



Agenda Report

19-1083

Agenda Date: 11/19/2019

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Consideration of Councilmember O'Neill's Request Related to the City's Participation in an "Innovation Zone" with the City of San José for the Stevens Creek Corridor

BACKGROUND

On April 30, 2019, Councilmember O'Neill sent an email (Attachment 1) to the City Attorney, City Manager, and Assistant City Clerk requesting that an item be placed on a future City Council agenda related to the City's participation in an "Innovation Zone" to test emerging technology.

Per Council Policy 30, "Adding an Item on the Agenda" (Attachment 2), the Mayor or any individual Councilmember may submit a written request to the City Manager's Office for inclusion of an item on a City Council agenda, provided the request is received at least two days prior to the public release of the agenda packet. It is worth noting that the City Council Policy does not require a staff report on the matter, rather the request for it to be added for future consideration.

At the May 21, 2019 City Council meeting, Item 14 on the agenda, Action on Councilmember's O'Neill's Request Related to the City Participation in an "Innovation Zone" (Attachment 3) was heard and a motion was passed to continue this item as staff did not have sufficient information on the proposed Innovation Zone in the City of San José at the time. On September 5, 2019, Councilmember O'Neill provided additional information (Attachment 4) to staff regarding the proposed Innovation Zone and requested that the City Manager calendar the topic for discussion at a future City Council meeting.

DISCUSSION

The Office of Vice Mayor Charles "Chappie" Jones in the City of San José has been working to designate a portion of West San José (Districts 1 and 6) as an Innovation Zone. The Innovation Zone will allow companies and groups to test anything within its boundaries that provides a large benefit to the community. Companies and startups will work directly with the Office of Vice Mayor Jones to facilitate these partnerships. As an initial goal, through a meeting with Mayor Lisa Gillmor and City Manager Deanna Santana, Vice Mayor Jones represented that there was comfort with beginning with an expression of support for the purpose of working together and collaboratively.

Staff has coordinated with the City of San José and currently, only the staff within the Office of Vice Mayor Jones has been assigned to this effort. Each project request will be handled on a case-by-case basis and additional San José City staff will participate as needed based on the specific request. San José's Vice Mayor's vision of the Innovation Zone is to engage community members and technology companies to pilot the latest innovative concepts in Silicon Valley.

As part of this process, there is agreement that opportunities for innovation would not be limited to

the region covered by the San José Vice Mayor's Council District and the proximate City of Santa Clara Council District. Additionally, conversations occurred with the Vice Mayor/Office of the Vice Mayor's staff that confirmed such designation does not in any way limit innovation to any specific region within City of Santa Clara boundaries and that the City of Santa Clara will continue with other innovation opportunities regardless of this geographic designation. Accordingly, and within the above context, the Office of Vice Mayor Jones is requesting the City of Santa Clara to participate by designating a portion of Santa Clara as part of the Innovation Zone. The proposed boundaries for Santa Clara are Pruneridge Avenue from the North, Interstate 880 from the East, Interstate 280 from the South, and Saratoga Avenue from the West (Attachment 5). A point of contact will need to be assigned to work with the Office of Vice Mayor Jones to process and coordinate requests for testing within Santa Clara's portion of the Innovation Zone if the City decides to participate. Additionally, staff time will need to be allocated to facilitate discussions with potential companies or groups, as it is likely that they will have questions regarding access to City infrastructure, permitting requirements, etc.

At the January City Council Operational and Strategic Priority Setting Session, staff discussed departmental workplans and major strategic issues our organization is facing. After the two-day session, the City Manager received input on individual councilmember's priorities. Of the 48 priorities that were submitted, 29 were funded as part of the FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 Proposed Operating Budget. This proposed item was not included in the Proposed Budget as it surfaced after that discussion and has not been considered against other work schedules or priorities. To the extent that this is just a symbolic gesture of collaboration, as has been suggested, there will be no workload impacts. To the extent that projects surface that require coordination with the City of San José, given that they too do not have dedicated City staff resources, both municipalities would need to dedicate City resources.

It would be expected that the Department of Public Works would take the lead in supporting this process. This would be an unplanned assignment, and staff would need to determine the level of staff support and budget needed. Based on past staff experience working on similar efforts in other jurisdictions, to successfully participate in this type of effort requires dedicating an experienced staff that can work quickly to address any demands or needs from the potential private parties interested in piloting new technology in Santa Clara.

It is worthwhile to note that staff has recently taken on additional unplanned workload such as:

- overall transportation coordination efforts regarding the Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor,
- creation of a Bicycle and Scooter Share program,
- installation of a new High Intensity Activity Crosswalk (HAWK) on Lick Mill Boulevard,
- Americans with Disability Act (ADA) related improvements adjacent to Levi's Stadium resulting from a Settlement Agreement, and
- Pruneridge Avenue Complete Streets Study.

Additionally, the recent approval of the Related Santa Clara Multimodal Improvement Plan and the City's Bicycle Plan 2018 will require dedicated staff time in the immediate future. Depending on the level of effort involved in this project, it could require delaying other projects or funding for consultant support.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a “project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact other than staff time for preparing this report. Depending on Council action, additional staffing and budget may be required. At this time, there is limited information from the City of San José about the workload coming from the proposed Innovation Zone project, so staff is unable to provide a cost estimate.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office and City Manager’s Office. Additionally, staff received information from the City of San José for the preparation of this report.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City’s official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City’s website and in the City Clerk’s Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk’s Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Councilmember O’Neill’s Request Related to the City’s Participation in an “Innovation Zone” with the City of San José for the Stevens Creek Corridor and direct staff to return to Council at a future date with a proposed workplan and funding strategy to support this effort.
2. Defer decision on this request until the upcoming City Council Operational and Strategic Priority Setting Session
3. Do not approve this request.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff makes no recommendation.

Reviewed by: Craig Mobeck, Director of Public Works

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. April 30, 2019 Email from Councilmember O’Neill
2. Council Policy 30 Adding an Item on the Agenda
3. Report to Council (RTC 19-590) Action on Councilmember’s O’Neill’s Request Related to the City Participation in an “Innovation Zone”
4. September 5, 2019 Additional Information provided regarding the proposed Innovation Zone
5. Proposed Map