



File #: 15-1014, Version: 1

SUBJECT

Review and Rank Study Issues

Background

In the 1970's, the City of Sunnyvale developed a process for prioritizing local policy concerns that became known as the "study issues process". A study issue is a topic of concern that may result in a new or revised City policy. The study issues process provides both City Council and City staff with a valuable planning and management tool, by providing a method for identifying, prioritizing and analyzing policy issues in an efficient and effective way. It provides a structured approach for addressing the large number of policy issues that are raised each year.

Council reviews all study issues once a year at the Council Study Issues Workshop. The process allows Council to rank the issues, separating those issues that may have seemed important when they were first raised from the truly critical issues. It also allows the City Manager and department directors to set and schedule the examination of issues so the workload does not interfere with the day to day delivery of City services at levels set by Council.

After a study issue is sponsored by Council, a commission, or staff, staff prepares and submits study issue papers to the city manager for review and approval. The study issue paper describes the topic of concern proposed to be studied, identifies how the issue relates to the General Plan, the origin of the issue, expected public outreach, staff hours, any additional resources required for study, and a staff recommendation regarding whether or not to study the issue. Papers are then routed to the appropriate board and commission for ranking in October/November. Study issue papers not under the purview of a board or commission are routed directly to Council for the annual Study Issues Public Hearing and Council Study Issues Workshop.

Roles in the Process

The study issues process includes participation by Councilmembers, City staff, board and commission members, and the public. A brief explanation of each of their roles follows:

Council - Council's role is to set policy. Regarding the study issues process, policy-related responsibilities include generating (or sponsoring) study issue topics; taking public input; prioritizing or "ranking" issues at the Council Study Issues Workshop in January; and approving target completion dates for each study.

City staff - City staff manage the annual study issues administrative process; generate study issue topics; prepare the study issue papers; following Council ranking of issues, determine how many issues available operating resources will support (issues are begun, and studied, in priority order); and propose target completion dates for studies able to be completed.

Boards and commissions - In their advisory capacity to Council, boards and commissions generate

study issue papers for Council's consideration, and provide a recommended ranking of the issues relevant to their areas of authority. Boards and commissions also provide a forum for public input and, with majority support, can sponsor issues brought to them by members of the public.

Members of the Public - Members of the public may suggest study issue topics to staff, boards and commissions, or directly to Council. In order for a study issue topic to get to the Council Study Issues Workshop it must be "sponsored" by staff, Council or a board or commission. Members of the public also provide input to Council on the relative importance or priorities of individual studies at the annual Study Issues Public Hearing, which is held a week or two prior to Council's Study Issues Workshop.

Discussion

Attached for your review is the description of the Board/Commission process for ranking study issues. The approved study issues referred to the Housing and Human Services commissions for ranking are also attached. These study issues must be ranked by the commission at this meeting in order to meet the deadline for inclusion in the Council Study Issues Workshop materials.

Staff will provide assistance with tallying the votes as needed.

Recommended Actions:

Following any technical questions for staff, hold a public hearing, open the floor for discussion and/or questions by commissioners, and then begin the ranking process consistent with the instructions in Attachment 1. Once the ranking process has been completed, staff will forward the results to Council.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Board/Commission Process for Ranking Study Issues
2. CDD 16-01: Feasibility of A Plan to Seek Voter Approval for A New Bond Financing Measure to Generate Additional Funds for Affordable Housing Development in Sunnyvale
3. CDD 16-11: Consider Methods to Encourage Alternative, Non-traditional Housing in High-density Residential Areas