



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: July 3, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: City Administrator's Office

SUBJECT: Participation In Nextdoor Neighborhood Website

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the City's participation in the Nextdoor neighborhood website to help the City communicate with residents on neighborhood issues, services and activities.

DISCUSSION:

Nextdoor is a website that enables neighbors to create private social networks for their neighborhood. The website allows neighbors to communicate with each other through a private site that is accessible only to the residents of that neighborhood. Once neighbors verify their addresses and join their neighborhood website, they can ask for advice, request and share local service recommendations, and share neighborhood information with each other. Participants can choose to see and respond to updates either via email, or only on the website. Residents and neighborhoods can participate in the site free of charge.

City staff in several departments have reviewed the Nextdoor website and expressed an interest in supporting the site. In addition to providing a venue for neighbors to communicate, the site provides the City with the ability to post information on neighborhood issues, services, and events.

The City uses many tools to communicate with the public, including media releases, electronic and printed newsletters, email subscriptions, City TV programming, websites, social media, direct mailings and brochures. Despite a wide array of options, there are very few tools to target communication to residents in specific neighborhoods.

The City's General Plan recognizes 32 neighborhoods, each with unique qualities and infrastructure needs (see Neighborhood Map in Attachment 1). The City could use the Nextdoor website to send news or information to the neighborhoods most affected by a particular project or event. For example, the City could post information on construction updates, police alerts, emergency bulletins, emergency response training, and neighborhood planning and outreach.

If the City participated in the website, the City would not oversee the site or have responsibility to sustain the site. While staff would be able to post information for neighborhoods, they would not have access to neighborhood websites. Neighborhood content can only be viewed by members who live within the boundary. Nextdoor has provided a list of frequently asked questions and responses to help the City and public learn about its website (Attachment 2).

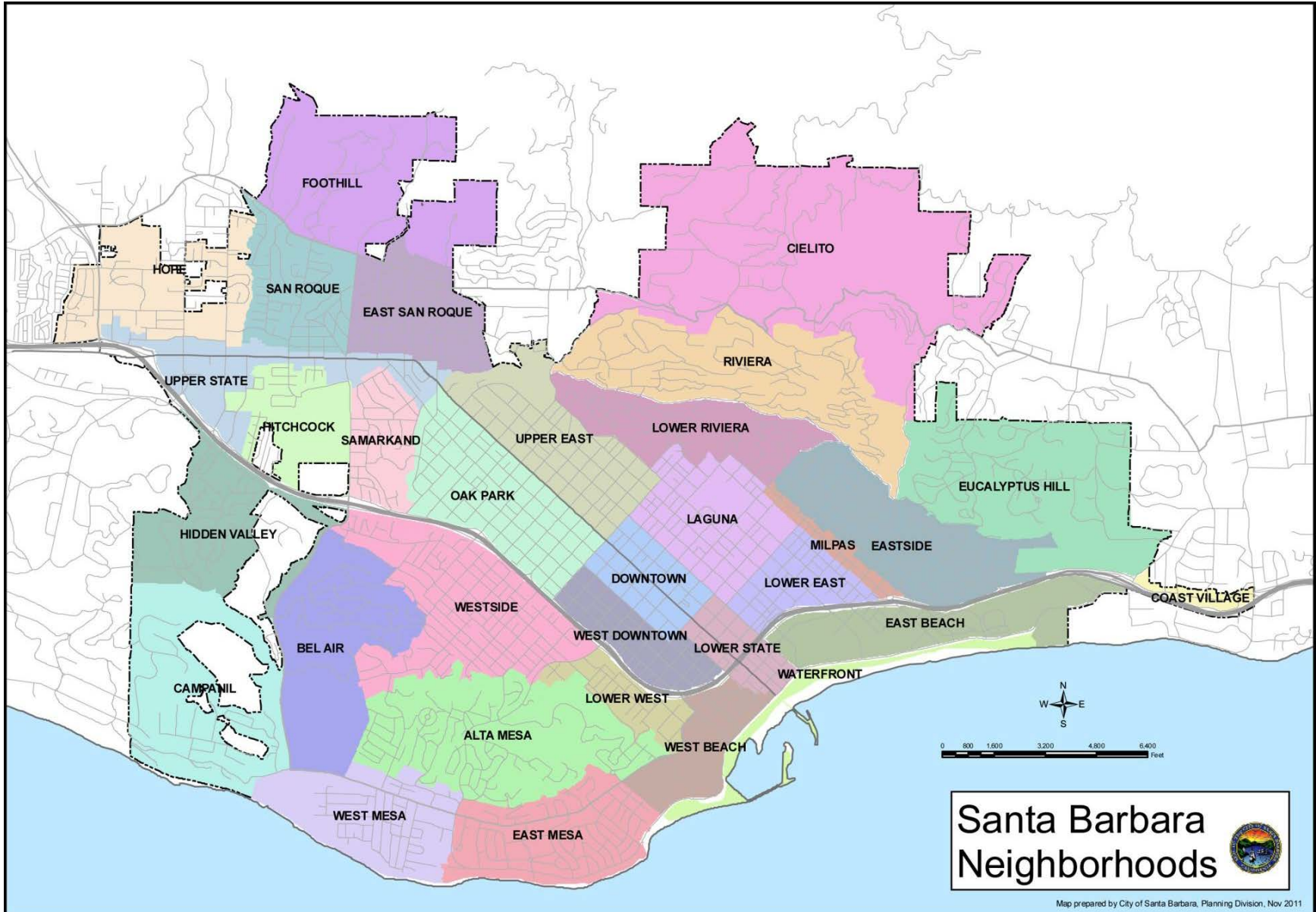
The Neighborhood Advisory Council received a presentation on the Nextdoor website and recommended the City's participation at its meeting on June 13, 2012.

ATTACHMENT(S): 1. City of Santa Barbara Neighborhood Map
2. Nextdoor Website, Frequently Asked Questions

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APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



Nextdoor.com Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What is Nextdoor?

Nextdoor is a free online platform that enables neighbors to create private social networks for their neighborhood. Using Nextdoor, neighbors can communicate with each other to build stronger and safer neighborhoods.

Nextdoor was created based on the idea that the neighborhood is one of the most important and useful communities in a person's life. Our mission is to bring back a sense of community to the neighborhood.

How does Nextdoor work?

Each neighborhood creates a private Nextdoor website that is accessible only to the residents of that neighborhood. Once neighbors verify their addresses and join their neighborhood website, they can find other neighbors in the resident directory, view a neighborhood map, ask for advice, exchange local recommendations, and share neighborhood information with each other. Neighbors can choose to see and respond to updates via email, or only on the website.

What types of things do people do on Nextdoor?

Neighbors can use their Nextdoor website to ask questions, request and share local service recommendations, sell or donate items they no longer need, and help each other in ways that benefit the entire neighborhood.

Here are some examples of how people are using Nextdoor:

- Give an extra armchair to a neighbor
- Get introduced to a great new babysitter
- Organize a neighborhood barbecue
- Alert fellow neighbors to a recent break-in
- Learn more about upcoming construction projects

How is Nextdoor different from my neighborhood mailing list?

Nextdoor is designed for the specific communication needs of a neighborhood. For example, Nextdoor websites include a neighborhood map and directory of residents, so it's easy to know who you're talking to. When a neighbor shares a recommendation for a favorite local service (e.g. gardener, cleaning service, tutor) it's automatically cataloged so anyone can easily refer back to it at any time.

Unlike mailing lists and groups, Nextdoor makes it easy to stay informed without overwhelming people with too many emails. Members can choose to receive emails about each new post, see everything in a single daily digest, or turn off emails and check the website from new posts from neighbors. In addition, Nextdoor archives and organizes all recommendations for easy use across the neighborhood.

How much does Nextdoor cost?

Nextdoor is completely free for neighborhoods, cities and their residents.

Membership

How do I join my neighborhood's Nextdoor website?

If your neighborhood has already set up a Nextdoor website, you can join it by asking a neighbor to invite you or by visiting [Nextdoor.com](https://nextdoor.com) and signing up. You will be required to verify your address before you can join any Nextdoor website.

My neighborhood isn't on Nextdoor yet. Can I set up my own neighborhood website?

Yes, any motivated neighbor can start a Nextdoor website for their neighborhood. The best person to start a neighborhood website is an active member of their community who can personally invite at least ten neighbors and help get the word out to others. To start the process, simply visit <https://nextdoor.com> and enter your address.

Can neighborhood businesses join Nextdoor?

In some areas, local businesses have joined their neighborhood websites. We do not currently have any special designation for businesses on the website, but business owners are welcomed to join as involved neighbors.

Can I join more than one neighborhood at a time?

Yes, you may join any neighborhood where you live or have a residence. However, you must use a distinct email address when signing up for each Nextdoor neighborhood website.

Whom should I invite to my Nextdoor website?

Anyone who lives in your neighborhood should be invited. If you invite anyone outside the neighborhood boundary, they will be invited to join their neighborhood Nextdoor website.

How do I invite my neighbors to Nextdoor?

Having all of your neighbors on Nextdoor helps to connect the neighborhood and improve communications. You can invite neighbors to the website by clicking the "Invite Neighbors" link on the top-right corner of the website. You can send invitations by email or postcard, or print out flyers to hand out to your neighbors. If you choose to send postcard invitations, Nextdoor will pay for the postage and send them on your behalf.

Safety and privacy

Is using Nextdoor safe? Can we restrict access to certain users?

Nextdoor is a private social network just for your neighbors. We do not tolerate any abusive activity and can restrict access to certain neighbors upon request.

I have a personal safety concern about my Nextdoor website. What should I do?

Please let us know about the issue by reporting it at https://nextdoor.com/report_concern, and we'll investigate right away. Of course, if you have an urgent safety issue, please contact your local authorities.

How do I know that only my neighbors can access Nextdoor?

Nextdoor uses four methods to verify member addresses. Every member must be verified using one of these four methods.

1. Phone verification. If you have a landline phone, you can choose to receive an automated phone call from Nextdoor that will provide you with a unique code to verify your account.

2. Postcards. Nextdoor can send a postcard to a new member's address with a unique code printed on it. The code will allow them to log in and verify their account. This usually takes about 3-5 days.
3. Neighbor invitations. Someone who is already a verified member of the website can vouch for a neighbor by inviting them to their website with an email or postcard invitation.
4. Credit card billing address. Nextdoor can instantly verify a new member's home address through a credit card billing address. While Nextdoor is a free service, banks require a one-time \$0.01 charge to the member's credit card to confirm a person's billing address. We do not store the credit card information and it is not used again.

Who can access my neighborhood on Nextdoor?

Access to your neighborhood's Nextdoor website is password protected and only available to residents.

If you think a non-resident may be accessing your Nextdoor website, let us know by reporting it to support@nextdoor.com

How does Nextdoor use my information?

Your information is only available to you and your neighbors in your Nextdoor neighborhood site. Nextdoor does not share or sell your information to third parties, including advertisers. Please read our privacy policy at https://nextdoor.com/privacy_policy for more information.

How does Nextdoor make money?

Nextdoor is funded by Benchmark Capital and Shasta Ventures and is focused on building a great product first and foremost. We will not sell your information to advertisers, or inundate you with banner ads and pop-ups.

Long-term, we hope to build a revenue model around working with local businesses to provide a special offers section of the website

Access

Who has access to my neighborhood on Nextdoor?

Access to your neighborhood's Nextdoor website is password protected and only available to verified residents. As a result, no one outside your neighborhood can view or post to your neighborhood's website.

Who can post in my neighborhood's website?

Only verified residents of your neighborhood who are logged in to the Nextdoor website can post. No one else has access to any of the content on the website.

Who can read the information posted on my neighborhood's website?

The information you share on Nextdoor is only visible to members who live in your neighborhood and have verified their addresses. The content of your website is not visible to Google or other public search engines.

How do I know that all members of the website are residents of my neighborhood?

Nextdoor uses four methods to verify member addresses. Every member must be verified using one of these four methods.

1. Postcards. Nextdoor can send a postcard to a new member's address with a unique code printed on it. The code will allow them to log in and verify their account. This usually takes about 3-5 days.
2. Home phone. If you have a listed phone number registered to your home address, you can request a free phone call to verify your home address. This can be done instantly.
3. Credit card billing address. Nextdoor can instantly verify a new member's home address through a credit card billing address. Banks require a one-time \$0.01 charge to the member's credit card to confirm a person's billing address. We do not store the credit card information and it is never used again.
4. Neighbor invitations. Someone who is already a verified member of the website can vouch for a neighbor by inviting them to their website with an email, flyer, or postcard invitation.

Why does Nextdoor use address verification?

New members must verify their addresses to ensure that all members are residents of the neighborhood. This helps protect the privacy of everyone on the website so they feel comfortable discussing neighborhood topics and sharing information with neighbors.

How is our neighborhood boundary determined?

Some neighborhood boundaries are automatically generated using data from Maponics, one of the leading providers of geographic data. In places where this data is not available, we work with the people starting the website to determine a boundary that works well for the neighborhood.

If the neighborhood name or boundary needs to be modified, please contact us. We will be happy to work with you to create a more appropriate boundary for your neighborhood.

How can I control the amount of email I get from Nextdoor?

You control the amount of email that you receive. You can choose to be notified of new updates from neighbors as they happen, see everything in a single daily digest, or opt out of emails and go to the website for new updates. You are always in control of which emails you get.

Personal information

Do I have to share my home address with my neighbors?

You may choose to display only your street name on your profile if you'd prefer. To do so, visit your profile and click on the "Edit profile" button. The address setting is located under the map near the bottom of the page.

Do I have to share my email address with my neighbors?

The email address attached to your Nextdoor account is not shared with your neighbors, but you may choose to provide an email address on your profile if you'd like. To do so, click the "Edit profile" button, and add your email address under the "Contact information" header.

If you'd prefer not to share your email address, neighbors can still contact you by sending you a private message on Nextdoor.

Can neighbors contact me if I do not share my email address on Nextdoor?

Yes. Even if you do not share your email address with others on Nextdoor, your neighbors can send you a private message from the Nextdoor website. Private messages can easily be sent from the profile page by clicking on the "Send a message" button under the profile photo. You will be notified via email of the new private message and will be able to respond. At no point will the personal email addresses of either member be revealed.

How does Nextdoor use my information?

Your information is only available to you and your neighbors on Nextdoor. Nextdoor does not share or sell your information to third parties, including advertisers.

City's role on Nextdoor

How does our city use Nextdoor?

Our city uses Nextdoor to send periodic updates to the neighborhoods. The purpose of these posts is to share official alerts, news and other information that is relevant to residents. It's important to note that city officials can only see their own posts and replies to these posts. They can NOT access or view any information that neighbors have shared on their Nextdoor websites. Access to your Nextdoor neighborhood site is restricted to members who can verify that they live within the neighborhood boundary.

What is the city's role in Nextdoor?

The City does not pay for, own, operate, control or moderate any Nextdoor neighborhood social networks. Residents voluntarily choose to use Nextdoor. Using Nextdoor is the same as using Facebook and Twitter - the city has no control or responsibility over the Nextdoor private neighborhood social networks.

How much does this cost the city?

Nextdoor is free to the city, their residents and neighborhoods. Nextdoor is funded by Benchmark Capital and Shasta Ventures, and is focused on building a great product first and

foremost. Nextdoor will not sell your information to advertisers, or inundate you with banner ads and pop-ups. Long-term, Nextdoor hopes to build a revenue model around working with local businesses to provide a special offers section of the website.

About the company

Who created Nextdoor?

The Nextdoor founding team is a group of experienced technology executives whose careers have been focused on building strong online communities.

When was the company founded?

The company was founded in the fall of 2010 when we launched our first neighborhood website in Menlo Park, CA.

Who invested in Nextdoor?

Benchmark Capital and Shasta Ventures have both invested in Nextdoor. Benchmark's Bill Gurley and Shasta Venture's Jason Pressman serve on the board of directors, along with outside board member Rich Barton, Chairman and Co-Founder of Zillow.

How does Nextdoor make money?

Nextdoor is currently focused on delivering the best possible user experience so that neighbors everywhere can come together to build safer and stronger neighborhoods. We are committed to safeguarding users' information, so that no one will be inundated with banner ads, pop-ups, or messages from advertisers that can impede or denigrate the neighborhood feeling of the website.

Our revenue model instead will focus on working with local businesses to provide special offers to members. This will not only benefit members by giving them access to deals they would not find elsewhere, but it also helps generate support for local businesses, in turn strengthening their own neighborhoods.

Nextdoor is currently in a strong cash position, and appreciates the backing of our prominent investors, Benchmark Capital, Shasta Ventures, and select angel investors.