



Staff Report

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TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Keith Stahley, City Manager

SUBJECT:

Update on priorities proposed for the 2023 City Council Policy Agenda.

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.

SUMMARY:

Through its annual Policy Agenda, City Council makes its priorities for action clear to staff and the community and provides direction on aligning resources towards the Strategic Plan Policy areas through the City's budgeting process. Each fall, City Council develops a framework for its policy priorities and considers progress achieved on earlier priorities, community feedback from the Community Satisfaction Survey, and updates on major initiatives in an annual Community Report.

On March 14, 2022, Council adopted its policy priorities for the 2022 Policy Agenda. For this year, Council Policy Agenda priorities are concentrated in four areas: (1) responding to our sheltering crisis; (2) planning for our future; (3) engaging our community; and (4) sustaining infrastructure and services. City Council received an interim progress report on July 28, 2022.

On November 21, 2022, City Council considered progress outlined in the 2022 Community Report, community satisfaction with City services outlined in the annual statistically valid survey, and adjustments to priorities for the 2023 Policy Agenda. At this City Council Work Session, staff are returning with a draft set of priorities for 2023.

ISSUE:

Update on priorities to guide development of 2023 City Council Policy Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information and discussion.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Policy Agenda Progress

The 2022 City Council Policy Agenda priorities are concentrated in four areas: (1) responding to our sheltering crisis; (2) planning for our future; (3) engaging our community; and (4) sustaining infrastructure and services. In the November 21, 2022 City Council Work Session, City Council affirmed these priorities for 2023 - and all of this work will continue.

As part of the Council's conversation, staff were asked to bring back ideas for how to advance the Housing Production Strategy work earlier than originally forecast. To be ready to launch this work in the new fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2024, staff are exploring restructuring of available staffing resources, resulting from the merger of Community Development with the Urban Development Department.

Other priorities that fit within the Policy Agenda framework that have been raised and can be added to the 2023 Policy Agenda include:

1. Improve engagement and communications. A comprehensive engagement and communications plan is expected to result in strategies to tell our story, increase awareness of the impact the City has in day-to-day lives, and increase civic participation and diversity in participation, enhance our volunteer base, expand Neighborhood Associations, advisory boards and commissions, and benefit talent acquisition and recruitment strategies. This work is underway and is anticipated to be completed prior to July 2023.
2. Assessing equity in delivery of Salem's programs and services. A detailed equity assessment focused on workplace equity, supplier diversity, equitable access of community services, and a general policy review. This work is proposed for inclusion in the 2024 budget and can be initiated before July 1, 2023 by making use of professional services savings, and completed in FY24. Based on this assessment, the City will create a strategic plan to guide future operations, incorporating equity analysis into everyday work and assuring city services are equitably available to and accessed by all. This assessment will also result into performance indicators for measuring external and internal equity..
3. Conducting a review of the City Charter. To ensure the City Charter reflects an efficient and effective government, principles of equity, and is relevant to today's Salem.
4. Examine the committee structure and look at opportunities to streamline and simplify advisory board and commission structure to enhance their effectiveness and relevance..
5. Continuing investment in community-engaged policing. Increase police engagement with all communities within the City to enhance crime prevention and to facilitate trust when a police response is needed. Continue the commitment in this work through the Salem Police Department Strategic Plan.
6. Strengthening our community's resilience and emergency response. by continuing to support

community preparedness efforts. Community resilience to natural hazards and those brought on by accelerating climate change, as evidenced by recent fires, ice storms, and flooding.

Staff can return with a 2023 Council Policy Agenda for City Council adoption in early February. City Council can expect to continue to receive detailed updates on key initiatives within the Policy Agenda as well as quarterly updates on progress for the 2023 Policy Agenda.

BACKGROUND:

Each year, through its Policy Agenda, the Council provides policy direction and develop a set of specific actions designed to move the City towards achieving each objective.

Revenue forecasts indicate that continuing ongoing expenses at current levels is unsustainable. Addressing this funding gap will be a critical consideration in the FY2024 Budget Process.

Courtney Knox Busch
Strategic Initiatives Manager

Attachments: