

Summary Notes

Santa Clara City Council Priority Setting Session

Background

City Council met for their annual Strategic Priority Setting Session on February 1 and 2, 2021. The facilitator, Shawn Spano, conducted advance, one-on-one interviews with each Council member. The results of the interviews were used to develop the session agenda and these four objectives:

1. Receive an update on the budget and fiscal outlook
2. Check-in on governance roles under district structure and COVID-19 emergency declaration
3. Develop norms and expectations for effective Council-to-Council relations
4. Review and assess the Strategic Pillars in light of COVID-19, and plan for future items

Budget and Fiscal Outlook

Kenn Lee, Finance Director, presented the Budget and Fiscal Outlook, which included an update on the 10-Year Forecast, a review of the impacts from Phase 1 proposals, budget balancing strategies for FY 2021/22, and the 2022/23 Biennial Operating Budget. One of the main take-aways from the Outlook was the need to develop and implement strategies for managing the budget impacts from COVID-19, which, as noted in the budget-balancing strategies, include a combination of ongoing expenditure reductions, increased revenues, and one-time solutions.

Following questions and discussion of the Outlook, Council formally adopted the 2021-2022 Budget Principles and the 10-Year General Fund Forecast.

City Governance in Transition

Deanna Santana, City Manager, provided background and context for the City's governance transition from at-large elections to a mix of at-large and district elections to Councilmembers elected by district with the Mayor elected at-large. This presentation built on the results from two Council workshops on governance held in 2018 and 2019.

Following questions and discussion, Council reviewed and affirmed these three governance principles that were developed at the prior workshops:

1. We all care about and will govern for the entire Santa Clara community
2. We will follow our Santa Clara ethical values
3. We will follow our council-manager form of government

City Council Communication Norms

For this segment the facilitator led a discussion on Council relations and communication norms, with the focus on how Council can work together productively as a governing body. The following Council-to-Council norms emerged from the discussion, as summarized by the facilitator:

1. Demonstrate Respect (for Council colleagues, staff, the community and the political process)

2. Build Collegial Relationships (make the effort to get along with each other in a professional capacity)
3. Manage Differences Productively (focus on issues, not personalities or personal comments or attacks)
4. Do Not Assume Negative Motives (avoid speculating on intent)
5. Vote and Move On (support the outcome of the decision-making process)
6. Do What's Best for the City (be accountable for doing what you believe is good for the City as a whole)
7. Be Prepared for Meetings (ask staff questions in advance)

COVID-19 Emergency Response/Review of Council Pillars

City Manager Santana provided an update on the City's COVID-19 emergency response and how it aligns with the existing Pillars. A key part of this presentation was highlighting what Council priorities from 2020 did and did not get accomplished due to the extensive disruptions from COVID-19, to the budget, staff, community, etc.

Council Discussion on Future Items

The facilitator led a discussion on future items, eliciting priorities from Council that they want to be considered for the upcoming year and beyond. Each item was placed in one of four categories:

1. Urgent/Top Priority: These are critical in the near-term, needing immediate focus and attention.
2. Important: These are important and will be included in staff's work plans but not at the urgent/top priority level.
3. Mid-Year or 2022: These are items for Council to consider at a mid-year Priority Session check-in or for 2022.
4. Already in Progress/Ongoing: These are items that staff has initiated and will continue to work on.

Overall, Council identified 16 items, included below by Pillar and priority level:

Priority Item	Pillar	Priority Level
1. COVID-19 Assistance and Relief (food distribution, rental assistance, small business grants, etc.)		Urgent/Top Priority
2. Revisit Stadium Curfew and Fee (part of revenue generation)	Promote and Enhance Economic, Housing and Transportation Development Ensure Compliance with Measure J and Manage Levi's Stadium	Important
3. Business Employee Tax	Promote and Enhance	Important

	Economic, Housing and Transportation Development	
4. Housing for Middle to Low Income	Promote and Enhance Economic, Housing and Transportation Development	Important
5. Elected Police Chief and City Clerk	Enhance Community Engagement and Transparency	Mid-Year or 2022
6. RV Parking/ Homelessness	Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure	Mid-Year or 2022
7. Economic Support from Large Businesses (voluntary)	Promote and Enhance Economic, Housing and Transportation Development	Mid-Year or 2022
8. Transportation “Quiet Zone”	Promote and Enhance Economic, Housing and Transportation Development	Mid-Year or 2022
9. Election Reform/ Contribution Cap	Enhance Community Engagement and Transparency	Mid-Year or 2022
10. Internet Equity and Wi-Fi Enhancement	Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure	Mid-Year or 2022
11. Facilitate Economic Recovery (Related Project, TOT, curfew fee, etc.)	Promote and Enhance Economic, Housing and Transportation Development	Already in Progress/ Ongoing
12. Elections/Redistricting for 2022	Enhance Community Engagement and Transparency	Already in Progress/ Ongoing
13. Provide Core Services, Including Public Safety	Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure	Already in Progress/ Ongoing
14. Plan for Re-Opening, Post-COVID-19	Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure	Already in Progress/ Ongoing
15. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force	Enhance Community Engagement and Transparency	Already in Progress/ Ongoing
16. Downtown	Promote and Enhance Economic, Housing and Transportation Development	Already in Progress/ Ongoing

Following this exercise, Council voted to validate the pillars, approve the new priority items above and schedule a three-month check-in following this session to revisit the priorities.