



TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Sara L. Hensley

**SUBJECT: TRAIL PROGRAM -
PRIORIZATION PROCESS**

DATE: 08-12-03

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

SNI AREA: N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Council approval to develop a Prioritization Process to strategically implement the Trail Program utilizing the two supporting processes:

1. An Annual Work Plan to accomplish Greenprint^[1] strategic goals.
2. A strategy for developing a Grant-Seeking Work Plan that supports delivery of the Annual Work Plan.

BACKGROUND

The City's Greenprint document provides a 20-year strategic plan for development of parks and recreational facilities. The document represents input received from hundreds of citizens. For trails, it sets forth a strategy to "create a citywide trail network that encourages alternative transportation modes and provides access to recreation."

Guidance in implementing the trail program and selection of projects comes from the Greenprint and four other sources:

1. Greenprint – A planning tool approved by Council in September 2000 that documents a long-term strategic plan for trail development by identifying specific projects by Council district.
2. Santa Clara County Trails Master Plan – By reference, this document forms the trail program's work plan. The Greenprint document indicates the need to "support the proposed projects in the Countywide Master Plan."
3. Collaborative Action Plan (CAP) – An inter-agency agreement signed by the City Manager and Santa Clara Valley Water District Board in January 2003 that identifies work plan elements for trails development. The document acknowledges that the City will work collaboratively with the District to increase open space by building trails along District waterways.
4. Strong Neighborhoods Initiative – A commitment made to City residents in designated blighted

neighborhoods to deliver projects identified by Neighborhood Improvement Plans. The plans identify specific projects.

5. Special Requests/Concerns – Project suggestions are received from Council offices, citizens, neighborhood associations and businesses.

Implementation of the Prioritization Process, Annual Work Plan and Grant-Seeking Work Plan will support the City's efforts to provide a trail system that meets stakeholder expectations.

Prioritization Process

Development of a Prioritization Process for implementation of existing projects was made necessary by the approval of the CAP. Staff sought to incorporate joint-trail^[2] development into the existing workload.

In developing the process, staff received input from the Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee (BSN) and the City Council.

Date	Discussion
February 26, 2003	General overview provided to BSN. BSN requested that the process for "Interim Trails" delivery be described in greater detail.
March 17, 2003	Refined prioritization process presented to BSN. The process integrated the implementation of interim trails into the overall process.
May 20, 2003	Council approved the Quarterly Status Report for the cooperative effort with the SCVWD. Council members provided input on the prioritization process. (Council item 5-20-03, 7.1a)
June 16, 2003	Existing project inventory in priority order presented to BSN. BSN recommended that staff complete development of the process by integrating SNI projects and present the process to Council at a later date.

With the input received, staff refined the process to differentiate between "at risk" and "opportunity" funding. It also identified the need for supporting processes (Annual Work Plan and Grant-Seeking Strategy) to focus project-delivery efforts and ensure that new projects are in line with the overall strategy presented by the Greenprint.

Table A – Prioritization Process

Priority	Type	Description	Supporting Process
1	Funding At Risk	Projects that have existing funding that may be at risk if not expended in a timely manner.	Annual Work Plan
2	Funding Opportunity	Projects that take advantage of a unique or timely funding opportunity.	Grant-Seeking Work Plan
3	Interim trails	Existing Water District service roads that can be opened to the public with minor improvements and agreement processing.	Annual Work Plan
4	CIP-Funded	Projects funded as part of the City's annual Capital Improvement Program.	Annual Work Plan
5	Master Planned	Projects with completed master plans/environmental documentation that can move forward to construction if adequately funded.	Grant-Seeking Work Plan
6	No Plan/No	The balance of projects. Projects that have been	Grant-Seeking

	Funds	suggested but have not been developed beyond development of a preliminary concept.	Work Plan
--	-------	--	-----------

ANALYSIS

Prioritization Process

As noted previously, development of the prioritization process occurred as staff sought to incorporate projects required as part of the CAP into the existing workload. The process identifies five levels of priorities, in general; projects that may lose funding are of a top priority and projects with no funding and little development having the lowest priority.

In forming the priorities, it was apparent that existing projects should be identified in an Annual Work Plan to limit the potential for new projects to prevent staff from managing previously committed efforts. In similar fashion, several priorities require funding and staff needs to identify an approach for seeking funds, as they become available throughout the year.

Priorities 1, 3 and 4 identified in Table A are for projects with funding. Assigning a high priority for development to these projects ensures that projects with allocated funds are completed.

Priorities 2, 5 and 6 are those projects that require funding. It is important to note that projects with a “funding opportunity” have a high priority. This acknowledges that funding opportunities can present themselves throughout the year, and that staff will commit resources to seeking funds if the project aligns with strategic objectives. As an example, the Willow Glen Spur Trail was identified in the Greenprint as a project to be pursued after 2010. Recently, the railroad right-of-way has been offered for sale. Staff has actively pursued funding for purchase and limited development.

Annual Work Plan

The current practice of work plan development is not clearly defined. Project requests are derived from the Greenprint, individual Council offices, Collaborative Action Plan, SNI Program, community associations, businesses, and citizens.

Development of a process to address the multiple requests for projects would require screening mechanisms to allocate the available resources in both an equitable and strategic manner. The current practice considers the Greenprint and other documented sources but does not adhere to them. This approach can result in development of discontinuous segments that reduce usability and do not support the City as it competitively seeks grant funding.

To support development of an Annual Work Plan, staff has inventoried all known trail alignments (both constructed and proposed). The inventory specifically identifies projects that are identified by the Greenprint, SNI Neighborhood Improvements Plans and SCVWD/City interim trails.

Coinciding with the annual Parks and Community Facilities Development process, staff will meet with each Council office in a three-round process as described by Table B to obtain project suggestions.

TABLE B - Annual Work Plan Development

Schedule	Activity	Outcome
September – Round 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current work load status and issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop scope of work and project estimates

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present list of recommended projects (source: Greenprint, CAP, etc.) Solicit project ideas 	
December – Round 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review list project scopes and estimates Obtain buy-in for projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding strategy (next fiscal year, 5-year CIP or Grant-Seeking Work Plan)
January – Round 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and obtain buy-in for funding strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare “Source & Use” documentation for Budget Office Document Annual Work Plan

Grant-Seeking Work Plan

Staff has identified 30 funding sources that align well with trail development. These sources are tracked and staff actively seeks these funds, as they become available.

Funding is offered from local, state and federal sources and each grant program has its own specific objectives and requirements. Therefore it is difficult to identify the specific type of projects to be pursued. Instead, the grant-seeking strategy presents a general guide for staff to actively seek grant funding for a set of projects on an annual basis and acknowledges with category 5 that grant-specific requirements will support the pursuit of funds. It is important to acknowledge that it is highly unlikely that the City will secure all grants pursued. The strategy guides development of a work plan for grant writing staff to pursue, it does not indicate the grants that staff will acquire.

No.	Category	Description	Factor Type
1	Identified project	Identified by the Greenprint and/or SNI Neighborhood Improvement Plan.	Primary
2	Partnering	Project is covered by the Collaborative Action Plan.	Primary
3	Strategic	Project strongly aligns with strategic goals.	Primary
4	Developed	Project is sufficiently developed to accept funding.	Primary
5	Grant-specific	Project aligns with grant-specific requirements.	Primary
6	Connectivity	Project supports connectivity (connecting parks, trails, open space, and/or community resources identified in Greenprint).	Contributing
7	City-wide	Project crosses multiple Council Districts.	Contributing

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Staff coordinated development Trail Program Prioritization Process with the Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee.

COORDINATION

The process was coordinated with the Santa Clara Valley Water District in developing the Trail Program Prioritization.

CEQA

-
Not a Project.

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

[1] Greenprint for Parks and Community Facilities and Programs - a twenty-year strategic plan adopted by the City Council in September 2000.

[2] Projects developed in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. These projects may be (1) “interim” – existing services roads that can function as trails with the construction of minor improvements and processing of a Joint-Trails agreement and (2) formal paved trails and associated infrastructure.