



Re: 2005-2010 Strategic Planning Program

Citizens of El Centro,

In January 2004, City staff developed a set of goals and objectives that were used to design the 2004-05 City Budget as well as serve as a foundation for a broader strategic plan for the City.

Those goals included:

- A. Maintaining Control of City Finances
- B. Enhancing the Image of the City
- C. Improving the Quality of Life in the City
- D. Improving and Extending the City's Infrastructure

Council members as well as staff realized at the time that a broader-based planning effort was necessary due to the fiscal and growth-related challenges faced by the City.

In July 2004, a committee consisting of Council Member Rosanna Bayon Moore, City Manager Ruben Duran, and Reliance Communications Consultant, Bill Gay, developed a program for soliciting input from the community as to the objectives that the City Council should consider during the development of the City's budget for fiscal year 2005-2006 and in future budgets. It was designed to assist in developing a team that consisted of city staff, elected officials, appointed commission members, as well as stakeholder agencies such as the El Centro Regional Medical Center, Chamber of Commerce, and others.

The program was approved in September of 2004 and consisted of several elements.

1. Establish a taskforce to assist with the implementation of the program.
2. Schedule and hold two community workshops. The first was held in October with "breakout tables". The second workshop was also held in October to establish priorities from information developed at the first workshop.
3. Conduct exit surveys at each of the workshops to ascertain the effectiveness of the workshop. The surveys were developed and conducted by students from San Diego State University, Imperial Valley Campus.
4. Develop goal statements from the information collected at the two community workshops.

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It was the first effort in many years to reach out to the public to help us plan for the future. The idea was to discover a shared vision in the City in a citywide initiative involving all stakeholders, ranging from faith-based organizations to businesses and cultural organizations.

Letters of invitation were sent to all churches, community-based organizations, nonprofits, service clubs and other organizations. Additionally, media advertisements were placed with an open invitation for the public to participate in two community workshops that were held to identify issues and establish priorities.

WORKSHOPS

The first workshop was held October 16, 2004 at the Conrad Harrison Youth Center. The site was organized into six sections, each covering an individual topic, with a council member as facilitator, a flip chart note taker, a translator and a note taker using a lap top computer.

Participants were encouraged to visit each section at will to express opinions regarding the topic at hand. The six topics were Safe Neighborhoods, Recreation, Health & Wellness, Economic Development & Beautification, Transportation & Mobility, Life Long Learning, and City Beautification.

About 48 people participated in the workshop and 273 individual statements, issues and recommendations were identified from the notes taken in the six sections. Safe Neighborhoods yielded 35 statements; Transportation & Mobility, 40; Economic Development & Beautification, 56; Health and Wellness, 26; Recreation, 59 and Life Long Learning, 57.

The second workshop was held October 26, 2004 at the El Centro Community Center. Its purpose was to develop a prioritized ranking in each of the six sections from the issues that were developed in the first workshop.

There were 59 participants, including an English as a Second Language class from the Recreation Department. Each participant was asked to prioritize five issues in each of the six sections. This "balloting" was then scored and all of the issues were then ranked from high to low priority.

TASKFORCE

A City/Community Project Taskforce was developed to review the prioritized outcomes and shape them into proposed strategic goals to be presented to the Council for discussion, revision and/or adoption. The Taskforce consisted of city council member Rosanna Bayon Moore, committee chair; Community Services Commission Chair Orlando Johnson; Planning Commission Chair Harold Walk; Library Board Chair David Tyler; Historic Site Council representative Evelyn Zinn; El Centro Regional Medical Center Board Member Jennifer Thomason; Arts Council Board Member Paul Standifur; El Centro Chamber of Commerce representatives Cathy Kennerson and Frank Popejoy; Imperial Valley Housing Authority Tenant Commissioner Cesar Gonzales; Senior Citizens Clubs

representative Albert Newton and Southwest High School Associated Student Body President Irassem Tellez.

City staff assistance was provided by City Manager Ruben Duran and Public Relations Consultant Bill Gay.

The taskforce met November 4 and 15 to develop goals from the prioritized issues that were developed from the two workshops.

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY EVALUATION OF PROCESS

In October 2004, a group of mathematics students from the San Diego State University Imperial Valley Campus contacted Councilmember Moore to offer their services in a city project that would involve logical reasoning and mathematical analysis. This participation would satisfy assignments in their SDSU class in Probability and Statistics.

The students were engaged to develop exit surveys of participants of the workshops and determine demographic backgrounds, appropriateness of the workshop site and general impressions concerning the workshop formats. This information was designed to assist the council in measuring the validity of the material that was gathered.

After several meetings with the SDSU students, it was clear that they had an academic interest in also conducting street surveys to obtain input from citizens in the general public. They proposed approaching customers at entry/exit of a number of local grocery stores.

As a result, the students developed three separate surveys and shared the results with the Council on December 15, 2004.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In January 2005, the City Council reviewed the set of goals and objectives that were put together as a result of two community workshops and the Task Force last year. After reviewing the proposed goals, the City Council made certain changes to the goals for better fluency. The goals, as amended, were unanimously approved by the Council. The Council then provided direction to have the proposed objectives for each goal reviewed by Council and staff, and reach a consensus of the top two or three priorities. Consequently, the Council formed five subcommittees that would address the assigned goal(s) in their area of interest and/or expertise consisting of two council members and the respective city/hospital staff. Five separate meetings were conducted, each at different city buildings, including one at the El Centro Regional Medical Center.

At each subcommittee meeting, there was a Champion (Council member facilitating the discussion), a staff recorder, and the aforementioned members. Notes were taken at each meeting. Each subcommittee was assigned to review the prioritized objectives developed in the second Community Workshop by including the examination of policy,

feasibility, finances, timing, ongoing costs, capacity and compatibility with other projects.

Upon review of the objectives, Council members as well as staff realized that several of the objectives were underway, and due to the fiscal and growth-related challenges faced by the City, the objectives would need to be labeled as In Process, Near Term (within next three years) or Long Term (within next three to five years) rather than priority number one, two, and three.

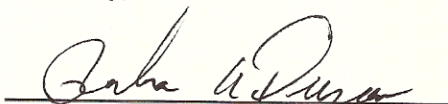
In July 2005, the City Council approved the proposed tasks for each objective and requested that target dates be assigned to each. Staff included status remarks for each item in order to provide the reader with current, pending or future tasks needed in order to complete the assignment.

After a little over a year and half process, it gives me great pleasure to present to the citizens of El Centro the 2005-2010 Strategic Planning Program. A program that took the unselfish dedication, expertise and collaboration of city staff, elected officials, appointed commission members, as well as stakeholder agencies such as the El Centro Regional Medical Center, Chamber of Commerce, students and citizens of El Centro.

The 2005-2010 Strategic Planning Program is updated regularly. The progress of each goal and task is tracked and the status is displayed on the right-hand side of the matrix.

I applaud all of you for your continued support and commitment to this great City. A City that's *Shining With Opportunity!*

Sincerely,



Ruben A. Duran
City Manager