



Staff Report

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Version: 1

Date: 3/8/2021

Item #: 5.b.

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Steve Powers, City Manager

SUBJECT:

City of Salem Strategic Plan Update for 2021-2026

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Result Areas - Good Governance; Natural Environment Stewardship; Safe Community; Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Strong and Diverse Economy; Welcoming and Livable Community.

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council adopt the City of Salem Strategic Plan Update for 2021-2026?

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the City of Salem Strategic Plan Update for 2021-2026.

SUMMARY:

Updating the Salem Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is designed to help the City identify major priorities and determine actions to achieve those goals. Through the Strategic Plan, the City is transparent and clear about the work it is doing to serve the public as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Why did we update the Strategic Plan? We built on the foundation laid in the 2017 Strategic Plan and made updates to reflect the City's current environment. Working through a flexible and lean process, staff supporting several on-going engagement projects like Our Salem, Climate Action Plan, and parks planning, shared input received from multiple community sources.

The Strategic Plan Update builds on the 2017 Strategic Plan, adjusts mission vision and values to reflect current conditions and direction for the organization through 2026.

Through its Policy Agenda, City Council makes its priorities clear to the City organization and the community. The Policy Agenda is part of an annual cycle of developing the budget, policy and program evaluation, financial forecasting, and reporting on progress.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Changes Since January. Based on community and City Council feedback, since January 19, 2021 Work Session, the following changes have been made to the draft Salem Strategic Plan Update (Attachment 1). The Strategic Plan Update now:

- Addresses anti-racism in value statements
- Addresses priority for bicycle, pedestrian and sidewalk projects
- Adds the intent of Library Strategic Plan to improve library service and equity
- Includes emergency preparedness in resiliency goal area
- Includes downtown and small business support in COVID-19 economic recovery
- Adds two City Council-approved resolutions on: 1) denouncing white supremacy and acts of racism and 2) declaring racism as a public health crisis.

Community Survey. In February, with the Strategic Plan Update drafted and priorities identified for each of the five areas, the City issued a survey to gauge how helpful proposed activities would be in achieving the outcomes of addressing homelessness, creating community resilience, increasing equity in delivery of City services, building great neighborhoods, and taking action on climate change. More than 240 responses were received (Attachment 2).

More livable wage jobs (88.7%), emergency response (86.6%), business support in COVID recovery (85.1%), and strengthening the City's long-term financial position (82.9%) were viewed most frequently as helping the City achieve its goals. Other actions were less popular like increasing the City's resilience to climate change (55.9%) and reducing the City's greenhouse gas emissions (61.0%).

Comments reflect divergent opinions and perspectives in our community. The majority of comments focused on homelessness in our community. Some expressed their interest in seeing the City focus on homelessness above all else while others asked the City to focus on essential service above all else.

Several respondents asked the City to use proven methods and best practice for its work in diversity equity and inclusion, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

2021 Policy Agenda

The Strategic Plan Update identifies priorities for implementation in the first year. The first-year priorities will become the 2021 Policy Agenda. Through the annual City Council Policy Agenda, City Council makes its priorities clear to the City organization and the community. The Policy Agenda is

part of an annual cycle of developing the budget, policy and program evaluation, financial forecasting, and reporting on progress.

BACKGROUND:

The [Salem Strategic Plan <https://www.cityofsalem.net/strategic-plan>](https://www.cityofsalem.net/strategic-plan), adopted by City Council in October 2017, articulates the mission, vision, values, and goals of the City. The plan charts a course for the City moving forward based on findings from an assessment of current conditions in our community, impacts of anticipated change in the region, and perspectives of residents, community leaders, and Council.

On September 14, 2020, outreach and engagement in the Strategic Plan Update began with a [brief presentation](#) to the City Council. Interviews with City Council and surveys of community members and staff have led to potential goal areas for the Strategic Plan update.

On October 12, 2020, the City Council received a [progress report on its priorities for 2020](#), organized around six result areas from the Strategic Plan: Safe Community, Welcoming and Livable Neighborhoods, Strong and Diverse Economy, Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure, Natural Environment Stewardship, and Good Governance.

On October 12, 2020, Council also received a report on the [2020 Community Satisfaction Survey](#). Consistent with responses since 2016, the results showed homelessness and affordable housing remain the top concern for half of the residents surveyed (49%). At least 8 of 10 residents were generally satisfied with the services the City provides like police and fire protection, parks and recreation, library, and water and sewer services.

At their November 16, 2020 work session, Council considered revisions to the mission, vision and values guiding the work of the organization and the Strategic Plan Update.

The Council also confirmed the Strategic Plan Update's five priority areas for action:

- **Addressing homelessness** through crisis response, working to prevent homelessness, and expanding affordable housing.
- **Creating community resilience** through more business supports through aftermath of COVID-19, increasing livable wage jobs in our community, and preparing for and responding to emergencies.
- **Increasing equitable delivery of service** by increasing access, increasing police engagement with all communities within our City, and strengthening the City's long-term financial position.
- **Building great neighborhoods** with access to parks and recreation for all ages and abilities, and increasing safety for bikers and walkers.
- **Taking on climate change** by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing our resilience to climate change.

At their January 19, 2021 work session, Council considered revisions made to the mission, vision and values; and three key questions to help guide final drafting of the Strategic Plan Update.

Courtney Knox Busch
Strategic Initiatives Manager

Attachments:

1. Strategic Plan Update, 2021-2026
2. February Community Survey Results