

CIP Study Session - City Council - 4/30/2019 - D. Grethen

The CIP snapshot slide indicates that we will have completed 16 of 41 projects by end FY, under the assumption that several ongoing can complete construction within two months time. While this is an encouraging metric, we must also acknowledge that our Accomplishment Rate for FY 18-19 this year is actually much lower when expressed using dollar expenditures as a metric, which to me is more representative of progress (ref: CIP expenditure report for 2nd regular Council meeting in March).

We have underperformed on Sewer and Storm Drain Improvements this year and in recent years. Street Improvements have similarly been lagging, notwithstanding the recent improvements on Hermosa Ave and Highland/Manhattan. Since these are large open-ended programs, it is necessary to establish and meet minimum thresholds for the amount of completed repairs every fiscal year. I am encouraged by the plans shown in the presentation slides - but it is imperative to execute this year.

The three Master Plan Documents (Sanitary Sewer, Storm Drains, Pavements) should be made accessible and locatable via City webpage search. The body of the documents without appendices would likely be adequate and appropriate for public viewing.

The number of New Projects for FY 19-20 seems rather high, given our extensive backlog and limited staff resources. Therefore we must continue to prioritize these along with the existing projects over the coming years, realizing that some projects may take awhile to reach fruition.

The introduction a New CIP Study Category is good. I have been concerned about a tendency to sometimes rush to conclusions and make commitments to prematurely-identified solutions without taking the time to properly define the problem or need being addressed and/or to perform trade studies among multiple candidate solutions and implementation concepts. One characteristic of projects in the study category should be that a possible outcome of the study phase is that no implementation occurs and the project does not proceed further design or otherwise. Well-performed studies and concept definition will enhance the likelihood of cost optimization and cost estimation accuracy.

The proposed new project for improvements at Hermosa Ave/Greenwich Village might be better regarded as only a study category project at this phase, as this looks like a good candidate for extensive public outreach before any firm project commitments are

made, including grant funding obligations. While I appreciate the project overview descriptions in the presentation slide and the CIP project sheet, the documented rationale for this project currently lacks detail, given the potentially broad scope and impact of the project. Prior to finalization in the CIP/Budget document, the project sheet should be updated to include a well-articulated statement of need and problem definition along with a description of what specific challenges have been identified. This project would also be worthy of a dedicated introductory public presentation if possible.

We should also be careful not to overemphasize the role of special/grant funding as rationale for the Hermosa/Greenwich project. In doing so, we may do ourselves more harm than the funds are worth by allowing special/grant-funded activities to distract us from performing and completing on (what would otherwise be) higher-priority projects in a timely manner. On the other hand, if we have a long enough time window to execute before funds expiration, this may be manageable, and I do appreciate that it can be difficult to ignore such funding opportunities.

The proposed new project for Parking Lot A as described in the presentation slide includes “incorporating parking spaces on 11th Street and Beach Drive”. I would appreciate hearing a more detailed explanation of this aspect during the meeting, including whether this includes any of the parking on the south side of 11th Street. It would be useful hear more about the origin of this project including what/who is driving it beyond ADA improvements and the downtown lighting assessment.

I see that the proposed new project for Parking Lot C Structural Assessment appropriately falls into the Study category at this time, presumably with the need for additional project scope and physical implementation pending study results.

There should be a slide included to recognize the Community Theater Needs Assessment as a new CIP. Even though this item came to City Council already, this should be included in order to make this package comprehensive as an annually-provided data product. At least inclusion as a Supplemental would help if it is easier than revising the package.

Please consider retention of the FY prefixes as part of the CIP project nomenclature. Inclusion of Fiscal Year Prefixes for CIP Project Numbers is useful to help keep track of the many CIPs listed in the project status reports. As a regular reviewer, I can attest that there can be a tendency for confusion among the many project types that have similar titles and description keywords (e.g., ADA improvements, PCH improvements, street/sewer improvements), so the prefixes serve to enhance uniqueness. The

prefixes also provide valuable historical context including the ability to gauge progress. Such historical context can be especially useful due to the inherent multi-year nature of many projects. It also makes it easier to perform a historical project search of prior year budget/financial documents by indicating how far back to go in time.

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P.S. This letter is submitted individually and not on behalf of the entire Commission.