



Staff Report

ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL PRIORITY CALENDAR STEP ONE: RANKING THE 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.

The annual review is generally a two-step process, and is outlined below:

- On March 11, Council will review all current and proposed projects, ask for clarification, and solicit input from the public. Council will then vote to remove any current or new projects that are not a priority for study, discuss and then rank all remaining new and “below the line” projects (see description below).
- On April 8, 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 (printed on green) and Attachment C (printed on blue) for “below the line” and new projects. Attachment D is the current Priority Calendar.

Background

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.

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.

Note: Per City Council direction, the City Attorney active/current project, Sign Ordinance & Real Estate Signs, has changed in scope, and is now titled: Ordinance Revisions.

Issues to Rank

There are a total of **17 projects to rank** (previously "below the line" and new projects). Previously "Below the line" items that you will be ranking include three in Community Development, one in Parks and Recreation, and three in Public Works.

There are **ten new projects to rank**. PDFs have been drafted for each of these that have surfaced since the last review in Spring 2007 (four in Community Development, three in Parks and Recreation, one in Police and two in Public Works). The ten new projects are listed below:

<u>Project:</u>	<u>Department:</u>	<u>Source:</u>
➤ Administrative Conditional Use Permits	ComDev	PC
➤ Property Acquisition/Development	ComDev	PC
➤ Refinement of San Juan Hills and Western Hills Floor Area Transfer Policies	Com Dev	PC
➤ Zone Text Amendment - Slope Calculations for Residential Development	Com Dev	PC
➤ Athletic Field Improvements	Parks and Rec	Staff
➤ Cipriani Dog Park Improvements	Parks and Rec	PRC
➤ Tree Planting Program	Parks and Rec	PRC/PC
➤ Community Disaster/Emergency Alert Systems	Police	Police
➤ Landmark Signage and Landscaping Project	PW	PC
➤ Street Narrowing Project	PW	PC

There is one new item that Police Staff added to the Priority Calendar ranking system. It is titled Community Disaster/Emergency Alert Systems. The project is created to research and implement systems for alerting the community to disaster & emergency situations. Areas to include, but not limited to, are emergency alert system for schools/parents, flood warning system for low-lying areas of Belmont Creek, water level monitor for Notre Dame (Water Dog) Lake/Dam, and low power community alert radio station.

This project is designed to be part of on-going disaster preparedness effort. If ranked by Council, the project will be led by Belmont PD & Belmont-San Carlos Fire with participation by other City departments as appropriate.

Planning Commission Input

The Planning Commission identified four new projects to be considered for the Community Development Department:

- Administrative Conditional Use Permits – Incorporation/Confirmation of 10% of Site Area Landscape Requirement
- Property Acquisition/Development – along El Camino Real – in an effort to “green” commercial areas in Belmont.
- Refinement of San Juan Hills Area & Western Hills Area Floor Area Transfer Policies – Study and propose revisions to the zoning regulations regarding floor area transfer policies within these specified areas of the City.
- Zone Text Amendment - Slope Calculations for Residential Devt. – study and propose revisions to the zoning regulations regarding slope calculations for residential development.

The Planning Commission recommended modifications to the following Below-The-Line (BTL) item to streamline/augment tasks as follows:

- Tree Ordinance – the scope of this project should be refined to include administrative/staff control of the tree removal/permit process (outside of single family design) & establishment of replacement standards for all trees removed via permit. Staff has no concerns with these additional tasks for this BTL project.

Three other projects identified by the Planning Commission will be addressed by other Departments:

- Street Narrowing Project – Streets perpendicular to Harbor Blvd. (i.e. Fifth and Sixth) to provide larger plantable areas – Public Works will take the lead on this, with a team including Parks and Recreation
- Landmark Signage and Landscaping Project – City Borders; specifically on Alameda de las Pulgas at the southern border, but would address any City border welcome sign – Public Works will take the lead on this, with a team including Parks and Recreation
- Tree Planting Program – this project was raised by Parks and Recreation staff as well as

the Planning Commission. The Parks and Recreation Commission ranked it BTL and recommended giving it to the Tree Board. The Planning Commission asked for heritage tree planting on certain paper trail areas of Belmont. *Staff recommends including the possibility of planting trees on the paper trails as part of a city-wide tree program which identifies all opportunity areas within the city.*

These three projects will be added as “new projects” for Council ranking – two in Public Works and one in Parks and Recreation.

One project was introduced by the Planning Commission that staff is recommending be incorporated into a current Community Development project:

- El Camino Real Telephone Pole/Wire & Undergrounding Project – The Planning Commission recommended a project to remove the remaining 11 telephone poles along the east side of El Camino Real from the southern border to Harbor Blvd. *Staff is recommending this be incorporated with the Planning CalTrain Station / Grand Blvd current project.*

Parks and Recreation Commission Input

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the current and active priority list along with two previously below the line ranked items and two new items. The Commission recognized that the current project list is fairly long and staff may be overwhelmed trying to manage the current list. The Commission reached a consensus and recommend to the Council to expedite the Semeria Park development project since they have been receiving feedback from the public on the immediate desire to develop the park. Semeria Park was ranked as the highest priority by the City Council in 2007.

Note: The City Manager’s office has received several emails and letters in support of Semeria Park, one of the active/current projects in the Parks and Recreation Department. This project will not be ranked again, because it is active/current. If the City Council wishes to change the scope of this project, they may vote to do so.

The Commission then discussed the four items that needed ranking which were:

- Athletic Field Improvements (all previously separate athletic field projects are included in this inclusive project)
- Ralston Ranch Park Development (a current BTL project)
- Cipriani Dog Park Improvements (a new proposed project)
- Tree Planting Program (a new proposed project)

In their discussion, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously voted to drop Ralston Ranch Park Development because it is a difficult site to develop and there is no current public support to develop a park at the site. The Commission unanimously voted to rank the three remaining items: Cipriani Dog Park received the higher ranking followed closely by the Athletic Field Improvements. The Cipriani Dog Park Improvements (ranked 1), the Athletic Fields

Improvements (ranked 2), and the Tree Planting Program (ranked BTL, as the Commission felt it should be given to the Tree Board for decisions and recommendations).

Staff consolidated all athletic field improvements into one category (project) to be consistent with our Athletic Field Master Plan of 2003. In previous years all 11 sites were ranked individually and no item was ever ranked above the line. Our Athletic Field Master Plan identifies improvements to all athletic fields managed by the department. If the improvements become a priority of the Council, they can then direct staff which items within the plan they would like to address and in which order.

Finance Commission Input

The Finance Commission is not recommending any new projects.

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

Projects Completed/Closed

Staff is recommending closing four completed or on-going projects:

- *Parks and Recreation:* Alameda Kiosk – Project complete.
- *Police:* Neighborhood Safety Awareness Program/Emergency Preparedness – This project is established and ongoing.
- *Police:* Red Light Cameras – staff is in contract with Redflex. Project complete.
- *Public Works:* Speed Hump Policy – Project complete.
- *City Manager:* Operational Audits – Per Council direction, Project is closed.

Operational Audits was discussed at both the July 2, 2007 and September 10, 2007 Council Audit Committee meetings. There was not consensus to proceed with Operational Audits by the committee. The committee therefore recommended that this item be removed from the agenda, adding that it was helpful for the Audit Committee to have thought about and discussed it. The conclusion of the September 10th Audit Committee meeting was that the City Manager would bring forth the Operational Efficiency Initiatives at such future times as organizational change issues are to be discussed. In the interim, the City Manager and Department Heads will take every opportunity to implement “best practices” within the organizational structure. Such best practices will be included in future City budgets.

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 11 meeting

- Discussion or clarification of any current, “below the line” or new projects.
- A majority vote is taken to remove or to modify any current item found in Attachment B.
- A majority vote is taken to remove or to modify any “below the line” or new item found in Attachment C.
- **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 26 be cancelled for a summer break.
 - Staff is recommending the meeting of November 11th be changed to Wednesday, November 12th because of the Veteran’s Day holiday.
 - Staff is recommending the December 23 meeting be cancelled.
- *Council should direct staff on the Tree Planting Program, and the El Camino Real Telephone Pole/Wire & Undergrounding Project if they are not ranked as separate projects.*
- Staff will then tabulate the ranked results and report back to Council.

Between March 11 and April 8

Before the April 8th 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 8 meeting

- Council will have the opportunity to review and revise the ranked list, and then adopt the Priority Calendar.

Attachments

- A. Priority Calendar Summary List of Projects (Current Projects, Below the Line Projects and New Projects)
- B. Project Description Forms for Current Projects (printed on green)
- C. Project Description Forms for Projects to Rank (printed on blue)
- D. 2007-2008 Council Priority Calendar
- E. Priority Calendar Council Ranking Sheet (to be used as a worksheet for this meeting)

Respectfully submitted,

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