



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 10692)

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 10/7/2019

Council Priority: Transportation and Traffic

Summary Title: Approval of 2019 Transportation Workplan

Title: Approval of the 2019 Workplan to Address the Council Priority "Transportation and Traffic"

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Transportation

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the 2019 Workplan to address the Council Priority "Transportation and Traffic."

Background:

At the February 2, 2019 City Council retreat, the City Council adopted four (4) priorities for 2019. The adopted priorities are: Fiscal Sustainability, Climate Change, Rail Grade Separation, and Transportation and Traffic. Half of the City Council priorities (Rail Grade Separation, and Transportation and Traffic) are the responsibility of the newly created Office of Transportation, and most transportation activities also support the Climate Change priority.

To date a division of the Planning & Community Environment Department (now Planning and Development Services), transportation resources and functions have been transitioned to a separate Office of Transportation in response to the increasing prominence of mobility issues in Palo Alto and throughout the region. The new Office of Transportation reports to the City Manager's Office. Transportation is consistently a top priority for City leaders as shown in its adoption, in some form, as a City Council priority in at least the previous six (6) years of City Council priorities.

Closely related is the City Council prioritization of Grade Separations, as this also relies on Transportation staff. The City Council adopted the Rail Grade Separation workplan on April 22, 2019 with direction to staff on many aspects of that program. The report is available online at:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=67695.84&BlobID=70530>.

City Council made some changes to the workplan which are reflected in the meeting minutes. The meeting minutes of the City Council action are available online at: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=44907.77&BlobID=72975>. Staff will continue to follow up with the City Council for the Rail Grade Separation (Connecting Palo Alto) City Council priority.

The Transportation workplan described in this report focuses on the rest of the transportation services provided by the Office of Transportation and effectively assumes the workplan for the Office to reflect the Council's priority interests in traffic and transportation. Other related issues should be acknowledged as not included, such as roadway maintenance, street lighting, and management of multi-party construction affecting streets. While these activities clearly impact traffic, for the purpose of providing a focused and discrete workplan this report is limited to functions of the Office of Transportation. It provides information in six (6) categories as described in the Discussion section below.

Discussion:

Office of Transportation Overview: The Office of Transportation has been established as a separate office reporting to the City Manager as of the adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget. The FY 2020 Budget includes a section that provides an overview of the Office and some initial performance metrics that can summarize some of the work done by the Office in a quantifiable way. These metrics help to articulate key ongoing performance objectives for the Office.

As staff are hired to implement the workplan and concurrent reorganization of duties occurs, the descriptions provided here are likely to evolve over the coming year and beyond.

The Transportation-specific content of the Adopted FY 2020 Budget are on Budget pages 187-198 (<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/73190>). The Office also has projects listed in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list. Recapping a few key pieces of information presented in the budget, staff includes the Mission Statement, Purpose, and Goals and Objectives here as a guide for thinking about the Transportation workplan.

Mission: The Office of Transportation's mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of life for Palo Alto residents, visitors, and businesses by providing efficient and cost-effective transportation services for all modes of transportation.

Purpose: The purpose of the Office of Transportation is to improve the safety of the users of all modes of transportation, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, address congestion, and reduce through traffic and non-resident parking in Palo Alto neighborhoods, leading to an

integrated transportation system that serves local, regional, and intercity travel.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Provide, design, and implement transportation services that meet or exceed the expectations of Palo Alto residents; encourage transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips; and improve traffic flow and parking availability.

Objectives:

- Improve traffic flow [and safety] on major streets
- Increase ease of public parking
- Increase ease of travel by bicycle in Palo Alto
- Increase ease of walking in Palo Alto
- Increase number of shuttle riders

Goal 2: Ensure that services are delivered efficiently and continue to improve.

Objectives:

- Institute a revised community engagement process for transportation projects.
- Revise the RPP Program to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability.
- Increase or add automated data collection systems.

Goal 3: Increase the professional capacity of the members of the Office of Transportation.

Objectives:

- Work collaboratively with staff to create and institute a professional development plan to optimize the abilities and productivity of Transportation staff.
- Develop a career development plan to promote the retention of Transportation staff.

The Transportation Office enhances safety and mobility of Palo Alto's transportation system while protecting environmental resources and preserving the community's quality of life. Work performed by the Office generally falls into the categories of mobility, engineering (traffic operations, engineering, and infrastructure), and parking. Currently consisting of 15.48 FTE (plus, the Transportation team is responsible for the bicycle network, neighborhood traffic calming, traffic operations, parking management, area transportation studies, the Palo Alto Shuttle system, coordinating the Safe Routes to School Partnership (between the City, PAUSD, and PTA), and regional transportation coordination and activities. The Office also provides staff support to the Planning and Transportation Commission, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the City/School Traffic Safety Committee.

Some Programs Within the Main Work Areas (Also Includes Rail Grade Separation):

Mobility (and Transportation Planning)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Demand Management • Safe Routes to School (safety education) • Coordination with Transit Agencies (e.g., VTA) • Plan Updates (Bike/Ped Plan, Transportation Element, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Management Association • Palo Alto Shuttle • Planning and Development Review • Grants/Funding
Parking Management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Parking Permit Management • On-Street Parking Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Garage/Lot Management • Bicycle Parking
Engineering (Traffic Operations, Engineering and Infrastructure)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle Boulevard Implementation • Regular monitoring of 101 City-operated traffic signals • Collaboration with Public Works on key projects such as the Adobe Creek Bike/Ped Bridge, the California Ave. Garage, and Charleston Arastradero improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood Traffic Calming • Transportation CIP Implementation • Ongoing Responses to 3-1-1 Requests
Connecting Palo Alto – Rail Grade Separation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, Community Outreach, Staffing Working Groups, Contract Management, etc. 	

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and programs may be refined as the new CTO evaluates Office workload and assignments.

Workplan Horizon for Transportation: The City is in the process of reorganizing transportation services and is recruiting for key positions in the Office. The City brought in Wayne Tanda with the Municipal Resource Group (MRG) as a consultant to help advise the City on organizational recommendations. While the City looks at these larger questions about organizational development and placement, the existing hardworking staff continue pushing forward with many required functions and programs as well as City initiatives. This workplan is a high-level summary of the Office of Transportation (OOT) initiatives, programs, and projects organized in the following six (6) categories:

A. Activities Previously Approved and In Progress

- B. Activities Previously Approved but Being Reevaluated
- C. Big Initiative Activities
- D. Upcoming Agenda Items
- E. Staff Development and Recruitment Activities
- F. Other Proposed or Potential Activities Not Yet Resourced or Directed

These activities coincide with the goals identified in the FY 2020 Budget and are intended to jumpstart the City Council in their thinking about the 2019 City Council interests related to transportation.

A. Activities Previously Approved and In Progress

- 1. Safe Routes to School 5-Year Plan
- 2. Citywide Traffic Signal Operations optimization and upgrades Middlefield North Traffic Calming Improvements
- 3. Bike and Scooter Share Programs
- 4. Participation with the implementation of the Cal Ave. Parking Garage, the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor Improvement Project, and the Adobe Creek Bike and Ped Bridge
- 5. Palo Alto Crosstown Shuttle

B. Activities Previously Approved but Being Reevaluated

- 1. Bike Boulevard Implementation and Follow Up Report – Staff will update the Council with a follow-up report in late 2019/early 2020 to provide data about the implementation of the Neighborhood Traffic Safety and Bicycle Boulevard Phase 1 project as well as bring information for the City Council to discuss Phase 2 of the project.
- 2. Embarcadero and El Camino Real Enhanced Bikeway Project – City Council approved a concept related to this project, but it is currently on hold due to the overlap of the project with the area that could be impacted by decisions related to grade separation proposals at Churchill Avenue.

C. Big Initiative Activities

- 1. Rail Grade Separation (separate City Council Priority for 2019)
- 2. Evaluation and revision of the Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) Permit Program to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability – A report from MRG was presented to the City Council on May 13, providing an overview of the RPP program with program revisions. Staff shared a Parking Workplan with City Council on June 24, 2019 providing next steps on this (report link: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=58592.08&BlobID=72158>)
- 3. Institute a revised community engagement process for transportation projects.
- 4. Consider data collection opportunities to increase automated collection systems.

D. Upcoming Agenda Items

Attachment A to this report provides a list of upcoming items related to Transportation that will come to the City Council, committee, or a commission in the coming months. It is not an exhaustive list and the timeframes are tentative. It is intended to give the City Council a general sense of the volume and type of work forthcoming related to Transportation.

E. Staff Development and Recruitment Activities

As stated in the budget, staff retention and development are paramount to increasing the professional capacity and bandwidth of the Office of Transportation. The Office has seen turnover in very key positions over the years, and development of a manageable workplan supported by the City Council is a key step to ensuring an environment that strengthens staff retention and sense of accomplishment in the work. The Chief Transportation Official (CTO) and Senior Transportation Planner positions were recently filled and began work on August 20, 2019. Five recruitments are currently underway, for the new Parking and Shuttles Manager (Transportation Planning Manager), the new Senior Engineer, a second Safe Routes to School Coordinator, an Administrative Associate, and a part-time staffer for parking citation reviews.

In addition to working to get the Office fully staffed, a focus is also being put on creating a professional development plan to optimize the abilities and productivity of individual staff. Given the rapid pace of change in the transportation field, it is important that staff remain actively engaged in professional development activities and individual growth.

As indicated by the City Council adopted priorities, transportation is a topic of significant interest in the community. As such, there are a significant number of suggestions about possible additional projects that the Office of Transportation should take on. While staff recognizes the interest in taking on additional projects, it is necessary to be realistic in the staff resources available to successfully deliver projects. Given the scope and significance of the projects that are currently in focus, the resources for several additional projects are currently not available.

Policy Implications:

This recommendation aligns with existing City policy and City Council direction.

Resource Impact:

Both staff and non-salary resources, such as consultants and the procurement of tools, will be necessary to complete this workplan. To complete the workplan and balance against other activities, a deliberate and judicious deployment of resources will be necessary. As portions of this workplan are developed more fully, resource needs will be identified at that time for the specific projects in addition to any already allocated resources. Additional staffing resources requested in the FY 2020 budget for Transportation Services (2 new FTE) were already

approved.

Environmental Review:

This report is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
Environmental review is not required.

Attachments:

Attachment A - OOT Work Plan (PDF)

Attachment A:

Upcoming Agenda Items to City Council, Committee, or Commissions (as of September 2019):

Note: This list is not exhaustive. Other contracts and items will be scheduled as they develop.

Category	Work Item	Timeframe / Date (Tentative)
Parking	Southgate RPP	City Council October 7
Parking	Cal Ave Valet Services	City Council October 7
Parking	Dixon Contract Amendment	City Council October 21
Parking	Old Palo Alto RPP	City Council October 21
Parking	Permit Contract Amendment	City Council October 21
Parking	Develop RPP Program Standards	PTC Fall/Winter 2019
Parking	City Council approval of RPP Program Revisions	TBD
Rail	Follow-up discussions per Rail Workplan	TBD
Engineering	Crescent Park Traffic Safety Project	PTC Winter 2019
Engineering	San Antonio at Charleston concept design and community outreach	Fall/Winter 2019
Engineering	On-Call Transportation Services	Winter 2019
Engineering	On-Call Signal Electrical Contractor	Winter 2019
Planning	Conversion from LOS to VMT as CEQA threshold of significance as required by state law	City Council Adoption Spring/Summer 2020
Mobility	Bike Blvd. Follow-up Report and Discussion	City Council Winter 2019/Early 2020
Mobility	TDM Ordinance	City Council Fall 2020
Mobility	Contract award from Palo Alto Shuttle Contract RFP	City Council Winter 2019
Mobility	Safe Routes to School Annual Report	Summer 2020
General	Transportation Support Services/Staff Development	Winter 2019