



STAFF REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council
From the City Manager

DATE: June 24, 2019

SUBJECT

Adoption of a Green Infrastructure Plan intended to reduce pollution in stormwater flowing to San Francisco Bay, and Amendment of City Code Chapter 18 and Chapter 27A for the inclusion of Green Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a resolution approving the Green Infrastructure Plan.
2. Waive First Reading and introduce an Ordinance amending City Code Chapter 18 Article XIV (Local Development Standards) and Chapter 27A Article II (Stormwater Treatment Measures and Maintenance Program) to implement the City's Green Infrastructure Plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Government Operations

BACKGROUND

On April 22, 2019, a staff report was presented to the City Council discussing the progress of the Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan intended to reduce pollution in stormwater flowing to San Francisco Bay. The report discussed the history of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the recent version of the Municipal Regional Permit (MRP) requiring the implementation of the GI Plan. The staff report also discussed the different ways that the City could meet the goals of the MRP and outlined staff's analysis of several potential policy decisions that could be implemented including a regional project at Red Morton Park that would meet the majority of the City's goals. The other policy decisions included the requirement to have large developments install GI elements in their frontage improvements where there are opportunities to do so. There was also a policy discussion for changing the thresholds outlined in the MRP to include onsite stormwater treatment on a wider range of projects such as all new buildings, and substantial commercial remodels (50% or more remodel of a building).

The City Council's feedback was supportive of the regional project concept and directed staff to pursue that project further. Council was also supportive of the policy recommendations, but directed staff to

complete additional outreach to get feedback from the community and business groups. After the City Council meeting, staff presented a presentation similar to the April 22, 2019 Council meeting to the following groups:

Group	Date
Chamber of Commerce – Economic Development Committee	May 7, 2019
Downtown Business Group	May 8, 2019
Redwood City Improvement Association – Board of Directors	May 8, 2019
Chamber of Commerce - Transportation and Housing Committee	May 9, 2019
Transportation Advisory Committee	May 13, 2019
Parks and Recreation Committee	May 22, 2019
Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors	May 23, 2019

The main concerns that came up during the meetings were that the policy recommendation for substantial commercial remodels would be difficult to achieve for certain projects given some constraints within the site, such as placement of buildings on the lot and other existing site improvements and structures. Staff had anticipated these concerns and as part of the presentations identified that some exclusions were being considered. These exclusions included “zero lot line projects” where the property did not have the physical space to install the treatment facilities due to placement of buildings immediately adjacent to lot lines, 100% affordable housing projects, and smaller commercial remodel projects so as to not adversely affect the viability of retail and similar small businesses. For the small business exclusion, there was some discussion about a project area threshold that would exempt smaller projects from the GI requirements. With this in mind staff is considering a threshold of a remodel of 10,000 square feet of space to be the minimum remodel area that would trigger the need for onsite treatment, as this should only impact remodel projects on the larger sites.

ANALYSIS

For implementation of the GI Plan, staff’s approach is to limit the GI Plan to only include the necessary information required by the MRP and provide a broad discussion of the general approach outlined in this staff report. At the July 22, 2019 Council meeting, a separate resolution will be submitted for review and approval that outlines the specific policy guidelines that will be implemented, and details when the need for onsite treatment is required and for what types of projects. Having specific policy guidelines and implementation details in a resolution will give staff the ability to closely monitor the progress of the implementation and return to City Council as needed with suggested policy changes and ensure compliance with the goals of the MRP. Since the GI Plan goals are projected through fiscal year 2040, it is expected that the implementation will need to be adjusted from time to time to make sure that the implementation is in line with City goals and initiatives in addition to the MRP goals. The resolution will provide that flexibility. The resolution approving the GI Plan is provided in Attachment A.

In addition to outlining how the City intends to comply with the MRP goals, the GI Plan includes the following elements:

- 1) Develop priorities and maps for potential and planned Green Infrastructure projects
- 2) Develop process for tracking and mapping completed Green Infrastructure projects

- 3) Develop overall Green Infrastructure guidelines, standard specifications, and design details
- 4) Develop requirements for design of projects to meet hydromodification sizing requirements or other accepted sizing requirements
- 5) Develop workplans to incorporate Green Infrastructure into the General Plan, precise plans, municipal code, and zoning ordinance updates
- 6) Develop workplan for completion of prioritized projects as identified in the GI Plan
- 7) Evaluate funding options
- 8) Adopt other policies, ordinances, and/or other legal mechanisms to ensure Green Infrastructure Plan implementation
- 9) Conduct outreach and education with public, staff, and elected officials
- 10) Report on Green Infrastructure planning efforts

In addition to the GI Plan, staff has also included an ordinance to update City Code Chapter 18 – Local Development Standards and City Code Chapter 27A – Stormwater Treatment Measures and Maintenance Program (Attachment B). For both City Code sections, the changes include new definitions for GI and revisions to language to include GI. For Chapter 18 it is being revised to also identify that GI improvements are required for new buildings and substantial commercial remodels as identified in Chapter 27A. For Chapter 27A, the required improvements reference the previously mentioned resolution, and also include some updates to reference more current MRP information. Since this is the first reading of the ordinance the resolution will be included for the second reading of the ordinance at the next City Council meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff time to develop and implement the GI Plan is included in the Adopted FY 2018-19 Budget. While there is no immediate fiscal impact to the City as a result of this action, ultimately, implementing the GI Plan will require ongoing funding administrative, capital, and maintenance activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This activity is categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308. Class 8 categorical exemptions consist of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. The proposed GI plan and ordinance amendments would reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff as required by the MRP, as explained in more detail above.

PUBLIC NOTICE

In addition to the outreach described above, public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

ALTERNATIVES

The City Council may choose to recommend modifications to the GI Plan or the ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution Approving the Green Infrastructure Plan

Attachment B: Ordinance amending City Code Chapter 18 Article XIV (Local Development Standards) and Chapter 27A Article II (Stormwater Treatment Measures and Maintenance Program) to implement the City's Green Infrastructure Plan

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