

Carson Municipal Code Chapter 4 of Article II

Section 2450 Code of Ethics.

A. Purpose. The City of Carson hereby adopts this Code of Ethics for members of the City Council and the City's commissions, boards and committees (collectively "members") to ensure the citizens of the City receive fair, ethical and accountable government, with adherence to both the spirit and the letter of the law affecting governmental operations. Nothing in the Code of Ethics is intended to limit or otherwise infringe on the First Amendment rights of free speech or association of public officials or members of the public, or to conflict with any Federal, State or local laws.

B. Distribution of Code of Ethics. This Code of Ethics shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for City Council, application packets to commissions, boards, and committees, and given to newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they read and understood the City of Carson Code of Ethics. In addition, the Code of Ethics shall be periodically reviewed and updated by the City Council upon recommendations from commissions, boards, committees, and the citizens of Carson.

C. Adherence to Principles. All members shall strive to adhere to the principles set forth in the Code of Ethics. If it appears that any member has not or is not adhering to the principles in this Code of Ethics, a hearing may be held by the City Council to discuss whether action should be taken. No hearing may be held, unless: (1) the hearing is requested by two members of the City Council, and (2) the person who is the subject of the hearing is given thirty (30) days' advance notice of the hearing, which notice shall describe the facts and reason for the hearing. The person who is the subject of the hearing shall be afforded all appropriate due process, including a meaningful opportunity to respond to allegations before any action is taken pursuant to subsection (D) of this Section.

D. Actions Against Members. If, after a hearing described in subsection (C) of this Section, the Council wishes to take action in response to any violation of the Code of Ethics, such action may include a public admonishment, a resolution of censure, removal of the member from the commission, board or committee on which he or she serves (does not apply to members of the Council), or any other action reasonably related to ensuring that member does not engage in future Code of Ethics violations; provided further, that such action is consistent with all Federal, State and local laws. The Council may adopt a policy of progressive remedies starting with warnings and increasing to more serious penalties to deter or prevent future violations.

E. Code of Ethics. The following principles shall constitute the Carson Code of Ethics, applicable to all members of the City Council and the City's commissions, boards and committees:

1. Act in the Public Interest. Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people of Carson and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims and transactions coming before the Carson City Council, commissions, boards and committees.
2. Comply with the Law. Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of California and the City of Carson in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and California constitutions; the Carson Municipal Code; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government. Members shall also comply with all applicable City policies and procedures.
3. Conduct of Members. The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and should take steps to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Council, commissions, boards and committees, the staff or the public.
4. Respect for Process. Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council and commissions, boards, and committees governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City staff.
5. Conduct of Public Meetings. Members shall prepare themselves for public issues, listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body, and focus their attentions on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.
6. Decisions Based on Merit. Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand, rather than on unrelated considerations.
7. Communication. Members shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Council or commissions, boards, and committees, which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process.

8. Conflict of Interest. In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest, or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In accordance with the law, members who are subject to the City's Conflict Code shall, in accordance with the Conflict Code, disclose investments, interests in real property, sources of income and gifts; and abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist.

9. Gifts and Favors. Members shall not use their public office to take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain that are not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

10. Confidential Information. Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or affairs of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.

11. Use of Public Resources. Members shall not use public resources not available to the public in general, such as City staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.

12. Representations of Private Interests. In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any commission, board, committee, or proceeding of the City, nor shall members of commissions, boards, and committees appear before their own bodies or before the Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies. This section shall not prevent members of commissions, boards, and committees from attending meetings of the Council or other commissions, boards or committees and advocating their views on matters of public policy, provided they are not doing so as a lobbyist for compensation.

13. Advocacy. Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council, commission, board, or committee to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state that they do not represent their body or the City of Carson, nor shall they allow the inference that they do. When

representing the City on Federal, State, or regional bodies, members shall advocate policies which are in the best interest of the City of Carson over their own personal interests.

14. Policy Role of Members. Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of Carson City government. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, commissions, boards, committees, and City staff.

Individual members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

15. Independence of Commissions, Boards, and Committees. Because of the value of the independent advice of commissions, boards, and committees to the public decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board and commission proceedings.

16. Positive Workplace Environment. Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive workplace environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with City employees to in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

F. No Effect on Decisions. A violation of this Code of Ethics shall not be a basis for challenging the validity of any Council, commission, board, or committee decision. (Ord. 08-1409, § 1)