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Workshop Report

The Stockton City Council met for their annual goal setting workshop on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at the Maya Angelou Branch Library, from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The workshop provided an opportunity for the Council to review the City’s financial outlook, reach a consensus on priorities for the coming year, and strengthen teamwork. This report contains a summary of the results of the workshop.*

Jan Perkins, Vice President with Management Partners, facilitated the workshop. Mandy Brown, Principal Management Analyst with Management Partners, assisted with the session.

Workshop Objectives and Agenda

Objectives
- Understand the City’s financial outlook and context for setting Council priorities
- Council consensus on priorities for the year
- Understand City Manager’s preferences regarding Council communications

Agenda
- Welcome by the Mayor
- Public comments
- Comments from the City Manager
- Financial outlook and context for setting priorities
- Visions of the future of Stockton
- Review guiding principles
- Determine Council priorities
- Progress reporting and staying on track
- Communication preferences of the City Manager
- Wrap up and next steps

Workshop Ground Rules. At the start of the workshop, the facilitator suggested several ground rules to help the group have a successful workshop.

- Listen to understand each other’s point of view
- Seek consensus
- Assume good intent
- Speak up if we need course correction
- Stay focused
City Council Workshop
Workshop Report
Management Partners

City Council

Mayor
Michael Tubbs

Vice Mayor
Dan Wright

Council Member
Sol Jobrack

Council Member
Paul Canepa

Council Member
Susan Lenz

Council Member
Christina Fugazi

Council Member
Jesus Andrade

Executive Staff

The following executive staff participated in the session.

- Harry Black, City Manager
- John Luebberke, City Attorney
- Laurie Montes, Deputy City Manager
- Eliza Garza, City Clerk
- Eric Jones, Police Chief
- Gordon MacKay, Public Works Director
- Matt Paulin, Chief Financial Officer

Workshop Preparation. In preparation for the workshop, Jan held individual interviews with each Councilmember, prepared an agenda and materials, and reviewed plans for the workshop with staff.
Bike Rack. The facilitator explained that items that were raised but would not receive immediate attention would be recorded on a “bike rack.” The following items were added to the bike rack during the workshop:

- PERS cost analysis as pertains to employee retention
- Strategies to deal with commercial vacancies
- Define the Stockton “brand” – determine identity
- Improve the process of distributing discretionary Council funds for districts
- Information about cost of security at Van Buskirk

Opening Comments
The workshop kicked-off with a call to order and a welcome by the Mayor, who then opened the session up to public comments.

City Manager Harry Black commented about the importance of the day’s discussions and explained what he hoped to get out of the workshop.

Financial Outlook and Context for Priority Setting
To help set the context for priority setting, Chief Financial Officer Matt Paulin reviewed several slides about the City’s financial outlook, including a long-range financial plan, general fund balances, and pension costs.

Members of Council noted that while the market is currently performing well, there is still financial uncertainty the City needs to focus on its long term financial forecast and plan.

Accomplishments
Jan Perkins presented a slide showing key accomplishments cited by Councilmembers during the individual interviews. These accomplishments are shown in Figure 1 below.
Contributing Factors

When asked what factors contributed to these accomplishments, the group mentioned the following items as important.

- Mayor gaining recognition for the City from the governor (financial and status)
- Savings experienced from low interest rates
- Balancing reserves/fiscal sustainability and service levels
- Grant saving
- Staff consistently looking for opportunities to save money
Visions for the Future

Jan reviewed a series of vision statements created at the January 2019 Council goal setting workshop. Working in pairs, the Council and staff discussed what has remained the same and what is different. The consensus was that all of last year’s visions are still relevant, especially those related to economic development and the revitalization of downtown. The group agreed that last year’s visions represent lofty goals and help put the Council on the right path.

The visions from the 2019 workshop are shown on the slide in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Visions from the 2019 Council Workshop

When asked if there should be any changes to these visions, the following comments were offered.

- Stockton has gotten stronger; is on its way to achieving these visions
- Stability – how do we surpass to the next level? Move from neutral to drive
- Want to be known as a good place to raise a family
- Brand management is very important; dealing with our identity
- Raise the bar in school districts - tools to improve – partner with schools
- Address vacancies – expand internship program

New visions for the future that the Council and staff shared are listed below.

- Have Stockton recognized as “the best run local government”
- Overcome stigma of bankruptcy; brand management (media coverage)
- Bringing companies to Stockton (including Fortune 500)
- Innovation in city operations and service delivery
- Work with community partners to address challenges
- Should be known as a great place to open a business
- Be more vocal around the current efforts made to address homelessness
Review Guiding Principles

Jan reviewed the principles that were agreed upon during the January 2018 Council workshop. Council agreed to keep the principles the same, with the exception of modifying principle #5 to include the term “customer service.”

The group discussed that these guiding principles help enable the City’s employees to be successful, and these go hand-in-hand with employee recognition. The City Manager noted that he is focusing on having the right management systems with data analytics and performance management.

The agreed-upon principles, including the modifications to principle #5, are listed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Council’s Guiding Principles, as Modified

1. **Follow our long-term financial plan** to ensure financial stability and sustainability.
2. Operate in a **transparent and open manner** to earn and keep trust of our community.
3. Create a **long-term vision** while focusing on meeting day-to-day challenges and taking care of the “small things” that matter to the community.
4. Maintain and expand **relationships with partner agencies**, private sector and organizations to extend capacity in carrying out and funding priority projects.
5. Foster **performance management**, **customer service** and **continuous improvement** while supporting the professional development of our employees.
6. **Measure** successes and **communicate** them to the community.
7. Implement voter-approved decisions on taxes and other laws fully with integrity: **honor voter intent.**
Consensus on Council Priorities

To kick off the discussion and determination of Council’s priorities for the coming year, the Council reviewed a handout that included information about the following:

- Strategic targets
- Tier 1 and Tier 2 Council priorities from 2019
- Potential new Council priorities for 2020

After discussion, the Council determined that the 2019 priorities remain important and agreed that they will be their priorities for 2020.

These priorities are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Tier 1 and Tier 2 Priorities for FY 2020-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 Priorities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop solutions to address homelessness including increasing the affordable housing supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Focus on crime reduction in focus areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prioritize resource allocation to focus areas within Council Districts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Develop our core downtown.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 2 Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop business incentives and tools for underserved neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work with education partners to improve quality of life, increase literacy, fund college scholarships and develop the workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Engage private employers and the business community in workforce development and job placement (including people with criminal records) and develop an employment pipeline for Stockton residents to Stockton employers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Council discussed a variety of important issues, as listed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Items Discussed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal sustainability</td>
<td>Discussion around discretionary $$ remaining; this is a foundational strategic target that remains critical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public safety</td>
<td>Pedestrian safety (linked to homelessness)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental design</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Police presence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address quality of life issues within districts</td>
<td>Communication between agencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Budget to respond to district-specific issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Responding to small requests has a big impact</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inventory top issues in each district</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Process to use discretionary funding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Code enforcement – commercial blight</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Illegal dumping</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process of responding to district-specific issues</td>
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<td>Develop the core downtown</td>
<td>Invest in downtown to generate tax base; set a goal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic development strategic plan; need to update</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homelessness and increasing affordable housing</td>
<td>Emergency housing solutions; consider cost impact, scalability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work with nonprofits and other agencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Metrics in housing strategic plan to demonstrate results/effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime reduction, gun violence, blight</td>
<td>Less group gun related violence this year; shift – domestic violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce blight through incentive programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision for the waterfront</td>
<td>Part of overall economic development plan – strategy as part of larger goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leverage Economic Development Department efforts with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business incentives</td>
<td>Part of economic development plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business and neighborhoods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deferred maintenance; work with community partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with education partners</td>
<td>Important effort for the City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Workforce development and job placement   | • Unemployment and living wage issues persist  
• Diversity in employers is important  
• Part of economic development strategic plan – drives its purpose | **Permit center** | • Customer service  
• Turnaround times: 9/80 schedule is limiting; need to maximize efficiency |
| Vision for Van Buskirk                    | • Underway; 2 request for proposals are out and will be coming back to the Council  
• Identify potential recreational uses (example: Frisbee golf) | **Communication and public image** | • Communication and brand management  
• Goes hand in hand with economic development strategic plan |
| Infrastructure                             | • Capacity  
• CIP – identify and re-evaluate projects in year five that require funding | **Foundation for four-year university** | • Need to have a robust plan in place  
• Privately funded committee in development  
• Support role for now |

**Progress Reporting**

The City Manager indicated that his executive team would be creating strategies with timelines to achieve the Council’s priorities established at the March 5th session. That work plan would then be returned to the Council.

The Council asked for information about how much had been spent on the priorities established in 2019. The Council desires specific metrics for their priorities this year.

**City Manager’s Communication Preferences**

City Manager Harry Black had an opportunity to share his philosophy and approach regarding Council/staff relations, the role of his office, and how he prefers members of Council communicate their questions and requests. He
emphasized his respect for Councilmembers’ need for information, and his intention of being responsive to both elected officials and the public.

As information requests come into the City Manager’s Office, his intent is that they will be responded to quickly, with requests recorded, tracked, and followed-up on. Harry indicated that when Councilmembers have a need for meetings with staff on a particular topic, he can facilitate such meetings.

A variety of methods will be used in communicating with members of Council, including the following:

- Weekly one-on-one meetings
- Shared calendar of events (this will be a new tool)
- Twice-annual updates on accomplishments on the Council’s priorities
- Other progress reports on priorities

**Wrap Up and Next Steps**

Jan noted that Management Partners would prepare and submit this summary report. The City Manager said he would be meeting with staff to create strategies to operationalize the Council’s priorities with metrics and timelines.

**Closing Comments**

To conclude the workshop, members of Council and staff were invited to offer a comment about something that was useful to them about spending the day together as a group. Comments included:

- Helpful for staff to understand Council’s needs
- Hearing interests of Council first-hand
- More robust discussion today – liked having staff present
- Wish more members of the public attended
- Exciting – new beginning
- Able to share community concerns as a group
- Appreciated development of solutions to address challenges
- Open setting to share thoughts
- Appreciated effort and being made to move the City forward
- Hearing the big picture of what’s important
- Alignment as a group/pursuing the same goals