



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 12111)

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 3/22/2021

Summary Title: Update & Direction on Community and Economic Recovery Workplan

Title: Approval of Revised Community and Economic Recovery Workplan and Budget Amendment in the General Fund

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Administrative Services

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council approval of the City of Palo Alto's Community and Economic Recovery (CER) workplan, including the revised recommended prioritized projects contained within the four CER elements: Managing through the pandemic, Community wellness and wellbeing, Focused business support, and City priority initiatives and approval of an amendment to the FY 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance in the General Fund by:

- i) Decreasing the COVID-19 Recovery: Contact Tracing expense appropriation by \$50,000 and
- ii) Increasing the COVID-19 Recovery: Business and Communication Support expense appropriation by \$50,000.

The appropriation action requires a simple majority for approval.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through several conversations with the City Council in 2020 and 2021, the City has identified several recommended priority projects and work items related to Community and Economic Recovery. At the City Council meeting on January 25, 2021 the initial list of work items was presented for discussion and feedback from the City Council through City Manager's Report (CMR) [11967](#). On January 30, 2021 the City Council held its annual priority setting session, where it affirmed the importance of Community and Economic Recovery and approved three other priorities. Social Justice, Climate Change Protection and Adaptation, and Housing for Social and Economic Balance were the additional priorities approved on January 30, 2021. Each of these new City Council priorities had appeared in some form on the initial Community and Economic Recovery workplan list that was presented on January 25, 2021. Based on City Council feedback at the January 25, 2021 discussion and the establishment of the three additional priorities discussed above, staff has revised the list of CER work items for City Council

consideration. The work plan elements proposed through this report connect to Council priorities, ensure workplan elements directly align with Community and Economic Recovery and are prioritized to ensure organization support and capacity to further these efforts in the coming year and beyond, where anticipated. This represents a highly ambitious workplan that will test the City's ability to successfully complete the tasks involved.

Following up from the City Council direction on January 25, 2021, this report seeks approval of the revised Community and Economic Recovery workplan and further discussion on certain policy areas and projects contained in the workplan.

An annotated version of the table presented to the City Council at the January 25, 2021 meeting with the four focus areas and individual work items for each, as well as the additional items added by the City Council in that discussion, is included as attachment A. The updated table visually maps out the changes from the January 25 workplan as it was presented then to this refined list, incorporating Council input and direction.

The refined list of individual projects, noted as a through k, are discussed in greater detail in this report as Attachment B. This attachment includes the information originally transmitted for the January 25, 2021 conversation as well as additional context and updates since that meeting. This report does not restate the entirety of the background and context transmitted as part of CMR [11967](#).

It should be noted that the City continues to face budget and financial challenges, continued pandemic uncertainties and continues to maintain ongoing essential services to support the Palo Alto community. As the City Council considers the prioritization of items in this report, it should keep in mind that the City continues to provide services with significantly fewer resources and this report provides a prioritization of project focus to assist with limited capacity and resources as a result. Some of the work items detailed in this report will likely require additional resources in order to accomplish them and/or to pursue the next phase of work.

BACKGROUND

Throughout Fall 2020, the City Council examined strategies for community and economic recovery. The City Council discussed these elements over multiple weeks, including looking at existing efforts such as "Uplift Local," convening a panel of experts to discuss national and local trends, local revenue levels, what the future of work may look like, and providing initial reactions to staff's organization of the ongoing workplan for Community and Economic Recovery.

As noted, this topic was last presented to the City Council on January 25, 2021 and discussed with the City Council on that evening through City Manager's Report (CMR) 11967. At that meeting, staff presented the report and discussed the various projects and anticipated work necessary to complete each item. As part of the City Council's discussion, they added additional projects and directed staff to return with a comprehensive discussion of the projects to inform

implementation of the workplan and next steps, including the prioritization and necessary resource allocation to continue progress. The City Council directed staff to review the additional projects and return with an adjusted plan, the full text of the action is below for reference:

- A. Direct Staff to proceed with the City of Palo Alto's Community and Economic Recovery efforts and prioritized projects, community engagement strategies, and governance framework for future work; and agenda a discussion of the updated workplan based on tonight's motion*
- ✓ *B. Direct Staff to bring forward budget adjustments to fund the following projects as part of the FY 2021 Mid-Year Budget Review to be funded from the Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC) Fund and Fiber Funds:*
 - i. Building Systems Improvements Project for City Facilities related to COVID-19 (\$500,000);*
 - ii. Fiber to the Home funding for engagement (\$200,000);*
- ✓ *C. Direct Staff to amend the prioritized Community and Economic Recovery workplan and future budget actions with the following:*
 - i. Provide an updated clear comprehensive and dynamic work safety plan;*
 - ii. Identify any additional open space projects that are needed in response to the emergency;*
 - iii. Initiate and return to Council with recommendations for an updated Foothills fire protection plan and required resources; and*
 - iv. Look at how to allocate additional resources to RV parking, unhoused, and childcare*

In addition, subsequent to that discussion, the City Council has reviewed the current financial status as part of the FY 2022-2031 Long Range Financial Forecast ([CMR 11954](#)) and the FY 2021 Mid-Year Budget Review ([CMR 11872](#)). Both reports articulated that the difficult work done to balance FY 2021 was necessary and the City continues to face additional gaps in the coming years depending on recovery timeframes and outside factors such as litigation. As such, the City Council provided direction as part of the FY 2021 Mid-Year Budget Review to make the reductions included in the FY 2021 Adopted Operating Budget ongoing based on its direction for financial planning through the Long-Range Financial Forecast. The FY 2021 Adopted Budget included a 11.3 percent reduction in the workforce in the General Fund, as 83 full-time staffing positions (76.50 FTE) were frozen and defunded and 107 part-time positions (26.18 FTE) were frozen and defunded as well. This represents an overall 18 percent reduction-in-force able to deliver services to the community.

It is worthy of note that since the discussion held on January 25, COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve with vaccine roll-out including the Johnson and Johnson single-dose vaccine has been approved for use by the FDA; the County of Santa Clara advanced out of the 'purple' tier into the 'red' tier; eases restrictions on several indoor activities; and, City services continue to

expand as a result of less restrictions and staff is balancing that with continued safety protocols and measures to support visitors and residents.

DISCUSSION

On January 30, 2021 the City Council adopted four (4) priorities for 2021: 1) Climate change, protection, and adaptation, 2) Housing for social and economic balance, 3) Social Justice, and 4) Economic Recovery. As a result, this revised workplan refines the discussion from January 25, 2021 to focus on projects directly related to Community and Economic Recovery. Staff will continue to provide updates for the other City Council priority areas separately. For example, staff has already brought forward and held a Study Session on the Sustainability/Climate Action Plan and expects to bring another discussion in April. In addition, the Policy and Services Committee recently received it's first quarterly update on the Race and Equity work and discussion of alternative service models for certain calls for service. Lastly, the Council is expected to consider a number of discussions regarding housing in the coming months starting in April.

This revised plan further elaborates on the recommended prioritized projects across the focus areas: "Manage through the Pandemic," "Community Wellness and Welfare," "Focused Business Support," and "City Priority Initiatives," and seeks feedback and affirmation from the City Council regarding this prioritization and the resources necessary to accomplish these tasks. As this work continues, staff anticipates providing updates on the various work items to the full City Council and meeting with *ad hoc* groups and standing committees, as appropriate, to ensure progress can continue to be made. To best facilitate a comprehensive discussion on next steps, the initial list of focus areas and work items, as well as the additional items approved by the City Council on January 25, is annotated and detailed in Attachment A to describe the changes from the initial report to this report's refined list.

The chart below provides a summary of the focus areas and specific priority projects recommended within each area first discussed with the City Council in December 2020. Staff has developed these priorities based on the City Council input to date, including Council consensus that this workplan is the highest and most critical priority for 2021. and adjusted to be accomplished in parallel with the City Council priorities identified at their retreat on January 30, 2021. Some funding has been allocated, however, it is expected that additional resources will be necessary for some of these projects, as noted by the "(+\$\$\$)".

CITY COUNCIL 2021 PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change, protection and adaptation: Work continues through the Sustainability/Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) • Housing for social and economic balance: Work continues through the Housing Element and Housing Workplan • Social Justice: Work continues through the City’s 17 Race & Equity initiatives adopted through CMR #11754 with quarterly updates to Policy and Services • Economic Recovery: Community and Economic Recovery (CER) workplan projects outlined below
<i>CER: Manage through the Pandemic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintaining services while managing daily pandemic needs such as testing, contact tracing, exposures, and other tasks necessitated by COVID-19 is currently the highest need of the City. b) Continue high-volume public communications and enhanced community engagement on managing through the COVID-19 pandemic to the City and the Community c) Provide an updated clear comprehensive Workplace Activation Plan (including remote staffing models) (\$500k)
<i>CER: Community Wellness & Wellbeing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Support Community Wellness and Wellbeing through development of a series of community events, presentations, and engagement opportunities e.g. Wellness Wednesdays
<i>CER: Focused Business Support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Continue, and further promote, Uplift Local and other retail supportive strategies f) Provide technical support for workplace environmental upgrades to mitigate risks for local businesses g) Refine the scope and breadth of the City’s economic support activities (+\$\$\$)
<i>CER: City Priority Initiatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Further accelerate Fiber to the Home (FTTH) and pursue expanded community engagement (\$200k) i) Downtown redesign for cars, pedestrians, and bicycle travelers and visitors (\$150k, design work only) j) Exploration of potential ballot measures (+\$\$\$) k) Initiate and return to Council with recommendations for an updated Foothills fire protection plan and required resources

Current recommended projects have been prioritized based on both project readiness and short- and long-term impacts. As the Council reviews these projects, resource constraints and resource needs must remain at the forefront and staff recommends approaching each project with a framework to ensure it is measurable and the outcome is defined and achievable. Staffing resources citywide have contracted over 7 percent, and more than 11 percent in the General Fund. This corresponds to an equivalent level of service reductions already implemented throughout the organization and the community. As outlined in the City’s FY 2022 Long Range Financial Forecast, the City will continue to face extreme fiscal pressures in the near term, further limiting resources.

Substantive text describing each work item from CMR 11967 that remains on the revised list of projects is included in Attachment B for the convenience of the councilmembers and the public. It also incorporates the additional work items passed by motion by the City Council for further examination as well as updates and additional information for the original items discussed on January 25.

The chart below represents the anticipated level of effort over the next six quarters related to each of the revised recommended work items. Some items have resource needs that are anticipated to taper off as the County, City, and community progress along the state’s ‘Blueprint for a Safer California’, while others have resource needs that may ebb and flow. The darker green represents greater resource intensity, while lighter shades demonstrate lower resource needs. For example, “Continue high-volume public communications and enhanced community engagement” is expected to be resource intensive for COVID communications and community engagement until the summer Council break when it will taper down somewhat before scaling back up for anticipated community engagement.

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
a) Maintaining services while managing daily pandemic needs	[Dark Green]					
b) Continue high-volume public communications and enhanced community engagement	[Dark Green]					
c) Provide a clear, comprehensive, and dynamic workplace activation plan (\$500k)	[Dark Green]					
d) Support Community Wellness and Wellbeing through community events	[Light Green]				[White]	
e) Continue, and further promote, Uplift local and other retail supportive strategies	[Dark Green]					
f) Provide technical support for workplace environmental upgrades to mitigate risks for local	[Dark Green]					
g) Refine the scope and breadth of the City's economic support activities (+\$\$\$)	[Dark Green]					
h) Further accelerate Fiber to the Home (FTTH) and pursue expanded community engagement (\$200k)	[Light Green]			[White]		
i) Downtown redesign for cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors (\$150k)	[Light Green]		[White]			
j) Exploration of Potential Ballot Measures (+\$\$\$)	[Dark Green]					
k) Initiate and return to Council with recommendations for an updated Foothills fire	[Light Green]		[White]			

Further detail and information on each of the revised work items can be found in Attachment A, including both the information originally discussed on January 25 and relevant and pertinent updates since that discussion.

Enabling actions from City Council to Continue Projects

In order to address the resource needs for the work items discussed, as well as to facilitate ongoing progress towards the workplan, staff anticipates returning to City Council on individual topics. Specifics of some of these are outlined in specific projects in Attachment B. This may include appropriation of additional resources such as the approval of funding for consultant resources to aid in refining the scope of the City’s economic support activities that is included in this report. Discussion by the City Council and feedback on these areas would be helpful to

continue progress on these projects, while recognizing that direction to increase levels of effort involved in one area will reduce capacity to complete others.

Manage through the Pandemic

- Support AB339, with amendments as necessary, to pursue hybrid City Council meetings that are both online and in-person after the City Council’s summer break and once the state is no longer facing the structure provided by the Safer CA Blueprint.

Community Wellness and Wellbeing

- Support “Wellness Wednesdays” and other community programming efforts

Focused Business Support

- Engage a consultant to facilitate refinement of the scope of the City’s economic support activities through conversation with the City Council

City Priority Initiatives

- Support augmenting existing resources to pursue work on items such as potential local ballot measures to meet necessary deadlines, including but not limited to polling, analysis, and outreach services (similar to the resources used on prior local measure initiatives).

Not specific to one focus area but universal to all is the need to recruit for necessary staffing for certain projects in key areas of significant vacancies, such as but not limited to communications for Fiber to the Home engagement.

Governance

Given the breadth and scope of this work and its critical role in shaping Palo Alto over the coming months, the City Council directed staff to return to the full Council with updates and additional direction as needed as work on these elements continue. As resource needs further solidify, necessary additional appropriation actions will also be brought forward for City Council approval to ensure that progress towards completing the tasks described above can be achieved. Updates on various work items will be provided as often as practicable and feasible and may be through several approaches such as verbal comments during the City Manager’s Updates, informational reports to City Council, or study sessions and action items at City Council when necessary.

In addition to returning to the City Council for updates, engagement with various *ad hoc* groups and standing committees (e.g. Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC), Architectural Review Board (ARB), Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC), Finance Committee (FC), and the Policy and Services (P&S) Committee) is also anticipated. Staff will also work to keep the community informed of progress on these work items, as described in greater detail in the Stakeholder Engagement section of this report.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In various discussions the Council identified several areas for specific stakeholder engagement and enhanced community engagement for specific work items outlined above. A desire to cultivate community leaders including Emergency Services Volunteers, and neighborhood leaders to support recovery efforts is a key priority across all elements of the Community and Economic Recovery Strategy. There is also a separate but related County ambassador program underway and staff will continue to connect into this effort as appropriate to support community engagement during the pandemic. Currently, each prioritized work item is expected to include communications and community engagement elements. For example, Community Wellness and Wellbeing work items will include connecting with our local non-profits and arts organizations, building on community resiliency and other management through the pandemic would engage volunteers, and more. Staff is planning roundtable forums for specific interest areas to allow for two-way communication and feedback on initiatives. Similar to the Race and Equity work, a central hub for information will continue through the City's website, regular updates to the City Council and the community, and online and virtual engagement platforms will be used to engage and inform.

In addition, staff is exploring a community leadership council concept or other venue to engage and tap into the City's existing neighborhood associations and other engaged groups such as Cool Block neighborhood blocks, Emergency Services Volunteers. Not only would this provide an opportunity to maximize already established groups and networks and further community welfare and wellness. A broader group such as this is both resource intensive and would require increased responsibility on our community networks but may provide a singular place for engaged citizens and community leaders to tap into for information-sharing and an opportunity for those engaged to share with their networks as a way to connect together during this challenging time.

Other community engagement tools in development related to this effort includes leveraging the capabilities of the City's new website, as well as implementing a new online platform for multiway communication, that will support several priorities within the workplan such as the City's Fiber to the Home priority. These tools will also connect community members to volunteer opportunities, enhanced community engagement options and more. In addition, staff is finalizing plans to re-establish the City's Town Hall structure, launch neighborhood specific community conversations and continue and expand issue-specific engagement.

RESOURCE IMPACT

The City continues to face unprecedented financial constraints. The prudent measures to contain costs in the adoption of the FY 2021 Budget have resulted in significant impacts on service delivery as well as position eliminations, reductions, and freezes. Additionally, the evolving nature of the pandemic has resulted in persistent uncertainty for economic and revenue forecasting, increased resources focused on safety as we balance service delivery during the pandemic, and the City will likely face continued adversity and resource scarcity over the coming years.

Because of these circumstances, it is imperative that the City prioritize its ongoing work to ensure that the needs of the community remain met to the extent practicable and possible. The proposed Community and Economic recovery workplan will serve as the template for the prioritization of services and programs across the different recovery elements for the foreseeable future, from managing through the pandemic in the short- and medium-terms to focusing the City's efforts on priority initiatives even through the long-term.

To the extent additional resources are identified and need to be appropriated for recovery work items, they will be brought forward to City Council for approval. For example, this item, requests realignment of some of the COVID-19 recovery funding to ensure sufficient funding for the economic support scope work. This is a net zero transaction and requires a simple majority for approval. Through the remainder of FY 2021 and the development of the FY 2022 Budget, staff will continue to look for opportunities to reduce costs to align with available resources while minimizing impacts to the community. However, at this stage of resource scarcity it should be noted that every further reduction will constrain service delivery and limit options for meeting community expectations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The action recommended is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Community & Economic Recovery Workplan from January 25, 2021 Annotated List
- Attachment B: Community & Economic Recovery Project Updates for March 22, 2021

Attachment A: Annotated List of Community and Recovery Work Items as originally presented on January 25, 2021 with City Council Additions

The table below shows the initial table of four priority areas and individual work items presented to the City Council on January 25, 2021 through [CMR 11967](#). As a result of the discussion on January 25, 2021 and the subsequent City Council priority setting held on January 30, 2021, changes, modifications, and edits to the table were included in this staff report.

These changes are detailed in the notes section following the table for each modification. When something presented on January 25 was changed it has been appended with a number corresponding to a specific note following the table.

The revised table appears in the body of this City Manager's Report; this annotated list is presented for ease of tracking and following what was initially presented and what is now recommended.

Table 1. Annotated List of Community and Recovery Work Items

	a)	Maintaining services while managing daily pandemic needs such as testing, contact tracing, exposures, and other tasks necessitated by COVID-19 is currently the highest need of the City
	b)	Continue high-volume public communications and enhanced community engagement on managing through the COVID-19 pandemic to the City and the Community
	c)	Ensure the continued safety of employees and visitors in various City facilities and workspaces ¹
Community Wellness & Wellbeing	d)	Support Community Welfare and Wellbeing through development of a series of community events, presentations, and engagement opportunities Support and promote childcare programs ² Provide school-aged youth programs ² Promote adult and senior wellness programs ² Build community emergency resilience ²
	e)	Continue, and further promote, Uplift Local and other retail supportive strategies
	f)	Provide technical support for workplace environmental upgrades to mitigate risks for local businesses
	g)	Advance sustainability and electrification goals (i.e. expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure) ³
Focused Business Support	h)	Refine the scope and breadth of the City's economic support activities
City Priority Initiatives	i)	Further accelerate Fiber to the Home (FTTH) and pursue expanded community engagement
	j)	Support experiences at Downtown and California Ave and redesign these corridors for cars, pedestrians, and bicycle travelers and visitors ⁴
	k)	Develop remote work staffing models for delivery of services ¹
	l)	Continue progress on the Housing Workplan, with a focus on renter protection and affordable housing construction ⁵
	m)	Exploration of potential ballot measures *NEW
	n)	Sustainability/Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) *NEW ³
City Council Additions on 1/25	o)	Provide an updated clear comprehensive and dynamic work safety plan ¹
	p)	Identify any additional open space projects that are needed in response to the emergency ⁶
	q)	Initiate and return to Council with recommendations for an updated Foothills fire protection plan and required resources ⁷
	r)	Look at how to allocate additional resources to RV parking, unhoused, and childcare ⁸

NOTES:

¹ These three items have been consolidated into one new item under the “Manage through the Pandemic” area titled “Provide an updated, clear, comprehensive, and dynamic workplace activation plan” that now encompasses the work for each of these items.

² These individual sub-categories are no longer displayed on the chart; work on the Community Wellness and Wellbeing priority area is still anticipated to address each sub-category.

³ These two items will now be addressed through the “Climate Change Protection, Adaptation, and Resiliency” City Council priority approved by the City Council on January 30, 2021.

⁴ This item has been re-titled to “Downtown redesign for cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors” to better reflect the anticipated work that will focus on redesign options for University Avenue for consideration by the City Council and the Community.

⁵ This item will now be addressed through the “Housing for Social and Economic Balance” City Council priority approved by the City Council on January 30, 2021.

⁶ This item is discussed in this report (Attachment B) and will be reported out on through the Community Wellness and Wellbeing priority area in the future.

⁷ This item is discussed in this report (Attachment B) and will be reported out on through the City Council Priority Initiatives priority area in the future.

⁸ This item is discussed in this report (Attachment B) and will be reported out on through the “Housing for Economic and Social Balance” City Council priority approved by the City Council on January 30, 2021.

Attachment B: Revised Recommended Community and Economic Recovery Plan Focus Areas and Priority Tasks – Updates for March 22, 2021

Revised Recommended Community and Economic Recovery Plan Focus Areas and Priority Tasks

Through the four focus areas seen in Table 1 of the main CMR, staff has recommended several work items to focus resources on pursuing concurrently. For each focus area, the work items are described in greater to detail to aid in the prioritization of work and provide context regarding the scope, timeline, anticipated resources necessary to bring them to completion. Given the unprecedented resource constraints the City is facing, it will be necessary to focus resources to ensure measurable identified outcomes are attained and some of the proposed items that surfaced during the conversation with the City Council may not be able to be pursued immediately. Each item on the revised workplan also includes the relevant information from the chart in the main body of the CMR that shows the relative resource intensity through the next six quarters.

This attachment also discusses the items added by the City Council on January 25, 2021 that do not appear on the revised recommended workplan for Community and Economic Recovery.

Manage through the Pandemic

This focus area had the strongest and most significant support from the City Council at the 2021 Priority setting session; staff accordingly recommends that each work item in this focus area continue to be prioritized. The workplan for this focus area includes the following items:

- a) *Maintaining services while managing daily pandemic needs such as testing, contact tracing, exposures, and other tasks necessitated by COVID-19 is currently the highest need of the City*
This work requires close communication and coordination among the City Manager's Office, the Office of Emergency Services, Human Resources, and the entirety of the organization. The volume of work required to maintain services and ensure employee and community safety by remaining in alignment with rapidly shifting health orders cannot be overstated. Even though vaccines are now being distributed throughout the country, state, and county, it remains unclear when they will be widely available and administered. As such, the highest priority of the City, as an organization and community, remains the provision and recalibration of services in the face of COVID-19. The City will continue coordination, to the extent practicable and possible, with other levels of government and elected officials.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
a) Maintaining services while managing daily pandemic needs						

As discussed above, this work requires extensive coordination throughout the entire City organization and now in partnership with the community as the County advances through the reopening tiers. This item is incredibly high-priority and directly impacts the ongoing community and economic recovery efforts of the organization as efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 continue. As the country, state, county, and city progress through those mitigation efforts, resource needs will likely be able to scale back and be redeployed to other areas such as providing newly allowable services.

b) Continue high-volume public communications and enhanced community engagement on managing through the COVID-19 pandemic to the City and the Community

This work has required a fully staffed communications team in the City Manager’s Office and the repurposing of staff resources (on average equivalent to approximately one position) from the Library and other departments in order to support the communication and community engagement needed to inform, engage and support the community through these difficult times. This volume of communication has been especially important given the rapidly changing circumstances that the community, businesses and community partners have encountered as a result of the changing Federal guidance, and State and County Public Health directives and restrictions. Guidance from the County evolves constantly, and quickly, and the frequency of the City’s communications has enabled it to convey the revised guidance to the community in a consistent, clear, and timely manner. Some focus areas include generating electronic newsletters, additional blogs on key issues and events, new webpages and websites, flyers, signage and printed materials, newspaper ads, news alerts and news releases, FAQs, and other timely communication to the City Council, community, businesses, and community partners. Other efforts include staffing the Community Support Call Center with redeployed resources.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
b) Continue high-volume public communications and enhanced community engagement						

Similar to the first item, this work requires a great deal of resources and the redeployment of staff that would otherwise be providing services directly to the community (such as library staff) to assist with functions like the call center. Given the rapidly developing changes and evolutions the County’s public health orders it has been incredibly important to have this function staffed. That importance will likely be maintained, if not increase, as the progress continues through different tiers to ensure consistent communication. As with Item A, it is hoped that resource needs will be able to scale back as efforts to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 are successful and that resources can be redeployed to services for the community.

Changes to this area would severely limit the communication efforts between the City and the community and likely increase uncertainty regarding progress through the California Blueprint for a Safer Economy tiers and other efforts to manage public health and public safety.

c) *Provide a clear, comprehensive, and dynamic Workplace Activation plan*

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
c) Provide a clear, comprehensive, and dynamic workplace activation plan (\$500k)						

This work item consolidates three items that were discussed on January 25, 2021 with the City Council. It encompasses “Ensure the continued safety of employees and visitors in various City facilities and workspaces”, “Develop Remote Work Staffing Models”, and the City Council direction to staff to “Provide a clear, comprehensive, and dynamic workplace safety plan”.

Staff has prepared a comprehensive and dynamic workplace activation plan that will be provided to the City Council under separate cover as an Informational Item. The plan will serve as a “living” document as the return from the pandemic evolves and will be adjusted to align to new health and safety information as it becomes known. The plan provides guidance for key safety issues such as: preparing for facility re-opening, staffing, entry and access points, general space configuration, common areas, elevators, and stairs, restrooms, breakrooms and meals, workstations and desk areas, gathering and meetings, infrastructure inspections, technology, vehicles and building systems such as HVAC and mechanical systems.

As part of the mid-year budget discussion held on March 4, 2021, the City Council appropriated \$500,000 for Building system improvements to aid in this work. With Santa Clara County’s move to the red tier, this work is now even more important as some community facilities – such as libraries - can now accommodate limited indoor access. Staff will continue to ensure that facilities’ retrofitting and reopening is aligned with community needs and safety considerations. As this work is completed, more facilities should comply

with operational and safety requirements as the region advances to the 'next normal'. It is anticipated that some changes to the City facilities, especially City Hall, will evolve along with staffing needs related to other elements and work items described in this report. Examples include developing remote work staffing models and creating a comprehensive and dynamic work safety plan.

Community Welfare and Wellbeing

d) *Support Community Welfare and Wellbeing through development of a series of community events, presentations, and engagement opportunities*

This work item includes developing a series of opportunities to discuss many of the adapted services available throughout the community providing forums for community engagement and presentations on topics related to health, wellness, and resiliency. This could include presentations by staff, guest speakers, or a panel of experts. Building on past practices of highlighting non-profits throughout the community at a Council meeting and the Library department speaker series, it is expected that this series would provide a reliable frequency of events that enriches the wellness and resilience of the community and highlights the services and its providers available to the community. Specific work items staff will prioritize and include in this series include:

- *Support and promote childcare programs*

Staff and the Palo Alto Advisory Committee on Early Care and Education Committee, which is an advisory committee to the City, on issues related to childcare and early learning, have been meeting bi-weekly with local childcare provider since the pandemic began. These meetings have given local providers a much-needed opportunity to get crucial information on County and State guidelines, share their operational struggles and successes, seek advice from other providers, and form a sense of community during these challenging times. Details discussed will then be shared with the community through the City's communications channels. This work will continue through the short-term as the situation continues to evolve.

- *Provide school-aged youth programs*

Both the Community Services and Library Departments continue to provide programming and leadership growth opportunities for school-aged youth and teens. While the format of these program offerings has shifted to a virtual model, the range of programs continues to represent academic, creative, social and athletic interests of Palo Alto youth. Staff continues to develop innovative programs for youth, such as a mindfulness program and opportunities for safe outdoor activities.

- *Promote adult and senior wellness programs*

Similar to youth programs, the City continues to provide programming for adults. The Library will continue to develop and provide community read events (Palo Alto Reads, Book to Action, and Silicon Valley Reads) and ESL programming for English language learners. These types of events allow the community to virtually meet, connect together, and discuss important topics as well as learn and interact with each other. Staff will continue to explore ways to promote the City's programming/services to adults, looking closely at opportunities to form collaborations/outreach with other local groups.

- *Build community emergency resilience*

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) continues to coordinate with other agencies and City departments during this ongoing public health emergency. At the same time, the City is preparing for a wide range of other possible threats and hazards; more information on those efforts can be found at www.cityofpaloalto.org/thira. Additionally, the City’s Emergency Services Volunteer (ESV) program continues to grow, providing training to residents, businesses, and other community members. See www.cityofpaloalto.org/emergencyvolunteers for more information on these efforts. Finally, the City is evaluating new technologies to address our evolving budget and personnel constraints, to increase efficiency of identification of, response to, and recovery from various critical incident scenarios. Part of this focus area includes expanding community engagement opportunities for the community to learn and gain tools to be ready for future emergencies and build resiliency, specifically focused on the first few days of an emergency.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
d) Support Community Wellness and Wellbeing through community events						

Staff is currently developing a Wellness Wednesday series, which will be curated virtual programming hosted by the City the third Wednesday of every month. Planned topics include: an introduction to mindfulness sessions (with an event in March for adults and another in May for teens), earthquake preparedness in April to coincide with California’s earthquake preparedness month, and using creative media for improved wellness. Depending on the topic presenters could include staff or external subject matter experts. The logistical and programming support work can be extensive, and the resource needs are greater when staff presents the materials.

When the new City website launches, there will be a comprehensive calendar of community events that can be sorted and filtered to align with the interest of the viewer. The calendar will be kept up to date with events as they are added and serve as a “one-stop” listing of events hosted and sponsored by the City. In addition, these events will be featured on subject specific webpages as filtered calendars to help inform the community. For example, Wellness Wednesdays will be listed on the City’s Be Well webpage [here](#) and Race and Equity related events and engagement opportunities will be listed on the City’s Race and Equity webpage, [here](#). Staff are also currently planning a May Fete community-wide event, a Fourth of July celebration, and are exploring smaller events like movies in the park, and drive-in movies or performances to ensure opportunities for community enrichment despite constraints precluding traditional activities.

Focused Business Support

e) Continue, and further promote, Uplift Local and other retail supportive strategies

The City will continue to pursue opportunities to promote local businesses through the “Uplift Local” initiative and facilitate communication among key stakeholders to ensure that concerns can be addressed. This may include things like changes to physical infrastructure (i.e. repurposing University and California Avenues) or encouraging support of local businesses. Actions already attributed to this program include fast-tracked permitting processes, opening of car-free streets in both University and California Avenue business cores, and roundtable meetings with the businesses in these areas to have a continuous dialogue on needs, challenges, and adaptations in alignment with changing health order regulations. These actions include permitted outdoor business activities such as restaurants, retail shops, salons, and fitness and a parklet program. Frequent communication, education and support regarding health order requirements and mandates of local businesses will also continue. Staff established a dedicated website to connect the community to local businesses, developed holiday related campaigns, and hosted ongoing monthly check-ins and an ongoing online survey for the community to raise concerns, share input and gain updates on this program and other related City initiatives.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
e) Continue, and further promote, Uplift local and other retail supportive strategies						

Staff has continued to hold frequent meetings with merchants at two of the city’s commercial cores of Downtown and California Avenue to hear from them regarding concerns and to formulate responses to those concerns. The dedicated website to promote local businesses to the community and visitors has had more than 1,000 unique visitors. In addition to meeting with stakeholders, staff provide focused, one-on-one support for permit applications and resolving issues along Uplift Local streets., Staff also provide timely information and resources to the local business community through e-mail, dedicated digital newsletter and other communication efforts.

One outcome of the work with local businesses has been the closure of California Avenue and portions of University Avenue and Ramona to vehicular traffic. The ground-floor businesses of California Avenue were very supportive of closing the streets once outdoor dining was allowed. Downtown businesses had a greater range of preferences; ultimately the closure pattern returned.

Additionally, the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative, through partnership with the San Mateo Chamber of Commerce, the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Palo Alto, created the Palo Alto Restaurant Relief Grant program. This program has sponsored more than \$250,000 in \$10,000 grants to local restaurants. Two webinars were held to help answer questions from prospective applicants, and the application period ran from February 22 through March 8. After reviewing applications to ensure applicants meet the qualifications, these grants will be randomly awarded to qualified applicants and disbursed. More information is available on the City’s webpage dedicated to this program, which can be found here: https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/services/public_safety/plans_and_information/coronavirus/reopening_together/restaurant_relief.asp

Over the medium and long-term, this work item will have significant overlap with item ‘g’ – Further refine the scope of the City’s economic support activities, which is discussed in greater detail below.

f) *Provide technical support for workplace environmental upgrades to mitigate risks for local businesses*

The Utilities Department is currently exploring options for partnering with a contractor that can provide an evaluative service to audit workplace safety of local businesses. This would include examining airflow, air filtration, and other mitigation options for businesses to ensure that they are able to operate while minimizing risk to employees, customers, and visitors.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
f) Provide technical support for workplace environmental upgrades to mitigate risks for local						

Staff has identified a vendor that can assist with this work under an existing contract. The vendor is available to begin this work in April and will audit workplace safety through smart technology that can assist with things like air flow, HVAC optimization and the installation of a high efficiency air filtration based on American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers’ recommendations, temperature, and others. As part of the vendor’s medium size businesses (SMB) Save Program, they will also offer SMB’s efficiency as a service financing option. The program is an off-balance sheet financing solution that allows customers to implement energy efficiency projects with fewer upfront capital expenditures. Once a project is complete the customers make payments solely based on the savings realized within a monthly billing period through an energy service agreement (ESA). The ESA payments then continue until the entire project cost has been paid in full at which point the customer realizes the savings on an ongoing basis.

g) Further refine the scope of the City's economic support activities

Throughout the conversations in the fall of 2020, the City Council expressed interest in revisiting the economic support function of the City of Palo Alto. As the City Council provides greater direction on what this function could entail staff will be able to respond with options for addressing those concerns. A potential first step in this process could be conducting an economic scan of the City to assess the current economic landscape of the City and options to expedite the economic recovery while also addressing community needs. Accomplishing that task will require additional funding for consulting services.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
g) Refine the scope and breadth of the City's economic support activities (+\$\$\$)						

Staff has begun to identify potential vendors that can research, analyze, and refine a potential scope of services for economic support activities. Staff anticipates that vendor presenting to City Council to discuss options for ongoing economic support activities and iterating on the initial scope of services, which can then be used to create a Request for Proposal and engage outside consultant resources to provide the agreed-upon services on an ongoing basis. The ongoing services will be decided through conversation with the City Council and be based both on that conversation as well the availability of outside resources to help provide those services.

Depending on the scope of services, the resource needs to provide the services will scale commensurate with the scope. This work would continue through each phase as part of the City's ongoing work. This CMR includes the appropriation of \$50,000 for the initial work to begin.

City Priority Initiatives

h) Further accelerate Fiber to the Home (FTTH) and pursue expanded community engagement

The COVID-19 Pandemic has emphasized the need for a comprehensive Fiber to the Home (FTTH) initiative. Already, staff has accelerated the FTTH business case and fiber expansion plan through a contract amendment with Magellan Advisors ([City Manager's Report #11580](#)). The amendment includes development of a business case and high-level design for FTTH, a local broadband market assessment, exploration of public private partnership business models, and community surveys. Preliminary findings and recommendations are scheduled to be completed by Q2 2021.

Should Council confirm authorizing this project and the appropriation of \$200,000 in additional funding, staff will be developing a new customer engagement platform for community outreach and enhanced communications for FTTH initiative. In addition to providing project updates, the platform will enable community stakeholders and members to provide input on key topics under consideration and enable the City to gauge public sentiment for decision making. This platform will also connect the community together in a

new way further enhancing two-way communication on this and other City priorities and services. Communications resources will be needed to further this work; requiring use of authorized budgeted resources including personnel and contracts. In addition, public-private partnership models and partners and/or service providers that the City could engage with to build-out a citywide FTTH. The City is also considering offering a cost-share bundle package of services to residential neighborhoods which includes FTTH, electric undergrounding, and electrification. Project management resources are being explored and additional resources may be needed to ensure successful execution of this major City effort and would be brought back during one of the City’s budget actions.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
h) Further accelerate Fiber to the Home (FTTH) and pursue expanded community engagement (\$200k)						

Magellan, the firm that the City is leveraging for this work, is scheduled to present the FTTH business case and high-level network design to the UAC and Council in April and May respectively. The business case will include a broadband market assessment, cost drivers, risks and rewards, financial models, and deployment approaches. The next major step will be community engagement. Council approved \$200,000 appropriation at mid-year for community outreach and enhanced communications for FTTH. The City will partner with Magellan to develop a plan including a web-based customer engagement platform, surveys and focus groups that will assess options for expanding access to affordable high-speed fiber-optic internet service throughout the community. Should Council approve the business case and deployment approach, Magellan will begin a detailed engineering design for FTTH by performing a field walk out of all routes to validate running lines, existing utilities and constructability.

i) Downtown Redesign for cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors

The City continues to look at options for supporting the two retail cores on University and California avenue through strategies such as the installation of bollards and other means for car-free streets. Initial work involves examining how the City can redefine and narrow vehicular lanes and provide flexible opening and closing of streets on a trial basis in the short term. Additionally, with Council’s direction to prioritize this, staff would begin a full redesign of the University Avenue streetscape to increase vibrancy by expanding pedestrian and outdoor spaces available for use by visitors and businesses while allowing for flexible opening and closing of reduced vehicular lanes.

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
i) Downtown redesign for cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors (\$150k)						

As part of the mid-year budget action, the City Council appropriated \$150,000 of funding in the Capital Fund from the Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC) Expansion Cost Mitigation Fund to establish a project and begin design of options for parklets and other reconfigurable spaces in the retail cores to facilitate car-free streets.

In the near-term, staff will evaluate trial basis street configuration changes that could be implemented on a block by block basis on University, potentially allowing weekend or other flexible closures to traffic. Concurrently, staff is preparing a RFP to solicit proposals for design, community engagement, and cost analysis for a larger University Avenue reconfiguration that could be pursued over a timeframe of several years.

Retailers, restaurants, and other businesses continue to take advantage of opportunities to conduct business outdoors where the risk of transmitting COVID-19 is lower than indoors. This includes restaurants securing permits for sidewalk dining, dining on closed public streets, and parklet dining. Presently, the City has issued permits for parklets (both at-grade and platform) and encroachment permits for sidewalk and/or street dining.

The City Council authorized the City Manager to close certain public streets to vehicular traffic through May 31, 2021. The City Council authorized parklets until September 6, 2021. Staff will return to Council this spring to discuss whether either of the opportunities should be continued. The continuance of these programs intersects with the potential capital improvements that may be proposed.

*j) Exploration of potential ballot measures *NEW*

Update for March 22:

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
j) Exploration of Potential Ballot Measures (+\$\$)						

As discussed with the City Council on January 25, 2021, the City has a range of options available for aiding community and economic recovery. Through the FY 2022 budget process, the City is actively engaging in conversations with the community and stakeholders regarding expenses. These include both services and Capital construction costs. However, another element that could be explored is potential revenue-generating ballot measures. Examples of these could be a revision to the City’s documentary transfer tax to fundraise for affordable housing construction or a business tax.

Significant work regarding a potential business tax was underway through the first half of FY 2020 but was de-prioritized in the face of COVID-19. Should the City Council wish to revisit the business tax and/or other potential ballot measures, significant outside resources will be needed to assist in the analysis, stakeholder engagement, and polling for any measure. Furthermore, the sooner that the City Council can “funnel” potential ballot measures into the ones it most wants to pursue, the more effectively and efficiently staff resources can be deployed.

Staff anticipates a preliminary conversation with the Finance Committee regarding options for resuming development of a potential business tax and discussing affordable housing needs no later than June 2021. Bundling conversations regarding potential local ballot measures will ensure that the City Council and the community are able to effectively prioritize staff time and resources to pursue ballot measures that are most likely to reach completion and ultimately be decided by voters through the election in June 2022.

Items Added by the City Council on January 25

k) Initiate and return to Council with recommendations for an updated Foothills fire protection plan and required resources

	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
k) Initiate and return to Council with recommendations for an updated Foothills fire protection plan and required resources						

The Council directed staff specifically to identify improvements to the Foothills Fire Management Plan, capabilities to detect fires and means to notify the public, and coordination and communication among first responder and other assisting agencies – including the use of volunteers and other non-government resources.

The City is exploring the creation of a Foothills Fire Early Warning System (FFEWS). The City has gained some experience in the use of advanced sensor technology, artificial intelligence, and remote monitoring services through the Intrusion Detection System (IDS). Leveraging such technology could be a prudent use of limited resources. The City may issue a Request for Information (RFI) to gain more knowledge about the complex technologies and other best practices, many of which are evolving.

Staff anticipates returning to Council with more details and potential approaches as this work continues.

Identify any additional open space projects that are needed in response to the emergency

Open space preserves are experiencing record high visitation due to COVID-19 and the restrictions the pandemic has placed on travel and regular indoor and outdoor group activities. Staff resources have been redeployed to Palo Alto’s Open Space Preserves in response to the increased visitation to assist with more frequent restroom cleanings, increased trash collection, and customer service, parking, and traffic control. Additional resources have been needed to add, and update, signage throughout preserves to advise visitors on best practices for responsibly enjoying open space areas, clearly identify no parking areas, and identify one-way trails.

Foothills Park visitation has been especially high after it opened to the public in December 2020. In response to this increase, and to ensure the safety of park visitors and protection of the natural environment, the City Manager convened a group of Foothills partners to include staff; the City's nonprofit partners Grassroots Ecology, Friends of Foothills Park, and Environmental Volunteers; members of the Parks and Recreation Commission; Stanford University, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, and the Town of Los Altos Hills. Three working groups were formed to identify needs related to people, the environment, and infrastructure. These groups meet bi-weekly and are working on several initiatives to make the park experience not only more enjoyable and safer for park users, but to ensure impacts to the natural environment are minimized.

The Infrastructure Work Group has met twice in early March to walk areas at Foothills that are seeing high usage by pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles and identify and document needed improvements. Examples of the types of improvements include reducing or eliminating spaces shared by pedestrians and vehicles, clearly identifying trails and walkways, and improving functionality of parking areas. Many of these improvements will be costly so there is a need for near-, mid- and long-term prioritization. The Work Group is exploring ways to involve park users in helping to prioritize these needed improvements. Staff anticipates presenting the results of the Work Group's efforts at the April Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Look at how to allocate additional resources to RV parking, unhoused, and childcare

On April 5, 2021 the City Council will hear a status report on services for the unhoused. The update will include further details on the City's Safe Parking program, support services available and other opportunities to support the City's unhoused and housing insecure members of the Palo Alto community. Community members are encouraged to attend to share their thoughts with the City Council.