

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
COUNCIL POLICY

SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT ON INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS & PRIORITIES
POLICY NO.: 000-32
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

BACKGROUND:

In 2012, Public Works staff, before drafting the Fiscal Year 2014 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget, conducted the first-ever public process to gain community input on infrastructure suggestions and priorities. The public process was organized under the Community Planners Committee (CPC) and implemented by the community planning groups. Despite a shortened timeline and a steep learning curve, the City's community planning groups conducted public outreach, provided a forum for discussion, and built consensus for recommendations. These community priorities were submitted to the City for consideration in the upcoming budget.

The Council has long recognized public participation and collaboration enhances its effectiveness, expands its range of options, and improves the quality of its decisions. Furthermore, the Council recognizes knowledge and talent are widely dispersed throughout our City, and all benefit when those skills and abilities are directed toward common goals. Along with City staff expertise, the public has an important role in developing the City's CIP.

In 1976, community planning groups were formed by Council Policy 600-24 and recognized by the Council to provide ground level organization for every neighborhood within the City of San Diego (City) as well as make recommendations to the Council and City staff. Planning groups are voluntarily created and maintained by members of their communities, provide democratic elections of their boards, and are subject to California's Open Meeting Law - the Ralph M. Brown Act ("Brown Act"). The CPC was formed under Council Policy 600-09 to advise the Council on citywide matters and consists of the chairs of the planning groups.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to formalize a role and process for neighborhood input on infrastructure needs and priorities for consideration in the City's multi-year infrastructure plan, which is the blueprint for the annual CIP budget. It is intended the process be administratively efficient, structurally predictable, and result in timely community input. This policy is also intended to underscore the importance of citywide public understanding and outreach for the CIP, as well as the need to communicate in various formats to reach all San Diegans.

In developing its multi-year infrastructure plan, the City will consider the neighborhood input collected under this policy along with expert knowledge, judgment, and objective data and information on capital needs provided by City staff that is consistent with Asset Management policies and Council Policy 800-14 on CIP Prioritization.

POLICY:

Neighborhood input on infrastructure needs and priorities shall be overseen by the CPC and implemented through the community planning groups. The process shall provide for public engagement that is responsive to the needs of all of its communities, neighborhoods, and residents; and encourages full, effective, and equitable participation.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. In its executive and legislative role, the City shall:
 - a. Initiate the annual community input process with a citywide public outreach effort.
 - b. Assist planning groups in expanding their public education, outreach, and participation efforts.
 - c. Provide City data in user-friendly and accessible formats including:
 1. All City data on current CIP projects and identified infrastructure needs by community planning area
 - i. The City shall make this information accessible via a geographic information system on the City's website.
 - d. Conduct CIP training sessions for planning groups, community leaders, and the general public. Within the constraints of staffing and budget, hold a training session in each council district.
 - e. Bi-annually review and update, if necessary, Council Policy 800-14 "Prioritizing CIP Projects" to reflect the changing needs of the City and its residents.
 - f. Maintain and annually update the Independent Budget Analyst's "Citizen's Guide to the Capital Improvements Program."
 - g. Ensure that one or more of the following attend each meeting of each community planning group during the input process: Mayoral staff, Council staff, IBA staff, CPC Chair.
 - h. Through each respective council office, issue a formal response to each community planning group regarding its annual submittals upon adoption of each multi-year infrastructure plan and/or annual CIP budget so that the public understands why a recommendation was not included or funded.
 - i. Through the Council's Infrastructure Committee, with input from the CPC, community planning groups, and the Council offices, conduct annual public review of this policy and its implementation to identify strengths as well as areas needing improvement including consideration of adequate resources.
2. In its advisory capacity, the Community Planners Committee (CPC) shall:
 - a. Work with the City and the planning groups to improve implementation of this policy including:
 1. Provide support when requested by individual planning groups;
 2. Develop a standardized manner to collect and submit the recommendations and lessons learned;
 3. Partner with other stakeholder groups to enhance public outreach and direct public participation via planning group meetings;

4. Gather, assemble, and submit the community planning group recommendations to the City by October 1st of each year without evaluating or filtering each group's recommendations.
 5. Gather, assemble, and submit the community planning group recommendations regarding "lessons learned" to the Infrastructure Committee by March 1st of each year to ensure continuous improvement for this policy and its implementation.
3. In its advisory capacity, each Community Planning Group shall:
- a. Start the community input process in July in order to allow as much time for outreach, input, deliberation and consensus-building prior to the October 1st submittal deadline.
 - b. Conduct public outreach above and beyond Brown Act and Council Policy 600-24 requirements to obtain input from participants that reflects the diversity of the City's neighborhoods. Consideration shall be given to removing traditional barriers to participation including: day, time, and location of meetings; translation services; and inclusion of other community-oriented organizations.
 - c. Provide outreach for and hold two (2) or more public hearings to gain community input.
 - d. Through outreach, discussion, deliberation, and public input, develop consensus on recommendations, taking inspiration from the following:
 1. Prior years' community recommendations.
 2. Existing CIP projects that have not been funded or need additional funding in order to proceed.
 3. Public Facilities Financing Plans.
 4. Projects identified as documented and validated infrastructure needs by City staff.
 5. "New" projects that have not previously been considered by the City.
 - e. Submit recommendations by October 1st in a format developed by the City in collaboration with the CPC that includes:
 1. Name of the Community Planning Group, Council District, Neighborhood/Community, Proposed Project Title, General Location, CIP Number (If any), Type of Project, Project Description, Project Purpose/Need, Project Urgency, and, Planning Group Vote.
 2. The priority of each recommendation.
 3. Supplemental information (graphics, plans).
 4. Description of the process conducted, including outreach, to encourage broad-based participation within the community planning group's diverse neighborhoods.
 - f. Be an advocate for your community by participating in City Council deliberations during budget discussions the following May and June and/or through the development and updating of the multi-year infrastructure plan.
 - g. Submit additional ideas for improving or refining the implementation of this policy or the policy itself to the CPC for its annual presentation to Infrastructure Committee.

Limitations:

Nothing in this policy shall preclude the right of the public or organizations to directly contact the Mayor's Office or the City Council or the ability of the Mayor's Office and the City Council to directly seek public input.