

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

October 24, 2024



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Christopher Freeland, City Manager
Subject: **Update on the City Council Strategic Planning Goals of 2024**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **RECEIVES** and **FILES** the update on the City Council Strategic Planning Goals of 2024; and

FINDS the action exempt from CEQA review under CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND:

On April 2, 2024, the City Council conducted its Annual Strategic Planning Session to establish goals for the City of Indian Wells for the coming year. The goals discussed encompassed City, Indian Wells Golf Resort (IWGR), and Housing Authority priorities.

Cities undertake strategic planning to help an organization determine where it is going over the next year or more, how it is going to get there, and how it will know if it got there or not. This is the City's "Game Plan." The focus of a strategic plan is to outline the goals of the City Council for the entire community/organization with the following benefits in mind:

- Formally adopted City Council Goals provide official direction to plan and organize resources to ensure their completion.
- The strategic plan is used to identify funding priorities for inclusion in the City's budget.
- A better understanding by citizens and staff of the City Council's plans as a single governing body for the future of the City of Indian Wells.
- Goals are established to meet the changing needs of the community.
- City staff are more focused and effective in addressing City Council priorities.
- City staff are more accountable to the City Council for achieving City Council Goals.

Recently, the Council updated the City Council Policy Manual requesting a review of Council Goals more frequently than on a yearly basis. This report satisfies that requirement.

DISCUSSION:

At the March 7, 2024, City Council meeting, staff provide a written update on the 2023 City Council Strategic Goals. Many of the goals established in 2023 were completed, however, some items rolled over to 2024. At the May 16, 2024, City Council meeting, staff provided a written report summarizing the 2024 City Council Strategic Planning Session and Goals for 2024.

This report provides an update to the 2024 City Council Strategic Goals and those goals from 2023 that rolled over. Staff are pleased with the progress that has been made towards these goals, with many of them being completed in the last several months.

City Council Fiscal Policies:

1. Continue the Council Policy of reserving \$2 million annually for long-term capital replacements. (Completed)
 - Adopted with the Fiscal Year 2023-2025 Mid-Budget update in 2024.
2. Continue the Council Policy of maintaining a fully funded pension program. (Completed)
 - Adopted with the Fiscal Year 2023-2025 Mid-Budget update in 2024.
 - The City Council also adopted a policy at its September 5, 2024, City Council meeting to maintain a fully funded pension plan. The council also adopted a General Fund Reserve policy.
3. Bring forward the implementation of the citywide operational Community Facilities District. (Completed)
 - Operational Community Facilities District to fund future public safety costs approved by the City Council in June 2024.
4. Examine and develop recommendations to address the declining Housing Authority fund balance. (In Progress)
 - Staff will continue to develop recommendations to address the declining Housing Authority fund balance for discussion at the 2025 City Council Strategic Planning Session.
5. Examine a new revenue measure designed to diversify revenue streams and provide a dedicated funding source to address future funding needs of the City (e.g., public safety cost increases). (On Hold)

- City Council considered a ballot measure to add a consumer price index increase to the fire tax. After polling the potential measure, Council decided to not move forward with a ballot measure.
- The Finance Committee discussed and recommended delaying any new revenue measure until new public safety cost increases were known. Contracts with Riverside County Sheriff and CalFire are expected to increase significantly over the next few years.

Capital Improvement Program Update:

A part of the annual budget review is the development of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is the City's comprehensive multi-year plan for the development of the City's capital facilities, improvements, and maintenance. Capital improvement projects include the construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, or non-routine maintenance work that exceeds \$5,000 and results in the creation or preservation of a City capital asset.

1. Advancement of Capital Improvement Projects. (In Progress)

- The Council approved advancing numerous infrastructure projects that are currently in design (e.g., residential street resurfacing and repair, paver replacement, sidewalk improvements, safer streets program).

2. Maintain and add healthy, vibrant, and water conscience landscaping citywide. (In Progress)

- Council approved landscape standard for the community to provide opportunities to promote drought tolerant landscaping, while maintaining Indian Wells' brand of lush landscaping. Staff developing concepts for improving Highway 111 landscaping, including Palm Tree replacement.

Provide Responsive, Innovative, and Efficient Public Safety:

1. Examine opportunities for the Sheriff's Department and Public Works to address further speeding in the community. (In Progress)

- The Sheriff's Department has increased traffic enforcement in the community through specialized and targeted enforcement. Additional work being done by Public Works as part of the safe streets' initiative in the community.
- Fairway Drive speeds were reduced with the addition of Fairway Park.

Tourism:

1. Evaluate the partnership with Acrisure Arena and suggest revisions to the media plan to maximize the city as the official city partner of the arena. (In Progress)

- Council approved the continuation of the partnership with Acrisure Arena and to focus marketing efforts to promoting Indian Wells as a tourism destination, with emphasis on increasing visitors to local hotels and businesses. Much of the advertisement in 2024-2025 will focus on IWGR and Kestrel.

Sustainable Community:

In 2021, the city began an initiative to be more energy efficient, promote recycling (e.g., organic waste, mulch, etc.), and water conservation.

1. Monitor the completion of the Energy Efficiency program and seek efforts to facilitate a quicker installation of the system. (In Progress)
 - While the project has seen significant delays, staff was successful in getting project completion days moved up. Currently, the solar project at City Hall and the Golf Resort Maintenance Yard are expected to be completed by the end of October 2024 and the Golf Resort Clubhouse is tentatively scheduled for completion in February 2025. Vendor also compensated city for project delays.
2. Examine opportunities to expand non-potable water for landscaping into community. (Completed)
 - City met with Coachella Valley Water District, who supports the City's efforts to expand non-potable water in the city. Will incorporate into landscape projects as appropriate.

General Plan Update:

The City's Comprehensive General Plan Update is currently in progress and anticipated to be completed in the first quarter of 2025. The City Council also wanted various components of the General Plan Update to include other relevant initiatives, including:

1. Complete Housing Element. (Completed)
 - Housing Element was adopted by City Council and certified by the State of California's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) on July 30, 2024. The certified Housing Element is posted to the City's website and shall be incorporated as part of the Comprehensive General Plan Update.
2. Complete Historical Resource Study (Completed)
 - Document provides historical information on community and architecture for inclusion in the final General Plan Update.
3. General Plan PEIR (In Progress)
 - A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the General Plan's Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) has been completed and circulated for the required 30-day public review period between July 31 through August 29, 2024. The City received nine (9) comment letters from the public and responsible agencies. The Draft PEIR is currently being prepared to address public comments and is on target to be circulated for the required 45-day public review period in December 2024.

Identify Potential Park Sites:

1. The City Council has instructed staff to continue to explore new recreational or park sites in the community. (Completed)
 - The City Council approved the use of the Lissoy Opportunity site as a location for a future park.

Update Communications Plan:

1. Update City's 2018 Communication Plan. (Completed)
 - The Council approved an updated Communications Plan at their July 18, 2024, City Council meeting.

Community Events and Activities:

The City Council budgeted additional funding for the Community Activities Committee to allocate towards several new programs and events in the city.

1. Continue identifying new community events and activities for residents and seek partnerships with Desert Recreation District (DRD) and other organizations that may be able to assist in providing enhanced benefits to residents. (Completed)
 - City partnered with the Palm Springs Air Museum for Indian Wells Day at the museum, discounts on Pickleball Paradise memberships, reduced membership for and is discussions with other organizations for events in 2024/2025.
 - Community Activities Committee is working with staff and DRD to increase recreational programming and events in the community.
2. Contact Southwest Church and Ford Elementary School to see if their choirs will perform at City events (e.g., Memorial and Veteran's Day). (Completed)
 - Staff will continue to seek opportunities to partner with both organizations for the various community events in the coming years.
3. Meet with the Canadian Consulate to ascertain an interest in developing a sister city relationship with Kelowna, Canada. (On Hold)
 - Currently, there does not seem to be progress in developing a relationship with Kelowna, Canada. Staff would like to revisit this goal with the City Council at its 2025 Strategic Planning Session.

Develop Landscape Uniformity Along Highway 111:

The landscaping along Highway 111 is an iconic characteristic of the City and requires high-quality maintenance to preserve the City's standards. The Council expressed interest

in developing uniform standards for landscaping materials used and consistency of maintenance efforts.

As part of this goal, the City Council recommended the following:

- Develop landscaping standards for commercial centers along Highway 111 that are consistent with the City's uniform standards. (Completed)
 - The City Council approved citywide landscaping designs with the intent of meeting state water conservation measures, while maintaining the community's iconic lush landscaping.
- Examine potential to reduce turf along Highway 111, while maintaining the lush appearance along the corridor. (In Progress)
 - Initial designs are being completed for community review in the coming months.
- Develop a multi-year phasing strategy to budget for the removal and replacement of publicly owned palm trees throughout the city. (In Progress)
 - City completed a citywide tree inventory. This included the identification of tree species and evaluation of those trees needing replacement.
 - The city has begun the process to replace trees, which will continue over the next few years.
 - Tree replacement was expedited in areas affected by Tropical Storm Hillary.
 - Palm Tree replacement along Highway 111 has also begun.

Encourage and Expand Economic Development Opportunities in the Community:

New economic development opportunities are coming forward in Indian Wells. Developers are interested in developing in the community. As part of the City's efforts to encourage and expand economic development in the community, the Council recommended the following goals:

- Continue efforts to develop the Genton and Brixton sites, including channel improvements. (In Progress)
 - Genton delayed this project to provide adequate time and due diligence to purchase the Brixton site.
 - To date, the channel improvements are currently being reviewed by the Coachella Valley Water District. Construction is tentatively planned for early to mid-2025.
 - The city has been successful in obtaining \$5 million in federal funding for the channel improvements, with an additional \$5 million in federal funding pending.

- Genton Development at the corner and Highway 111 and Miles Avenue continues moving forward.
 - Tentative site plan and initial city approvals have been applied for.

Expand Partnership with the Indian Wells Preservation Foundation:

The City has been working closely with the Indian Wells Historic Preservation Foundation (IWHPF) to catalog items that document the history of Indian Wells. The relationship between the City and IWHPF has never been better.

1. The City Council directed staff to further expand its relationship with the IWHPF to help educate the community on the history of Indian Wells and support the IWHPF's efforts to become more involved with its community. (Completed)
 - While being marked completed, staff and Council will continue to work with the IWPF in the coming years to further the preservation of history in the community.
 - This past year, City and IWPF provided additional community events, added a historical display at Fairway Park, and finalizing the remaining interviews for the oral histories project.
 - City also conducted a preliminary feasibility for the creation of an IWPF museum/library at the former Carl Bray homesite.

Resident Committee and Commission Function Review:

Residents of Indian Wells volunteer to serve on a variety of City committees and commission for the betterment of the community.

1. The City Council recommended the review of the duties, responsibilities, and functionality of the City's resident committees and commission. (Completed)
 - Council approved changes to bylaws, In 2023, the City Council authorized the formation of a Council Ad Hoc Committee to review the resident committees and commission consisting of The Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Mayor Pro Tem Whitman and Councilmember Griffith met with each of the City committees and commission and developed recommended changes to the various committees, which were approved by the City Council.

Goals for the Indian Wells Golf Resort:

In the past two years, the City Council's goals for the Indian Wells Golf Resort (IWGR) were to complete negotiations with Troon for the management of the IWGR, implement financial performance measures, have the IWGR be more profitable, and encourage residents to use of the facilities.

Highlights for the IWGR include the following:

- For the first time in over 20 years, the IWGR achieved profitability for the last two fiscal years. Generating over \$1.2 million in profit for the City after including all annual capital spending.
- Additionally, the City Council has strategically decided to eliminate the Resident Golf Amenity Fee Subsidy, a move that will save taxpayers over \$25 million over the next decade. This subsidy was initially implemented to align the Resident Discount Rate with the average rate paid by non-resident golfers.

The Council also instructed staff and Troon to complete the reconceptualization of the Vue Restaurant to Kestrel-A Richard Blais Kitchen and Lounge. Kestrel opened to the public in early October. A formal grand opening is planned for November.

The Council has authorized the completion of the redesign of the Players Course, specifically approving the relocation of Holes #17 and #18 to the north side of the Whitewater Channel. In a 3-1 vote, the Council selected John Fought to complete the redesign and prepare the necessary bid documents, with City staff tasked with securing construction bids.

Initially, the City's bid process resulted in only one bid. After consulting with Troon, it was decided to rebid the project with Troon managing the process. Troon suggested that some contractors may have been hesitant to bid directly with the City and noted that they could leverage their industry connections to encourage more participation.

Troon publicly solicited bids on September 9, 2024, and hosted a pre-bid meeting with interested contractors on September 17, 2024. The bidding period closed on September 27, 2024, with three bids received: Landscapes Unlimited at \$12.1 million, Heritage Links at \$12.4 million, and Sperber Landscape Companies at \$16.9 million. The Council is expected to review this matter at a public meeting in October.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (14 CCR 15061(b)(3).)