

City Council Priority Setting Guidelines

Approved by City Council: October 1, 2012

Last revised: October 1, 2012

Background

The City Council adopted its first Council priorities in 1986. Each year the City Council reviews its priorities at its Annual Council Retreat. On October 1, 2012 the City Council formally adopted the definition of a council priority, and the Council's process and guidelines for selection of priorities.

Definition

A Council priority is defined as a topic that will receive particular, unusual and significant attention during the year.

Purpose

The establishment of Council priorities will assist the Council and staff to better allot and utilize time for discussion and decision making.

Process

1. Three months in advance of the annual Council Retreat, staff will solicit input from the City Council on the priorities to be reviewed and considered for the following year.
 - a. Council members may submit up to three priorities.
 - b. Priorities should be submitted no later than December 1.
 - c. As applicable, the City Manager will contact newly elected officials for their input by December 1.
 - d. The City Clerk will provide timely notice to the public to submit proposed priorities by December 1. The Policy and Services Committee shall recommend to the Council which suggestions if any shall be considered at the City Council retreat.
2. Staff will collect and organize the recommended priorities into a list for Council consideration, and provide to Council no less than two weeks in advance of the retreat.
3. The Policy and Services Committee, each year at its December meeting, shall make recommendations about the process that will be used at the Annual Retreat paying particular attention to the number of priorities suggested by Council members. The recommended process is to be forwarded to Council for adoption in advance of the Council retreat.

Guidelines for Selection of Priorities

1. There is a goal of no more than three priorities per year.
2. Priorities generally have a three year time limit.

Attachment A
City of Palo Alto

City Council Priority Setting Schedule

