



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: 3/18/2023
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Locations: Teleconference and
 City Council Chambers
 751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Special Session

A. Call To Order

Mayor Wolosin called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Doerr, Nash, Taylor, Wolosin
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Justin I. C. Murphy, Assistant City Manager Stephen Stolte, City Attorney Nira F. Doherty, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi A. Herren

C. Regular Business

C1. Annual City Council priority and goal setting workshop (Staff Report #23-069-CC)

- Lynne Bramlett spoke in support of prioritizing disaster preparedness, discussing the structure of the government, and utilizing residents.
- Karen Grove spoke in support of prioritizing housing and housing protections.
- Patti Fry spoke in support of prioritizing more guardrails and guidance for rapid development and additional attention on financial and physical infrastructure that supports a higher quality of life.
- Edward Schlesinger spoke in support of prioritizing smoke free multi-unit housing.
- Linh Dan Do spoke in support of prioritizing REACH code updates to include electrification.
- John McKenna spoke in support of prioritizing all climate action plan (CAP) goals and electrification.
- Gregory Faris spoke in support of prioritizing the annexation of the West Menlo triangle.
- Tricia Barr spoke in support of prioritizing smoke free multi-unit housing.
- Adina Levin spoke in support of prioritizing the implementation of the housing element and environmental justice element.
- Katherine Dumont spoke in support of prioritizing diverse equitable representation across the Districts on City advisory bodies and a stipend for Planning and Housing Commissioners.
- Jenny Michele spoke in support of prioritizing stabilized labor and housing for all income levels.
- Angela Evans spoke in support of prioritizing a new ordinance requiring electric pump water heaters and HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems.
- Leah Elkins spoke in support of prioritizing a safe storage of firearms ordinance.
- Ryan Essenburg spoke in support of prioritizing Nealon Park playground and tennis courts.
- Erika D. spoke in support of prioritizing smoke free multi-unit housing.
- Alheli spoke in support of prioritizing smoke free multi-unit housing.

- Thomas Prussing spoke in support of prioritizing disaster preparedness and staffing.
- Marcy Abramowitz spoke in support of prioritizing quiet zones.
- Steve Walter spoke in support of prioritizing quiet zones.
- Fran Dehn spoke in support of prioritizing economic development considerations in all City Council decisions.
- Sally Cole spoke in support of prioritizing safe streets.

City Manager Justin Murphy introduced the item.

Facilitator Steve Mermell guided the City Council through the presentation and opened City Council discussion on each section (Attachment).

The City Council discussed the ILG article on “Attributes of Exceptional Councils”:

- Teamwork
- Good foundation for this meeting

The City Council discussed “Typical Council Norms”:

- Struggle with manual and policies conflicts
- Excited about the norms
- Good governance into practice guidance
- Communications between staff, public, and City Council
- Norm enforcers
- Adding norms to mission/vision statement or creating a separate policy

The City Council discussed City Council comments

- How to manage priorities when natural disaster, pandemics, etc. occur

The City Council discussed accomplishments

- Reestablishing programs and public engagement coming out of the pandemic

The City Council discussed the financial outlook

- Sales tax decrease due to retired and transitioning businesses out of Menlo Park
- Budgeting role in priorities and work plan
- Considering programs and projects with and without cost recovery

The City Council discussed key challenges

- Viewing some challenges as opportunities
- Bifurcating forging a vision for the City and setting priorities
- Clarifying the what City Council has “control” compared to what City Council has a “role”
- Focusing on what impacts Menlo Park and macro level impacts
- Add “meeting fatigue” to the challenge list
- Creating “enabling conditions” through ordinances
- Embracing different ways to view an issue
- City Council and staff’s role in policy initiatives, goals, and objectives

The City Council took a recess at 11:52 a.m.

The City Council reconvened at 11:58 a.m.

The City Council discussed

- The status of items not identified as a “priority”
- Priorities setting the tone for the City
- MenloPark.gov/priorities – communication page that is continually updated

The City Council took a recess at 12:08 p.m.

The City Council reconvened at 12:40 p.m.

The City Council discussed community input on priorities

- Ways to direct staff to work on items not listed as a “priority”
- Communicating to the public about item statuses

The City Council discussed priority issues

- EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
 - Leveraging the San Mateo County Office of Emergency Preparedness
 - Best practices
 - Including volunteer groups already in existence
 - Scale of resident impacts from local emergencies
 - Incorporating in the local hazard mitigation plan
 - Number of disasters in Menlo Park
- The City Council added ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT to ACTIVATING DOWNTOWN
 - Investing in Downtown
 - Revitalizing businesses in all Districts
 - Updating Downtown aesthetics
 - Need of an economic development director
 - Assisting businesses city-wide with a focus on Downtown
 - Look at storefront vacancy rates and how to incentivize rental of vacant businesses
 - Revisiting the downtown specific plan zoning
- SAFE STREETS
 - Need to update the transportation master plan
- ADVANCING EQUITY
 - Seek additional funds through grants, etc. for additional resources city-wide
 - A tool to be utilized in all priorities
- ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
 - A tool to be utilized in all priorities
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
 - A tool to be utilized in all priorities
 - Improve how to communicate with residents and the dissemination of information, especially to those without internet/phone/cell service

The City Council discussed

- Items not listed as a top priority
- Agenda management
- Setting public expectations for public priority requests

The City Council engaged in the selection of priorities exercise selecting the top five priorities:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Climate Action

- Activating Downtown and Economic Development
- Safe Streets
- Housing

The City Council took a recess at 2:02 p.m.

The City Council reconvened at 2:06 p.m.

City Manager Justin Murphy provided information on next steps.

The City Council provided closing statements.

D. Adjournment

Mayor Wolosin adjourned the meeting at 2:19 p.m.

Judi A. Herren, Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting of April 4, 2023.

WE NEED SMOKEFREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

Everyone deserves a safe and healthy place to live.



There is **NO SAFE LEVEL** of exposure to secondhand smoke. (U.S. Surgeon General)¹

Secondhand smoke has **OVER 7000 CHEMICALS** and over **250 OF THESE ARE TOXIC**²



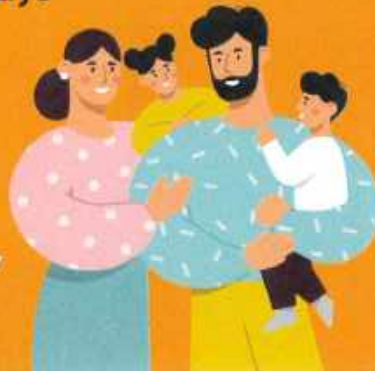
Smokefree Multi-Unit Housing Policies Mean:

- Less Secondhand Smoke Exposure
- Clean Air
- Healthier Communities

In multi-unit housing, **SECONDHAND SMOKE DRIFTS ACROSS UNITS** through:

- Air Ducts
- Plumbing
- Electrical Lines
- Open Windows
- Cracks in Floors & Walls
- And many other ways

HOMES ARE A MAJOR SOURCE OF SECONDHAND SMOKE EXPOSURE – ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN³



Smokefree policies may help people quit smoking.^{3,4}

SMOKEFREE POLICIES HAVE BEEN ADOPTED IN: Belmont, Brisbane, Burlingame, Daly City, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, Pacifica, Redwood City, San Mateo, South San Francisco, San Bruno, San Carlos, and all unincorporated county areas.



Sponsored by
San Mateo County Tobacco Education Coalition

Contact Information:
TobaccoEducationCoalition@gmail.com
tobacco prevention @ smc gov. org

Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. A Report of the Surgeon General. 2016.
2. National Cancer Institute. Secondhand Smoke and Cancer. Fast Facts and Fact Sheets. National Institutes of Health. 2011.
3. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Smoke-free laws encourage smokers to quit and discourage youth from starting. 2017.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smokefree Policies Reduce Smoking. Fast Facts and Fact Sheets. 2014.



City of Menlo Park City Council Workshop

City Hall Council Chambers
March 18, 2023 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Steve Mermell | Facilitator



Welcome from Mayor Wolosin



Mayor
Jen Wolosin



Vice Mayor
Cecilia Taylor



Councilmember
Drew Combs



Councilmember
Betsy Nash



Councilmember
Maria Doerr

Public Comment



Opening Comments from the City Manager



Consensus direction from Council on priorities is needed



Build a foundation for Strategic Planning



Today's Objectives



Understand major projects and initiatives underway that will continue through the end of FY 2023-24



Review community input on Council priorities



Establish Council priorities through the end of FY 2023-24



Strengthen teamwork

Agenda



Discuss governance and norms

Discuss the context for priority setting

Discuss major projects and initiatives underway

Establish Council's priorities through FY2023-24

Review follow-up steps from staff

Wrap up

Workshop Ground Rules



**Listen to
understand
each other's
point of view**



**Seek
consensus**



**Assume good
intent**

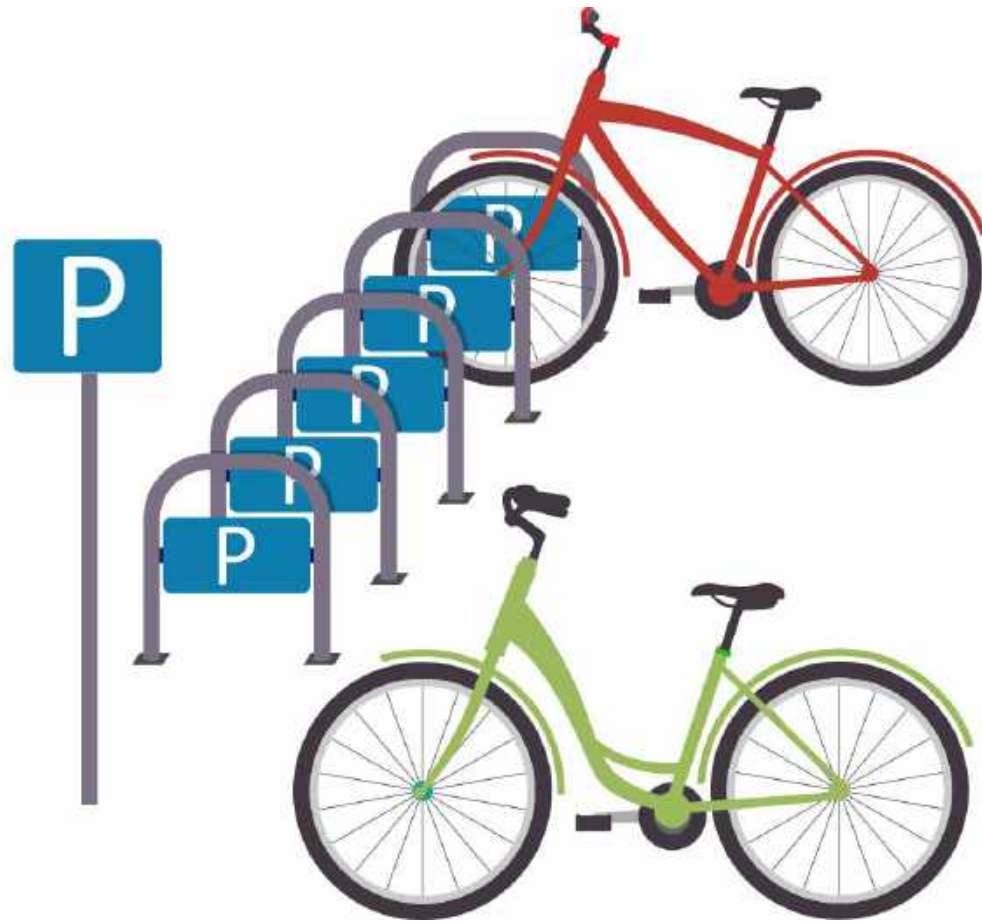


**Speak up if we
need course
correction**



Stay focused

Bike Rack



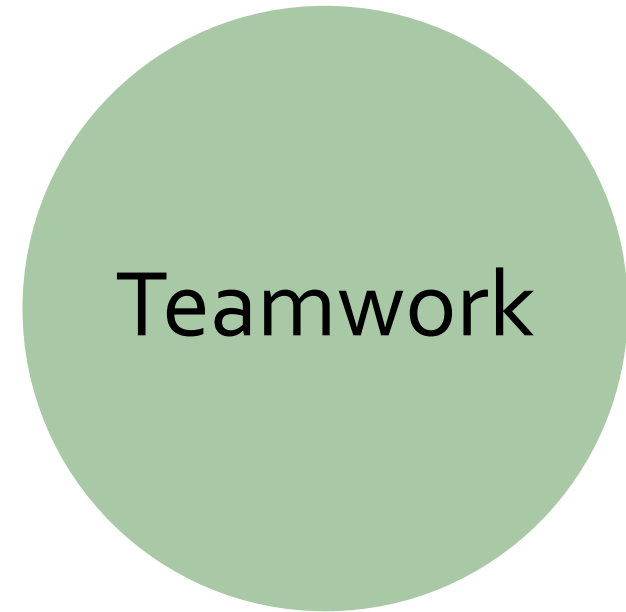
Serving the
Community
Requires

Being in Alignment with These

The What



The How



Effective Councils

All Four of These Are Needed

Unity of
Purpose

Clear Roles and
Responsibilities

Positive
Governance
Culture

Norms,
Protocols, and
Policies

Institute for Local Government

Exceptional City Councils

Institute for Local Government

1. Have a **sense of team**; a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city
2. Have **clear roles** and responsibilities that are understood and adhered
3. **Honor the relationship with staff and each other**
4. Routinely conduct **effective meetings**
5. Hold themselves and the city **accountable**
6. Have members who practice **continuous improvement**

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™
Promoting Good Governance at the Local Level

Attributes of Exceptional Councils

Leading public organizations and governing with colleagues on a council is a challenging art of community service. The Institute recognizes that many aspects of leadership and governance are not intuitive. This piece is intended to provide councilmembers and city managers insight into the attributes of exceptional councils as well as provide practical tips to help them become exceptional.

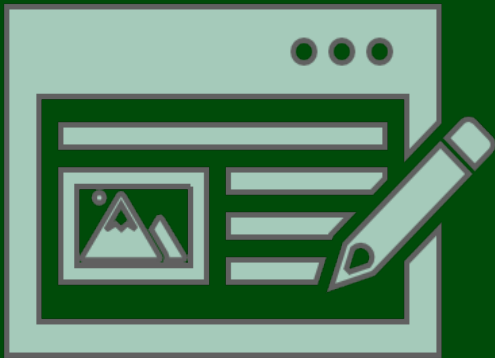
1. Exceptional councils develop a sense of team – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city

The mayor, councilmembers and city manager see themselves and work as a team as they undertake a series of tasks to further their common purpose. The individual team members work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with a high degree of respect, trust and openness. The team values diversity in style and

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Successfully transition from candidate to a member of the council.
- Become a champion of the city. Make decisions based on the needs and interests of the community at-large / the greater good.
- Develop, communicate and support policy goals and council decisions.
- Demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively (as a team) and have a

Council Discussion About Norms



Norms are agreed upon **standards** of behavior and **practices**

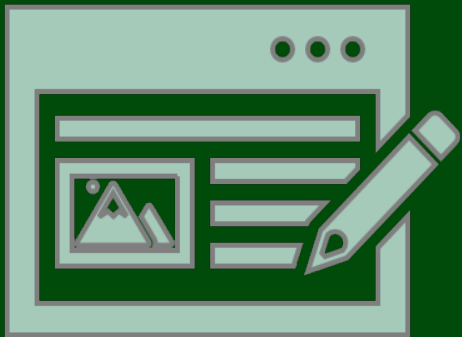
Many Councils have a set of **adopted norms** for governance

Typical Council Norms

For Effective Governance

- 1) Maintain a **citywide perspective**, while being mindful of our districts.
- 2) Move **from I to we**, and from campaigning to governing.
- 3) Work together as a body, **modeling teamwork and civility** for our community.
- 4) Assume **good intent**.
- 5) Disagree **agreeably and professionally**.
- 6) Utilize **long range plans** to provide big picture context that is realistic and achievable.
- 7) Stay **focused** on the topic at hand. Ensure each member of Council has an **opportunity to speak**.
- 8) Demonstrate **respect, consideration and courtesy** to all.
- 9) Share information and **avoid surprises**.
- 10) Keep **confidential** things confidential.
- 11) Respect the **council/manager form of government** and the roles of each party.
- 12) Communicate concerns about staff to the City Manager; **do not criticize staff** in public.

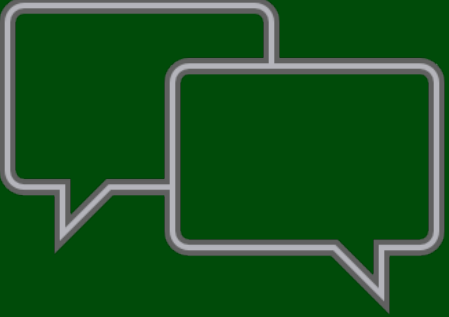
Consensus on Norms



Do you
concur with
these typical
norms?

What
would
you
change?

Councilmembers' Comments About Setting Priorities



Desire to be more **strategic**



Consider a two-year budget process



Keep focused on what we've already started



Keep a citywide focus



Ensure we are inclusive of all segments of the community

Priority Setting



We can't
do
everything



But we can do
some things very
well if we are
focused

Successful City Governments

- Respect the **ongoing work** of City departments as the **day-to-day operations** must be well managed; that takes time
- Have a **collaborative, trusting relationship** between the City Council and staff
- Set a **few priorities**, with a staff work plan to achieve them

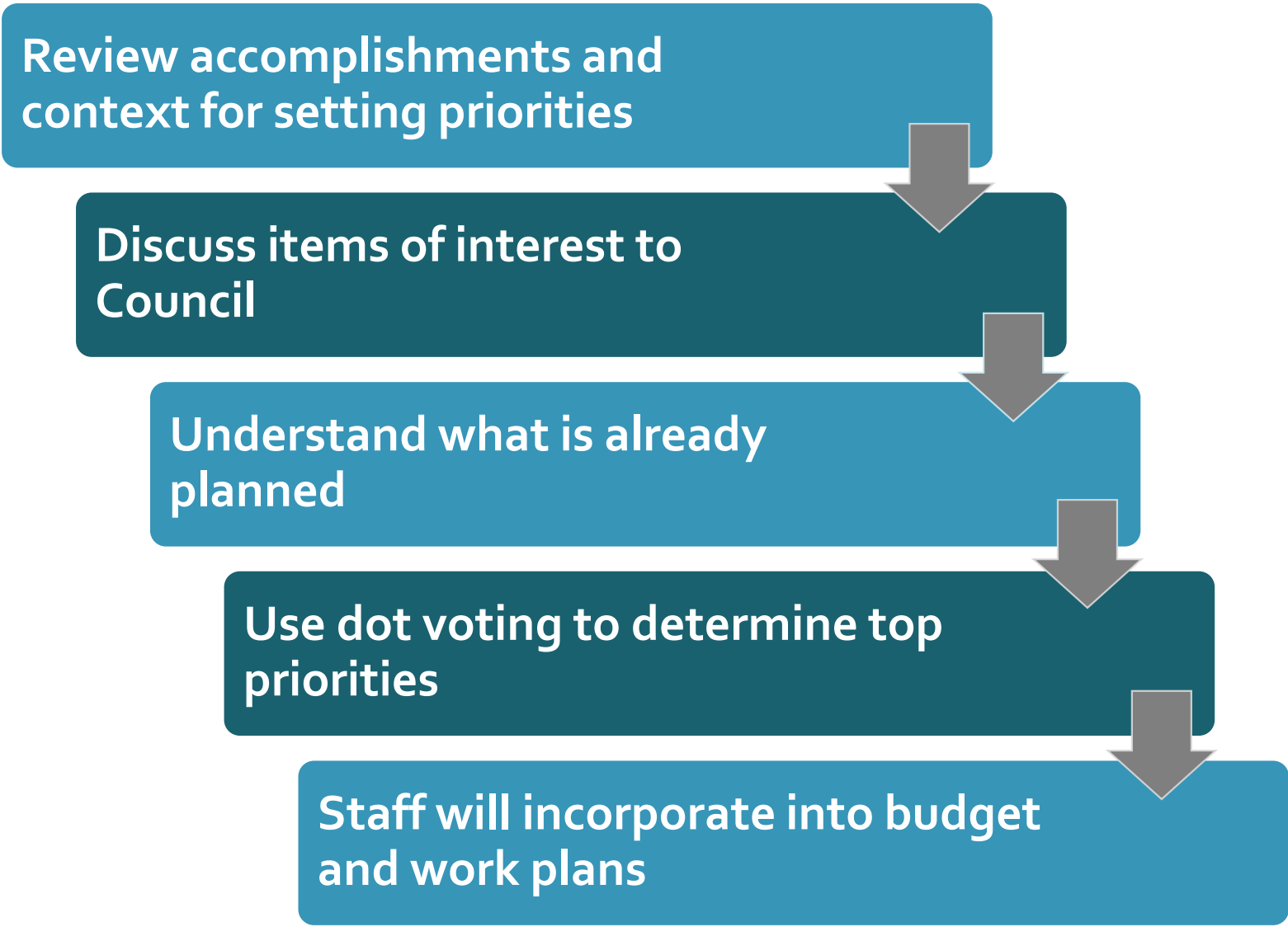
“Big Rocks”

Don't fill up the bucket
with so many small
rocks that there isn't
room for the big ones

**Put the big
rocks in first**

**Then add the small
ones where there is
room**

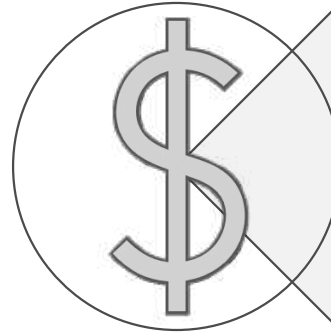
Today's Process: Council Discussion and Consensus on Top Priorities



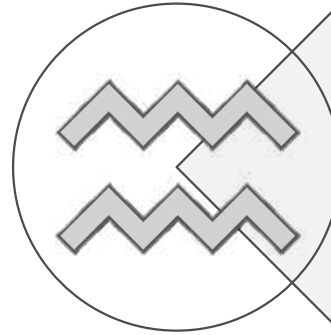
Some Key Accomplishments Cited by Councilmembers

- New executive leadership
- Completing the redistricting process
- Greater participation and diversity on City commissions
- Development of the Climate Action Plan
- Covid-19 response
- Approval of the Housing Element
- Approval of Willow Village development project
- Beginning to address historical inequities within the City

Financial Outlook

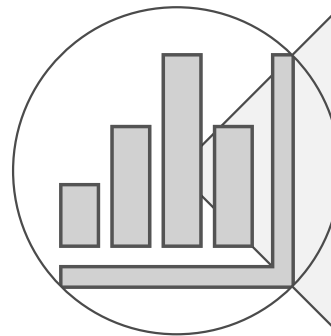


General Fund revenues have started to recover from pandemic impacts



Economic uncertainty

- Bank collapses, significant layoffs in tech sector

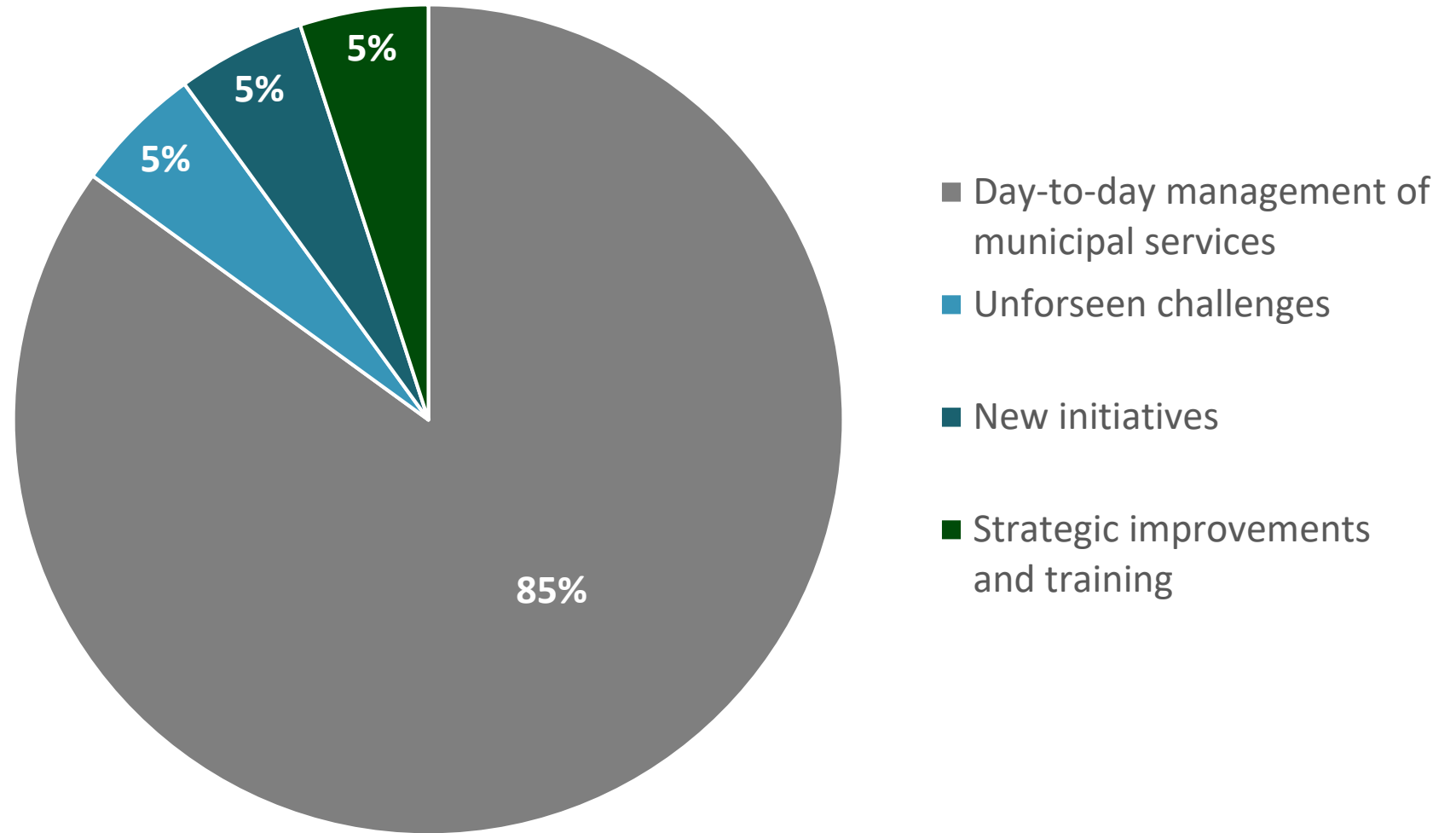


Development of updated five-year General Fund financial forecast

- To better inform decision-making

How Management Staff Allocate Their Time

Management's Time



Key Challenges



Forging a vision for the City and setting priorities



Planning for emergencies



Housing



Addressing impacts of racial inequality



Staff vacancies and capacity



Managing the pace of development



Creating a vibrant downtown



Climate change



Improving communication and engagement

Former Council Priorities

Adopted April 2021

- Redistricting
- Reimagining Public Safety
- Conversion of buildings to all-electric (CAP #1)
- Housing Element and Zoning Code updates
- ConnectMenlo update
- Menlo Park Community Campus building
- Reimagining downtown
- Caltrain rail corridor quiet zone analysis
- Middle Avenue rail crossing and complete streets

Former Council Work Plan

Adopted April 2021

- ✓ Racial equity – NLC REAL program and baseline project
- ✓ Set citywide goal for increasing electric vehicles (EVs) and decreasing gasoline sales (CAP #2)
- ✓ Expand EV charging access for multifamily and commercial properties (CAP #3)
- ✓ Reduce vehicle miles traveled by 25% or an amount recommended by the Complete Streets Commission (CAP #4)
- ✓ Transportation management association formation (CAP #4a)
- ✓ Eliminate the use of fossil fuels from municipal operations (CAP #5)
- ✓ Develop a climate adaptation plan (CAP #6)
- ✓ Implement Menlo Park SAFER bay (CAP #6a)
- ✓ Public health advocacy (Covid-19, mental health)
- ✓ Caltrain grade separation
- ✓ Willow Road traffic calming
- ✓ Coleman and Ringwood avenues transportation study

Examples of Significant Council Directed Projects or Items Requiring Allocation of Staff Time



Implement new technology to improve operations and customer service



Evaluate and improve public engagement strategies and emergency preparedness communications



Maintain a productive workforce and continue to fill key vacancies and retain talent; complete negotiations with labor groups



Advance Climate Action Plan goals: Reach Code 2.0, public education, fossil fuel use elimination at City facilities



Implement Housing Element including Environmental Justice and Safety Elements



Advance transportation projects that enhance safety and quality of life



Coordinate development projects

Priorities Mentioned by Councilmembers

Emergency preparedness

Climate action

Activating downtown

Safe streets

Housing

Advancing equity

Organizational effectiveness

Community engagement

Community Input on Priorities



Community Input on Priorities

Main themes of 392 online submissions:

- Quiet zone for train noise (41%)
- Expand pickleball opportunities (25%)
- Preserve/improve tennis opportunities (17%)
- Safe streets for bicycles and traffic (14%)
- Sustainability, mainly electrification and climate action (10%)
- Other themes: Emergency preparedness/response, recreation opportunities/improvements and park preservation, housing, downtown vibrancy

Discussion of Priority Issues

❖ Emergency preparedness

- The changing nature of threats
- Response plans
- Communication to residents and businesses

❖ Activating Downtown

- Creating vibrancy
- Attracting diners and shoppers
- Developing downtown parking lots

❖ Climate action

- Advancing plans for climate adaptation
- Reducing vehicle miles travelled (VMT)
- Reducing/eliminating use of fossil fuels
- Electrifying buildings and vehicles

❖ Safe Streets

- Multimodal: walking, biking, cars
- Traffic enforcement

Discussion of Priority Issues (continued)

❖ Housing

- Creating workforce housing
- Meeting state requirements (RHNA)
- Managing the pace of development

❖ Organizational Effectiveness

- Strategic planning
- Better use of advisory bodies
- Review of policies and processes
- Enhancing the City's website to offer more online services

❖ Advancing Equity

- Through the priority of City expenditures
- Addressing the geographic determinants of health
- Addressing impacts of red-lining

❖ Community Engagement

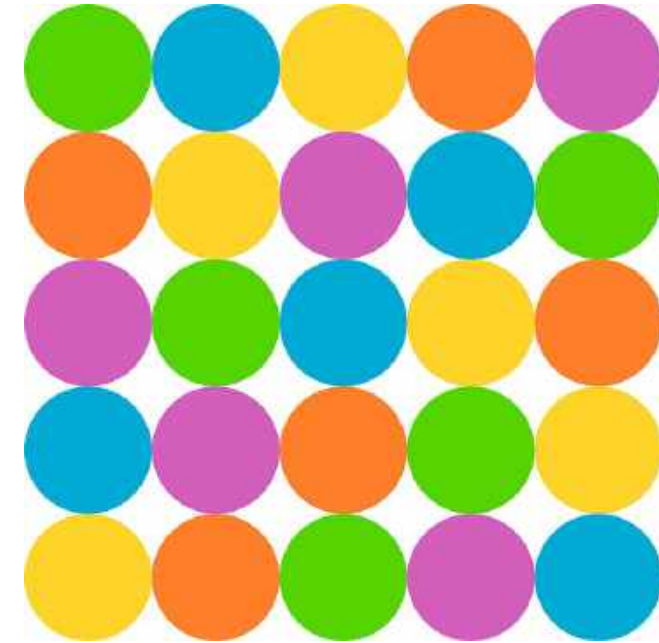
- Improving communication with those not "plugged-in" to city hall, e.g., seniors, low-income residents, community-based organizations
- Hosting events that build community

Dot Voting

Priorities to be set
through FY 2023-24

Dot voting exercise
for priorities

- Place your dot next to your four top priorities



Commitments from Staff



Align **programs, projects and activities** to advance Council priorities consistent with budget, staffing, and workloads



Build Council direction into the **budget**

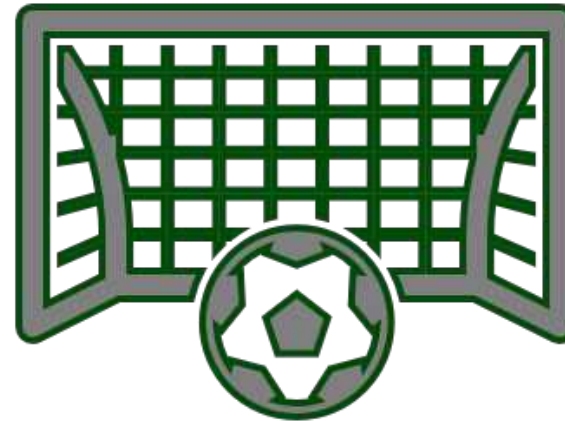
Staying on Track with Priorities



Regular progress reporting



Hold off on new Council initiatives until next priority setting



Best Practice Criteria for Adding Initiatives and Projects Mid Cycle

*Otherwise wait until
next priority-setting
process*

Emergency (natural
disaster, pandemic,
civil unrest)

**New outside
funding** opportunity
that is time
sensitive

**New multi-agency
opportunity** that
cannot be delayed

Community safety
issue that must be
addressed in near
term

Changes in **laws or
mandates**

What **comes off**
the plate if
something goes
on?

What are the
consequences of
shifting direction
mid way?

Next Steps

Workshop report

City Manager's next steps

Closing Comments



Please share a comment about what was useful about today's discussions.



Thank you!

Steve Mermell | steve.mermell@bakertilly.com

