



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
& EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT:** GREENPRINT 2009 UPDATE

**DATE:** 10-30-09

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Approved

Date

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**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Review and accept this report and forward this report and staff recommendations, with any recommended changes, to City Council for consideration of each of the following:

1. Adopt the Final Greenprint 2009 Update with the changes indicated in the Final Errata Sheet (Attachment A);
2. Authorize the City Manager to make any grammatical changes, minor edits, corrections and other changes which do not impact the major policies and substance of the document during the final editing and production process;
3. Adopt a resolution to repeal City Council Policy 1-6: Parks and Recreation Priority for Expenditure of Funds Collected from the Construction Tax and Property Conveyance Tax and City Council Policy 6-8: City Improvement of School Sites for Public Recreation.

## **OUTCOME**

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee will have an opportunity to review the changes to be incorporated from the draft to the Final Greenprint 2009 Update document and to recommend approval, with any necessary changes, to the Mayor and City Council. The draft Greenprint 2009 Update, the City's Strategic Plan for Parks, Recreation Facilities and Trails to the Year 2020, with proposed changes to be incorporated into the final document, is provided at the following weblink: <http://www.sjparks.org/greenprint/gp2009/>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In September 2000, the City Council adopted the original Greenprint which is a 20 year Strategic Plan to help guide the expansion of parks and recreation opportunities in the City through the year 2020. The 2000 Greenprint was a successful document as it helped define needs and parameters for the passing of the Parks Bond Measure in late 2000. However, substantial changes impacting the

parcs and recreation system in the City since the publishing of the original Greenprint have led to it becoming less useful as a document to guide the investments in projects through the year 2020.

As a result of these changes, staff from Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) began the community process to update the Greenprint in 2007 by holding community input meetings in every council district. The Greenprint 2009 Update (Update) also aligns with the Envision San José 2040 General Plan Update (General Plan Update) process. The completion of the Update will allow for the concepts of this document to serve as a tool for incorporation and dialogue in the development of the Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space sections of the General Plan Update. It will also serve as a valuable guiding document for priority investments in parks and recreation facilities through the year 2020.

Key policy questions that serve as the backbone of the Update were presented to the City Council as part of a Study Session on September 8, 2009. Attachment B is the report prepared for the Study Session and it provides further background on the Greenprint Update process and Attachment C provides a summary of input received from the Study Session. In general, the City Council provided feedback at the Study Session consistent with staff's recommendations. However, the City Council requested more detail and research in specific areas such as our ability to count school acreage and our ability to fund the operations and maintenance of the parks system. Staff also presented the feedback received to date from the General Plan Update Task Force and the difference between policy issues that are part of the Greenprint Update process and those that are part of the broader, long range vision of the General Plan Update process.

Following Council and public feedback at the Study Session, staff held two community meetings in September 2009, and presented the Update to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) in October 2009. The PRC unanimously supported approving the Greenprint and recommended certain changes related to "railroad to trail" conversions, counting of school recreational acreage, and creativity in identifying large tracts of parkland. These requests are discussed in detail later in this report. Attachment A provides an Errata Sheet with proposed changes that will be incorporated into the Final Greenprint 2009 Update as a result of input received from the City Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the residents of San José. Following City Council approval of the attached Errata Sheet, a final document will be published in January 2010.

In addition, there are two existing City Council policies (1-6 and 6-8) which were adopted in the 1970s and have not been updated since adoption. Staff is recommending that Council repeal the Council policies and the concepts included in these policies be incorporated into the Update. The reason for this recommendation is that the Greenprint is used by PRNS as the guiding document for capital investments, so as opposed to having to refer to separate policies on the use of Construction and Conveyance Tax (C&C) funds or on partnering with schools, it is more efficient to have it all incorporated for Staff's reference into the Greenprint.

## **BACKGROUND**

Since 2000, there have been a number of changes in the City environment, leading to the need for an update of the original Greenprint. These changes include new policies, a new fiscal reality, and the completion of hundreds of projects. The new policies such as the Green Vision, Facility Re-Use Policy and Urban Environmental Accords have had significant impact on parks and recreation priorities since the completion of the original Greenprint. The original Greenprint helped to implement many changes, including completion of nearly 400 projects. However, as a result of all these new policies, the current fiscal reality and new projects, the original Greenprint is no longer a useful tool for the setting of park and recreation priorities for the City.

The Update process began in 2007 with over four hundred residents participating in community meetings held in each Council District. Staff released the draft Update in early July 2009 to the public for review and input. Written comments on the document were accepted until August 31, 2009 and additional feedback was received through the September 8<sup>th</sup> study session, at the two community meetings in September, and the Parks and Recreation Commission in October. Attachment D provides a summary list of the written comments that have been received as well as staff's response regarding how these comments will, or will not, be incorporated into the Final 2009 Greenprint Update.

## **ANALYSIS**

The draft Update is intended to be an "Update" of the original document. It was not intended to be a new document. Updating the document provided the opportunity for a new look at identifying future needs for parks, recreation facilities and trails, to keep San José a livable City and to attract new businesses and set new priorities based upon all of the changes that have occurred since 2000. In order to ensure that the Greenprint is a useful document, the first step was to revise the Vision and Mission statements. The second step was to define the future projects needed to create a balanced park system in each of the urban planning areas. The third step was to align with the schedule for the General Plan 2040 Update process, which is occurring concurrently with the update of the Greenprint. This is discussed in further detail below.

### **General Plan Alignment**

The General Plan Task Force has focused its discussion on parks and recreation amenities at the July, August and September 2009 meetings. There are a number of issues that are being resolved as part of the Greenprint 2009 Update and there are also a number of other issues that are going to be incorporated into the larger General Plan discussion moving forward. For example, the City's current General Plan service level goal for neighborhood and community serving parkland is to achieve a ratio of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents, of which a maximum of 2.0 acres can come from recreational school grounds. At the September 28, 2009 General Plan Task Force meeting, the task force recommended keeping the policy of counting school acreage towards our service level goal but including stronger language regarding access to school sites.

The General Plan Update process is also discussing the potential for a system of grand parks, including the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens. The draft Greenprint 2009 Update helps to provide a foundation for this discussion. Following adoption of the Greenprint 2009 Update, PRNS staff plans on continuing to work with the General Plan Task Force to develop this long term vision.

### **Key Policy Issues**

There are three key policy questions that serve as the backbone of the Update and were presented to the City Council as part of the September 8, 2009 Study Session. Staff provided recommendations for each of these policy questions and received Council's feedback. This feedback, summarized in Attachment C, with Council approval will be incorporated into the Final Update to ensure that the policies in the final document are in alignment with the City Council's priorities.

Staff will incorporate Council's feedback from the study session into the Final Update through the attached Errata Sheet. These policy issues, along with staff's recommendations, are discussed in further detail below.

### **Long Term/General Plan Parks and Recreation Service Levels**

In order to achieve the best service level standard for the City which will allow for the development of new communities with balanced park systems while continuing to enhance existing communities, Staff is recommending the following in the proposed Update:

- A. Strive for a balanced park system in each Planning Area;
- B. Establish a long-term goal of having the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens as the City's Central Park and incorporate the Green Vision Goal of developing 100 miles of interconnected trails;
- C. Incorporate the Urban Environmental Accords goal of 1/3 mile walking distance to a park, school or open space for every resident into the Update, but look to connect existing/enhanced facilities outside of this radius before building new facilities;
- D. Keep the existing General Plan service level standard of 3.5 acres of neighborhood and community serving parkland per 1,000 residents, including a maximum of 2 acres being recreational school land;
- E. Rank the Planning Areas on level of parkland deficiency based on the criteria outlined in the proposed Update.

At the September 8, 2009 Study Session, the City Council seemed to concur with the above recommendations, but requested specific detail and a stronger focus on the following areas:

- Focusing on a balanced park system for each Planning Area, which includes a combination of acreage from parks, trails and recreational facilities;
- Continuing to utilize the ratio of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents as the service level goal with 2.0 of these acres possible through recreational school grounds and working with the City-School Collaborative to enhance access to K-8 school sites;

- Providing an interconnected system of parks and facilities through the trail network and showing strong linkages to the bicycle network;
- Stressing the importance of larger parks and the utilization that they receive;
- Providing additional tables showing the relative park acreage deficits per Planning Area in the current year and projected for 2020;
- Stressing that while adding parks to underserved areas is important, the underserved areas are not always the highest priorities for new park development depending upon the priorities of the individual planning areas and the number of households in the underserved areas;
- Ensuring that barriers such as expressways and freeways are factored in when determining the underserved areas per the Environmental Accords' access goal (i.e. if a park is less than 1/3 of a mile from a residence but it is not accessible due to a freeway in between the development and park, then the area would still count as underserved);
- Stressing accessibility of parks and recreation facilities and discussing plans to further expand the City's design guidelines to incorporate accessibility;
- Adding a table in Chapter 5 which shows the acres per 1,000 population in each Planning Area as well as the deficits as compared to the service level of 3.5 acres per 1,000;
- Provide operational and maintenance costs for a hypothetical Planning Area Model of the Balance Park System.

The above items identified by the City Council are addressed in the Errata Sheet and will be addressed in the text of the Final Greenprint 2009 Update.

**Near Term Priorities: Financial and Environmental Sustainability**

In order to create a sustainable park system that can continue to grow, the Update recommends focusing on projects that are environmentally and financially sustainable. The highest priority projects for PRNS to achieve the near term strategies of environmental and financial sustainability include:

- Advancement of the Green Vision Goal of 100 Miles of Trails;
- Focus on the infrastructure backlog;
- Investment in financially sustainable projects (including public/private partnerships);
- Land banking for future park development; and
- Sports Field renovation (premier, artificial turf fields).

The discussion in the Action Plans in Chapter 5 of the Update will match the projects with current funding available in the Adopted 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Program and projects without current funding will be listed as unfunded Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects. The unfunded priorities were developed based on input from various stakeholders throughout the Update process.

At the September 8, 2009 Study Session, the City Council voiced concurrence with the above recommendations, but requested specific detail and a stronger focus on the following areas:

- Focusing on financially and environmentally sustainable projects which includes trails, infrastructure backlog, partnerships, land banking and sports fields;
- Providing detail in the final document regarding the operations and maintenance costs associated with providing a balanced park system in each Planning Area;
- Providing guidelines regarding the minimum requirements for a successful joint use partnership with a school district, using the Leland High School agreement as a model;
- Modifying the text regarding the use of the General Fund ending fund balance on parks facilities to align with current city policies and practices.

The above items identified by the City Council are addressed in the Errata Sheet and will be included in the text of the Final Greenprint 2009 Update.

### **Use of Parkland Fees under the Parkland Dedication/Park Impact Ordinance**

In order to increase our ability to provide quality community serving facilities to our residents such as community centers, skate parks, sports fields, dog parks, community gardens and trails, the draft Greenprint Update recommends the following:

- Maintain the requirement that parkland in-lieu fees generated from developments be spent within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the project paying the fees for neighborhood serving facilities;
- Increase the nexus radius to allow expenditures of parkland in-lieu fees for community serving facilities from 2 miles to a maximum of 3 miles from the project paying the fees, while still ensuring that the residents paying the fees will benefit from the project.

One of the major sources of funding for the development of new parks and recreational facilities are the Parkland Dedication and Park Impact Ordinances. For new housing developments, the City requires the dedication of 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 new residents, development/renovation of a new or existing park, payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination of the three. Under State Law and the City's Municipal Code, when in-lieu fees are used for park or recreational development, the fees must be used on a facility that benefits the development that paid the fees. For neighborhood facilities the City currently uses a nexus of  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile and for community facilities the City uses a nexus of 2 miles as set forth in the original Greenprint. Neighborhood facilities, such as neighborhood parks are typically 1 to 2 acres in size and include standard amenities such as playgrounds, picnic tables and open turf areas. Community facilities are larger in size and include amenities such as sports fields, dog parks, community centers, skateparks or community gardens.

The Update proposes keeping the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile nexus standard for neighborhood serving facilities. However, in order to better create a balanced park system which includes community serving amenities to serve a broader range of residents, the Update proposes to expand the nexus for the use of parkland in-lieu fees on community serving amenities. The Update proposes that parkland fees can be spent on community serving elements at a maximum of 3 mile radius (measured on a straight line on a map). Reasons for this proposed expansion include:

- As part of the Greenprint Update, a telephone survey was performed, which indicated that 70% of residents surveyed were willing to travel up to 10 minutes to a recreational facility, which is approximately three driving miles on a straight line map.
- Analysis of Fall 2009 community center sign ups shows approximately 50% of the users at four community centers analyzed live more than 2 miles away from the facility;
- Expanding the nexus on these amenities allows the City to create a balanced park system by ensuring that each planning area has these key facilities;
- It allows greater flexibility to fund the trails program and sets up the network to connect underserved locations to existing park facilities and destinations; and
- Expands the ability to construct community serving amenities such as community centers and sports fields to increase the ability to become financially sustainable and serve a broader customer base.

State law and the City's Municipal Code require any fees collected pursuant to the Park Impact Ordinance and Parkland Dedication Ordinance to benefit the development that generated the fees. Therefore, it is important to note that even though the nexus is proposed to be expanded from 2 miles to 3 miles, expenditures of the fees will still need to benefit the development that generated the fees. The draft Update also proposed to expand the nexus beyond three miles to be able to use parkland fees anywhere within the Planning Area that generated the fees. Following further analysis, Staff is no longer proposing this as part of the Final Greenprint 2009 Update. An analysis of the size of the Planning Areas shows that it is unlikely that this situation would occur and this could hamper the enforcement of the Parkland Dedication/Park Impact Ordinances. At the September 8, 2009 Study Session, the City Council voiced concurrence with the above recommendations.

### **Parks and Recreation Commission Feedback**

On October 7, 2009, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) reviewed the proposed Update and draft Errata Sheet and recommended approval of the proposed Update with the changes on the Errata Sheet. In addition, the PRC also made a motion to request the following:

1. Eliminate the ellipse indicating further study of the Willow Glen Spur Trail and make the text stronger that the abandoned rail line is the preferred alignment;
2. Strengthen the language regarding future rail abandonments to trails conversions;
3. Outside of the Greenprint process:
  - a. Work with the General Plan Task Force and the City/Schools Collaborative on methods to better ensure access to elementary and middle school recreational facilities;
  - b. Continue to be creative in development of facilities in urban environments;
  - c. Work towards a mechanism to purchase large tracts of land for future park facilities.

Item number 1 above is in regards to the ellipse on Page 102 of the draft Update surrounding the Willow Glen Spur rail line which indicates that the City should "Study area for most feasible east-west connection." Staff is proposing to keep the language and the ellipse as it is shown in the draft document. The original Greenprint showed a line along this abandoned rail line indicating a

potential future trail and the Update continues to show this line on the map. It is critical for the City to maintain an east-west connection from the Guadalupe River to the Coyote Creek trail networks. However, it is also important to continue to study alternative alignments to ensure that the City can achieve the most advantageous future connection under the circumstances so staff is recommended to keep the notation as shown on the draft Update.

Item number 2 above requested stronger language in the Update regarding conversion of abandoned rail line right-of-ways into trails. The draft Greenprint 2009 Update (Page 23) states that the “Abandoned railroad right-of-ways should be evaluated for acquisition and development as trails when funding, functionality and public safety result from the built trail and where the right-of-way aligns with the City’s Trail System.” The PRC would like to strengthen this language in the final Update. After further analysis, Staff is proposing to keep the language as it is shown in the draft Update. Staff realizes the importance of evaluating each and every right-of-way for its potential benefits to the City’s trail and transportation network and will continue to place a priority on these opportunities. However, staff does not support language that would mandate any study or evaluation of every abandoned railroad right-of-ways. This could hamper the City’s flexibility and create administrative burden and unintentional consequences.

Staff concurs with the motions made by the PRC under item three above and will continue to work on methods to secure land and creativity in park design. The PRC also echoed the position of the City Council (during the Study Session) and the General Plan Task Force (at their September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting) in indicating that while it is acceptable to count schools as part of the 3.5 acres per thousand resident service level goal, that there needs to be stronger language regarding access to K-8 school grounds. Staff will continue to work with the PRC regarding this issue.

### **Additional Feedback**

Staff conducted a thorough outreach process that almost mirrored the original 2000 Greenprint process of community meetings in each Council District, citywide meetings and the 1,000 person telephone survey. The document has been posted on line for comments since early July. Since publishing the draft Update in July, we have received over 185 comments and conducted two community meetings in September of 2009, before bringing the Update to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Neighborhood Services and Education Committee for approval. Attachment D provides a summary of the comments received as well as staff’s responses to how, and if, these comments will be incorporated into the Final Update.

### **Repeal City Council Policies 1-6 and 6-8**

There are two existing City Council policies (1-6 and 6-8) which were adopted in the 1970s and have not been updated since adoption. Staff is recommending that Council repeal the Council policies and the concepts included in these policies will be incorporated into the Update. The reason for this is that the Greenprint is used by PRNS as the guiding document for capital investments so as opposed to having to refer to separate policies on the use of Construction and Conveyance Tax (C&C) funds or on partnering with schools, it is more efficient to have it all incorporated for Staff’s reference into the Greenprint.



On July 5, 1972, the City Council adopted Council Policy 1-6 titled “Parks and Recreation Priority for Expenditure of Funds Collected from the Construction Tax and Property Conveyance Tax.” The policy was designed to give guidelines and priorities to PRNS in the acquisition of parkland and the development of park and school playground land from funds made available from the Construction and Conveyance Taxes. It laid out seven types of expenditures that should be considered for expenditures of these funds ranging from land acquisition to development of school playgrounds. As part of the Update, Action Plans were developed for each Planning Area listing the priority projects. In general, these priorities align with those listed in the existing Policy 1-6 but they are more specific to the respective Planning Areas. In addition, each Planning Area has the ultimate goal of achieving all of the elements of the “balanced park system.” In order to ensure consistency amongst documents, staff proposes to repeal Council Policy 1-6. Staff proposes that the City should allocate C&C revenues to the priorities laid out in the respective Urban Planning Area action plans set forth in Chapter 5 of the proposed Update. Priority for expenditure of these funds should be towards the City’s inventory of park and recreational facilities. However, this does not preclude the use of the funds for strategic new development opportunities.

On November 1, 1977, the City Council also adopted Council Policy 6-8 titled “City Improvement of School Sites for Public Recreation.” The purpose of this policy was to provide guidance in investments for the improvement of school sites for public recreation and to encourage school districts and the City to cooperate in the joint planning, development and use of school areas and facilities for public playground and recreation purposes as a supplement to the City’s park and recreation system. As mentioned in the proposed Greenprint Update, the lack of available space for new park facilities, especially sports fields, requires that the City continue to partner with school districts. Recent joint use agreements entered into by the City with school districts have followed the intent of Council Policy 6-8 but have included specific provisions to ensure that the City has access equivalent to it’s investment in the project. By including this in the Update, staff can avoid duplication of documents and follow the Greenprint for guidance on joint use agreements moving forward as opposed to having an additional Council policy to follow. Moving forward, the City should continue to look for opportunities to invest C&C revenues, Park Trust and other funding in joint projects on school district property as long as there is a written agreement which provides for specific terms related to public use including identified hours.

The above policy changes are discussed in further detail in the draft Greenprint 2009 Update on Pages 34 and 37, respectively.

## **POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

### ***Alternative #1: Do not approve the Greenprint 2009 Update***

**Pros:** None

**Cons:** Staff and Council will not have an updated document to guide investments in Park and Recreation facilities.

**Reason for not recommending:** As mentioned in the background section of this document, the original 2000 Greenprint served its purpose and, since so many changes have taken place, is no longer useful as a guiding document for investments in Park and Recreation facilities. By approving the Greenprint 2009 Update, the City will have a document to guide investments over the next decade.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

Staff has met the outreach requirements for Criterion 3. Staff conducted a thorough outreach process that with community meetings in each Council District, citywide meetings, and the 1,000 person telephone survey. The document has been posted on line for comments since early July. To date we have received over 185 comments ([Attachment D](#)) and conducted two community meetings in September of 2009, before bring the *Greenprint* to the Parks and Recreation Commission, Neighborhood Services and Education Committee and City Council.

This memorandum, along with the draft Greenprint 2009 Update, final Errata Sheet and comments received to date, will be posted on the City's website for the November 12, 2009 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement and the City Manager's Budget Office.

### **FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT**

This Project is consistent with the Council-approved Budget Strategy Economic Recovery section in that it will spur construction spending in our local economy.

## **COST IMPLICATIONS**

The Urban Planning Area Action Plans in the Greenprint 2009 Update only include commitments which are already reflected in the Adopted 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Program and in the associated General Fund forecast. Priority projects which are not funded clearly listed as “unfunded” in the Action Plans and the Greenprint indicates that the City will need to identify operations and maintenance, as well as capital, funding for these projects when they are proposed to move forward. In addition, staff has provided a summary table (Attachment E) indicating the future operations and maintenance costs associates with completing each item towards a balanced park system to ensure that staff, Council, and the public are aware of the cost implications of future decisions to fund projects.

## **CEQA**

Addendum to an environmental impact report (Attachment F) PP08-284

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For questions please contact Matt Cano, Division Manager, at (408) 535-3580.

Attachment A: Final Greenprint 2009 Update Errata Sheet  
Attachment B: September 8, 2009 Council Study Session Greenprint Memorandum  
Attachment C: Informational Memo to City Council Summarizing September 8, 2009 Study Session  
Attachment D: Summary of Public Comments Received  
Attachment E: Estimated Operational and Maintenance Costs for a Planning Area  
Attachment F: Addendum to an Environmental Impact Report