

City Council Annual Planning Workshop Summary of 2024 Strategic Vision Session

On January 19, 2024, the City Council convened for its Annual Planning Workshop in the City Council Chambers. This session featured a presentation on the City's financial standing and future projections. The workshop also encompassed discussion on policy issues and strategies for enhancing organizational efficiency. The workshop concluded with a productive dialogue centered around the strategic vision for 2024 through the prioritization of policy initiatives.

Staff has been working to enhance the community and provide essential services in alignment with the City Council's direction and initiatives. However, at the onset of the exercise, it was characterized to the City Council that capacity limits the ability for the organization to make meaningful progress on the City Council's initiative list, while maintaining routine operations, and addressing unforeseen events.

The City Council subsequently reviewed and received updates on previously established policy initiatives. Councilmembers also proposed initiatives not listed to be considered for inclusion on the 2024 Policy Initiatives list. Following this evaluation, the City Council engaged in a priority-setting process to help align policies with available resources. Each Councilmember was provided with five stickers to allocate to initiatives. Additionally, one more sticker was provided to Council members to place on initiatives already marked with stickers. Any initiative containing three or more stickers would be considered a priority of the City Council and be the focus of staff resources in 2024. This exercise identified the following priorities:

1. Explore Revenue Enhancements (5 Stickers)
2. Solar Panels on City Facilities (4 Stickers)
3. Develop Funding Plan for Laguna Canyon Road Improvements (4 Stickers)
4. Downtown Action Plan (3 Stickers)
5. Artist Live/Work Affordable Housing (3 Stickers)
6. Explore Com. Development Opportunities to Improve Customer Experience (3 Stickers)
7. Performance Measures and Efficiency Programs (3 Stickers)

The City Council's revised policy initiatives list is included with this memo. Staff remains committed to advancing every policy initiative, with a primary focus on the seven items listed above. A summary of the Annual Planning Workshop will be included in the February 13, 2024, City Council agenda.

City Council's Policy Initiatives List & Larger Projects Inventory

Ref	Category	Project Name	Project Update as of January 19, 2024	Status	Dot
1	Internal Operational Improvements	Revenue Enhancements	At the Annual Planning Workshop on January 19, 2024, the City Council prioritized the exploration of opportunities to increase the City's revenue. Staff will consider subsequent actions and propose options to the City Council at an upcoming meeting.	Conceptual Phase	5
2	Environmental Stewardship	Solar Panels on City Facilities	Staff is set to finalize its Microgrid Resiliency Assessment section of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan in Q1 2024. The microgrid report will provide recommendations for the installation of solar and battery backup systems at the assessed facilities. The microgrid report will be posted on the City's website in February as well as included in the TW2 memo. Staff's objective is to present the report's findings to the City Council in March. During the meeting, the City Council may discuss next steps, which could include directing staff to proceed with installation of sites.	Conceptual Phase	4
3	Infrastructure	Develop Funding Plan for Laguna Canyon Road Improvements	The City Council received a presentation from staff during its January 9, 2024 meeting. Subsequently, the City Council approved a Public Engagement Plan, authorized the submission of a RAISE grant match commitment of up to \$1.2 million, and granted authorization to the City Manager to submit a Relinquishment Initiation Letter to Caltrans.	Conceptual Phase	4

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4	Community Design	Downtown Action Plan	The report was reviewed by the Planning Commission on September 20, 2023. Following this review, the Planning Commission expressed its desire to establish a subcommittee to further collaborate on refining the document. Staff is evaluating subsequent steps for the City Council's consideration.	Conceptual Phase	3
5	Cultural Arts	Artist Live/Work Affordable Housing	<p>The City Council appointed Mayor Pro Tem Rounaghi and Councilmember Orgill to work with City staff to develop initiatives that could support the preservation of artist housing in the City. The ad hoc committee is expected to present its findings to the City Council in March.</p> <p>The City's Housing Coordinator is investigating potential locations for constructing affordable housing within the city. She has identified and is evaluating the potential and limitations of the site at 630 Laguna Canyon Road, with the intention of presenting her findings to the City Council. This location was previously suggested in the Laguna Beach Parking and Transportation Demand Management Report as a potential parking structure site; however, it is now being evaluated for artist live/work housing to align with the City Council's emphasis on housing for artists, as stated at the January 19, 2024, Annual Planning Retreat.</p>	Conceptual Phase	3

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6	Internal Operational Improvements	Explore Community Development Opportunities to Improve Customer Experience	Community Development has expanded its ability to issue permits over-the-counter and has also established an online appointment booking system. Goals for 2024 include fully transitioning to digital plans, initiating a comprehensive code update to streamline regulations, and improving informational handouts.	Underway	3
7	Internal Operational Improvements	Performance Measures and Efficiency Programs	At its Annual Planning Workshop on January 19, 2024, the City Council identified the implementation of efficiency-focused programs aimed at evaluating, improving, and incorporating performance measures into city processes as a top priority for the staff to focus on in 2024. Staff will prepare recommended options and present them to the City Council during an upcoming meeting	Conceptual Phase	3
8	Community Design	Downtown Specific Plan Phase II (Housing Related Items)	The City retained CSG Consulting to prepare a program EIR and assist with the update. An overview was provided to the City Council on December 12, 2023. The item is scheduled for the Planning Commission in February.	Conceptual Phase	
9	Community Design	Commercial District Beautification/ Maintenance Ordinance	The City Council continued its review of this ordinance from January 9, 2024 to March 26, 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
10	Community Design	Promenade on Forest Concept Development	The City Council reviewed the two concepts during its January 23, 2024 meeting. Subsequently, the City Council appointed an ad hoc committee to collaborate with staff and the consultant. Their task is to define the scope and constraints, establish the process for moving forward (including the possibility of a design competition), and present their findings to the City Council within 90 days.	Conceptual Phase	

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11	Community Design	LBUSD's Proposed New Community Pool	During its October 10, 2023 meeting, the City Council appointed Mayor Kempf and Councilmember Whalen to an ad hoc subcommittee. This subcommittee will collaborate with staff and stakeholders to explore various pool options and identify potential joint-use opportunities with the Laguna Beach Unified School District. The ad hoc subcommittee will return in March to present various fiscal and programming implications.	Conceptual Phase	
12	Community Design	Aliso Estuary Restoration Project	The City Council received a presentation from the Laguna Ocean Foundation (LOF) regarding the restoration of the Aliso Creek Estuary during its January 23, 2024, meeting. Subsequently, the Council requested that LOF submit its project for a concept review before proceeding with the environmental review. It is estimated that the results of the concept review will be presented to the City Council in late summer. During that meeting, the City Council may review the project's benefits and implications and determine the next steps	Conceptual Phase	
13	Community Design	Commercial Design Guidelines	The Planning Commission has taken steps to advance the project by appointing a subcommittee and collaborating with staff. The project is designed to complement the broader comprehensive code update, demonstrating a coordinated effort to enhance and align various aspects of planning and development.	Conceptual Phase	
14	Community Design	Laguna Canyon Specific Plan Update	Per the Community Development Workplan approved by the City Council on May 2, 2023, the project will be initiated in March, 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
15	Community Design	Major Remodel and Bluff Top Regulations	The draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration has been finalized, and collaborative efforts with the City Attorney's Office are underway to edit the document. The City Council is scheduled to consider and potentially adopt the document in March 2024.	Conceptual Phase	

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16	Community Design	Comprehensive Code Update incl: Multifamily Zoning Stnds	The comprehensive code update could simplify development regulations and improve customer experience. Revisions may also seek to amend the parking standards throughout the City's commercial districts. A request for Proposals will be released no later than Q1, 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
17	Community Programs	Affordable Housing Program	The City's Housing Coordinator is actively implementing Housing Element programs and pursuing other initiatives as directed. These initiatives include Vista Aliso, Accessory Dwelling Unit legislation, and opportunities for artist live/work housing. A biannual progress report will be presented to the City Council, as requested by the City Council during its January 19, 2024 Annual Planning Workshop.	Underway	
18	Community Programs	Lang Park Pickleball Courts	Staff presented its findings related to sound attenuation at Lang Park, along with opportunities to expand programming to other locations within the City, to the City Council on January 23, 2024. As the next step, staff will investigate potential locations at Moulton Meadows, Alta Laguna, and inland Aliso Beach. Additionally, staff will collaborate with the property manager of the adjacent residential units at Lang Park to incorporate additional sound mitigation efforts, including the installation of triple-pane windows. Staff will subsequently return to the City Council with project scope and cost estimates for Lang Park.	Conceptual Phase	
19	Community Programs	Riddle Field Night Use	Laguna Beach Little League has requested an extension of the use of Riddle Field, including utilization of lights. An environmental analysis is being prepared. Results will be shared with the City Council during the first quarter of 2024.	Conceptual Phase	

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20	Community Programs	Local Housing Trust Fund	During its December 12, 2023 meeting, per the recommendation of the Housing and Human Services Committee, the City Council directed staff to conduct additional analysis with representatives from the Housing and Human Services Committee and, if feasible, return with the appropriate documents to establish a local housing trust fund.	Conceptual Phase	
21	Community Programs	Extending City Transit Services	Staff is determining the feasibility of extending City transit service to residential areas off Laguna Canyon Road and El Toro Road, including the possibility of securing grant funding through OCTA's Project V program. Applications for Project V funding are due in late January 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
22	Community Programs	Parks and Recreation Master Plan	In June 2023, the City Council approved consultant services to develop a Playground Master Plan to identify needed improvements to the City's public playgrounds. Separately, staff planned to initiate a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide a long-term vision for the City's parks and recreational facilities that addresses overall park conditions and needs, recreation programming and facilities, and funding opportunities. These two efforts will be combined into a single Parks and Playground Master Plan with an expected completion date in early 2025.	Conceptual Phase	
23	Cultural Arts	Art in Public Places for Village Entrance	To be discussed at the joint meeting of the City Council and Arts Commission on February 27, 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
24	Cultural Arts	Public Art Ordinance and Policy	The ordinance and policy would provide clear application, review, and approval processes relating to permanent and temporary public art installations. The concept will be presented to the City Council on February 27, 2024.	Conceptual Phase	

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25	Environmental Stewardship	Electric Vehicle and Charging Station Master Plan	The City Council formally accepted the proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) master plan on June 27, 2023. In response, the Council instructed staff to advance the development of a funding and implementation plan, which will return to City Council in mid 2024.	Underway	
26	Environmental Stewardship	Update the Open Space and Conservation Element (Including Watercourse Mapping)	The City Council authorized staff to retain a consultant during its January 9, 2024 meeting to conduct the biological survey required for the report. This biological survey is a seasonal component typically conducted in the spring. By awarding this portion of the contract, the project can proceed while staff works on developing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the remaining phases of the project. Staff anticipates returning later in 2024 to recommend the award of the full contract.	Conceptual Phase	
27	Environmental Stewardship	Climate Action and Adaptation Plan	Phase I was completed at the end of 2023, which included the vulnerability assessment report, the City's greenhouse gas inventory, and the microgrid resiliency report. The next phase will involve identifying vulnerability gaps and developing reduction strategy policies based on the results of Phase I. Staff anticipates returning to City Council in March to present the findings of the microgrid resiliency plan, along with preliminary reduction strategy policies, and to request City Council guidance on policy formulation for the program.	Conceptual Phase	
28	Environmental Stewardship	Community Choice Energy: Potential JPA Analysis	The City Council may consider exploring benefits and implications of joining Orange County Power Authority in 2024.	Conceptual Phase	

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29	Environmental Stewardship	Consider Joining the Natural Communities Coalition	During its November 21, 2023 meeting, the City Council authorized staff to determine operational benefits and implications of joining the Natural Communities Coalition (NCC) and for the City Attorney to review legal ramifications of the same before returning to the City Council with information necessary to consider seeking City membership in the Coalition. Staff will initiate its research in early 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
30	Environmental Stewardship	Citywide Plastic Ban Ordinance	During its June 27, 2024 meeting the City Council directed staff to conduct additional analysis regarding the prohibition of plastic film bags at grocery stores and, if feasible, return with an amended ordinance for consideration. This project was not initiated due to unavailable staff resources.	Conceptual Phase	
31	Infrastructure	Finalize Parking/ Mobility Master Plan and Proceed with Implementation	On June 13, 2023, the City Council reviewed and approved the Parking and Transportation Demand Management Plan. Staff was instructed to initiate the implementation of short-term strategies outlined in the plan. Progress on the short-term strategies is expected to be presented to the City Council in February 2024.	Underway	
32	Infrastructure	Moss St Beach Access Improvements	The project is under construction and is scheduled for completion in June 2024.	Underway	
33	Infrastructure	Caltrans Coast Hwy ADA Sidewalk Improvements North - Ledroit St to Ruby St	Construction is underway and will recess during the summer of 2024. It is estimated that the project will be completed in May 2025.	Underway	
34	Infrastructure	Caltrans Coast Hwy ADA Sidewalk Improvements South - Moss St to Fifth Av	Construction is underway and will recess during the summer of 2024. It is estimated that the project will be completed in May 2026.	Underway	

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35	Infrastructure	LBCRC Parking Exploration	At its November 21, 2023 meeting, the City Council directed staff to explore parking solutions for City staff and users of the Laguna Beach Community and Recreation Center (LBCRC). Staff will begin this work and plan to report to City Council during the second quarter of 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
36	Infrastructure	Facilities Master Plan	Contract award is scheduled for the February 13, 2024, City Council meeting. While staff and the consultant will be working with City Council to implement approved recommendations throughout the process, the final report is expected 12 months after the contract is signed.	Conceptual Phase	
37	Infrastructure	Anita Street Lift Station and Beach Access Improvement	Staff has addressed comments from the Coastal Commission, and there are expectations that the project will be presented for consideration at its February 2024 meeting.	Conceptual Phase	
38	Infrastructure	Main Beach Park Renovation	Plans and specifications are in development, with staff expecting to recommend a contract award for construction in May 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
39	Infrastructure	Repave Forest Alley	Design to commence in early 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
40	Internal Operational Improvements	Pursue Grant Funding	During the 2024 Annual Planning Workshop, staff committed to providing the City Council with quarterly reports summarizing applied for and received grants.	Underway	

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41	Internal Operational Improvements	Develop the Workforce Investment Initiatives/ Executive Team Recommendations	Several employee training and engagement opportunities were offered in 2023. Employee training expanded to 30 sessions, including performance management, Critical Practices for Leading a Team for the Management Team, Leadership 101 for frontline staff, and 7 sessions of Customer Service in the Public Sector, and Writing Emails, Letters & Emails. To show staff appreciation and celebrate our newly adopted City Values, five summer events and four Fun Friday theme days were held.	Underway	
42	Internal Operational Improvements	Enhance Community Communications	The City's Communications Plan was approved by City Council on August 22, 2023. Implementation of short-term items, such as adding a new 'Frequently Asked Questions' button on the City website homepage, is underway. Additionally, the medium-term goal of streaming City Council meetings to YouTube has been implemented.	Underway	
43	Internal Operational Improvements	Integrated Pest Management Plan	During its January 9, 2024 meeting, the City Council directed staff to return to the City Council with an Integrated Pest Management Plan based on best practices, such as those by the Natural Communities Coalition. Staff's next steps include meeting with Coastal Commission staff to determine feasibility of treatment protocols and required mitigation timelines.	Underway	
44	Internal Operational Improvements	New Permitting System	A comprehensive software upgrade will occur on Jan 5, 2024, which will allow the Community Development Department to make the conversion to digital plans during the first quarter of 2024.	Underway	

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45	Internal Operational Improvements	Agenda Management System	<p>Staff is preparing to switch its agenda and meeting management system for City Council, Committee, Board, and Commission meetings. The implementation of the new system is expected to begin in early 2024, offering a more user-friendly and interactive agenda system for citizens. The community will benefit from features that include a new online public portal, an online public comment feature, and interactive HTML agendas and minutes. This change will also enhance the efficiency and accuracy of the agenda preparation process for City staff. It simplifies the staff report review and approval processes and integrates with Microsoft 365, improving collaboration between departments and overall quality control.</p>	Underway	
46	Internal Operational Improvements	HR & Finance System (Automate City Systems)	<p>On March 7, 2023, the City Council authorized an agreement with Tyler Technologies to develop and implement an Enterprise Resource Planning software system for the City's Finance and Human Resources services. Implementation is ongoing, with Finance and IT staff working alongside the Tyler Technologies project team on system set-up and data conversion. All Financial modules, including the General Ledger, Budgeting, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Cashiering, Capital Assets, Projects and Grant Accounting, and Accounts Receivable, are anticipated to go live Q3 of Calendar Year 2024. The remaining Human Resource Management modules, to include Payroll, Human Resources, Time and Attendance, Risk Management, and Employee Expense Reimbursement, are anticipated to go live by the end of 2024.</p>	Underway	

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47	Public Safety	Upgrade police, fire and community serving facilities and seismic analysis	The Tier 3 seismic analysis for City Hall, Fire Station 2 & 3 is underway. Additionally, the Tier 1 analysis of the Corp Yard and SOCWA lift stations is complete. The results of the Tier 1 analysis are slated to be presented to the Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Committee in Q1, 2024.	Underway	
48	Public Safety	LRAD Alert System	As outlined in the Wildfire Mitigation and Fire Safety Report, two additional Outdoor Warning System installations have been completed in Bluebird Canyon, as well as an upgrade at the lifeguard main tower. The proposed installation at Canyon Acres is pending design review, which, when completed, will bring the number of outdoor warning speakers to 24.	Underway	
49	Public Safety	Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)/ Records Mgt Sys (RMS)	The implementation of the new RMS is scheduled to begin in December 2023, with an anticipated completion date of September 2024. Staff anticipates issuing a Request for Proposal and awarding the contract for a new CAD system in 2024, with implementation expected to begin in 2025.	Underway	
50	Public Safety	Caltrans Laguna Canyon Rd Improvements - SR-73 to El Toro Rd	Construction is underway, with utility undergrounding work expected to begin in February 2024.	Underway	
51	Public Safety	Proposed Diamond St Undergrounding Assessment District 2013-2	Construction of underground infrastructure is substantially complete. SCE has begun installing its facilities, and Cox and Frontier are scheduling their respective work. Poles are expected to be removed by January 2024.	Underway	
52	Public Safety	Proposed Woods Cove Undergrounding Assessment District 2014-2	A public hearing to tally district formation voting occurred on December 12, 2023. With a 61% vote in favor, the district was formed. Construction is scheduled to commence in summer 2024.	Underway	

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53	Public Safety	Underground Bluebird Canyon Dr between Cress St & Rancho Laguna Rd	Southern California Edison is bidding the project for construction, which is anticipated to begin in March 2024.	Underway	
54	Public Safety	Underground Coast Hwy between Agate St & Arch St	Utility designs have been completed. Southern California Edison is collaborating with Caltrans to secure the necessary permits. Once the permits are obtained, the project will proceed to the bidding phase for construction.	Underway	
55	Public Safety	Underground Coast Hwy between Agate St & Cajon St	Southern California Edison is finalizing plans and permits.	Underway	
56	Public Safety	Underground Park Av between Wendt Terrace & St. Ann's Dr	Installation of the underground infrastructure is under construction and scheduled to be complete by January 2024. Following completion, additional utility work and private connection work will be required to complete the undergrounding.	Underway	
57	Public Safety	Vision 0 Plan on City Owned Streets Pending Funding (Proposed During Annual Planning Workshop)	Finalization of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Citywide Action Plan is underway, with plans to circulate it soon. The intention is to award the contract for the preparation of the Citywide Action Plan in February 2024.	Conceptual Phase	
58	Public Safety	Develop a Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover and Continue to Enhance Fire Safety	ESCI presented findings to EDPC on Oct 2, 2023. The findings will be presented to City Council during a future meeting.	Conceptual Phase	

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59	Public Safety	Enclose Marine Safety Lifeguard Towers	The project was placed on hold to focus staff resources on the acquisition and management of South Laguna Beaches. Staff will return to City Council during a future meeting to present a project outline, which could include requesting authorization to retain technical experts to conduct preliminary engineering and analysis for each site.	Conceptual Phase	
60	Public Safety	Replace Fire Station 4	A design contract was awarded to PBK. Staff and PBK have engaged in discussions with South Laguna residents to deliberate on the proposed design. PBK is advancing design drawings, demonstrating ongoing progress. The budget includes construction funds; however, it is anticipated that additional funds will be required to fully fund the project.	Conceptual Phase	
61	Public Safety	Coast Highway Potential Relinquishment	\$100k was included in the 2023-24 budget to complete the cost benefit analysis; work is anticipated to begin prior to June 30, 2024. Senator	Conceptual Phase	