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Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Sara L. Hensley

SUBJECT: GRANT FUNDING
PRIORITIZATION GUIDELINES

DATE: 10-27-04

Approved

Date

10.28.04

INFORMATION

Over the past several years, the City Council has approved various actions brought forward by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) related to the prioritization of grant opportunities for capital projects¹. This memorandum has been prepared in an effort to provide the City Council with a single, comprehensive document that outlines the guidelines used by PRNS to evaluate the viability and appropriateness of pursuing a particular grant opportunity to support its capital improvement program.

Grant Review Process

The PRNS capital improvement program has experienced significant growth in the recent years. While much of this growth can be attributed to a successful bond measure, it can also be attributed to the Department's high level of success in securing various local, state and federal grants.

Key to that success has been a strategic approach that examines each grant opportunity against the overall needs of its capital program. In an era of tight budgets and limited staff resources, it is essential that the Department evaluate each opportunity against a standard set of criteria in order to maximize the City's investment. This evaluation should include both an examination of eligible projects as well as a review of grant requirements to determine the viability and appropriateness of the opportunity. In this manner, only applications for projects that are ultimately the most competitive for grant funding and that meet the stated, approved objectives for trail, park and facility development will be submitted.

¹ Actions related to Open Space, Trails and the use of Proposition 40 funding.

The following chart summarizes the criteria used by the Department to evaluate which capital projects are the most viable candidates for a particular grant opportunity².

Criteria	Objective	Applicability
Approved Development Priority	Project is listed in the <i>Greenprint</i> or identified as a priority in an approved Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) Neighborhood Improvement Plan.	All grants
Grant Alignment	Project aligns to the stated objectives outlined in the notice of grant funding.	All grants
Inter-connectivity	The project will link to another existing PRNS project (ie., trail segments) and/or fills an identified gap in overall service delivery system.	All grants
Leveraging of Funds	Project has existing funds and a match of no more than 30% of the total project budget is required.	All grants
Operations and Maintenance	Project complies with Green Building objectives and minimizes on-going expenses for upkeep and operation.	All grants
"Project-Ready"	A master plan and required environmental documentation has been completed and approved. Project is ready to move forward.	All grants
Renovation/Service Delivery	Proposed renovation will improve service delivery within existing facilities.	All grants

² It is important to note that this information is presented in alphabetical order and does not represent a pre-determined weighting of the criteria. It is the overall assessment of the project that determines which project is considered to be the most viable and strategic priority as it relates to a particular grant opportunity.

Project Criteria	Objective	Applicability
Safety & Security	Project will repair safety hazards, improve site visibility or enable the Department to conform with the design guidelines recommended by the Police Department for safety and security.	All grants
“Last Chance” Opportunity	Project is needed to protect open space opportunity threatened by development.	OSA grant specific ³ , may also apply to other grant sources as well.
Contiguous Open Space	Project site is adjacent to existing open space and parklands.	OSA grant specific
Accessibility	Provides access to open space from a nearby urban area.	OSA grant specific
Unique/Significant Characteristics	Project has exceptional environmental, scenic, recreational or cultural attributes.	OSA grant specific

In addition to the evaluation of individual projects, the Department also examines the requirements of the grant itself. Factors such as eligibility requirements, implementation timelines, reporting and match requirements, budget projections and the existing workload of the capital improvement program must also be considered. **The City’s ability to continue its success in securing outside funding is directly related to its ability to effectively administer and implement existing grants.** Failure to perform in a satisfactory manner can have long-term negative implications for the program. As such, the Department strives to balance the need to achieve the optimum number of grants to support priority projects with the need to effectively meet its current obligations.

CONCLUSION

One patent approach to the pursuit of grant opportunities will not be successful. Each project and each grant opportunity is unique. However, by establishing consistent guidelines for evaluating capital projects and grant opportunities, the Department is making a deliberate effort

³ The last four criteria (Last Chance Opportunity, Contiguous Open Space, Accessibility, and Unique/Special Characteristics) pertain primarily to projects seeking Open Space 20% funding; however, they may also be used in to evaluate a project for other funding sources as well.

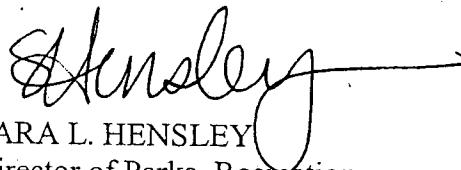
HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

10-27-04

Subject: Grant Funding Prioritization Guidelines

Page 4

to maintain its level of success in securing grant opportunities and advancing the capital improvement program set forth in the City's Greenprint document and SNI neighborhood improvement plans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara L. Hensley", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

SARA L. HENSLEY
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services