



# CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

February 27, 2020

The City Council of the City of Mesa held a Strategic Planning Session at the Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, 708 West Baseline Road, on February 27, 2020 at 7:33 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT	OFFICERS PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT (Cont.)
John Giles Mark Freeman Jennifer Duff Francisco Heredia David Luna Kevin Thompson Jeremy Whittaker	Christopher Brady Dee Ann Mickelsen Jim Smith	Mike Kennington Kari Kent Jill Kotsur Natalie Lewis Jeff McVay Randy Policar John Pombier Jessica Potter Melissa Randazzo Brian Ritschel Alicia White RJ Zeder
COUNCIL ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT	
None	Scott Bouchie Katie Brown Scott Butler Blaise Caudill Sabrina DeCosta Isaias Garcia Romero	
OTHERS PRESENT	Lucy Hambright Marc Heirshberg Beth Huning	
Kristin Darr		

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the March 2, 2020 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna regarding Item 5-f, **(McDowell Road Underpass Repair Project. (District 5))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, City Engineer Beth Huning pointed out the McDowell Road Underpass was built

in 1985 to connect Boeing to the Falcon Field Airfield. She explained the original concept incorporated crib walls, which are designed for drainage, and over time the dirt behind the walls has washed out, creating voids. She added repairing the wall will cost approximately half a million dollars less than removing the crib walls and consists of filling the voids and placing concrete in front of the crib walls to keep material from coming loose. She reported Boeing occasionally uses the underpass.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Freeman regarding how long the repair will last, Ms. Huning explained it will be a permanent repair and that the City has a contract with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to inspect bridges annually. She estimated the lifecycle of the underpass is approximately 20 years.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff regarding Item 5-c, **(Amendment and Contract Value Increase to the Term Contracts for Solid Waste Disposal, Recyclable Material Processing, and Vegetative Waste Processing Services as requested by the Environmental Management and Sustainability Department (Citywide))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Environmental Management & Sustainability Director Scott Bouchie stated the United Fibers contract extension was approved in September of 2019; and before the contract even went into effect in January 2020, the City received notice from United Fibers asking for an \$11 per ton price increase due to higher costs. He described the changes to the contract consist of a price increase from \$71 per ton to \$82 per ton for the processing fee and lowering the allowable contamination rate from 10% to 0%. He explained a \$40 per ton charge will be added for any blue barrel contamination and United Fibers is limiting the number of materials that are considered recyclable.

Mr. Bouchie pointed out of the 30,000 tons of total waste generated in the City of Mesa, 6,000 tons is delivered to United Fibers. He added the City is unable to bring waste material to Republic at this time due to a fire at the facility and that Waste Management also sent a termination letter requesting an increase in excess of \$100 per ton with limitations on accepted material. He stated the cost to take the waste to the landfill is between \$22 and \$32 per ton.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Bouchie explained the cost depends on the contamination rate and the value of the material after it is sold, but the estimate would be approximately \$53 per ton with United Fibers and approximately \$110 per ton with Waste Management. He reported the cost to shift all the waste to the landfill would be \$20 to \$30 per ton for United Fibers and \$80 per ton for Waste Management.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated the intention is to come back to Council with a presentation about the recycling program in April to discuss options.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Duff regarding how vendors can cancel the contracts, Mr. Bouchie advised United Fibers is using a clause that was added to the contract stating if the price-per-ton revenue generated from the materials dropped below \$65, then either party can cancel with 30-days' notice. He stated currently the contamination rate with United Fibers is at 12.8%. He agreed the City

cannot get the contamination rate down to 0% and estimates the contamination rate will be closer to 20%.

Mr. Brady explained attaining 0% contamination is impossible because items that are currently recycled are now considered contaminants.

Mr. Bouchie pointed out there is outreach occurring regarding the changes to recycling, but it will take time for residents to change their recycling habits and understanding of what is considered contamination.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Bouchie explained the acceptable items are beverage bottles and cans, cardboard, paper, and tin cans. He confirmed that the cost increase is approximately \$95,000 per year.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Bouchie commented United Fibers receives material from Chandler, Gilbert and Mesa and presented their offer to all three cities at the same time, stating the terms were non-negotiable.

In response to a question posed from Councilmember Duff, Mr. Brady reported that recent discussions took place with other East Valley cities regarding the possibility of working together to deal with waste sorting and separating, but then the question remains what to do with the product. He pointed out Phoenix has their own sorting facility and there have been discussions about transitioning some loads to Phoenix. He reiterated the problem remains that there is no longer a market for the recycled material.

Mr. Bouchie pointed out that although Phoenix owns the facility and equipment, Republic operates and sells the materials.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff regarding whether cutting out the middleman would help, Mr. Brady stated staff would have to run the numbers, but at the end of the day the system is falling apart because there is no longer value for selling the commodities and is cheaper to landfill. He added it is a false premise to think that the countries receiving the material were recycling the material. He advised that Phoenix significantly raised their rates and are planning on increasing rates again next year.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Duff, Mr. Bouchie replied the City is charged by weight. He explained there is a local vendor that recycles glass. He added staff continues to have conversations with surrounding cities and businesses in hopes of working on a regional approach to solving the problem and is hoping to come back to Council with a different solution.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman regarding whether the City is absorbing any of the impact from the recycling facilities increasing fees, Mr. Brady reported if the threshold becomes too high, the waste will be taken to the landfill and not recycled.

Mr. Bouchie remarked because of the fire at the Republic Material Recovery Facility (MRF), Mesa has been forced to take material to the Salt River Landfill. He stated it is

not an option to bring material to any of the other MRFs due to a combination of the other facilities being too far away and limits on the amount other MRFs will accept.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Bouchie confirmed because of the recent changes to the recycling program, the cost to the City will be approximately \$1.1 million just for the processing fee.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman regarding whether Mesa should consider a self-collection recycling center, Mr. Bouchie replied Mesa closed the unmanned recycle centers because of issues with contamination and illegal dumping.

In response to a comment from Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Bouchie replied aluminum cans, cardboard, metal, paper, plastic and glass still have some value. He reported there is a local vendor who receives glass and is turning the material into other products.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Bouchie announced, in response to the new campaign, a mailer will be sent to residents, a new app is being launched, and social media outreach to residents will continue. He added the mailer is being held back until further information is obtained on the recycling contracts.

Mayor Giles emphasized community engagement needs to occur to include residents in the decision-making process surrounding the recycling program.

2. Participate in a facilitated, strategic planning for the purpose of identifying City-wide, Departmental, and shared projects, developments, accomplishments, and priorities:

Mr. Brady mentioned the Strategic Planning Session takes place once a year before the budget kickoff. He indicated the purpose is to provide an opportunity for Council to begin a discussion about significant issues each councilmember is interested in and to share thoughts and ideas. He reported the goal today is not establishing the what or the how, but why are certain issues important, why projects were successful, and looking at specific issues influencing the City budget into the future.

Mr. Brady displayed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of statistical data comparing Mesa with the Phoenix Metropolitan area and the United States. He commented next month Council will be presented with the General Fund and Enterprise Fund forecast. He supplied total City sales tax revenues, lodging tax revenue, and residential and commercial permit numbers for the current Fiscal Year (FY) compared to previous years. **(See Attachment 1)**

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Brady explained the City of Mesa is the lowest per capita collector of sales tax in the Valley, adding he does not have the numbers for the bed tax, but will look into that. He reported in one year the Visit Mesa agreement will be up for renewal and discussions will be taking place regarding using bed tax revenue to help offset the convention center, spring training operations and administration costs.

Deputy City Manager Natalie Lewis introduced Kristin Darr, facilitator for the discussion on City Council Strategic Priorities.

Ms. Darr discussed her qualifications and gave examples of organizations she has worked with. She stated her objective is to facilitate a dialogue among councilmembers concerning Mesa's strategic plan for next year, adding the dialogue is about finding common ground.

Ms. Darr suggested one area where all councilmembers have common ground is wanting what is best for Mesa. She commented today Council will look back, look ahead, and then talk about what is currently happening that is beneficial and what Council wants to see happen in the future. She stated Council is looking for common ground to articulate its values and find focus areas for staff to develop over the next year.

2-a. Last Year — FY 19/20: Discuss projects, developments, and achievements Council has initiated or completed in the last year.

Ms. Darr reviewed the list of what achievements Council are most proud of in Mesa as follows: (**See Attachment 2**)

- Economic Development
  - Jobs
  - Developments (Residential and Commercial)
  - Falcon Field Airport

Ms. Darr asked Council to expand on why economic development is important or valuable to Mesa.

Councilmember Luna commented economic development brings employment opportunities to residents which allows residents to contribute to the community.

Councilmember Duff stated having economic opportunities helps to entice residents to live and work in the City and provides upward mobility to take advantage of those opportunities.

Mayor Giles explained economic development is important for Mesa because it is the formula Mesa follows to bring in revenue to provide services for the community instead of having a property tax.

Councilmember Duff added the goal for Mesa is to be one of the top major cities in the United States that individuals are attracted to for opportunities and quality of life.

Vice Mayor Freeman suggested that the core services provided by Mesa like transportation, public safety, development services, community services and parks, all intertwine to provide the quality of life and sustainability of the community. He added the City needs to be proactive in keeping the City viable and ensure that older sections of the City are receiving the assistance needed.

Councilmember Heredia commented on the economic development side, Mesa is moving toward a more strategic approach in attracting more technology companies to Mesa which will bring in a broader group of employees to work and live in Mesa.

Ms. Darr questioned Council on why innovation is important to the City of Mesa?

Councilmember Duff commented it is important to be a contemporary city with creative ideas and solutions.

Councilmember Whittaker advised innovation is the future and ensures the City stays competitive.

Councilmember Luna stated there is a correlation between education and opportunities for gainful employment in the City that will attract residents to Mesa.

Ms. Darr summarized the values that drive decisions made by Council as follows: (See Page 2 of Attachment 2)

- Community
- Service
- Action
- Innovation
- Stability/Sustainability

(A brief recess occurred at 8:41 a.m. The Council Strategic Planning Session resumed at 8:55 a.m.)

2-b. Future: Discuss projects and developments Council would like to see Mesa achieve in the future, after Council term is concluded.

Ms. Darr asked Council to list strategic priorities for the future.

Discussion ensued relative to important accomplishments for Mesa's Future.

Ms. Darr led Council in an exercise to discuss important accomplishments for Mesa's future and how they align with existing strategic priorities. She highlighted Council's strategic priorities for Placemaking, Skilled and Talented Workforce, Community Safety, Innovation, Transforming Neighborhoods, Sustainable Economy and Other. (See Pages 4 through 10 of Attachment 2)

Discussion ensued regarding what can be done to achieve the discussed strategic priorities and finding solutions that touch multiple areas.

2-c. Upcoming Year – FY 20/21: Discuss projects and developments Council would like to focus on and be included for consideration in the FY20/21 budget process.

Mr. Brady stated staff is looking for an idea of what is important to Council so they can understand the values driving Council. He mentioned he understands everything listed

will not be solved in a single year but wants to ensure that staff is moving in the right direction.

Mayor Giles suggested the list is very ambitious yet intimidating. He stated there is overlap with many of the items on the list and Council will need to focus on two or three things to make meaningful improvements.

Ms. Darr listed the top focus areas discussed by Council for FY 20/21 are homelessness, utility infrastructure improvement and education.

Mr. Brady stated the discussion needs to be based on a regional plan because there are a significant number of homeless that did not originate in Mesa and there is a lack of transitional housing with services to help stabilize residents who do want assistance. He expressed the need to find a viable non-profit partner to leverage federal dollars and help support the regional plan to combat the problem in all the cities so the homeless are not just transferring from one city to the next.

Discussion ensued regarding the homelessness issue in the Valley and ways to come up with solutions as a region.

Mayor Giles suggested staff develop a plan and invite the human service community to weigh in and critique the plan, then take the plan to the region and engage other communities.

Further discussion took place with regard to how to entice other communities to invest in a regional plan and housing issues for the homeless.

Councilmember Whittaker pointed out homelessness is a national problem and the issue is the divergence between affordability versus the median income. He stated the cause of homelessness needs to be specifically addressed.

Councilmember Luna added that prevention of homelessness should be explored using artificial intelligence.

Ms. Darr summarized the discussion between Council as giving staff direction to begin working on a regional homelessness strategic plan focusing on ideas that address the cause of the homelessness problem and prevention.

Ms. Darr asked for Council input on utility infrastructure improvements and a discussion took place among Council regarding goals for downtown utility improvements and infrastructure development in newer districts.

Mayor Giles advised Council will be voting on an ordinance that will formalize the utility revenue transfer. He presented the possibility of referring the ordinance to the ballot as a charter amendment.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman regarding whether the Development Services permitting process is effective, Mr. Brady replied Mesa is doing a good job with the volume of permits coming in. He added Development Services is assigning specific

staff to deal with smaller projects to keep them separate from the larger projects. He mentioned the permitting process can be done online and the City needs to do a better job of promoting that process.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Brady stated he will work with the City Attorney and Prosecutor's Office to verify who is enforcing trespassing and urban camping violations by the homeless, adding code compliance officers are not sworn. He advised he will check from an authority perspective how these cases can be referred to community court.

(Councilmember Thompson was excused from the remainder of the meeting at 10:21 a.m.)

Mr. Brady suggested expanding on education and providing additional direction for staff.

Additional discussion took place among Council regarding making investments into the Promise Program and engagement with East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) and Mesa Community College (MCC) to change Mesa from being less educated and having lower income than other cities to providing educational opportunities that will enhance workforce development.

Mr. Brady reported the number of children in Mesa Public Schools (MPS) who are homeless is significant and there are many foster children that need transition after aging out of the system. He suggested starting with these vulnerable groups to figure out solutions to assist in getting them on the path to further education.

Councilmember Heredia touched on the connectivity part of Proposition 500 going on now into next year and how to connect more people to developments throughout Mesa like the Union at Riverview, the Asian District, MCC, and Fiesta Mall. He remarked Mesa needs to stay on the cutting edge for the next 20 years in terms of transit to ensure that residents live, work and play in Mesa.

Ms. Darr recapped the FY20/21 direction which includes items like a regional homelessness strategic plan, infrastructure improvement, reviewing the effectiveness of Development Services, education, public safety and citizen engagement. (See Pages 11 and 12 of Attachment 2)

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Freeman, Mr. Brady explained the exercise is to help inform staff when putting the budget together. He stated staff is evaluating Public Safety service models, with the idea of expanding the programs that are working.

Further discussion ensued relative to Public Safety cost-saving measures and maximizing opportunities to ensure that patrols are fully staffed and using new technology.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Duff, Mr. Brady described the Fire and Police units that are trained to deal with mental health issues.



Assistant City Manager John Pombier added out of the thousands of mental health contacts Mesa Police had in 2019, there were only two instances of use of force due to the training of the specialized mental health unit. He mentioned legislation has been changed on the Fire side to allow more behavioral health units in the system.

Additional discussion ensued relative to citizen engagement, diversity, neighborhood services, climate change and good practices that can be followed in the future.

Mayor Giles commented that Page 3 of Attachment 2 best summarizes the priorities that are important to Council and the question remaining is how Council accomplishes these priorities.

3. Review and modify, if needed, the City Council Strategic Priority broad categories (Community Safety, Transforming Neighborhoods, Placemaking, Skilled and Talented Workforce, and Sustainable Economy).

Mr. Brady inquired whether Council is comfortable with the City Council Strategic Priorities or would like to make any changes. **(See Attachment 3)**

Mayor Giles stated no changes to the Strategic Priorities need to be made.

4. Closing remarks and discussion on the next steps relating to the City Council Strategic Priorities.

Mayor Giles thanked Ms. Darr for facilitating the meeting.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Council Strategic Planning Session adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

---

JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

---

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council Strategic Planning Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of February 2020. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

---

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK