



CITY OF CERRITOSSM

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AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Robert A. Lopez, City Manager *RAL*

INITIATED BY: Drew Schneider, Director of Administrative Services *IH for DS*
Peter Kemp, Finance Manager/City Treasurer *PK*

DATE: November 4, 2024

SUBJECT: **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE CERRITOS CITY COUNCIL TO IDENTIFY THE PRIORITY GOALS TO GUIDE THE PREPARATION OF THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET PREPARATION POLICY (POLICY 2.04)**

BACKGROUND

On April 28, 2022, the City Council adopted a comprehensive policy and procedures manual that provides direction and guidance on a wide variety of City-related administrative matters. Among the policies adopted therein is Policy 2.04, which formalizes the City's budget preparation process. The policy includes a requirement to hold a working meeting of the City Council involving the City's executive team and members of the general public. Specifically, said policy requires that a Strategic Planning Session be conducted annually to prioritize budget goals and initiate the City's budget preparation process.

Taken collectively, Policy 2.04 formalizes the requirement for strategic planning to be utilized as a key component of the City's annual budget preparation process for the purpose of establishing funding priorities based on community needs and the priority goals of the City Council. Strategic planning also ensures that adequate financial and staffing resources are available to successfully implement goals created for the purpose of achieving the community's vision of the City's future.

The priority goals adopted by the City Council for FY 2024-25 have shaped this year's budgetary approach and include:

1. Enhance Public Infrastructure and Community Aesthetics
2. Boost Economic Growth and Prosperity
3. Enhance Effectiveness and Efficiencies of Public Safety Programs
4. Increase Technology Infrastructure/Use
5. Increase Fiscal Transparency

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MAYOR

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LYNDA P. JOHNSON
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COUNCILMEMBER

These priorities guide budget development and provide a framework for addressing key community concerns in the near term.

CONSULTANT-LED STRATEGIC PLANNING

For this year's Strategic Planning Session, as directed in City Council Consensus Item 373, the City has engaged Tripepi Smith, a consultant with extensive experience in municipal strategic planning, to lead the process. This consultant-led approach is intended to enrich the strategic planning experience by incorporating a broader range of community input and supporting a more comprehensive, multi-year planning horizon.

By facilitating engagement through a series of workshops, community surveys, and additional outreach, Tripepi Smith has helped gather a more representative cross-section of perspectives from Cerritos residents and stakeholders. The involvement of a neutral, third-party consultant is also expected to foster open discussion, enabling the City Council to approach goal-setting from an objective and community-centered perspective.

Based on a thorough analysis of feedback collected through these engagement activities, Tripepi Smith has narrowed the focus for this year's session to eight potential goals. These goals are designed to reflect the community's values while addressing the City's operational needs. The eight goals presented for discussion, modification and consideration by the City Council include:

- Enhance Public Safety
- Assess and Maintain Infrastructure
- Strengthen Economic Development
- Improve Technology Resources
- Attract and Retain a Highly-Skilled Workforce
- Focus on Fiscal Transparency and Sustainability
- Improve Community Communications
- Ensure Continued Excellence in Community Recreation and Cultural Programming

During the Strategic Planning Session, Tripepi Smith will facilitate discussions around these eight goals, helping the City Council prioritize and shape a clear strategy that will guide the City's work over the next three to five years. These long-term goals will be developed with a focus on measurability and alignment with both the City's fiscal policies and the community's vision, resulting in a strategic plan that enhances accountability and responsiveness.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

To ensure the strategic plan reflects a comprehensive understanding of both internal and community priorities, Tripepi Smith facilitated a range of engagement activities involving residents, City staff, and elected officials. These activities provided a well-rounded foundation for identifying long-term goals that are aligned with operational realities and community needs.

Engagement efforts included:

- **A community questionnaire** inviting residents to share their views on City programs and services they value most
- **Two community workshops** designed to allow residents a direct platform to discuss their priorities and provide feedback on key issues
- **Meetings with the Executive Team** to gather insights on departmental priorities and operational challenges
- **A staff questionnaire** distributed to City employees at all levels, capturing diverse perspectives from within the organization
- **One-on-one meetings with City Councilmembers** to understand their individual priorities and vision for the future of Cerritos

This approach has ensured that the strategic planning process is informed by a broad spectrum of voices, supporting the City Council in setting goals that are both actionable and reflective of Cerritos' shared vision for the future. During the Strategic Planning Session, Tripepi Smith will present an overview of the results from these engagement efforts, providing the City Council with a clear understanding of key themes and priorities identified by stakeholders.

PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

To maximize community engagement in the strategic planning process, a comprehensive promotional campaign was deployed across multiple channels. Efforts included articles and calendar listings in the Cerritos News, advertisements in the Los Cerritos Community News, and a promotional video to increase awareness. Social media posts and advertisements were published to reach a broader audience, while posters were displayed at all City facilities, and postcards were distributed at community events. Direct emails and presentations were also shared with Cerritos community groups, and announcements were made at City Council meetings to encourage participation and ensure broad representation of resident voices in the planning process.

NEXT STEPS

Following the Strategic Planning Session, Tripepi Smith will work closely with City staff to translate the City Council's selected goals into specific, measurable objectives. These actionable objectives will be developed to create a clear roadmap, setting priorities for the coming years and ensuring alignment with both the Council's strategic vision and the community's priorities.

Once drafted, the actionable objectives will be presented to the Budget and Finance Ad Hoc Working Group, with Tripepi Smith facilitating the review process to ensure that each objective is thoroughly vetted and aligns with the City's fiscal policies and operational capacities. This collaborative effort with the Budget and Finance Ad Hoc Working Group will help refine the objectives to ensure they are feasible, strategically sound, and aligned with available resources.

The final strategic plan, incorporating these objectives, will be presented to the City Council for adoption in December. This adopted plan will formalize the City's strategic direction and establish a structured path forward, setting the foundation for long-term progress and accountability as Cerritos works toward its multi-year goals.

CONCLUSION

This year's Strategic Planning Session, led by Tripepi Smith, represents an expanded commitment to proactive planning for the City of Cerritos. By drawing on insights from residents, staff, and elected officials, the City Council is equipped to define strategic goals that balance immediate priorities with long-term aspirations for the community.

The collaborative planning process will set measurable objectives that align resources with City Council goals, fostering a strategic approach that is adaptable, accountable, and reflective of Cerritos' evolving needs. This session will shape the City's strategic direction and provide a roadmap for sustainable growth and enhanced community services, setting Cerritos on a clear path toward achieving its vision for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Review and discuss the information provided herein;
2. Solicit input from members of the general public regarding community needs;
3. Identify priority goals by City Council consensus for use in guiding the preparation of the City's FY 2025-26 Budget;
4. Direct the City Manager or designee to work in collaboration with Tripepi Smith and the Budget and Finance Ad Hoc Working Group to develop measurable objectives and tasks for achieving the City Council's priority goals. The City Council's priority goals, along with their corresponding objectives, will be presented to the City Council for review and final consideration at a future date and time.