

**CITY OF LARREDO
STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP
M2006-W-09
OCTOBER 20, 2006, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
OCTOBER 21, 2006, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
LA PITAYA RANCH
MIRANDO CITY, TEXAS**

I. CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Mayor Raul G. Salinas called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL

In attendance:

Raul G. Salinas, Mike Garza,	Mayor Council Member, District
I Hector Garcia,	Council Member,
District II Johnny Amaya,	Council Member,
District IV Johnny Rendon,	Council Member,
District V Gene Belmares,	Council Member,
District VI	

III. STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Strategic Planning Session moderated by Tyler St. Clair, Consultant

October 20, 2006

Local Elected Leadership Model

An overview of how this approach can help localities achieve both long and short term outcomes will be provided.

Environmental Scan

The council will work together to review the issues and trends that the City is facing and to identify implications for Council policy and strategy.

Develop/Clarify Desired Future State for the City of Laredo Entertainment Center

Using a simple exercise, Council Members will describe the long-range changes they

would like to make in the City and the best aspects of it that they would like to retain.

Recess for Lunch

Council Vision and Strategic Targets Synthesis

The council will refine the City's vision to incorporate the identified desired future states and come to consensus on the strategic targets that will direct the City's efforts for the next ten years.

Presentation by TXDOT regarding ongoing and future projects.

Vision Principle Development/Investment Review

This session is devoted to identifying principles to guide decision-making to Council's vision and strategic targets. Council will also review the investments outlined in the City's strategic plan to insure that they are on target. The vision and related guidance will be provided to City staff members who will develop action steps to achieve it.

Saturday, October 21, 2006

I. CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Mayor Raul G. Salinas called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL

In attendance:

Raul G. Salinas, Hector Garcia, District II	Mayor Council Member,
Johnny Amaya, Johnny Rendon, District V	Council Member, District IV Council Member,
Gene Belmares, District VI	Council Member,

Finalize vision, Goals, and Vision Principles

Effective Roles for Council and Staff

Participants will define roles for effective policy setting and administration and identify areas that would benefit from clarification.

Develop Operating Guidelines

This session will be devoted to helping the Council define guidelines for operating effectively as a group and in its work with the staff.

Recess for Lunch

Finalize Operating Guidelines

The Council will achieve consensus and a plan for reinforcing the Operating Guidelines.

Organize for Work to Come

The council will determine and action to follow up on the vision, critical success factors, and operating guidelines. The council will also evaluate the session.

Please find an attached City of Laredo Planning Retreat Session Report provided by the facilitator for the retreat:

Laredo City Council Planning Retreat Session Report October 20-21, 2006

VISION BRAINSTORM

Thinking about the City of Laredo in the year 2025 and keeping a possibility oriented, comprehensive view of its ideal future:

- *What is it that we need to keep?*
- *What is it that we want to change?*

Red Group

Gene Belmares, Mike Garza, Johnny Rendon, Cindy Collazo, Horacio De Leon, and Rafael Garcia

Keep:

- History and culture defining the community
- Tradition
- Social traditions
- Family values
- Diversification – unbiased [view toward others]
- Economic momentum
- Higher ed support – TAMIU/LCC
- Public education
- Civic mindedness as an organization
- Education and foster health program – immunization, dental, etc.
- Park development – acquisition of land, development of land
- Continue CIP and strategic plan for future
- Focus on responsible development throughout community (i.e. ordinances, infrastructure)
- Unique urban/suburban community – Rio Grande; maintain feeling of rural (Monte)
- Continue Rio Grande (environmental partnership between Rio Grande and wastewater treatment plant)

- Protecting and securing future water
- Continue to foster relationship with sister cities (Neuvo Laredo, Mexico)
- Focus on public safety
- Leadership role on public transportation and trade
- Continue to expand position as regional medical center
- Our international bridges and railroad bridges
- Focus on downtown in the Comprehensive Plan (development of downtown, El Portal)
- Continue fiscal management practices and fiscal responsibility
- City Manager form of government
- Marketing momentum for airport
- Advisory committees, but provide more importance to their input and recommendations
- Focus on transportation infrastructure and Master Plan; relief of congestion; ITSS program; North/South/East/West access that is functional
- Focus on customer service; One Stop Shop Center (facilitate process and provide assistance and guidance)
- Focus on customer service overall (police department, solid waste, etc.)
- Relationship with all state and federal officials
- Pride and love for the City – “Keep Laredo Beautiful”
- Open and positive relationship with the media
- Keep expanding on partnerships and relationships with governmental entities
- Continue staff and council dialogue
- Keep current organizational and administrative structure
- Attraction of diverse cultural and family attractions

Change:

- The way we think of all aspects of city government; use alternate thinking to improve customer service
 - Budget process
 - Building issues
 - Continue to define complaints and solutions
- Improve public safety image
- The way we disseminate information; the web site
- Media may not get all the information; do a better job of getting our ideas across
- Plan annually; develop a longer, broader process for the Council and staff
 - Perhaps an expansion of the CIP
 - Incorporate/align Comprehensive Plan
 - Change format – [Design a good format; don’t just “make it fit”]
 - Have public hearings to take the plan to the neighborhoods and to inform the public of plans
 - Have BOLD visions and audacious plans – “swing for the fences” – Council should not be afraid to make tough decisions and to go forward
- Do not be afraid even if it is a change in the form of government
- Improve City’s image with media; consider creating a media office at City facilities
- Add Mexican Customers at Airport for processing both people and cargo
- Image of City as a clean city – pride (in partnership with the schools)
- Enforce compliance with codes/ordinances – specifically, cleanliness; change the perception of selective enforcement
- True long range plan on basic infrastructure (water and sewer and Council commitments); planning for all aspects of change

- Change Council Committees; it is too lengthy a process; bring everything to the City Council
- Overall communication
- City Council agenda; use a consent agenda
- Audit Committee to Finance Committee
- Separate recognitions – currently the process takes too long due to posting, quorums, etc.
- Divide responsibilities on City Council for committees; reduce the number and give them more importance; this will require trust; engage in trust building
- Get railroad out of downtown
- Expedite entire process of “contract” construction (streamline construction, P.O.s)
- Empower directors by removing limitations on budget administration; interdepartmental transfers should require City Council approval, but Department Directors should be able to move funds within their budgets
- Advisory Committees - change governmental structure to give more stature and to deal with impact of Open Government Act (TOMA)
- Control of international bridges
- Continue to pursue rail projects (i.e. hub)
- Keep and improve transportation infrastructure (i.e. outer loop, fly overs)
- Continue to pursue rehabilitation of water and sewer infrastructure (i.e. pipes, transmission lines)
- Continue on track with secondary water source
- Continue on track with a one stop center for building permits and development
- Focus on regional parks
- Pursue a large regional park
- Improve on customer service for infrastructure development and builders
- Fast track secondary water source
- Need to keep up with growth in the public safety category

Green Group

Raul Salinas, Hector Garcia, Johnny Amaya, Larry Dovalina, Jessica Hein

Keep:

- Zacate Creek
- The flow of our water and our rivers
- Health assistance for the indigent (health initiatives)
- Culture
- Assistance for the elderly
- Historic buildings, preservation, and beautification
- Bruni Plaza – the way it once was; plazas
- Inland port status
- Transportation infrastructure and bridges
- International trade
- Educational institutions
- Regionalism (Mexico and U.S.)
- Natural international boundaries (no wall)
- Promotional tourism
- City Hall in downtown
- Downtown vibrant and active
- Form of government

- Parks attractive
- Both railroads
- Safe city
- Sustainability
- Economically sustainable
- Low taxes
- Low unemployment
- Business friendly
- Strong relations with Mexico
- Bicultural/bilingual
- Strong relations with federal and state government
- Good mobility (traffic)
- Customer friendly
- Transparent government/open door
- Proactive government
- Smart growth
- Economic development
- Focus on vulnerable sectors

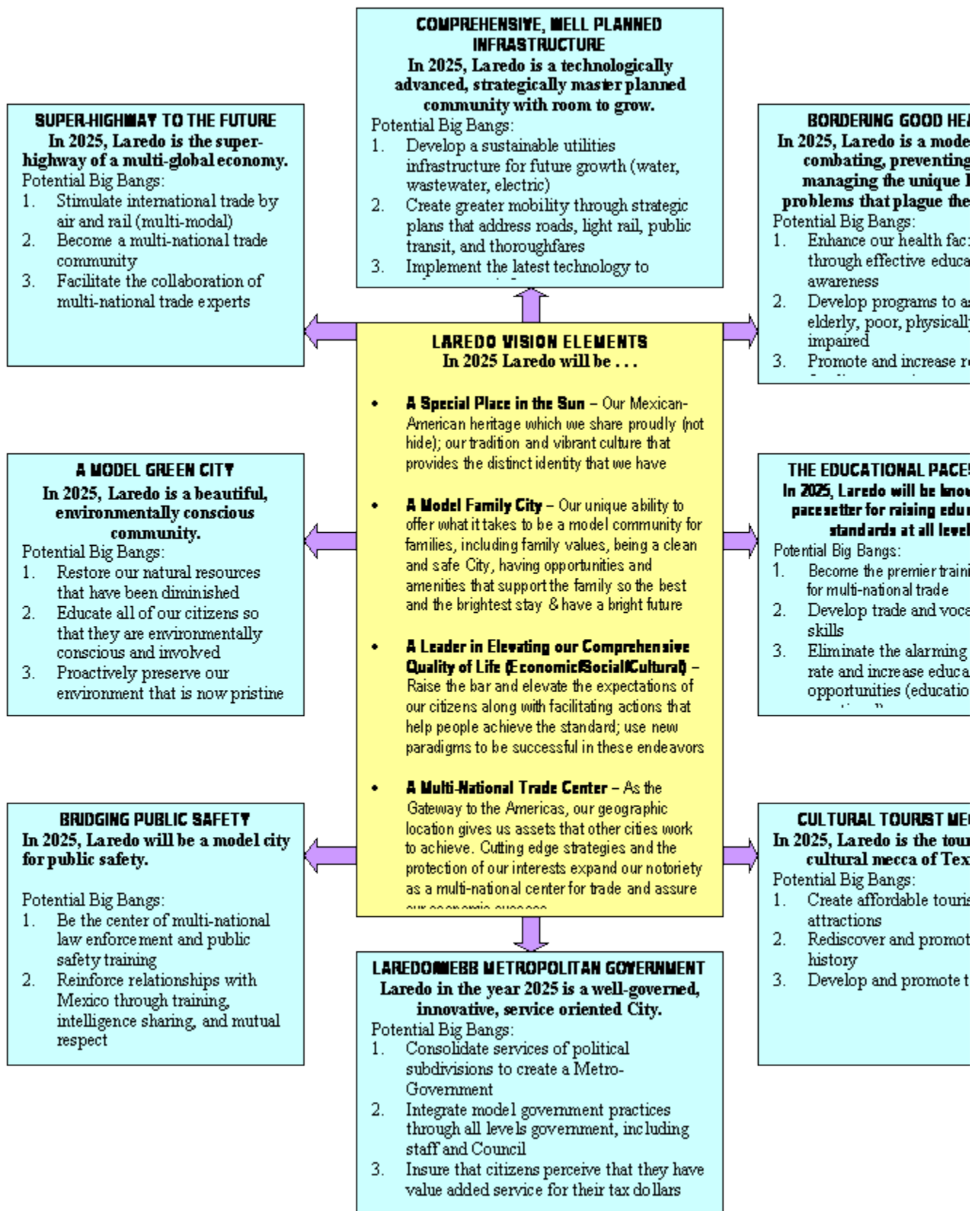
Change:

- Wastewater treatment plant at Zacate Creek
- Number of rail bridges (building more; 4 points of crossing)
- School systems (unified districts)
- Environmental policies (i.e. share a ride)
- Flooding, drainage issues
- Bob Bullock Loop
- Synchronization of traffic lights; implementation of Phase II ITS
- Removing unnecessary traffic signals
- Appraisal districts; property appraisals
- Water source/desalinization
- Pro-activity
- Council committees
- Create Blue Ribbon Committees (Health and International Trade)
- Attractiveness to tourists
- Relationship with County
- Clean city
- Relationship with El Cenizo, Mirando, Rio Bravo, etc.
- Working relationship with law enforcement agencies and other government entities
- Electric supply adequacy
- Channelization of river/Town Lake
- Number and variety of recreational activities
- Transit bus system/light rail
- Revitalization of downtown
- Parking/high rise/off street parking
- Shorter City Council meetings
- Traffic circulation and flow
- Less bureaucracy
- Morgue
- Cemetery

- Encroachment of airport
- Finished product for strategic plan
- Budget overview to Council to include department work papers
- Airport cargo numbers
- Second airport/cargo airport
- Bridges – 5th bridge
- City Hall Annex/Southern Hotel/South Annex
- Citizen Service Center – South Laredo
- One Stop Shop – developmental services
- Continue codification of subdivision ordinance plating
- Sewage system; change infrastructure in old parts of town
- Detail plan of maintenance and implementation of sewer systems
- Revisit noise mitigation acquisition of properties
- Sale of Laredo Municipal **Msg/Wsg** Corporation
- Redevelopment of downtown (high rise and condos)
- **PD training facility; incorporate with LIFLET**
- Restructuring fire training program to be gender neutral
- Sell Colonia Guadalupe
- Zacate Creek/riverfront development
- Employee rights (civil service with modifications)
- Evolve current landfill to be energy efficient
- Law enforcement aerial support
- Expand medical center facility; enhance regional centers
- VA Hospital
- Face of downtown
- Landing strip at fire training facility/ **Ty Emer. Resp. Fac.**
- New EOC
- Increase diversification of retail shopping
- Increase efforts to diversify to light manufacturing
- Bring Burlington Northern into the picture of the bridges so we have intermodal expansion
- Better paying jobs, including relocating companies
- Create more vocational programs to upgrade skills (i.e. machine shops, engine lathes, medical)
- Make it attractive for people to come
- Need public radio in the City
- Think about how CEOs are going to look at Laredo; need to address those aspects such as: Recreation for young and old, public safety, water resources, medical facilities, schools
- Perception of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo; need image modification; not a Third World city; be proactive in our counterattack to keep media from exploiting the bad
- The image that we want is that of a historic City with positive qualities, beauty, culture, fastest growing city, unemployment down, 2 universities, massive trade, with enormous impact on the country
- Wi-Fi City
- Weir
- 3-1-1
- Professional baseball team and stadium with press box for media
- Soccer stadium

LAREDO CITY COUNCIL VISION, ASPIRATIONS, AND POTENTIAL BIG BANGS

Following the Vision Brainstorm, Council Members identified core vision elements for further development into a vision statement. "Big Bang" areas identify where significant leadership focus will lead to the Vision.



ASPIRATIONS AND “BIG BANGS”

Council subgroups then developed aspirations for each of the 8 “Big Bang” areas, along with potential Big Bangs, responding to the following questions:

1. *Thinking about the “Big Bang” areas, write an aspiration that begins with, “ In 2025, Laredo will be . . . “*
2. *Identify 1 to 3 “Big Bang” opportunities – some areas that City Council might focus on that would take it a long way strategically to achieving the aspiration. Note that these are not priorities that the Council has selected for funding, but represent areas for further strategic consideration.*
3. *Give each Aspiration with its potential Big Bangs an inspiring tag title*

Super-Highway to the Future

In 2025, Laredo is the super-highway of a multi-global economy.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Stimulate international trade by air and rail (multi-modal)
2. Become a multi-national trade community
3. Facilitate the collaboration of multi-national trade experts

A Model Green City

In 2025, Laredo is a beautiful, environmentally conscious community.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Restore our natural resources that have been diminished
2. Educate all of our citizens so that they are environmentally conscious and involved
3. Proactively preserve our environment that is now pristine

Bridging Public Safety

In 2025, Laredo will be a model city for public safety.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Be the center of multi-national law enforcement and public safety training
2. Reinforce relationships with Mexico through training, intelligence sharing, and mutual respect

Laredo/Webb Metropolitan Government

Laredo in the year 2025 is a well-governed, innovative, service oriented City.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Consolidate services of political subdivisions to create a Metro-Government
2. Integrate model government practices through all levels government, including staff and Council
3. Insure that citizens perceive that they have value added service for their tax dollars

The Educational Pacesetter

In 2025, Laredo will be known as the pacesetter for raising educational standards at all levels.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Become the premier training center for multi-national trade
2. Develop trade and vocational skills
3. Eliminate the alarming drop out rate and increase educational opportunities (educational, vocational)

Comprehensive, Well Planned Infrastructure

In 2025, Laredo is a technologically advanced, strategically master planned community with room to grow.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Develop a sustainable utilities infrastructure for future growth, including water, wastewater, and electric
2. Create greater mobility through strategic plans that address roads, light rail, public transit, and thoroughfares
3. Implement the latest technology to enhance our infrastructure

Bordering Good Health

In 2025, Laredo is a model city for combating, preventing, and managing unique health problems that plague the border.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Enhance our health facilities through effective educational awareness
2. Develop programs to assist the elderly, poor, and physically impaired
3. Promote and increase research for diseases unique to the Hispanic population

Cultural Tourist Mecca

In 2025, Laredo is the tourist and cultural mecca of Texas.

Potential Big Bangs:

1. Create affordable tourist attractions
2. Rediscover and promote our history
3. Develop and promote the arts



LAREDO CITY COUNCIL VISION

In 2025 Laredo will be . . .

- **A Special Place in the Sun** – Our Mexican-American heritage which we share proudly (not hide); our tradition and vibrant culture that provides the distinct identity that we have
- **A Model Family City** – Our unique ability to offer what it takes to be a model community for families, including family values, being a clean and safe City, having opportunities and amenities that support the family so the best and the brightest stay and have a bright future
- **A Leader in Elevating our Comprehensive Quality of Life (Economic/Social/Cultural)** – Raise the bar and elevate the expectations of our citizens along with facilitating actions that help people achieve the new standard; use new paradigms to be successful in these endeavors
- **A Multi-National Trade Center** – As the Gateway to the Americas, our geographic location gives us assets that other cities work to achieve. Cutting edge strategies and the protection of our interests expand our notoriety as a multi-national center for trade and assure our economic success.

ASPIRATIONS

H Super-Highway to the Future

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H A Model Green City

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ROLES

City Council Members then brainstormed the roles of the City Council, Mayor, and City Manager . . .

City Council	Mayor	City Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Policy making · Public voice · Leader · Be willing to vote for what is right, recognizing that 100% of the people won't like decision · Stewards of the public treasury · Accessible · Commitment to public service · Role models · Shaping our kids' futures · Good listener, sounding board · Responsible; bear burden of the public trust · Team player; go forward together in order to score with common vision, goals, and strategic plan · Influencers of other political subdivisions · Good negotiator; able to listen with open mind; understand compromise · Be a man of your word, therefore inspiring trust · City's planners · Pace setters · Trust the Mayor and departments/staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consensus builder · Leader · Innovator · Peacemaker; keep peace among Council Members; go between · Open minded; give and take · Negotiator · Facilitator; remind others of common ground · Diplomat; help people disagree so decorum is maintained · Voice of the people · Unified voice of our Council and community · Protector of the City's interests · Not allow inappropriate conduct toward Council, staff, citizens · Policy influencer; make sure our voice is heard at local, state, and national level · Be a good spokesperson; honest and open with people · Bring forth ideas and goals to the community · Articulate the Council's message even when he doesn't personally agree · Make tough decisions, especially when breaking a tie (good of the community vs. political interests) · Mature and disciplined · Chair of the Council · Bridge between Council & staff; be able to see both sides; make decisions after facts are heard · Be well versed in what is going on in the City · Really put people first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Administrator · Policy implementer · Leader · Trust Mayor and Council decisions; believe that they are made in the best interests · Facilitator of Council's plans; make it happen · Consensus builder for Council by providing good information, articulating staff position well, translating to bridge gaps in understanding among Council · Good liaison among Council and departments · Make sure goals/objectives are carried out · Good relations with media · Good relations with community · Innovator/Pacesetter, especially in areas of good government · Go between Council and staff; the "master seamstress" · Self starter - bring ideas, be a futurist; be visionary · Creative · Good listener · Good negotiator · Open doors with legislature and Congress · Open door policy; accessible · Good driven · Research; find out how we can make things happen · Good problem solver · Be fair and impartial · Be a good closer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Good manager of resources; delegate tasks to Council Members and inspire them · Trust the Council and City Manager and his staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Be a good diplomat, especially on the border · Be a good tactician (execution) · Chief Budget Officer/CFO, good money manager
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OPERATING GUIDELINES

City Council then identified Operating Guidelines in response to the question, "What are some of the areas that we could enhance from a procedures/role perspective that would enhance our effectiveness?"



1. Council Members would like to be well prepared for their decisions by having all relevant information from staff members well in advance of the meeting.
2. The staff will insure that issues that are relevant to Advisory Committees will be considered by the Advisory Committee before bringing recommendations (own and Advisory) to the Mayor and City Council so as to have the benefits of their thoughts on the issue.
3. The Council will communicate direction to the Department Directors through the City Manager but can ask for information from them directly.
4. Council policy will be to inform the City Manager when there is a legitimate concern from a citizen or employee, especially in a major policy, customer service, or personnel issue. The City Council will seek to avoid situations where an employee or employees may "shop for support" amongst Council Members. Using his discretion and within the boundaries of personnel law, the City Manager will seek to provide feedback to the City Council regarding actions taken on such issues.
5. Council honors democratic values and public participation, but recognizes the responsibility to structure its work and public processes to insure productive decision-making, including:
6. It will be the personal responsibility of each Council Member to listen and not to interrupt when others are speaking.



NEXT STEPS

Action Step	Respon./Date
1. Send Session Report to City Manager for distribution to City Council.	Tyler – Oct.23
2. Establish /Implement a clear Vision to Strategy plan.	Dates not set
a. Write/format draft vision statement	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Align current initiatives (approved CIP projects, customer survey data) under the 8 aspirations) to create a foundation for priority setting c. Schedule/hold a Council Priority Setting Session to clarify Council Priorities that will achieve the vision over a 2 – 5 – 10 year period. d. Develop/implement process for getting citizen input regarding Vision/Aspirations e. Staff to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan to incorporate Council Priorities and other relevant staff goals f. Develop a system for incorporating priorities and strategic goals into City Manager and staff performance plans g. Develop system(s) for monitoring and measuring success 	
<p>3. Develop plan for sharing the Council’s vision widely, to include packaging and promoting the document</p>	<p>Dates not set</p>
<p>4. Re-vision every two years after the Council election.</p>	

IV. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn.

Moved:

Second:

For:

Against:

Abstain: