

Information Item

Date: April 15, 2025

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Scott Tesh, Budget and Performance Management Director

Subject: Update on Strategic Planning Process and FY 2025-26 Budget

Strategic Focus Area: Service Excellence

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



Strategic Planning Update

In January 2025, the Mayor and City Council held a two-day workshop to discuss strategic priorities for the next three-four years. The City Council reviewed input from a variety of sources, including but not limited to, bi-annual resident survey data, resident prioritization and goal planning surveys, stakeholder focus groups, and information taken from the recently completed comprehensive planning process (Forward 2045). At the workshop, the framework for new priorities emerged, and four new focus areas were created:

- **Good Government** is a focus on delivering efficient and effective core services and utilizing best practices for municipal government. This includes working to maintain and update infrastructure and facilities, strengthening organizational financial practices and policies, and working to make sure the City is an employer of choice with competitive compensation and enhanced workplace cultures.
- **Economic Prosperity** is about empowering individuals and businesses alike for economic growth and success that benefits the entire community. This will include a focus on housing affordability and reducing the unhoused population, efforts to improve economic mobility and reduce poverty, attracting and retaining quality businesses that pay living wages, and fostering the sense of entrepreneurship and innovation that have been a hallmark of the community.
- **Community Advocacy and Engagement** recognizes that City staff cannot move the community forward without valued relationships with key partners. Advocacy involves marketing Winston-Salem as a wonderful place to live work and relax; working with our local, state, and federal partners to provide opportunities to improve the city; engaging with residents to foster civic pride; and strengthening our relationships and connections with community partners.

- **Livable Community** is about creating a community of choice. This includes a focus on enhancing resident's sense of safety through crime reduction, maintaining or improving the appearance of neighborhoods, and providing community and neighborhood amenities.

A draft of the strategic plan is attached. Each of the focus areas has four priorities and a series of outcomes or benchmarked performance indicators. Departmental work plans will align with these priorities to effect change in the community and create better outcomes in each of the four focus areas.

FY 2025-26 Budget Update

On May 19, 2025, the City Manager will present the FY 2025-26 proposed budget to the Mayor and City Council. The budget will include items related to the strategic plan with a focus on delivering efficient and effective core services. The attached presentation is primarily focused on the City's general fund and provides information on major revenue source projections, potential key cost drivers of the upcoming year, and policy changes regarding capital planning and debt structuring.

A series of workshops on the proposed budget will be held on May 21st, May 22nd, and May 28th. In addition, a public hearing on the budget will be held at the June 2nd City Council meeting, where any person wishing to be heard on items germane to the City's budget can provide input/feedback directly to the Mayor and City Council. The budget is slated for adoption on June 17, 2025.