



## **Staff Report**

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### BIANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL PRIORITY CALENDAR – STEP ONE: REVIEWING AND RANKING PROJECTS

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

#### **Summary**

Based on direction provided by Council, staff has implemented a biannual process for reviewing and prioritizing current and proposed Council study items. Study items are one-time projects that require significant staff time and generally are placed on the Council agenda for action. The first Priority Calendar was adopted in April 2002. Now is the time for the biannual review.

Previously, a three-step process has been initiated. As suggested by Council, a two-step process is now proposed:

- On March 8, review all current and proposed projects, seek clarification, and solicit input from the public. Vote to remove any current or new projects that are not a priority for study and rank all remaining new projects.
- Review the rankings and final Project Description Forms (PDFs) and approve a six-month calendar on March 22.

The goal of this process is for Council to clearly state what their priority for study is and to prevent issues from coming up at different times and overwhelming staff without a clear sense of what is most important to the community. With this greater ability to do effective workload planning, staff will be held to a higher level of accountability for delivering on what is on the calendar when we say we will deliver it.

Attachment A is a summary of all current and proposed projects. PDFs for current projects can be found in Attachment B and in Attachment C for new projects (including “below the line” items from the last ranking). Attachment D is the current Priority Calendar, noting what has been accomplished.

Staffs recommends Council review the attachments and, after soliciting public input, discuss the issues among yourselves, and then add, drop or modify any as desired before ranking the new ones.

#### **Background**

In October of 2001, staff presented Council a report that, among other things, was intended to enhance Council’s understanding of the many projects and competing demands on staff time. As

a result of that report, the Council Protocols were amended to establish a biannual review of study items and a process for handling Agenda Item #9's.

The definition used for “study items” (or priority calendar items) is studies or implementation activities that -

- Require at least 20 hours of staff time (increased from the original 15 hours)
- Are one-time in nature
- Have been directed by Council or the City Manager through specific action, including the budget
- Do not reflect the routine provision of City services
- Are mandates imposed by the state or federal government, or other funding agencies
- Are major capital improvements

In order to ensure the system captures all issues, while recognizing the limited resources available to undertake studies, the October 2001 report led to the creation of a “below the line” category of projects. These are items that are not expected to be started within the next six months. PDFs are created with the descriptions and estimated hours/cost, but due dates for the milestones are not detailed. These items are not acted on, but are kept on the master list for the next biannual review by Council. Should Council desire that staff address an issue earlier than proposed, other projects might need to be adjusted or additional resources secured.

In February 2003, Council modified the biannual process somewhat to limit the fall review; Commissions now provide input into the process once a year, in spring.

### **Discussion**

#### **Completed/removed projects**

Since the current Priority Calendar was adopted in September 2004, the following seven projects have been completed or are otherwise being dropped for the reasons listed below and will be removed from tracking. As a result, these items are shown on Attachment A but not found in Attachment B.

CM01 – Service Delivery Initiative/Performance Budgeting; Implementation completed.

Now ongoing activity

CD04 – Re-Zone HRO-3 to Open Space/Agriculture

Council reviewed 3/8. Complete.

CD05 – Parking Standards Update

Council reviewed 3/8. Complete.

FN03 - SCFPA Special Financial Project

Project Complete

PR01- Patricia Wharton Park/Alameda Gateway

Project Complete

PW03 – Review of Citywide Parking Issues

Project Complete

PW04 – Public Works Commission

Report presented.

Follow-up in March should complete item.

Attachment D is the current Priority Calendar, noting which items were accomplished over the past six months. 90% of the items on the Calendar for the past six months were accomplished in that timeframe, and 77% were completed on the scheduled date. In addition, staff has responded to 18 “#9’s” this fiscal year.

### Project Description Forms

One of the purposes of the Priority Calendar is to ensure Council and staff are on the same page with regard to the scope of a project and what it takes to complete it to Council’s satisfaction (including timeframe). Thus, it is important that every project have a Project Description Form (PDF) reviewed by Council.

PDFs for current projects that were previously ranked by Council have been reviewed and updated as appropriate (see Attachment B). Several have been modified since the Council’s last review. It is important for Council to review these and ensure the description and timeline remain acceptable. If Council wants to alter the scope or timeline for any of the current projects, direction should be provided to staff prior to ranking the new projects.

As in the past, the forms include a section for “Staff Recommendation.” Generally, staff will make “No Recommendation” as the purpose of this process is for Council to set priorities and provide clear direction to staff. However, in some cases, staff will make a recommendation, in which case there is usually a brief explanation in the “Comments” section at the bottom of the page. Keep in mind staff capacity to take on new projects is limited, as first priority is for on going service delivery and then current projects.

### Current Issues

Generally Council reviews current issues on an exceptions basis only. They are not re-ranked every six months.

### Issues to Rank

There are a total of **20 projects to rank**. PDFs have been drafted for each of the nine new issues that have surfaced since the last review in September (seven in Community Development, and two in Parks and Recreation):

- Administrative Hearing Process for Code Enforcement
- Parking Lot Lighting and Screening
- Recognition Program – Commercial Properties
- Residential Design Guidelines
- Solar Access Ordinance
- Planning CalTrain Station – “Grand Boulevard”
- Historic Preservation
- Davey Glen Park
- Parks Open Space Master Plan

Previous “Below the line” items to be ranked include nine in Community Development, one in

Public Works and one in Parks and Recreation. Descriptions for all the projects to be ranked can be found in Attachment C.

Staff recommends the following items be ranked “below the line”

- Downtown Plan (Community Development)
- Creek Restoration (Public Works)
- Barrett Community Center (Parks & Recreation)
- Davey Glen Park (Parks & Recreation)

#### Commission Input

Council suggested the first of the new issues listed above. The others in Community Development came from the Planning Commission, and the two for Parks and Recreation came from the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Finance Commission did not add any issues or have any to review. Attachment A includes the ranking of the commissions so you have the benefit of their recommendations.

#### Biannual Review

Staff recommends Council adopt the process outlined below to develop the Priority Calendar. It is suggested that Council review all of the projects in two broad categories: current items and new items (those proposed since the last review as well as those “below the line”). Only the new items will be ranked, but Council can provide direction (including to drop or modify) on the current list if it so desires. When ranking or dropping items, Council should keep in mind that staff has limited resources to take on new special projects due to current staffing levels and the workload generated by ongoing operations or projects.

#### **March 8 meeting**

- Public input on current and proposed issues.
- Council reviews, discusses and seeks clarification on the current issues (Attachment B).
- Council reviews, discusses and seeks clarification the new items (including those “below the line”). Attachment C is PDFs for the new items.
- Council can suggest additional items they would like to rank.
- A majority vote is taken to remove or to modify any current item.
- Council will then be asked if there are any new items on the list that they want to drop or modify (majority vote required). *It is important that Council use this mechanism to ensure that only true priorities are undertaken.*
- Council will then rank all the remaining new items, by department.
- We will take a short break (or move on to the next agenda item) while staff tabulates the results and then reports back to Council.

#### **March 22 meeting**

- Before the next meeting, staff will review the list and determine how many new items can be taken on given existing budgets, staffing and workloads - and what timelines are realistic for achieving them. Council should note that the first priority for staff is providing day-to-day

- operations, then existing special projects, so *there is limited capacity for new projects*.
- Timelines will be filled in for those new projects that staff propose to take on in the next six months.
  - Those that can't be undertaken in the next six months will be recommended for “below the line” and will automatically come back at the next review.
  - Council will have the opportunity to review and revise the list, then adopt a six-month Priority Calendar.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no direct fiscal impact to this report. Individual projects have cost estimates associated with them (beyond staff resources) on the PDFs and the fiscal impact of the alternatives would be discussed when the individual item is brought back to Council for action.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends Council approve the priority setting process outlined in this report and rank the “new” issues.

### **Alternatives**

1. Modify PDFs in Attachment B and/or C and approve them
2. Modify the priority-setting process
3. Provide alternative direction to staff
4. Take no action at this time

### **Attachments**

- A. Summary (current projects, existing below the line and new to rank items)
- B. Project Description Forms for current projects
- C. Project Description Forms for new projects (including BTL)
- D. Current Priority Calendar (with completed items noted)

Respectfully submitted,

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Daniel Rich  
Interim City Manager

## ATTACHMENT B

Project Description Forms for

**CURRENT PROJECTS**

## ATTACHMENT C

Project Description Forms for

**Projects to Rank**  
**(New and Below the Line)**

**2004-2005 Council Priority Calendar**  
**ADOPTED**

**October 12, 2004**

- ✓ Priority Calendar – Step 3
- ✓ Discussion and Direction Regarding Parking Standards Update

**October 26, 2004**

- ✓ Restricted Parking on Curves Policy presentation to Council
- ✓ Discussion and Direction on Residential Permit Parking Near Carlmont HS
- ✓ Municipal Code Chapter to Council: Property Maintenance

**November 9, 2004**

- ✓ Update on Emmett House Options
- ✓ Update on HIA Issues
- ✓ Council considers award of contract for new library (*Dec. 14*)

**November 23, 2004**

- ✓ Council Reorganization
- Update on options for 1365 Fifth Ave.
- Consideration of Rezoning HRO-3 (*delayed by PC*)

**December 14, 2004**

- ✓ Joint meeting with Planning Commission
- ✓ IGR Assignments
- ✓ Present Public Works Commission alternatives to City Council for direction
- ✓ Council direction on responsibilities of the Permit Efficiency Task Force

**December 28, 2004**

**January 11, 2005**

- ✓ City Attorney Evaluation (*City Attorney Services Report*)

**January 25, 2005**

- ✓ City Council direction on Noise Ordinance revisions
- ✓ Municipal Code Chapter to Council
- ✓ Council consideration of Parking Standards Update

**February 8, 2005**

- ✓ Council appoints Permit Efficiency Task Force (*March 8*)

**February 22, 2005**

- ✓ Mid-Year Budget update
- Budget amendment to fund consultant (if needed) for noise ordinance (*not needed*)
- ✓ Consideration of Emmett House Project details (*March 8*)

**March 8, 2005**

- ✓ Priority Calendar – Step 1
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**March 22, 2005**

- Priority Calendar – Step 2

**April 12, 2005**

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**April 26, 2005**

- Council discussion and direction on Paper Trails
- Municipal Code Chapter to Council

**May 10, 2005**

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**May 24, 2005**

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**June 14, 2005**

- Development Impact Fee study recommendations to Council

**June 28, 2005**

- *FY06 Budget Adoption*