



# Memorandum

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Mayor Sam Liccardo  
Councilmember Raul Peralez  
Councilmember Dev Davis

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** September 6, 2019

APPROVED:

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the staff report with the following recommendations:

1. Direct staff under the leadership of the Environmental Services Department, with support from the departments of Public Works, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services, to develop an inclusive communications strategy that allows for meaningful public education and engagement on green stormwater infrastructure and its multiple benefits, including: flood attenuation, groundwater recharge, reduction in urban heat island, and overall climate resiliency, and report back to the Transportation and Environment Committee by June of 2020 for review.
2. Direct staff to develop a list of near-term projects and approaches from those identified in the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan and provide a corresponding funding strategy for both capital and ongoing maintenance by June of 2020. This effort should be informed by the engagement strategy outlined above.
3. Direct staff to include elements from the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan in projects where we apply for discretionary grant money from regional and state agencies, wherever feasible and consistent with competitive guidelines.
4. Pursue partnerships with Caltrans and Valley Water – and other possible funding partners – to implement strategies outlined in the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan. Include consideration of opportunities to leverage public and private sector investment, such as Guadalupe River Park revitalization efforts and the Diridon station development in this assessment.

## **BACKGROUND**

In February of 2018, the City of San José established our commitment to combating climate change with the adoption of Climate Smart San José. Climate Smart in tandem with the regulatory compliance needed through the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Program (NPDES), as well as the Baykeeper Consent Decree have given rise to the Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Plan, where climate resilience is at the intersection of regulatory compliance.

The benefits of green stormwater infrastructure are multifaceted, and it's clear that meaningful public education on its multiple benefits – beyond meeting our regulatory compliance obligation – is required. Staff should work collaboratively with coordinating departments and stakeholders to develop an inclusive communications strategy. The strategy should include a focus on the regional projects and green streets and their environmental benefits, as well as benefits to beautification and in ensuring climate resilience in San Jose.

What we know for certain is that implementing a visionary GSI plan is an important but costly undertaking, with varied views on where and how we should invest limited resources. To that end, staff should develop a list of near-term projects that we can prioritize, and develop a funding strategy behind that list, that captures both capital and ongoing maintenance costs.

To ensure the success of the Plan, we should leverage public and private sector partnerships for projects where we will see the potential for significant investment, such as the Guadalupe River Park revitalization efforts and the Diridon station development. Additionally, implementation of this work should include pursuit of agency partnerships with Valley Water, Caltrans, and others. Staff should leverage outside funding to implement the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan by including elements of the plan in projects where we apply for discretionary grant money from regional and state agencies – as we have done successfully with the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities grant program.

Finally, we would like to thank Kerrie Romanow, John Ristow, and Matt Cano and their teams for their leadership within the building, and stakeholders, including the League of Women Voters and Save the Bay for their engagement and advocacy on the GSI Plan.