



## **Staff Report**

---

### ANNUAL 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 an annual 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. Now is the time for the annual review.

As suggested by Council, a two-step process is proposed:

- On March 27, Council will review all current and proposed projects, seek clarification, and solicit input from the public. Council will vote to remove any current or new projects that are not a priority for study and then rank all remaining new projects.
- On April 10, Council will review the rankings and final Project Description Forms (PDFs) and approve an annual calendar.

Attachment A is a summary of all current and proposed projects. PDFs for current projects can be found in Attachment B (green) and in Attachment C (blue) for “below the line” and new projects. Attachment D is the current Priority Calendar, noting the completion of items. 73% of the items on the Calendar for the past year were completed on the scheduled date, or deleted or postponed by Council agenda review.

#### **Background**

The Priority Calendar process began in October of 2001.

The definition used for priority calendar items:

- Require at least 40 hours of staff time
- Are one-time in nature
- Have been directed by Council, City Manager or a Commission 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

To ensure the system captured all issues, a “below the line” category of projects was created. These are items that are not expected to be started within the next year. These items are not acted on, but are kept on the master list for the next annual review by Council. This ranking

process goes hand-in-hand with the City Budget process, and City Commissions also provide Council with their input and ranking.

## Discussion

### 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 (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 timelines 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 the ranking of the "below the line" and new projects.

### Issues to Rank

There are a total of **28 projects to rank**. "Below the line" items that you will be ranking include eight in Community Development, eleven in Parks and Recreation and one in Public Works.

There are **eight new projects to rank**. PDFs have been drafted for each of these that have surfaced since the last review in Spring 2006 (one in Community Development, one in Parks and Recreation and six in Public Works). The Council requested item of *Downtown Crosswalks* is combined with the new Public Works project titled *Ralston Avenue Narrowing*.

By recommendation of Community Development and the Planning Commission, six current and below the line Community Development projects have been either combined or modified into three new items. They are:

- *Hardscape and Lot Coverage Standards/Requirements* and *Landscape Plans – Section 13A Revisions* is being combined with the current project "Residential Design Guidelines." Community Development staff does not have concerns about adding these two issues into the current project and workload. The new current project will continue to be titled "Residential Design Guidelines" but will include this expanded scope.
- *Redefine building height* (BTL project) should be considered in conjunction with *Revision of Zoning Ordinance definitions* (BTL project) – so the new BTL project for ranking will include both issues and continue to be titled: "Revision of Zoning Ordinance Definitions."
- *General Security Issues* (BTL) should be considered in conjunction with *Parking Lot Lighting and Screening Standards* (BTL). The new BTL project will include both issues and be titled: "Parking Lot Lighting, Screening and General Security issues."

The eight new projects are listed below:

| <u>Project:</u>  | <u>Department:</u> | <u>Source:</u> |
|--|--------------------|----------------|
| ➤ Master Parking Plan for Downtown “Village Districts”     | Com Dev            | PC             |
| ➤ Updated Ralston Traffic Study                            | Public Works       | PC             |
| ➤ Increased Parking along Alameda de las Pulgas            | Public Works       | PC             |
| ➤ Review all Traffic Policies                              | Public Works       | PC             |
| ➤ Ralston Avenue Narrowing ( <i>including Crosswalks</i> ) | Public Works       | Council        |
| ➤ Belmont Solid Waste/Recycling Alternatives               | Public Works       | Council        |
| ➤ Review of Speed Hump Policy                              | Public Works       | Council        |
| ➤ Non-Profit Belmont Parks Foundation                      | Parks and Rec      | PRC            |

Commission Input

The Finance Commission is recommending that the *Belmont Fire Protection District Liability Exposure Contingency Plan* be dropped. This project is being removed from the list.

The Planning Commission, in their review/ranking of the Below the Line items, recommended an additional item for consideration: *Master Parking Plan for Downtown “Village Districts.”* This new item was ranked 1 (out of 9 items) from the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission is also recommending that the Parks and Recreation Athletic Field Improvement Projects include broader uses (i.e. passive activities, trails, benches – and not targeting all fields solely for athletic purposes.) The Planning Commission also recommended three items for Public Works.

The Parks and Recreation Commission, in their review/ranking of the Below the Line items, ranked the Manor Building Repairs as 1 (out of 17 items). This item has previously been combined with the *Planning for Old Police Department Site / Manor Bldg Repairs* project and is on the current/active list. The Parks and Recreation Commission has recommended a new item: The creation of a *Non-Profit Belmont Parks Foundation*.

The Council, in their adoption of the Permit Efficiency Task Force (PETF) recommendations in October 2005, directed staff to pursue items which are no or low cost to streamline operations and improve efficiency. Staff continues to implement these “low/no” cost items as part of their daily work efforts. According greater staff authority over approvals would entail amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (i.e. increasing the 400 sq. ft. addition threshold for Single Family Design Review), which was a component of the PETF recommendations that the Council directed not to pursue at the last ranking in Spring 2006. Unless Council chooses to drop this item or put it “Below the Line,” this item will remain on the “Current/Active” list of projects, and will not be ranked during this process.

Attachment A includes the ranking from the Commissions so you have the benefit of their recommendations in advance.

### Citywide Priorities

In the spring of 2006, the City Council adopted 10 issues as “citywide priorities” from the entire workload before the City, for 2006-2008. These are the significant projects in terms of the time and resources devoted to them, as well as their visibility and impact on the community. They transcend the annual timeframe of the Priority Calendar and are the priorities for the Council during its entire two-year tenure (even though some may take longer than two years to complete, significant progress is expected in that timeframe). While the goal is that all items on the Priority Calendar will be completed according to the timelines established, the citywide priorities are those issues (including non-Priority Calendar items) where Council and staff devote focused attention.

Attachment F is the current list of ten 2006-2008 Citywide Priorities. The ten issues are:

- Update the General Plan
- Plan for Belmont Fire Services
- Harbor Industrial Area Annexation Strategy
- Economic Development
- Redevelopment Priorities
- Parking Issues
- Build a Bike/Pedestrian Bridge over 101
- Emmett House Redevelopment
- Old City Hall Site
- Improvements to Development Review Process

*Unless changed by Council consensus, this top ten list should remain until Council reestablishes them in the Spring of 2008.*

### **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 can be discussed when the individual item is brought back to Council for action.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends Council approve the priority setting process outlined below:

#### March 27 meeting

- Ask for public input on current and proposed issues.
- Council reviews, discusses and seeks clarification on current issues in Attachment B.
- A majority vote is taken to remove or to modify any current item.
- Council reviews, discusses and seeks clarification on “below the line” and new items in Attachment C.
- A majority vote is taken to remove or to modify any “below the line” or new item.
- **Council will rank all the remaining “below the line” and new items, by department.**

- After the ranking, the Council will want to discuss if they wish to cancel either of the following Council meetings (*Discussion on these items is necessary so staff can prepare the next Priority Calendar*):
  - Staff is recommending the meeting of August 28 be cancelled for a summer break.
  - Staff is recommending the December 25 meeting be cancelled.
- Staff will then tabulate the ranked results and report back to Council.

Between March 27 and April 10

Before the April 10 meeting, staff will review the Council-ranked 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.

April 10 meeting

- Council will have the opportunity to review and revise the list, and then adopt the Priority Calendar. “Below the line” items will be re-ranked at Council review next Spring.

**Attachments**

- A. Priority Calendar Summary List of Projects (Current Projects, Below the Line Projects and New Projects)
- B. Project Description Forms for Current Projects
- C. Project Description Forms for Projects to Rank
- D. 2006-2007 Council Priority Calendar (with completed items checked)
- E. Priority Calendar Council Ranking Sheet (to be used as a worksheet for this meeting)
- F. 2006-2007 Citywide Priorities

Respectfully submitted,

---

Joni Stallings  
Executive Assistant to the City Manager

---

Jack R. Crist  
City Manager

---

Staff Contact:

Joni Stallings, Executive Assistant to the City Manager  
650-595-7408  
[jonis@belmont.gov](mailto:jonis@belmont.gov)