to the subcommittee must be listed.</b> <i>Include name, title, affiliations, etc., along with a brief summary of the information presented by them.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sera Fernando and Maribel Martinez, County of Santa Clara Office of LGBTQ Affair</li> <li>2. Bonnie Sugiyama, Director, PRIDE Center &amp; Gender Equity Center, San José State University</li> <li>3. Stephanie Jayne &amp; Sabrina Parra-Garcia, San Jose Office of Racial Equity</li> <li>4. Ellina Yin, San Jose Resident presented data on Boards and Commissions</li> </ol>
<p><b>Relevant Links</b> <i>Provide links or locations of the information in this research as much as possible, otherwise provide attachments.</i></p>	