

City Council Questions

September 13, 2022 Council Meeting

ITEM 4.9 Approval of Council Advisory Body Work Plans

1. On the VAC’s workplan, there are several items that involve art on private property. For example, “Continue to collaborate with private and nonprofit organizations on visual arts opportunities” and “Explore Phantom Gallery opportunities for vacant downtown properties”. Given the purview of the VAC is public art, how do workplan items that involve private property fit within the VAC’s purview?

The main responsibility of the VAC is to recommend the acceptance, purchase and placement of Public Art to City Council. In addition, the VAC solicits and reviews temporary exhibits within the City Center. The VAC also plays a role in encouraging privately accessible art as well. In a recent joint meeting with the Downtown Committee, there was an interest in collaborating together on activating vacant storefront windows to provide more visual interest and improve the aesthetics of downtown. Given the connections to the artist community that the VAC has cultivated, there is an opportunity for partnership and collaboration with the Downtown Committee. Furthermore, as part of the ongoing dialogue in developing a public art strategy for Mountain View, an area that is being explored is a recommendation for developing an art in private development program to further enhance art in the Community beyond Capital Improvement programs.

ITEM 4.10 Approve the Acquisition of Real Property at 909 San Rafael Avenue (APN: 153-18-012) and 917 San Rafael Avenue (APN: 153-18-027)

1. What would be needed to use this as a Safe Parking Site in the interim before it is developed as a park?

The site would have to be cleared of all structures, graded, and paved. Improvements would also have to include installing an appropriate storm drainage system for the paved area, potential tree removals to facilitate enough paved area for circulation and delineating parking spaces, lighting for Safe Parking needs, and a water connection. This would require a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project with a project manager and design consultant to prepare plans and specifications for a formal bid process for a Public Works construction contract. However, this is likely not feasible, as once the time construction for a Safe Parking Site could be completed, the new park design process will likely be well underway and the park nearly ready for construction.

ITEM 6.2 Community Center Resiliency Hub Project-Variou s Actions

1. Is Option A the largest kWh option available, meaning there are only two options (A and B), and a larger option is not available?

The recommended battery system is modular and expandable in nature and customizable to a range of capacities both smaller and larger than proposed. 528kwh capacity was considered the largest recommended size at this time for the following two reasons:

- Cost: The grant from SVCE will cover slightly less than half the cost of the recommended system and it will take approximately 16+ years to recoup the initial expense via energy savings. As noted in the memo, larger systems do not increase the average annual savings and therefore the City's investment in a larger system would not pay for itself within the projected lifetime of the equipment, which is a requirement for the use of the energy conservation contracting process authorized by the Government Code and necessary to deliver the project within grant timelines. In the future, if additional funding becomes available, the battery system is expandable.
 - Physical size: The 528kwh battery storage system needs three (3) battery cabinets. Each cabinet is approximately 40" wide x 36" deep x 96" high. In addition to the batteries, the system requires the installation of other equipment such as a control cabinet, transformer, inverter and the breakers. The current potential location for the installation of the battery system is the basement and courtyard of the Community Center. The interior locations do not have enough room available to allow the installation of additional battery equipment if needed for higher storage capacity.
2. We often see new CIP projects come to council for approval outside of the annual review/approval cycle. Typically, there is enough funding for the new CIP. Why is funding typically available when during the formal review/approval cycle of CIPs, it seems like all of the available funding is allocated and no funds remain to be allocated.

Part of the strategy in developing the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is to maintain some reserves for each major CIP funding source (Water, Wastewater, etc.) in addition to having the general CIP Reserve fund. This allows us to be prepared for midyear CIP projects that may arise due to emergency situations and grant funding opportunities as well as the potential need to add funding to existing capital projects due to rising construction costs when inflation rates are high. Additionally, the 5-Year CIP uses conservative estimates for fund revenues, where some revenue may come in higher than expected during the year and, if so, staff may recommend utilizing the additional revenue for mid-year CIP projects. For some fund sources such as Impact Fees, only revenues already received are programmed into the annual CIP and if the City receives a large payment during the year, staff may recommend use of these new impact fees for an eligible midyear project or project cost increase.

3. Are energy costs mostly heating and cooling in this building?

Heating and cooling are the main components of the energy costs. The cost also includes energy cost for lighting, appliances, server rooms and computers.

4. What are average annual costs?

Approximately \$97,000 annually for electricity and \$8,000 for gas for all energy uses of the building.

5. Has the City modified its building heating and cooling temperatures in any way in response to the climate crisis? Other businesses I frequent (Kaiser comes to mind) have lowered their heating target to 68 degrees and their cooling target to 78 degrees. Have we done anything like that?

The Community Center was re-opened in Feb. 2019 after a complete remodel as a LEED Gold Certified facility. A significant element of the Gold Certification was the project's whole building energy efficiency including heating, cooling, and lighting which was calculated to save over 45% in energy use over standard code requirements. The remodel included all new heating cooling and ventilation systems that were designed to be energy efficient and controlled by a building management system (BMS). The BMS system sets the minimum and maximum temperatures for the facility which are currently set at 70 Degrees with a 1.5-degree variation.

6. This sounds like a great idea, but there is always a down side. What are the risks associated with using SVCE's vendor, if any?

SVCE's vendor; Buro Happold, will function as a third party reviewer of Syserco's proposed design. As the City does not have in house resources with electrical engineering and battery storage expertise, Buro Happold's review will improve the quality control aspect of the project. Staff does not see a risk in using SVCE's vendor.

7. Where does this project fit into the City's program to learn how to utilize battery backup systems? Shouldn't this be considered as a pilot for what we might do at other City Facilities, particularly fire & police stations?

As the City's first "whole building" battery storage project, it could be considered a pilot. It will allow the City to better evaluate utilizing battery storage systems at other City facilities during peak hours to reduce utility cost and as an alternative to diesel-fueled emergency generators for short term outages. Police and Fire stations can be evaluated for these system, however as essential facilities, they will require emergency power to last up to a minimum of three days, which would need to be taken into account if they do not have a sizable solar array or access to a functioning power grid to recharge the batteries.

8. How would this system be utilized as part of a micro grid for the neighborhood?

The battery storage system under consideration is sized and located to serve the limited resiliency needs of the Community Center. It is located on the City or "private" side of the PG&E meter and will not be allowed to back-feed the public utility. It will not have sufficient capacity to serve the entire park or a neighborhood "micro-grid" which would also require its own distribution system isolated from the main utility power grid.

ITEM 7.1 Alta Housing Notice of Funding Availability Proposal-1020 Terra Bella Avenue

1. Did the NOFA Committee change staff's recommendation to the NOFA Committee? If so what was staff's original recommendation?

The NOFA Committee's recommendation to the City Council is consistent with the original staff recommendation, which is \$13.5 million.

2. The staff report says that the city received two letters advocating for increased sidewalk width and connectivity. Have we addressed this? What is the sidewalk width in front of the project?

As proposed, the project at 1020 Terra Bella has extended walkways with landscape on both frontages. Specifically, the project provides an 11' walkway on the Terra Bella frontage; seven feet dedicated to walkway and four feet dedicated to landscape. On the San Rafael frontage, the project provides a nine-foot walkway; five feet dedicated to walkway, and four feet dedicated to landscape. Both of these are an improvement over the current five-foot walkways.

ITEM 7.2 SB 330 Replacement Requirements

1. While I know we are not discussing replacement requirements for some protected units, can you please clarify if it is just the initial tenancy in the replacement unit that must meet the replacement requirements? I'm specifically looking at the first two categories in Table 1. For example, if the previous tenant had an income of 80% AMI or less, the tenant in the replacement unit must have an income of 80% AMI or less. But after that tenant moves out, is the unit no longer protected? And is it the same process for units when the income of the previous household is unknown? In other words, in both of these cases, the units would go to market rate when the tenant in the replacement unit moves out?

SB 330 requires the recorded affordability restriction for replacement units to be for at least 55 years. There is no upper limit in SB 330 and the City can require a longer period such as in perpetuity. The staff recommendation related to replacement units for projects subject to SB 330 is that they be protected in perpetuity (in all three columns of the staff report). This will maximize the ability to achieve no net loss of affordable housing and is consistent with the requirements in the City's BMR program.

2. We received a letter from the public saying that, "Although the use of Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data (CHAS) to infer tenant income does not appear to be on the agenda, we are concerned about the accuracy of this data. As older apartments are more likely to be redeveloped, we believe the household incomes of apartments being demolished may lean towards lower-income brackets than the CHAS data. Therefore, we recommend that the City track this information, especially since SB 330's replacement protections also apply to any unit, whether under CSFRA or not, that were rented by lower or very low income households (e.g. like the Latham/Escuela situation)." Can staff comment on this?

Staff have evaluated and incorporated certain strategies to gather household income information such as on project applications but usually developers/landlords do not have the information and tenants are not required to provide the information. The CHAS data – which is based on Census data – is currently the most accurately available data source.