

City Council Questions
April 25, 2023 – City Council Meeting

ITEM 3.1 Fiscal Years 2023-24 and 2024-25 Council Work Plan Development: Project Prioritization and Gatekeepers

1. How will the “potential 2024 revenue measure” be developed? Will staff propose projects be funded, or will there be opportunities for community input, including potential polling? Will there be a Council subcommittee, as there was with 2020 Measure D?

Once Council formally adopts the Work Plan, staff will bring an item to Council after the summer recess in September 2023 to initiate the revenue measure conversation and next steps. This will include convening a Council Revenue Measure Ad Hoc Sub-Committee. Community polling is very important and will be conducted to determine the revenue measures that the community would support, as well as the proposed projects it will support. Staff is already developing a polling firm RFP and will be prepared to discuss the next steps with Council in September.

2. How will the charter modernization/clean-up be developed? What does the project involve? Will staff propose a scope and potential amendments? What community input opportunities will there be?

Why are we amending the City Charter?

Pursuant to the California Constitution, a city charter may be amended only by majority vote of the electorate. Amendment of the Mountain View Charter was placed on the draft work plan at the Council’s request for the purpose of allowing the Council to consider whether to introduce a ballot measure that would amend the Charter to modernize, clarify, and better align the Charter with current law and Council goals for the community.

If the Council elects to include the charter amendment on its work plan, staff will seek initial direction on the type and scope of amendments from the Council in a study session. This may include direction to convene a Council Charter Amendment Ad Hoc Subcommittee and determine community outreach and polling. Staff will return to the Council with proposed amendments for Council’s consideration and further direction.

Generally, the project would involve revising one or more provisions of the Charter to add, delete or clarify text and preparing a ballot measure for voter consideration. The type and scope of the amendments would dictate whether the measure could go to the voters at the 2024 or 2026 election; the more comprehensive the amendments are, the more time it would take to reach a consensus on the proposed revisions.

3. What will be the scope and process for the Municipal Code clean-up?

Because the Mountain View Code contains 47 Chapters and is more than 500 pages long, staff would have to use a phased approach to updating the code, which will take several years to complete. If the Council elects to include this project in the work plan, the City Attorney's Office would perform an initial high-level review of the code to identify inconsistencies in numbering, internal references, definitions, etc. Then, the CAO would work closely with other departmental staff to review and identify provisions of the Municipal Code that are obsolete, currently unenforceable or are otherwise in need of an update. The entire process will entail extensive collaboration between CAO and other departmental staff and will require Council feedback (over several Council study sessions and/or public hearings over the years) to obtain direction and approval on the proposed amendments.

4. How much work has been done already on the R3 Update? Is there a reason it is listed in Category B?

Staff has completed a significant amount of background analysis, including an evaluation of economic feasibility and an assessment of current standards, and several rounds of outreach with community groups in each impacted neighborhood and mobile home residents. Future activities include additional outreach, the development of a preferred alternative and specific development standards, and CEQA-required analysis.

This project is listed under Category B because it is not strictly required under the Housing Element or other mandates. However, staff would like to note that there will be a Council study session on the R3 zone update to get Council feedback regarding density options, which will help refine replacement requirement options for the Displacement Response strategy. The Displacement Response Strategy has been identified as a Category A – Highest Priority project and is scheduled to come before Council in May.

5. If the Council is interested in a broader scope of amendments to the Gatekeeper process, how much input will we need to provide during this study session? If a more holistic update to the process is desired, how much additional time would staff need to prepare a future study session?

Staff has provided a memo on recommendations for the scope of amendments to be considered during a Gatekeeper study session in Q3-Q4 2023. At this time, staff plan to discuss exemptions related to the Housing Element program and ask for Council direction. If the Council is interested in expanding the scope of amendments including exemptions and/or Authorization Criteria beyond those anticipated in the Housing Element, Council can provide direction at the study session later this year. Staff anticipates being able to bring back amendments for Council adoption in Q1/Q2 2024. Additional time will only be required if the Council direction is to conduct additional research on specific issues prior to bringing the amendments back for adoption.

Staff would also like to note that if additional time is required to bring the amendments back for Council adoption, they may not be in place as the City receives the June 2024 Gatekeeper applications per the Housing Element program requirement.

6. What is the thinking behind updating the Race, Equity, and Inclusion Plan? Have new issues cropped up? Were items missing in the original plan?

What does the Race, Equity and Inclusion Update involve?

The City's Race, Equity, and Inclusion (REI) Plan was adopted in June 2020 and focused on policing practices, policies and accountability, celebration and recognition of community diversity, and review of City operations and policies, with opportunities for community engagement.

In 2021, action items to raise community awareness, and provide resources to prevent hate crimes and discrimination toward members of the AAPI community were added to the REI plan.

Many of the action items from 2020 and 2021 have been completed, implemented, or are in progress. Completed action items included applying an equity-based lens during the budget development process, providing culturally sensitive outreach and engagement to Mountain View residents, conducting forums to promote dialogue on race and a safe, welcoming community for all, and creating the Public Safety Advisory Committee. For the next iteration of the REI Plan, staff plans to bring together a cross-departmental team to identify new REI action items and engage with programs or organizations that work towards advancing racial equity and opportunities for all that will be presented to the REI Subcommittee at a future date for their consideration and input.

7. On average, how much does the city receive on an annual basis in terms of grant funding? What is the range of the dollar amounts of grants? How much time is spent on applying for grants?

In FY 22-23, the City received approximately \$32 million in funding from Federal, State, and County grant funding combined. This includes Federal formula grants through CDBG and HOME funds, which are awarded and dispersed on an annual basis, CARES Act funding, HOME-ARP (American Rescue Plan), California Covid-19 Pandemic FEMA funding, and other formula and competitive Federal, State, and County grants related to Housing, Parks and Recreation, Sustainability, and Transportation projects. The City is also a recipient of Federal Appropriations Funding for the Crestview Hotel Conversion and the Bernardo Undercrossing projects. The range of dollar amounts for grants varies and is dependent upon the agency, program, and project eligibility. Grant administration is decentralized throughout the City, so the amount of time staff spends applying for, and administering grants varies depending on if the grant is a formula grant or a competitive grant. Staff generally spends many hours working on grant applications and monitoring the requirements of the grant.

8. If developing a Dark Skies Ordinance is starting in Q3 2024, why is funding needed in FY 2023-24?

Staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend beginning work on the Dark Skies Ordinance project in Q3 2024 following the completion of the Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan, anticipated in Q2 2024. However, if the Council would like to accelerate the project, the \$100,000 budget appropriation will be needed in FY 2023-24.

9. Why does a temporary office cap downtown need to be part of a comprehensive update to the Downtown Precise Plan?

During previous discussions related to the Downtown Precise Plan area, the Council and community discussed potentially revising the Precise Plan to limit office development and allow more residential development. The purpose of a temporary cap would be to put a pause on office development for a limited time in the downtown while changes to the Downtown vision are discussed as part of the comprehensive Downtown Precise Plan update.

10. Please provide more details on B35 (Citywide Travel Demand Update). What specifically does this project include and why is it important to do?

A Citywide Travel Demand model is used to forecast or predict future demand for the transportation system based on land use plans and other factors that can affect mode choices. It is primarily used for land use planning purposes. In addition, based on its forecasts of use of motor vehicles, including vehicle miles traveled, vehicle hours of delay, etc., the model can be used to estimate transportation-related greenhouse gas reductions under different scenarios involving land use, growth rates, and shifts in mode split.

11. It seems like hiring is an ongoing issue. Besides the cost of living, and a competitive labor market, are there other issues causing the city to continually have staff shortages, especially in Planning and Public Works?

All public sector agencies are currently experiencing multiple vacancies and difficulty hiring and retaining highly skilled staff, particularly in specialized technical positions including planners and engineers, and are competing for a small pool of candidates. Until the sector-wide labor shortage resolves, the City will likely face challenges filling these positions. Notably, 48.8% of the City's workforce began serving in their current position after 2020.

Key reasons for vacancies in the past year have included a higher-than-usual number of retirements of long-tenured, high-capacity employees and the loss of staff to other cities due to the cost of living, lighter workloads, or opportunities for career advancement. In 2022, HR projected that, between 2023 and 2025, close to 34% of Public Works employees (57% in key positions) and 27% of Community Development employees (33% in key positions) will become eligible for retirement. Thus, additional retirements are anticipated over the next few years.

The labor market is highly competitive, especially for experienced, qualified employees, which presents several challenges when filling these vacancies. Fewer candidates are moving into lateral positions and those that do often have multiple job offers and can be highly selective about accepting positions and project portfolios that are the right fit. Similarly, finalist candidates are asking for salaries higher than what the City can offer.

Considering these issues, one strategy the City uses for filling position is to hire promising candidates with less experience or qualifications and provide additional training and support to ensure their success and ability to work independently, which maintains staffing levels, but doesn't immediately replace the capacity, experience, or knowledge of exiting staff.

Currently, Planning has one regular open position (Senior Planner) and intends to recruit for this position in the Fall. Public Works has 18 vacancies (two new employees started this week) and anticipates two retirements before September. Of the 18 vacancies, 8 are in the Engineering Division, representing approximately 20% of their workforce.

12. What does the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment involve?

The Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment will analyze the risks that Mountain View is likely to face as the impacts of climate change become more severe. The assessment will identify vulnerabilities, including populations, natural systems, and infrastructure, by assessing their potential exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity to projected climate impacts. This analysis will incorporate findings from regional resources such as the County of Santa Clara Silicon Valley 2.0 tool and Cal-Adapt and involve comprehensive community engagement. The assessment is the first step in developing a comprehensive resilience plan to address the City's vulnerabilities.

13. The staff report refers to "state-mandated projects." What are those? Are they just Housing Element-related projects or are there other kinds of state-mandated projects as well?

"State-mandated projects" does refer to Housing Element-related projects.

ITEM 4.2 Adopt a Resolution in Support of the Efforts of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to Preserve Sargent Ranch/Juristac as Open Space

1. Will a conversation take place, or a letter be sent (along with the Resolution) to the Board of Supervisors for Santa Clara County? When will the Board of Supervisors be voting on the permit application?

Upon adoption by the Council, staff will transmit a letter of support and a copy of the resolution to the Board of Supervisors. Staff understand that the EIR consultant is currently in the process of reviewing comments submitted during the public comment period, therefore, it could be many months before the permit application will go to the Board of Supervisors for a decision.

ITEM 4.3 Authorization of a Second Year for the Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program "Elevate MV"

1. Has any research been done on what happens to recipients of GBI after the programs end? Do recipients return to the quality of life they had prior to the GBI? Are recipients able to continue to support a better quality of life?

It is communicated clearly and purposefully in all Elevate MB V program materials that the program is temporary and will last only for two years. The program is distinct from one-time emergency assistance with payments over a longer-term. The stabilization of the recurring funds over two years is aimed at having more lasting effects. This is what will be analyzed through the research evaluation of the program.

Since only one study has been concluded and published, Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration, or SEED, (see SEED study link), there is not yet an empirically sound answer to indicate how people fare after the program ends.

This is especially true since SEED ended during the Covid-19 pandemic. The researchers will have more information to share about longer term effects likely in the fall and into the winter of 2024, as other cities' pilot programs are analyzed.

ITEM 4.5 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Project 22-37-Authorize Professional Services Agreement and Adopt a Resolution Appropriating and Transferring Funds

1. How will The ETC Institute guarantee that survey respondents are Mountain View residents? Or that they will be able to break out responses from verified Mountain View residents from responses from others? (Restricting responses by IP address does not guarantee the respondent is a Mountain View resident, self-reporting is not reliable, participants can respond more than once, and other concerns)

The statistically valid survey that ETC Institute (ETC) will conduct as part of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan will focus on Mountain View residents only. ETC purchases Mountain View addresses from a large list brokerage and cross-references the list with GIS shapefiles to ensure all addresses are within the City limits. ETC will then randomly select Mountain View households from that list to participate in the survey and will mail each randomly selected household a survey in the mail. The mailed survey will include a link to the online survey for those who prefer to take the survey online or the resident may mail back their survey responses. If someone chooses to take the survey online, they will be asked to provide their home address when submitting the survey.

If the address they provide does not match one of the addresses that were randomly selected to participate, then the survey is not counted. This will ensure that the database only includes one completed survey per household that was randomly selected. ETC's survey will not include addresses outside of Mountain View.

ITEM 4.7 2019/20 City Bridges and Culverts Structural Inspection and Repairs, Project 20-60-Authorize Professional Services Agreement

1. Are the current structures being replaced (City Structure Nos. 25 structures ready prefabricated steel truss bridges, so the new structures will look like the existing structures? Or will the new structures be different? If there are differences, what are the differences?

At City Structure No. 25, the new structure will be different. The existing structure consists of a berm that includes six (6) large diameter Corrugated Metal Pipes (CMP) through the berm to let water pass. A 7'-4" wide pathway of asphalt concrete paving rests on top of the berm. These CMPs are failing hence the need to replace the structure. The new structure will consist of a prefabricated steel truss bridge with safety rails.

The existing City Structure No. 27 is a 70- foot long, prefabricated steel truss bridge and the replacement structure will be a similar prefabricated steel truss bridge with safety rails.

ITEM 7.1 Funding Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2023-24 Annual Action Plan

1. Are the items in the bulleted list on page 3 of the staff report new (i.e., funding framework, policy)?

In November 2022, the Human Relations Commission (HRC) approved a funding framework for that includes existing practices such as funding recommendations being in alignment with the City's Consolidated Plan goals and flexible administration of funds for capital projects (i.e., direct allocation of funds to capital projects). While the minimum funding thresholds (\$7,500 for public services and \$300,000 for capital project) are newly established, this has been a discussion topic for the HRC over the past few years and was brought back to the Commission in November to determine the amounts.

2. On page 3 the sentence "The city has previously allocated CDBG and/or HOME funding directly to eligible capital projects due to a lack of interest for a number of reasons ..." is not clear. If there is a lack of interest, why is the city allocating CDBG and/or HOME funds to capital projects?

Staff meant to convey that there has been a lack of interest when making funds available for capital projects through the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process due to the reasons noted in the staff report. HUD allows entitlement jurisdictions to directly allocate funding to projects that align with the City's Consolidated Plan goals and that meet national CDBG and HOME objectives. The City has previously allocated CDBG and/or HOME funding directly to the affordable housing pipeline instead of making funding available through a NOFA as there continues to be a need for funding for projects in the affordable housing pipeline and the lack of applicants through the NOFA.

3. What is the historical use of general fund resources for public service grants?

Historical use of general fund resources for public service grants is based on Council policy, A-8 (Service Organization Funding Policy). Per the City policy, an annual allocation from the General Fund is made to supplement Federal funds and support human service, educational, cultural, arts, and other programs not eligible for Federal funds. As per the Council policy, the uses of the City's General Funds that supplement Federal funding must align with and further the goals and strategies in the City's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. In addition, the General Fund amount is included in the CDBG/HOME NOFA process and follows the same timeline, public noticing requirements, application, and review process as the CDBG public service grant.

4. Are the eligibility requirements listed on page 6 of the staff report city requirements, federal government requirements, or something else?

The eligibility requirements for CDBG public service activities – and by extension for the General fund allocation per Council policy A-8 – are based on federal requirements.

5. Do we have enough in the expected budget excess to cover the additional \$107K for this?

\$107,655 is the amount that is oversubscribed for the CDBG funding (Table 1 of the staff report) and the General Fund (Table 2 of the staff report). The Finance and Administrative Services Department has confirmed the City's budget has sufficient funding available in the General Fund to cover the additional \$107,000 if the Council wishes to do so. If Council approves adding supplemental funding to the requests noted in the staff report is approved, staff will implement the additional funding accordingly.