

# Memorandum

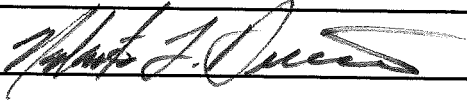
**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT: GREENPRINT 2009 UPDATE  
STUDY SESSION**

**DATE:** 08-28-09

Approved



Date

8-28-09

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff's report on the draft Greenprint 2009 Update.

## OUTCOME

Council will have an opportunity at the Study Session to provide feedback and directions regarding key policies that are being recommended by staff as part of the draft Greenprint 2009 Update, the City's Strategic Plan for Parks, Recreation Facilities and Trails. The draft Greenprint 2009 Update is included at the following weblink: <http://www.sjparcs.org/greenprint/gp2009/>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2000, the City Council adopted the original Greenprint which was a 20 year Strategic Plan to help guide the expansion of parks and recreation opportunities in the City through the year 2020. The 2000 Greenprint was a successful document as it helped define needs and parameters for the passing of the Parks Bond Measure in late 2000. However, the substantial changes impacting the parks and recreation system in the City since the publishing of the original Greenprint have led to it becoming less useful as a document to guide the investments in projects through the year 2020. These changes include:

- New policies such as the Green Vision of 100 miles of interconnected trails;
- A new fiscal reality and a need to focus on financial sustainability and managing expectations; and
- The completion of nearly 400 capital projects and planning efforts as part of the City's "Decade of Investment."

As a result of these changes, staff from Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services began the community process to update the Greenprint in late 2007. The Greenprint 2009 Update (Greenprint Update) is aligned with the Envision San José 2040 General Plan Update (General Plan Update)

process. The completion of the Greenprint Update will allow for the concepts of this completed document to serve as a tool for incorporation and dialogue in the development of the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space sections of the General Plan Update. It will also serve a valuable guiding document for priority investments in parks and recreation facilities through the year 2020.

There are three key policy questions that serve as the backbone of the draft Greenprint Update that will be presented to the City Council as part of the Study Session. Staff will provide recommendations for each of these policy questions and receive Council's feedback. This feedback will then be incorporated into the final Greenprint Update to ensure that the policies in the final document are in alignment with the City Council's priorities. These three policy questions are as follows:

1. **Long Term/General Plan Parks and Recreation Service Levels:** What is the best park standard for the City which will allow for the development of new communities with balanced park systems while continuing to enhance existing communities?
2. **Near Term Priorities: Financial and Environmental Sustainability:** How do we shape our priority projects investments today to build a foundation for a financially and environmentally sustainable parks system for future generations?
3. **Use of Parkland Fees under the Parkland Dedication/Park Impact Ordinance:** How do we increase our ability to provide quality community serving facilities to our residents such as community centers, dog parks, aquatics facilities and skateparks?

Staff will also present the feedback received to date from the General Plan Update Task Force and the difference between policy issues that are part of the Greenprint Update process and those that are part of the broader, long range vision of the General Plan Update process.

Following Council and public feedback at the Study Session, staff will hold two citywide community meetings in September, and present the Greenprint Update to the Parks Commission and Neighborhood Services and Education Committee prior to requesting City Council adoption of the Greenprint Update in late 2009.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Why update the original 2000 Greenprint?***

The 2000 Greenprint – A Twenty Year Strategic Plan was adopted by the San José City Council in September 2000 to provide staff and decision makers with a strategic plan for expanding recreation opportunities in the City. Since 2000, there have been a number of changes in the City environment, leading to the need for an update of the original Greenprint. These changes include new policies, a new fiscal reality, and the completion of hundreds of projects.

The new policies that have had significant impact on parks and recreation priorities since the completion of the original Greenprint include, but are not limited to:

- San José's Green Vision goal #10 which calls for the development of 100 miles of interconnected trails by the year 2022;
- The adoption of new Council policies to guide the development of programming and priorities in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) such as the Facility Re-Use and Pricing and Revenue policies.
- The adoption of the Urban Environmental Accords in 2005 which call for a goal of an accessible public park or recreational open space within a half kilometer (approximately 1/3 of a mile) of every resident by 2015.

The original Greenprint called for an average annual investment of \$60 million to complete all of the intended projects by the year 2020. The new fiscal reality of today has led to declining revenues in both the operating and capital funds for parks and recreation facilities. In addition, the new economic climate has caused the City to focus more on being financially and environmentally sustainable and to invest in projects that help to further those goals. To this end, the Greenprint needs to be updated to set more realistic expectations on the delivery of projects due to declining revenues while simultaneously focusing on projects which will help to build a sustainable foundation for the future. For example, by investing in artificial turf sports fields which can generate sufficient revenue to pay for their operating costs, PRNS can become more financially sustainable and continue to offer needed services throughout the City. Another example is the trail network. By creating an interconnected system of trails, the City can allow for residents to access the City's parks and other destinations without having to drive their vehicles. In addition, there is still a large backlog of infrastructure in the parks and recreation system that will need to be replaced in the next several years.

Besides the new policies and new fiscal reality, the parks and recreation system in the City simply looks a lot different than it did back in 2000. This is because of the success of the City's "Decade of Investment" which led to the completion of approximately 400 projects and studies related to parks and recreation facilities. These accomplishments included:

- Addition of over 84 developed park acres;
- Addition of 30 new parks;
- Completion of Lake Cunningham Skatepark – one of the world's premier skate facilities;
- Addition of 25 miles of trails;
- Renovation of over 100 playgrounds;
- Completion/renovation of nine community centers;
- Renovation (near completion) of the Happy Hollow Park & Zoo.

The original Greenprint helped to implement many of these changes, including the investments and approval of the bond measure that provides financing for many of these projects. However, as a result of all these new policies, the new fiscal reality and new projects, the original Greenprint is no longer a useful tool for the day-to-day setting of priorities for the PRNS Department. The Update process began in late 2007 and is discussed in further detail below.

### ***Greenprint 2009 Update Process***

Over four hundred (400) residents participated in community meetings held in each Council District, and those who could not attend the meetings had an opportunity to complete an online survey that could be faxed, emailed or mailed to staff. This netted a response of over three hundred (300) surveys. Staff also hired a consultant to conduct a telephone survey of 1,000 randomly selected residents. This survey, which was conducted in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, had favorable results and confirmed much of the input staff received at the community meetings.

A subcommittee was also formed made up of representative from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Senior Citizens Commission, Disability Advisory Commission and former members of the 2000 Greenprint Advisory Task Force. The committee was formed to provide staff feedback and guidance throughout the process based on input from the community and their respective commissions. Meetings with the subcommittee were typically held monthly and were a very valuable sounding board for providing staff input on policies and shaping the Greenprint Update.

Staff released the draft Greenprint Update in early July 2009 to the public for review and input. The document is also available for viewing at the ten (10) multi-service hub community centers and libraries, and is posted on PRNS' website ([www.sjparcs.org/greenprint](http://www.sjparcs.org/greenprint)). Notice of its release was sent via email to past community meeting attendees, homeowner associations and Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) groups. Its release was also advertised in the various newspapers that service San José. Written comments on the document are being accepted until August 31, 2009 and additional feedback will be received at the two community meetings in September, the Parks and Recreation Commission in October, the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE) in November and at the adoption meeting by the full Council before the end of the calendar year.

### **ANALYSIS**

The 2009 Greenprint is intended to be an "Update" of the original document. It was not intended to be a new document. The original Greenprint from 2000 contained good research and information but it simply needed to be updated because of the many changes that have occurred since that time. The 2020 General Plan and its policies are the guiding directions in revising the Greenprint. Updating the document also provided the opportunity for a new look at identifying future needs for parks, recreation facilities and trails, to keep San José a livable City and to attract new businesses and set new priorities based upon all of the changes that have occurred since 2000. In order to ensure that the Greenprint is a useful document, the first step was to ensure alignment with the schedule for the General Plan 2040 Update process which is occurring concurrently with the update of the Greenprint. This is discussed in further detail below.

### **General Plan Alignment**

The Greenprint 2009 Update is being prepared in on a parallel schedule with the General Plan 2040 Update process. Key factors of alignment with the General Plan process include:

- The Greenprint Update is organized around the 12 Urban Planning Areas in order to feed into, and align with, the General Plan organization. Council District boundaries have changed since 2000 and further changes are anticipated with the 2010 census. The Greenprint Update uses Planning Areas for its data analysis, planning and strategizing. Because of their stable boundaries they are especially valuable in the collection and analysis of data over a long period of time and align with the structure of the General Plan.;
- The General Plan Update will include updated Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space sections. In order for the Task Force to have a meaningful conversation about these policies, the Greenprint needed to be updated to reflect the current status of the parks and recreation systems in the City. The General Plan Task Force has been using the draft Greenprint Update as a basis for their review of the General Plan policies.

As mentioned above, the General Plan Task Force has focused its discussion on parks and recreation amenities at the July and August 2009 meetings. Key topics of discussion for the General Plan Task Force surrounding Parks and Open Space have included:

- Service Level Objectives – How many park acres should we have in the City per 1,000 residents?
- How will the City meet the parks needs of the future villages which will be densely populated with (potentially) little room for large park facilities?
- How does the City create greater connectivity of the parks, trails and transportation system?
- How does the City meet the need for large, grand parks?

The topics above will be discussed with the City Council at the Study Session and staff will also discuss the difference between issues that are being resolved as part of the Greenprint Update and those that are going to be part of the larger General Plan discussion moving forward. For example, the City's current General Plan service level goal for neighborhood and community serving parkland is to achieve a ratio of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents, of which a maximum of 2.0 acres can come from school grounds. There are questions amongst the Task Force regarding whether schools should be part of this count to meet the City's service level. This is an existing General Plan policy and is not being recommended for change as part of the Greenprint Update but it will likely continue to be discussed during the update of the General Plan.

The draft Greenprint Update also provides a foundation for the possible development of a grander long term vision for the General Plan Task Force since the Greenprint horizon is to the year 2020 as opposed to the 2040 horizon for the General Plan. Following adoption of the Greenprint 2009 Update, PRNS staff plans on continuing to work with the General Plan Task Force to develop this long term vision.

### **Key Policy Issues**

There are three key policy questions that serve as the backbone of the draft Greenprint Update that will be presented to the City Council as part of the Study Session. Staff will provide recommendations for each of these policy questions and receive Council's feedback. This feedback will then be incorporated into the final Greenprint Update to ensure that the policies in the final

document are in alignment with the City Council's priorities. These three policy questions are as follows:

1. **Long Term/General Plan Parks and Recreation Service Levels:** What are the best park standards for the City which will allow for the development of new communities with balanced park systems while continuing to enhance existing communities?
2. **Near Term Priorities: Financial and Environmental Sustainability:** Should our guiding principles for new capital commitments within the five year capital improvement program be focused on today's priorities to create a strong system for the future?
3. **Use of Parkland Fees under the Parkland Dedication/Park Impact Ordinance:** Should we increase our ability to provide quality community serving facilities to our residents such as community centers, dog parks, aquatics facilities and skateparks?

Staff will take Council's feedback from the study session and ensure that it is incorporated into the recommendations when the final Greenprint 2009 Update is presented for approval in late 2009. These policy issues, along with staff's recommendations, are discussed in further detail below.

#### *Long Term/General Plan Parks and Recreation Service Levels*

**What is the best service level standard for the City which will allow for the development of new communities with balanced park systems while continuing to enhance existing communities?**

In order to achieve the best service level standard for the City which will allow for the development of new communities with balanced park systems while continuing to enhance existing communities, Staff is recommending the following in the draft Greenprint Update:

- A. Strive for a balanced park system through the "Ideal Planning Area" model;
- B. Incorporate the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens as the City's Central Park and the Green Vision Goal of 100 miles of interconnected trails;
- C. Incorporate the Urban Environmental Accords goal of 1/3 mile walking distance to a park, school or open space for every resident, but looking to connect to existing/enhanced facilities outside of this radius before building new facilities;
- D. Keep the existing General Plan service level standard of 3.5 acres of community and neighborhood serving parkland per 1,000 residents, including a maximum of 2 acres being school land;
- E. Rank the Planning areas based upon level of parkland deficiency.

#### *A. Strive for a Balanced Park System through the "Ideal Planning Area" Model*

While the Greenprint Update is intended to provide a realistic action plan for the next 10 years, it also looks to the future and starts to envision the ideal scenario for parks and recreation facilities. While no commitments are made for the delivery of this ideal scenario, it is important to provide this as a basis to feed into the General Plan Update visioning exercise. To this end, the draft Greenprint Update introduces the "Ideal Planning Area" model (Page 11 of draft Greenprint

Update). In order to properly serve a Planning Area with parks and recreation amenities, the City must strive to create a balanced parks system. A balanced system includes not only park acres, but sports fields, aquatics facilities, dog parks, skate parks, community centers, and other facilities including trails which provide for connections to and from destinations.

*B. Incorporate the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens as the City's Central Park and the Green Vision Goal of 100 Miles of Interconnected Trails*

The draft Greenprint Update also discusses the potential to develop the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens (GRP) as a Central Park for the City and using the Green Vision Goal of 100 miles of interconnected trails to connect the GRP and other parks through an interconnected system. This Central Park theme is being vetted out further as a long term vision by the General Plan Task Force.

*C. Incorporate the Urban Environmental Accords Goal of 1/3 Mile Walking Distance to a Park, School or Open Space for Every Resident, but Look to Connect to Existing/Enhanced Facilities Outside of This Radius Before Building New Facilities*

One June 5, 2005, the United Nations World Environment Day was held in San Francisco. During this event, mayors from around the world discussed executing an accord to guide future developments in cities around the world that were ecologically sustainable, economically dynamic, and socially equitable. With City Council approval, the City executed the Urban Environmental Accords (Accords) and agreed to work with all other cities joining the Accords to provide for a sustainable future. The draft Greenprint Update incorporates the Accords goal of having a park, open space or school ground within 1/3 mile walking distance of every resident by 2015.

There are 51 underserved areas identified in the draft Greenprint Update that do not meet this goal. Staff also looked at barriers such as freeways when identifying these underserved areas recognizing that even if a park was ¼ mile from a resident that if a freeway was in between them and the park then they were underserved. However, the Greenprint Update stresses that, prior to focusing on developing new park facilities in each of these 51 areas, staff should look for opportunities to connect these residents to existing facilities and expand or renovate those facilities to meet the needs of the existing or additional residents. If it is infeasible to serve the residents through connections to existing facilities or renovating existing facilities then a new park facility should be considered. By focusing on expanding existing facilities, and connections to these destinations, the City can maximize the use of available parkland.

*D. Keep the Existing General Plan Service Level Standard of 3.5 Acres of Community and Neighborhood Serving Parkland per 1,000 Residents, Including a Maximum of 2 Acres Being School Land*

The draft Greenprint Update proposes to keep the park acreage service level standards for neighborhood and community serving parkland at 3.5 acres per 1,000 population. Per the existing General Plan, this includes a minimum is 1.5 acres of neighborhood, community or locally serving regional/City-wide park lands and up to 2 acres of school playgrounds. Currently, the City is at 3.0 acres per 1,000 with 1.6 acres per 1,000 from City owned land and 1.4 acres per 1,000 from school

recreational lands. In addition to City owned parks, the draft Greenprint Update proposes to count the acres associated with trails and community serving elements of other agency lands such as County of Santa Clara Parks toward the 3.5 acres per thousand service level objective. These were not counted as part of the original Greenprint. This has been a major topic of discussion at the General Plan Task Force meetings as there are concerns that the City is relying too heavily on school district property to meet the service level objectives.

*E. Rank the Planning Areas Based Upon Level of Parkland Deficiency*

The draft Greenprint Update also includes a new analysis of the most underserved planning areas factoring in park acreage, number of households that do not meet the Accords goal, and density of the Planning Areas. Based on this analysis, included in Appendix B of the draft Greenprint Update, the West Valley, Willow Glen, Central/Downtown and Edenvale Planning Areas are the most underserved in relation to park acreage. However, it is important to note that the creation of a balanced park system is based upon providing access to multiple amenities such as sports fields, dog parks and community centers and is not solely based upon park acreage deficits.

**Near Term Priorities: Financial and Environmental Sustainability**

**How do we shape our priority projects investments today to build a foundation for a financially and environmentally sustainable parks system for future generations?**

In order to create a sustainable system that can continue to grow, the draft Greenprint Update recommends focusing on projects that are environmentally and financially sustainable. The highest priority projects for PRNS to achieve the near term strategies of environmental and financial sustainability include:

- Advancement of the Green Vision Goal of 100 Miles of Trails;
- Focus on the infrastructure backlog;
- Investment in financially sustainable projects (including public/private partnerships);
- Land banking for future park development; and
- Sports Field renovation (premier, artificial turf fields)

The commitments in the Action Plans in Chapter 5 of the draft Greenprint Update match the projects with actual funding available in the Proposed 2009-2014 Capital Improvement Program and projects without existing funding are listed as unfunded Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects. The unfunded priorities were developed based on input from various stakeholders throughout the Update process and will be discussed with the community as part of community meetings in September 2009

Projects that are not the primary focus of the action plans include new park development and construction of aquatics facilities. This does not mean that new parks will not be developed in the next ten (10) years. The Greenprint Update does list a number of new parks in the near term action plan however these facilities are typically in the highest need areas where other opportunities for connections to existing facilities are not feasible.

***Use of Parkland Fees under the Parkland Dedication/Park Impact Ordinance***  
**How do we increase our ability to provide quality community serving facilities to our residents such as community centers, dog parks, aquatics facilities and skateparks?**

In order to increase our ability to provide quality community serving facilities to our residents such as community centers, skate parks, sports fields, dog parks, community gardens and trails, the draft Greenprint Update recommends the following:

- Maintain the requirement that parkland in-lieu fees generated from developments be spent within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the project paying the fees for neighborhood serving facilities;
- Increase the nexus to allow expenditures of parkland in-lieu fees for community serving facilities from 2 miles to a maximum of 3 miles from the project paying the fees, while still ensuring that the residents paying the fees will benefit from the project.

One of the major sources of funding for the development of new park and recreational facilities is the Parkland Dedication and Park Impact Ordinance. For new housing developments the City requires the dedication of 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 new residents, development/renovation of a new or existing park, payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination of the three. Under State Law and the Municipal Code, when in-lieu fees are used for park or recreational development, the fees must be used on a facility that benefits the development that paid the fees. For neighborhood facilities the City uses a nexus of  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile and for community facilities the City uses a nexus of 2 miles. Neighborhood facilities, such as neighborhood parks are typically 1 to 2 acres in size and include standard amenities such as playgrounds, picnic tables and open turf areas. Community facilities are larger in size and include amenities such as sports fields, dog parks, community centers, skateparks or community gardens.

The draft Greenprint Update proposes keeping the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile nexus standard for neighborhood serving facilities. However, in order to better create a balanced park system which includes community serving amenities to serve the entire Planning Area, the Greenprint Update proposes to expand the nexus for the use of parkland in-lieu fees on community serving amenities. The update proposes that fees can be spent on community serving elements at a maximum of 3 mile radius (measured on a straight line on a map), while still ensuring that the residents paying the fees will benefit from the community serving amenity, as required by law. Reasons for this expansion include:

- As part of the Greenprint Update, a telephone survey was performed and 70% of residents surveyed were willing to travel up to 10 minutes to a recreational facility, which is approximately three miles on a straight line map.
- Expanding the nexus on these amenities allows the City to create a balanced park system by ensuring that each planning area has these key facilities;
- It allows greater flexibility to fund the trails program and sets up the network to connect underserved locations to existing park facilities and destinations; and
- Expands the ability to construct community serving amenities such as community centers and sports fields to increase the ability to become financially sustainable and serve a broader customer base.

As previously discussed, State law and the Municipal Code require any fees collected pursuant to the Park Impact Ordinance and Parkland Dedication Ordinance to benefit the development that generated the fees. Therefore, it is important to note that even though the nexus is proposed to be expanded from 2 miles to 3 miles, expenditures of the fees will still need to benefit the development that generated the fees. The draft Greenprint Update also proposes to expand the nexus to within the Planning Area, even if it is beyond three miles. However, there are legal limitations to this approach and staff will need to further investigate this issue with the City Attorney's Office regarding whether this will be necessary based on the developments in the City and locations of potential park and recreational facilities. Staff will complete its investigation and discuss this in further detail with Council.

### **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

In summary, the study session will provide staff the opportunity to update the City Council on the draft Greenprint 2009 Update, discuss the alignment with the General Plan Update process and discuss key policy issues and staff recommendations revolving around the following topics:

1. **Long Term/General Plan Parks and Recreation Service Levels:** What are the best park standards for the City which will allow for the development of new communities with balanced park systems while continuing to enhance existing communities?
2. **Near Term Priorities: Financial and Environmental Sustainability:** How do we shape our priority projects investments today to build a foundation for a financially and environmentally sustainable parks system for future generations?
3. **Use of Parkland Fees under the Parkland Dedication/Park Impact Ordinance:** How do we increase our ability to provide quality community serving facilities to our residents such as community centers, dog parks, aquatics facilities and skateparks?

After receiving feedback from the City Council, staff will hold two community meetings in mid-September, a Parks and Recreation Commission Study Session in October, and a Neighborhood Services and Education Committee Study Session in November prior to finalizing the Greenprint for City Council for approval before the end of 2009.



ALBERT BALAGSO  
Director of Parks, Recreation and  
Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact Matt Cano, Division Manager, at (408) 535-3580.