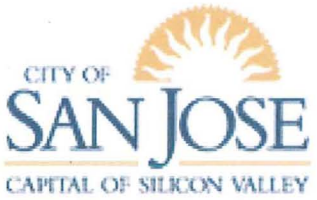
Council Agenda: 2/26/08
Item: 6.1



Regular Meeting
Of the
San José
Transportation & Environment Committee
Held
February 4, 2008 at 1:30 P.M.

Roll Call
Present: Chair Forrest Williams; Vice Chair Sam Liccardo; Councilmember Judy Chirco; Councilmember Nora Campos

Chair Forrest Williams asked for the Committee's approval to drop item (a) and defer item (d) and (i). Department of Transportation Director, Jim Helmer, recommended that item (a) be dropped from the agenda. In the past the Committee would get an update report every six months. Caltrans will now be reporting out to the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Board of Directors on issues County wide two times a year. The Caltrans update reports can be included in the VTA Issues Reports that are scheduled to be heard by the Committee quarterly. Upon the motion of Vice Chair Sam Liccardo, and seconded by Councilmember Judy Chirco, the Committee voted to drop and defer the items.

a. Caltrans District 4 Director Report (DOT) - DROPPED BY THE ADMINISTRATION

b. Status Report on Trail Development Efforts (PRNS)

Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood services staff provided a presentation focusing on the relationship between Greenprint and Green Vision Goals and project development highlights. Staff was happy to report the completion of Airport Parkway trail. As of December 2007 pedestrians can travel beneath Airport Parkway and will not interfere with vehicle traffic. Highlighted in the presentation were projects in the design process, projects under construction and projects completed. In order for the City to meet the San Jose's Green Vision goal #10, one hundred miles of interconnected trails, the City would have to complete 4 miles of trails per year. Currently, the City is completing 2 miles of trails per year. Trail development is becoming more difficult due to the need to acquire land, environment regulations and the costs for study, planning, design and construction. Upon the motion of Councilmember Judy Chirco, and seconded by Vice Chair Sam Liccardo, the Committee voted to accept the report.

c. Status Report on the City's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sidewalk Transition Plan (DOT) – Deferred from November

Department of Transportation staff presented the status report on the update to the City's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sidewalk Transition Plan. In October of 2006, the City Council approved a consultant agreement with Alta Planning Design to update the City's ADA sidewalk transition plan to help confirm the City's compliance with current legal requirements and consistency with standard practices related to ADA sidewalk accessibility issues. The scope of work for the ADA sidewalk transition plan update process addresses the following tasks:

- Compile and document current City plans and practices
- Review best practices from other jurisdictions
- Recommend updates to City's plan and practices
- Coordinate with City staff and key stakeholders
- Prepare updated ADA sidewalk transition plan

The City currently has a comprehensive and effective program. However, to enhance the program the following recommendations and actions are proposed:

1. Refine Inventory of Needs
2. Refine Implementation Priorities
3. Adopt Schedule Goals
4. Have City Council Adopt Updated Sidewalk Transition Plan
5. Refine Design Standards
6. Improve Publicity and Communication of Program

A key recommendation from the study is to refine the City's inventory of sidewalk accessibility needs and to establish clear improvement priorities and timelines. Implementing this direction is estimated to cost approximately $700,000 for Citywide survey work, documentation and analysis. Staff proposes to complete the consultant study and submit an updated ADA sidewalk transition plan for Council adoption by June 2008. Several members of the Committee were concerned that a large amount of money was going to be spent on surveys. They felt that funds could be better used to start the work needed on the sidewalks. Upon the motion of Councilmember Judy Chirco, and seconded by Vice Chair Sam Liccardo, the Committee voted to accept the report.

d. Quarterly Update Report on Performance Measures (CMO) – Deferred to March

e. Recommendations on Tree Preservation Services (CMO) – Deferred from January

City Manager's Office, Department of Transportation and Planning, Building and Code Enforcement staff presented the report on the review of tree preservation services and provided recommended strategies for preserving and improving the urban forest. In early 2007, the City Council directed the Administration to review City policy and procedures related to tree preservation. Council requested that, after soliciting comments from the community, seeking out best practices, and consulting with recognized tree professionals, the Administration make recommendations for improvements utilizing all available resources wherever possible. As a results, the following recommendations are being proposed and in some cases have already been approved by Council to address the concerns and desires of the community and improve the City's tree preservation services.

1. Tree Removal Permits must be displayed during work
2. Weekend response to illegal removals in progress
3. All tree removals coordinated through the City Arborist
4. Expanded agreement with Our City Forest
5. Consolidated public hearings for infested/infected trees
6. Created new website with San Jose State University student volunteers
7. Geographic Information System (GIS) street tree maps under development
8. Received two State grants to assist with a tree inventory and a Citywide tree management manual

Based on the input and feedback received from the community and outreach done with other organizations, cities, academia, and tree industry experts, staff is recommending the following strategies for implementation.

1. Develop overarching policy on urban forestry
2. Simplify access to tree related services
3. Streamline tree permit processes and regulations
4. Increase organizational leadership capacity
5. Address ongoing funding needs
6. Develop and implement a Tree Master Plan

The message from the public is clear: the urban forest is a valuable asset to the City and a comprehensive approach to more effectively deliver tree-related services and better manage the urban forest is needed. Rhonda Berry, Executive Director for Our City Forest, provided input on the item. Ms. Berry's organization is very excited about the City's efforts and the dialogue that has occurred as a result of the study. Our City Forest feels that we need more trees and more places to plant them. A member of the public, Matt Hood, spoke on the item. Mr. Hood wanted to thank the City for its efforts and hopes that the City will continue with the public/private partnerships to encourage citizen involvement. Upon the motion of Vice Chair Sam Liccardo, and seconded by Councilmember Judy Chirco, the Committee voted to accept the report.

f. Report on Process for Development and Adoption of the Municipal Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) (ESD) – Deferred from January

Environmental Services Department staff presented the report on process for development and adoption of the municipal Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Stormwater flows are conveyed without treatment to local streams and ultimately to the Bay through the storm sewer system. The Federal Clean Water Act requires the City to operate under an NPDES stormwater municipal permit for the discharge of stormwater to surface waters via the City's storm sewer collection system. The next generation of the stormwater permit is being developed as a Regional Permit for municipal stormwater. The Tentative Order for the permit was released by the Water Board on December 4, 2007, and it is anticipated to be adopted in the spring 2008. The Tentative Order, Fact Sheet, and all related documents are available at the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board's) website. This Tentative Order is more prescriptive than previous permits and includes stringent requirements to implement programs designed to minimize pollutants to creeks. While several of the proposed provisions are well aimed to improve water quality, the aggregate would place a considerable strain on City resources, particularly given the storm sewer infrastructure improvements that the City will also need to address during the five-year time frame that will be covered in the Permit. The cost to implement the Tentative Order as proposed well exceeds currently available and projected funds. Staff is seeking direction to submit formal comments to the Water Board and will ensure that the Water Board is aware of City concerns with the Tentative Order.

Upon the motion of Councilmember Judy Chirco, and seconded by Councilmember Nora Campos, the Committee authorized the submission of written technical and legal comments to the Water Board concerning the Tentative Order; authorized City participation in Water Board public hearings related to the adoption of the Regional Permit and directed staff to work with the Mayor's Office to identify representation from the City Council to address the Water Board concerning the Regional Permit.

g. Communication Strategy for Implementing the Water Pollution Control Plant Master Plan (ESD) – Deferred from January

Environmental Services Department staff presented the report on the communication strategy for implementing the Master Plan process for the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (Plant). In November of 2007, the Council awarded an agreement to Carollo Engineers to develop a Master Plan for the Plant. This will entail a three-year planning process scheduled for completion by fall 2010. Staff committed to presenting a separate communication strategy to the Transportation & Environment Committee. The Plant is owned jointly by the cities of San Jose and Santa Clara and provides wastewater treatment services to these two cities as well as to the tributary area. The Plant thus stands as a regional facility serving 1.4 million residents and 16,000 businesses. Consequently, development of the Master Plan will involve many diverse stakeholders and be of broad public media interest. A robust communication strategy will establish a communication effort appropriate for the critical Plant's master planning effort. The proposed communication strategy will engage stakeholders and decision-makers on a tributary-wide basis. Communications will be ongoing, and the strategy will adapt over the three-year master planning timeframe based on input received from internal and external participants and decision-makers. The communication goals are to:

- Identify and meet the educational and informational needs of specific audiences;
- Enable stakeholders input into the Master Plan's vision, goals, objectives and alternatives
- Communicate the principles of sustainability, watershed protection and environmental stewardship as part of the overall outreach approach; and
- Develop stakeholder support that is essential to the successful implementation of the Master Plan

Upon the motion of Councilmember Judy Chirco, and seconded by Councilmember Nora Campos, the Committee voted to accept the report.

h. Report on Pilot Program to Educate Residents about Proper Recycling (ESD)

Environmental Services Department staff presented the report on the Recycle Plus pilot resident education campaign designed to encourage correct participation in the City's recycling services and reduce cart contamination at a targeted number of single-family households. Continuing to focus on educating residents about proper recycling habits will achieve a cleaner waste stream from San Jose residents and allow the diversion of more materials from local landfills. The City of San Jose has one of the highest recycling rates in the nation. Nonetheless, the Recycle Plus program has experienced contamination in the recycling stream. Numerous factors can contribute to recycling contamination including customer education and motivation, adequately-sized garbage and recycling carts, garbage rate structure, vehicles and processing equipment used, and driver participation in education/enforcement activities. As San Jose strives to meet the goals of Green

Vision, it is important to achieve the cleanest recycling stream possible in order to divert the maximum amount of waste from our landfills and help ensure the highest and best use of our recyclable materials. Recycling more of the City's waste stream supports the City's sustainability and environmental objectives and is an integral component in the effort to reach the City's 75% overall diversion goal by 2013 and ultimately the San Jose Green Vision Zero Waste goal. Upon the motion of Councilmember Judy Chirco, and seconded by Chair Forrest Williams, the Committee voted to accept the report.

i. Report on the Clean Air Vehicle Program (DOT) – Deferred to March

j. Oral Petition

There were no Oral Petitions

k. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

Forrest Williams

Councilmember Forrest Williams, Chair
Transportation & Environment Committee