



# City of Palo Alto

## Policy and Services Committee Staff Report

(ID # 6376)

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**Report Type: Agenda Items**

**Meeting Date: 12/1/2015**

**Summary Title: 2016 City Council Priorities**

**Title: Discussion and Recommendations for 2016 City Council Priority Setting Process**

**From: City Manager**

**Lead Department: City Manager**

### **Recommendation**

Policy and Services Committee discuss and consider making recommendations to the City Council in January on the process to be used at the Annual Retreat to identify the 2016 Council Priorities.

### **Background**

On October 1, 2012, the City Council approved the Council Priority Setting Guidelines included as Attachment A. The guidelines define a Council priority and lay out the purpose, process and general parameters for annual priority setting. Consistent with these guidelines, the Council established early December as the deadline for Council submitting 2015 priorities to staff.

Each year the Policy and Services Committee, at its December meeting, is to review the priorities suggested and consider making recommendations to the City Council about the process that will be used to identify priorities at the Annual Retreat. The recommended process is to be forwarded to the Council for adoption.

As the Council directed, after the submittal period closes, staff is to collect and organize the Council recommended priorities into a list and provide to the Council no later than two weeks in advance of the 2016 Annual Retreat.

### **Discussion**

This staff report provides the input received from the Council and the public on the priorities to be reviewed and considered for 2016.

A Council priority is defined as a topic that will receive particular, unusual and significant attention during the year. The purpose of establishing priorities is to assist the Council and staff

to better allot and utilize time for discussion and decision making. There is a goal of no more than three priorities per year and priorities have a three year time limit.

The Policy and Services main focus is to make process recommendations for Council conduct of the priority setting at the retreat. In some years, the Council used the “nominal group voting technique” (dot voting) to work through suggestions and generate a collective recommendation. In recent years, Council Members briefly presented their suggestions and explanations as needed and Council discussion led to relatively easy decisions. The 2012 policy helped add definition and limitations on the priorities which helped.

Staff is collecting Council member feedback and will provide a summary at the Policy & Services Committee through an At Places Memo. Policy and Services may want to offer some suggestions to staff regarding groupings. Whatever staff presents, Council, obviously, can amend or modify the recommendations at the retreat.

### **Input from City Council**

Staff will provide an At Places Memo on the input received from Council members on recommended priorities.

### **Input from Community**

In October 25, 2015, the City posted the question, “What are the priorities you would like to see the City Council adopt for 2016?” to its Open City Hall online civic engagement site to solicit input and feedback from the community. As of November 18, 2015 a total of 212 individuals had visited the topic with 62 posting responses. The community is still able to provide feedback on Open City Hall, but below is a summary of comments received to date, and identification of a number of themes that emerged from the responses:

- **Reduce airplane noise**
- **Housing:** low cost/high density, more affordable, charge all new housing Mello-Roos fees, increase supply, build housing near transit, moderate public housing near Caltrain stations and along El Camino
- **Growth and development:** no parking exemptions for developers, stop office development, charge all new commercial development \$25,000 per job to trench Caltrain, recognize the Palo Alto is at limit of growth, infrastructure to support growth, finish Comprehensive Plan
- **Parking and transportation:** policies to encourage biking, walking and EVs, support high speed rail, close all inner streets, address influx of parking in residential neighborhoods, safe bike routes, TDM measures including demand-based parking downtown, parking permits for Evergreen neighborhood, multi-modal transportation solutions, shuttle service improvements, train grade crossing
- **Municipal governance:** eliminate appearance of conflict of interest between electeds/developers/city employees after leaving city responsibilities, clarify role of

Planning Commission, cut Palo Alto's unfunded liabilities for current and past employees, manage benefits and salary to city employees, reduce utility costs

- **Smoking:** no smoking in apartments/condos
- **Other:** fiber-to-the-premise/high speed internet, sustainability, more open space, closed circuit TV on all major arteries to prevent crime, flood control, no home construction on Saturday

Attachment B is the detailed responses from Open City Hall. As of November 18, 2015 no feedback was received from the community through email, telephone or mail.

### **Timeline**

Upon the Policy & Services Committee's approval, staff will forward the recommendation to the City Council in January. Staff will update the January staff report to include any additional community feedback received prior to agenda publication. Upon approval by the City Council in January, staff will publish results in advance of the retreat. At this time, the Council's 2016 Annual Retreat is tentatively set for January 30, 2016.

### **Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Priority Setting Guidelines and Schedule (PDF)

## City Council Priority Setting Guidelines

**Approved by City Council:** October 1, 2012

**Last revised: October 1, 2012**

### Background

The City Council adopted its first Council priorities in 1986. Each year the City Council reviews its priorities at its Annual Council Retreat. On October 1, 2012 the City Council formally adopted the definition of a council priority, and the Council's process and guidelines for selection of priorities.

### Definition

A Council priority is defined as a topic that will receive particular, unusual and significant attention during the year.

### Purpose

The establishment of Council priorities will assist the Council and staff to better allot and utilize time for discussion and decision making.

### Process

1. Three months in advance of the annual Council Retreat, staff will solicit input from the City Council on the priorities to be reviewed and considered for the following year.
  - a. Council members may submit up to three priorities.
  - b. Priorities should be submitted no later than December 1.
  - c. As applicable, the City Manager will contact newly elected officials for their input by December 1.
  - d. The City Clerk will provide timely notice to the public to submit proposed priorities by December 1. The Policy and Services Committee shall recommend to the Council which suggestions if any shall be considered at the City Council retreat.
2. Staff will collect and organize the recommended priorities into a list for Council consideration, and provide to Council no less than two weeks in advance of the retreat.
3. The Policy and Services Committee, each year at its December meeting, shall make recommendations about the process that will be used at the Annual Retreat paying particular attention to the number of priorities suggested by Council members. The recommended process is to be forwarded to Council for adoption in advance of the Council retreat.

### Guidelines for Selection of Priorities

1. There is a goal of no more than three priorities per year.
2. Priorities generally have a three year time limit.

Attachment A  
City of Palo Alto

**City Council Priority Setting Schedule**

