

# San Mateo County Harbor District Code of Ethics & Values

The Harbor District's Code of Ethics & Values, adopted by the Harbor Commission of 2015, is designed to provide clear, positive statements of ethical behavior reflecting the core values of the community. The Code includes practical strategies for addressing ethical questions and a useful framework for decision-making and handling the day-to-day operations of the municipality.

The current Code of Ethics & Values was developed in 1999 by the City of Santa Clara by a Committee composed of three elected officials, nine City commissioners, two community members, the City Manager and the City Attorney. The Committee took a fresh approach by working with the [Markkula Center for Applied Ethics](#) at Santa Clara University to create a new Code of Ethics & Values that would better reflect the issues and concerns of today's complex and diverse society.

## Goals of the Code of Ethics & Values

- To make San Mateo County a better place to live, work and play
- To make the Harbor District a stronger public agency, built on mutual respect and trust
- To promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct among all involved in local government - elected officials, District staff, volunteers, and members of the District's committees

The Code of Ethics & Values is a touchstone for members of board of commissioners and committees in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

## Preamble

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. The San Mateo County Harbor District has adopted this Code of Ethics & Values to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the District's government. All elected and appointed officials, District employees, volunteers, and others who participate in the District's government are required to subscribe to this Code, understand how it applies to their specific responsibilities, and practice its eight core values in their work. Because we seek public confidence in the District's services and public trust of its decision-makers, our decisions and our work must meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement in following this code.

1. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be ethical. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I am trustworthy, acting with the utmost integrity and moral courage.
- b. I am truthful, do what I say I will do, and am dependable.
- c. I make impartial decisions, free of bribes, unlawful gifts, narrow political interests, and financial and other personal interests that impair my independence of judgment or action.
- d. I am fair, distributing benefits and burdens according to consistent and equitable criteria.
- e. I extend equal opportunities and due process to all parties in matters under consideration. If I engage in unilateral meetings and discussions, I do so without making voting decisions.
- f. I show respect for persons, confidences, and information designated as "confidential."
- g. I use my title(s) only when conducting official District business, for information purposes, or as an indication of background and expertise, carefully considering whether I am exceeding or appearing to exceed my authority.

2. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be professional. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I apply my knowledge and expertise to my assigned activities and to the interpersonal relationships that are part of my job in a consistent, confident, competent, and productive manner.
- b. I approach my job and work-related relationships with a positive attitude.
- c. I keep my professional knowledge and skills current and growing.

3. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be service-oriented. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I provide friendly, receptive, courteous service to everyone.
- b. I am attuned to, and care about, the needs and issues of citizens, public officials, and city workers.
- c. In my interactions with constituents, I am interested, engaged, and responsive.

4. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be fiscally responsible. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I make decisions after prudent consideration of their financial impact, taking into account the long-term financial needs of the District, especially its financial stability.
- b. I demonstrate concern for the proper use of District assets (e.g., personnel, time, property, equipment, funds) and follow established procedures.
- c. I make good financial decisions that seek to preserve programs and services for District residents.

5. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be organized. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I act in an efficient manner, making decisions and recommendations based upon research and facts, taking into consideration short and long-term goals.
- b. I follow through in a responsible way, keeping others informed, and responding in a timely fashion.
- c. I am respectful of established District processes and guidelines.

6. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be communicative. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I convey the District's care for and commitment to its citizens.
- b. I communicate in various ways that I am approachable, open-minded and willing to participate in dialog.
- c. I will engage in effective two-way communication, by listening carefully, asking questions, and determining an appropriate response, which adds value to conversations.

7. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be collaborative. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I act in a cooperative manner with groups and other individuals, working together in a spirit of tolerance and understanding.
- b. I work towards consensus building and gain value from diverse opinions.
- c. I accomplish the goals and responsibilities of my individual position, while respecting my role as a member of a team.
- d. I consider the broader regional and statewide implications of the District's decisions and issues.

8. As a Representative of the San Mateo County Harbor District, I will be progressive. In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I exhibit a proactive, innovative approach to setting goals and conducting the District's business.
- b. I display a style that maintains consistent standards, but is also sensitive to the need for compromise, "thinking outside the box," and improving existing paradigms when necessary.
- c. I promote intelligent and thoughtful innovation in order to forward the District's policy agenda and District's services.