



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** 1/26/2021  
**To:** City Council  
**From:** Nick Pegueros, Assistant City Manager  
**Re:** 2020 City Council priorities and work plan year-end report

The following provides a year-end report, as of December 31, 2021, on the City Council's priorities and work plan.

### **City Council adopted top priorities**

The following reflects the City Council's adopted top priorities for fiscal year 2020-21. The designation of a project as a "top priority" clarifies that staff may strategically realign limited resources to achieve the stated milestones for priority projects. The realignment may delay work on other projects or impact services to the public. Projects are listed by department in reverse alphabetical order. Attachment D.1 provides an at-a-glance view of all City Council adopted priorities and identified work plan projects.

#### Transportation master plan (Ref #1.)

The City Council adopted an updated transportation impact fee program December 10, 2019. The changes to the program went into effect in early February 2020. Staff released the draft plan in August, before the ninth Oversight and Outreach Committee meeting held September 15. At that meeting, the Committee voted 6-0-2-3 (Mueller, Nash abstained; DeCardy, Riggs, Strehl absent) to recommend approval of the draft plan and provided additional policy recommendations for implementation for the City Council's consideration. The Complete Streets Commission reviewed the draft plan at their October meeting and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the draft plan and reaffirmed recommendations by the Committee. At their meeting on November 17, the City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Transportation Master Plan. Staff is finalizing the document before publishing the final plan on the City's website. Now that the plan is complete, staff will transition to implementing the plan and anticipates removal of this item as a top-priority project.

#### 2022 Housing element, zoning code update and related work (e.g., preparation of an environmental justice element, land use element amendments, rezonings, etc.) (Ref #2.)

On November 10, 2020, the City Council amended the fiscal year 2020-21 by \$1.69 million for the Housing Element and its work related. This expenditure includes the partial-year funding for 2.0 full-time equivalent personnel (FTE). At the end of December, the City issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to seek a consultant who would lead the Housing Element project and began recruitment to fill the senior planner position that was recently approved. The City will be recruiting for the Community Development Director position in early 2021.

Menlo Park community campus (Ref #3.)

The project continues to move forward on an ambitious timeline with start of construction activities anticipated in summer of 2021.

COVID-19 pandemic local emergency response (Ref #4.)

The emergency use authorization for two vaccines in December provide some relief to a virus that has fundamentally changes the City organization and operations. Early reports suggest that vaccines will not be widely available until summer 2021 with the County of San Mateo taking the lead on vaccine distribution. As of December 31, the vast majority of City facilities remain closed to the public to prevent the spread of the virus and protect the health of City employees and the community, especially those who are most vulnerable to illness and death from COVID-19. Facilities and operations will remain closed or heavily restricted through June 2021.

Information technology master plan implementation, year 2 (Ref #5.)

Considerable progress has been made in 2020 and staff looks ahead to 2021 with several projects in the pipeline. Accomplishments include increase in internet bandwidth, mobile computing and remote work, Land Management System Replacement, asset management system launch, security upgrades, cloud backups and disaster recovery.

Projects planned for 2021 are upgrade of physical security system and video surveillance, telephone system upgrade, virtual server infrastructure upgrade, network design and core network device replacement, electronic document management, create and rollout enhanced GIS-related services, increased security, completion of replacements for payroll and financial accounting software, and HVAC system upgrade in City Hall datacenter.

**Identified work plan projects**

Work plan projects reflect City Council goals. The distinction between a “top priority” and a “work plan project” is that resources may be shifted away from work plan projects and public services, if necessary, to make progress on top priority projects. The listing below includes previously approved work plan projects and projects discussed by the City Council over the past year. The City Council did not take action August 18 to authorize additions or deletions to work plan projects.

Transportation management association (TMA) formation (Ref #6.)

This work effort would prepare a feasibility study with recommendations about how to structure and fund a TMA. The City Council authorized a consultant agreement for this study in July 2019, and data collection occurred in fall 2019 (interviews, in-person ‘drop-in’ chats with small downtown businesses, and sharing a survey link to gather information and opinions about current commute habits.) On February 25, staff prepared an informational update for the City Council transmitting a summary of the data collection efforts for this effort. On July 16, City Council directed staff to pursue evaluation of two TMA models – citywide and sub-regional. Staff is coordinating with Manzanita Works, an organization building on the partnerships is created during the Manzanita Talks, on the potential sub-regional model as part of the final evaluation. Staff expects to bring an informational update to the City Council tentatively on April 13, before seeking the Complete Streets Commission’s recommendation on the final

report on April 14, and returning to the City Council for consideration of the final report on May 25.

Middle Avenue pedestrian and bicycle rail crossing planning (Ref #7.)

Staff prepared and submitted applications for approximately \$12 million from state and regional active transportation programs and San Mateo County Measure A/W funds, which were submitted in mid-September. San Mateo County Transportation Authority has conditionally approved \$1.3 million for the project. Staff anticipates to hear about the state and regional funds by June. Additionally, ongoing and continuing coordination with Caltrain regarding design, construction timing, and utilities that must be relocated for the project (PG&E, telecommunications, etc.) is underway. Ongoing coordination related to property acquisition needed for the project is also underway. Staff has reached a tentative agreement with the property seller and will request the City Council to approve a Purchase and Sale Agreement later this spring.

Short-term rental ordinance (Ref #8.)

On July 28, 2020, the City Council appropriated \$35,000 for a short-term rental compliance contract to activate enforcement of municipal code for transient occupancy tax collection for short-term rentals with caveat that demands for payment against unregistered short-term rentals be suspended until January 1, 2021. City staff are currently in the process of completing reviews of short term rental compliance vendors in order to select firm to enter into a contract for services. Depending on the vendor selected, staff may return to City Council with an update on the selection process including updated pricing, which may include a budget amendment request.

Accessory dwelling unit ordinance update (Ref #9.)

Staff has been working to enhance the information on the City's website to assist the public navigate through the changes in state law, and will continue to explore other education materials and tools to aid ADU production as part of an SB2 grant. As a second step, staff proposes to initiate "cleanup" amendments for internal consistency in the Zoning Ordinance for increased clarity for applicants. Through reallocation of a vacant FTE position from Community and Library Services, an additional .75 FTE was recently added to Community Development to support this work plan item and work on minor modifications to the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (item #11). The clean-up amendments are anticipated to be reviewed by the City Council during July to September 2021. A third phase to explore substantive modifications could align with work on the upcoming housing element in the latter part of 2021 and 2022. Funds awarded as part of the SB2 grant could help fund these activities that support additional ADU production.

ConnectMenlo community amenities list update (Ref #10.)

On October 6, City Council received a recommendation from Mayor Taylor and City Councilmember Nash to form a City Council subcommittee to review the community amenities list and to suggest revisions to the list for consideration by the City Council at a future date. City Council appointed Mayor Taylor and City Councilmember Nash to the subcommittee. City staff in the city manager's office has been assigned to work with the subcommittee, and the subcommittee has met three times. The next step is a study session with the full City Council, which is anticipated for February 23.

ECR/Downtown specific plan area housing development incentives (Ref #11.)

No work has yet to commence on establishing incentives and reducing development barriers to creating housing in the specific plan area. Staff anticipates that the work would be limited in scope to focus on housing production, and would neither increase the residential cap nor explore larger policy issues that the City Council contemplated as part of its 2018 and prior specific plan biennial reviews. The project would be partially supported with funding from an SB2 grant and would need to be completed by June 30, 2022. During April to June 2021, staff plans to return to the City Council with a timeline and scope of work, including potential funding request for consultant resources. Any work that would trigger a general plan amendment, preparation of EIR, or extensive public outreach would require an extended timeline.

Development and environmental review process education series (Ref #12.)

The idea for an education series on the development and environmental review processes was an outcome of work done by the City Council subcommittees to help educate the public and interested parties about the City's development review process given the number of large, complex development projects occurring in the City. At this time, the series will remain on hold until staff receives confirmation from the Council on the proposed approach and additional resources, if needed

Santa Cruz Avenue closure and economic development initiatives (Ref #13.)

On June 19, the City Council adopted urgency Ordinance No. 1070 to help respond to the effects of COVID-19 on local businesses. The City developed a pilot program that partially closed Santa Cruz Avenue to vehicle traffic, suspended certain zoning requirements, streamlined permits for the use of outdoor spaces, and waived all fees associated with those permits. Since then, the City Council has continued to express the importance of the program and has sought adjustments in order to respond to business needs and to balance varying interests. The City Council has adopted several modifications through urgency ordinance nos. 1071 and 1072, and most recently adopted ordinance no. 1073 October 6, which require changes to be implemented by mid-October. The permit review process, changes in the field, and liaising with businesses require a tremendous amount of staff resources from multiple departments. The City Council extended the closures through February 2021 and the program through September 2021.

In November 2020, the Council approved a professional service agreement with HdL to provide economic development service activities. In addition, on December 8, the Council approved the creation of a new grant program and set aside \$100,000 to assist restaurants install outdoor dining areas. The City will be collaborating with the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA), and the San Mateo Credit Union to implement the program.

Citywide communication program development (Ref #14.)

As identified previously, expanding and improving two-way communication with Menlo Park residents requires additional staff time, to be achieved either through reallocating existing staff time or hiring new staff. In fiscal year 2020-21, resources were shifted to move one management analyst into the city manager's office to support communications. This position assists the public engagement manager with implementing communications program tasks and recommendations.

Climate action plan implementation (Ref #15.)

The City Council approved a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in July with a bold goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. Work began this year on three of the six CAP strategies for existing building electrification (CAP strategy No.1), electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure for existing buildings (CAP strategy No.3), and elimination of fossil fuel use in City operations (CAP strategy No.5).

For existing building electrification (CAP No.1), staff has acquired the resources necessary to carry out the policy analysis which included hiring a temporary building official, and formally partnering with Peninsula Clean Energy and finalizing a scope of work with their technical energy consultant, TRC companies.

For EV infrastructure (CAP No.3), staff completed an infrastructure needs and gap analysis that identified at-home charging for multifamily residents as a high priority in order to increase EV purchases in this segment of the community that represents 40% of Menlo Park's population. City Council authorized staff to analyze and develop potential requirements for electric vehicle infrastructure at multifamily properties. In November, staff requested a budget amendment to support policy analysis. In January 2021, the City Council decided not provide further funding for the project due to state and regional incentives available. As a result, no further staff action is being taken on CAP strategy No.3 at this time.

For CAP strategy No.5 (eliminate fossil fuel use from city operations), staff completed a feasibility analysis for a solar micro grid for the new Menlo Park Community Center Campus that was presented to City Council. City Council authorized including a solar micro grid as part of the project. As a result, Optony Inc. was hired to develop a request for proposals on behalf of the City to support selection of a vendor to install and operate a solar micro grid for the Menlo Park Community Center Campus project next year.

National League of Cities' (NLC) Race, Equity, And Leadership (REAL) program (Ref #16.)

The National League of Cities' (NLC) Race, Equity, And Leadership (REAL) initiative strengthens local leaders' knowledge and capacity to eliminate racial disparities, heal racial divisions and build more equitable communities. Through training, technical assistance, tools, resources, assessment work, and capacity building for city leaders, REAL has worked with over 400 cities who are committed to using an equity lens in the design and delivery of city services and pursuing equitable access to those services for all residents. At their January 12 meeting, City Council considered and approved a budget request of \$80,000 to support the REAL initiative in fiscal year 2020-21.

### **Newly identified projects**

On occasion, new projects present themselves that may result in a strategic benefit to the City. Often these are multiagency or multijurisdictional efforts that are accompanied by funding. On occasion, the City Council will take action midyear to add a work plan project or direct staff to include a new project for consideration in the broader scope of the adopted priorities and work plan.

#### Menlo Park SAFER Bay Project (Ref #17.)

In September 2020, PG&E approached the City about partnering on a FEMA grant opportunity to address sea level rise impacting the Ravenswood Electrical Substation consistent with the SAFER Bay project (Attachment D.2) and the recently completed Dumbarton Bridge West Approach + Adjacent Communities Resilience Study (Attachment D.3.) Following initial coordination, the City, SFCJPA and PG&E also reached out Facebook to consider providing additional funding to expand the project. The FEMA grant is a program offering up to \$50 million per project to reduce risks from disasters and natural hazards. The City Council authorized a letter of support for the application on November 17, 2020. PG&E, the SFCJPA, Facebook and the City collaborated on the required documentation for a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) application, which was submitted to CalOES by December 3, 2020. Cal OES submitted the grant application for FEMA consideration on January 27, 2021. FEMA notifications on awarded projects are expected in summer 2021. In the meantime, staff is working with the project partners to develop a draft memorandum of understanding to formalize the roles and responsibilities to advance SAFER Bay implementation.

#### Middle Avenue traffic calming project (Ref #22.)

At the City Council's October 13 meeting, the City Council directed staff to develop a traffic calming and speed reduction plan for Middle Avenue. Staff anticipates this work would build on the recommendations in the draft Transportation Master Plan (projects 92 and 118) to add bicycle lanes and improved pedestrian facilities, to also consider traffic calming improvements such as curb extensions/bulb-outs, raised or other crosswalk enhancements, improved signage, or other devices to slow vehicle traffic. It is expected this work would also build on a petition received in mid-2019 from Middle Avenue residents, and as such, community engagement will be a critical component of developing conceptual plans for this project.

Staff proposes that this project would be developed in three phases: conceptual design and community engagement; trial installation using "quick-build" materials; and final installation using permanent materials. This three-phase approach is consistent with the process currently underway in the Belle Haven neighborhood traffic calming plan, where the trial installation is currently in place. Beginning this project is contingent on filling two vacancies in the transportation division of the public works department, which are beginning recruitment efforts following the reallocation of two positions as disclosed to the City Council as part of the budget amendments considered on January 12.

### **Suspended projects**

Suspended projects are those previously approved as work plan projects and are now suspended due to resource constraints. No action on public works or community development projects is anticipated due to an abundance of priority and work plan projects. City manager's office suspended projects may receive attention as resources allow.

#### Near-term downtown parking and access strategies (Ref #18.)

Suspended. No work has occurred in the past quarter and no additional work anticipated until resources allocated to advance this project.

#### Ravenswood Avenue Caltrain grade separation study (Ref #19.)

Suspended. Beginning this project is contingent on filling two vacancies in the transportation division of the public works department, which are beginning recruitment efforts following the reallocation of two positions as disclosed to the City Council as part of the budget amendments considered on January 12.

#### Single-family residential design review (Ref #20.)

Suspended. No work has occurred in the past quarter and no additional work anticipated until resources allocated to advance this project.

#### City Council procedures update (Ref #21.)

City staff has substantially completed proposed draft revisions for City Council consideration and action. New procedures, including a teleconference meeting participation and a City Councilmember calendars sunshine/transparency procedure, were included in a September 8 City Council packet and subsequently continued to a future date. The item is tentatively scheduled for City Council action in February 2021.

### **Attachments**

- D.1. 2020 City Council Priorities and Identified Work Plan year-end report as of December 31, 2020
- D.2. Hyperlink – SAFER Bay project: [sfcjpa.org/safer-bay-project](https://sfcjpa.org/safer-bay-project)
- D.3. Hyperlink – Dumbarton Bridge West Approach + Adjacent Communities Resilience Study: [adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Dumbarton-Bridge-West-Approach-Adjacent-Communities-Resilience-Study-Final-Report.pdf](https://adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Dumbarton-Bridge-West-Approach-Adjacent-Communities-Resilience-Study-Final-Report.pdf)

Memorandum prepared by:

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**2020 City Council Priorities and Identified Work Plan**  
**Year-end report as of December 31, 2020**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Ref #	Priority projects (Approved August 18, 2020)	Lead Department	0	--	% Complete	--	100	
1	Transportation master plan (TMP)	Public Works						
2	2022 Housing Element, zoning code update and related work	Community Development						
3	Menlo Park community campus	City Manager's Office						
4	COVID-19 pandemic local emergency response	City Manager's Office						
5	Information Technology Master Plan implementation	Administrative Services						

Ref #	Identified work plan projects (No action taken on August 18, 2020)	Lead Department	0	--	% Complete	--	100	
6	Transportation management association (TMA) formation	Public Works						
7	Middle Avenue pedestrian & bicycle rail crossing planning	Public Works						
8	Short-term rental ordinance	Community Development						
9	Accessory dwelling unit ordinance update	Community Development						
10	ConnectMenlo community amenities list update	Community Development						
11	ECR/Downtown Specific Plan area housing development incentives	Community Development						
12	Development and environmental review process education series	Community Development						
13	Santa Cruz Ave closure and economic development initiatives	Community Development						
14	Citywide communication program development	City Manager's Office						
15	Climate Action Plan implementation	City Manager's Office						
16	NLC Race, Equity, And Leadership (REAL) program	City Manager's Office						
17	Menlo Park SAFER Bay implementation	Public Works						
22	Middle Avenue traffic calming project	Public Works						

Ref #	Suspended projects (Approved August 18, 2020)	Lead Department	0	--	% Complete	--	100	
18	Near-term downtown parking and access strategies	Public Works						
19	Ravenswood Avenue Caltrain grade separation study	Public Works						
20	Single-Family residential design review	Community Development						
21	City Council procedures update	City Manager's Office						

Complete							
In progress / Implementation phase							
On hold/ Suspended							