

CITY OF PLACERVILLE

**COMMUNICATION AND  
GOAL-SETTING SESSION  
SUMMARY**

Thursday, April 19, 2018

*designed and facilitated by*

**Mason***Smith*  
**S U C C E S S  
S T R A T E G I E S**

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**INTRODUCTION**

On Thursday, April 19, 2018, the following members of the City of Placerville's Council and Staff met to plan for the coming year. The primary focus for the day was to:

1. Discuss City strengths, opportunities, and challenges,
2. Prioritize the top four City priorities for 2018-19, and
3. Enhance shared understanding, communication, and teamwork.

In the afternoon, the Staff excused themselves from the meeting, and the Council Members and City Manager worked together to continue to enhance communication and teamwork.

**Council Members**

Wendy Thomas, Mayor

Marc Acuna

Patty Borelli

John Clerici

Trisha Wilkins

**Staff**

Cleve Morris, City Manager

Regina O'Connell, City Clerk/Human Resources

James Ortega, Police Chief

Pierre Rivas, Director of Development Services

Dave Warren, Director of Finance

Steve Youell, Director of Community Services

The session was designed and facilitated by Laura Mason-Smith, of Mason-Smith SUCCESS STRATEGIES. Pre-session interviews were conducted by Mason-Smith to clarify individual perspectives and desired outcomes that helped inform the session agenda and activities. Outlined below is a summary of the session results.

## **PLACERVILLE POSITIVES**

The participants identified what they value about the City of Placerville as well as the City's strengths:

1. People here love and have a passion for our City
2. Quality of life :
  - a. Safe, friendly, enviable position relative to other cities
  - b. We're a real hometown with family, friends, and a strong sense of community
  - c. Cool people and the friendly vibe that we have in our community
  - d. Lots of things to do here for people of every generation
3. Our unique history:
  - a. We're a destination, and our unique downtown is a draw
  - b. The community embraces our City's history and keeps keep it alive
4. Placerville is a working town with a positive future; we have a nice mix of many types of business and with two large employers, Marshall Hospital and the County
5. Dedicated, passionate staff:
  - a. Provide calm, strong, effective leadership – a privilege to work with
  - b. Willing to perform miracles to keep the City running
  - c. Nimble, creative, and with can-do attitudes
6. Really good Council
7. Making steady, meaningful progress; our town is in good shape, and we keep making it better
8. Excellent Parks and Recreation programs
9. We're far enough away from the urban core to be unique

## **WHAT WE VALUE ABOUT OUR WORK**

1. Our role in serving the citizens
2. Working with people every day – great colleagues and great energy
3. Helping people work through and resolve problems
4. Finding our way through challenges and making things better
5. Passing Measure L to fund infrastructure maintenance and improvements
6. Doing work that is both challenging and enjoyable
7. Knowing our employees by name
8. Teamwork between the Council and the staff
9. Representing the City on Commissions

## **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES**

The City's internal and external challenges were identified as:

1. Financial sustainability, especially with the onerous impact of CalPERS and the need for more City staffing
2. Old infrastructure that needs investments (and Measure L will be able to significantly help with this)
3. Need for economic revitalization:
  - a. Hotels
  - b. Revitalization of older commercial areas
  - c. More and affordable housing
4. Being a City for everyone:
  - a. The need to serve people of all generations and ages
  - b. Attracting young people and families who want to live here and stay – art, music, sightseeing, the trail, etc.
5. Most people don't engage with City government unless it affects them personally
6. People don't necessarily realize how good we have it in Placerville
7. Differences of opinions and perspectives of the citizenry
8. The impact of social media on local government and the constant need to communicate effectively and build trust with the citizens
9. Issues related to homelessness
10. While Historic Main Street makes Placerville unique, it is important to also recognize the value of all areas of the City
11. Traffic circulation in and through town; getting the traffic passing through to stop and enjoy the City
12. Lack of a diverse sales tax base
13. Need to focus more on annexations and/or tax sharing with the County
14. Information sharing and messaging is critical for anything we want to do
15. Unfunded State mandates
16. Infrastructure and infrastructure maintenance isn't necessarily visible or understood
17. We have no funds budgeted for staff training
18. Concerns about the potential of another recession
19. Buying habits are changing (more focus on internet shopping and less on shopping centers)



## ***PRIORITIZED 2018-19 GOALS FOR THE CITY***

The participants developed and prioritized the following goals for 2018-19:

1. **Increase revenue to the City through the development and implementation of a solid Economic Development Strategy.**  
Components for consideration may include:
  - a. Exploring annexations and revenue sharing
  - b. Sewer service to Camino Heights and Motor City
  - c. Redevelopment of the Fair Grounds
2. **Increase public trust and engagement through more active positive messaging about what is happening in the City and why**
3. **Complete the Clay Street review process** (there is a proposed project but no final design for Clay Street, as we are still in the review process)
4. **Address the unfunded CalPERS liabilities threat**

## ***WHAT STAFF WANTS FROM THE COUNCIL***

The Staff indicated that they feel well supported and appreciate the Council making tough decisions and continuing to do so. Suggestions for the Council are:

1. Continue to provide the City Manager and Departments Heads with heads-up phone calls about issues or situations.
2. When you have a request or suggestion of something you think needs to be done, please go to Cleve or the relevant Department Head and refrain from going to any lower level staff.
3. If you have a question of the City Manager or Department Head, please ask them ahead of a Council meeting rather than asking it for the first time in the public forum; this allows staff to be well prepared.

## ***OTHER IDEAS FROM THE COUNCIL TO SUPPORT THE STAFF***

The Council Members agreed to the staff suggestions above and also suggested additional ideas for what they can do to support the staff:

1. Listen.
2. Become more engaged with the staff to understand their challenges.
3. Make themselves available for ride-along's or Department Staff Meetings at the request of the staff.
4. Be completely involved with the budget process.
5. Help with the Legislative process on discussing CalPERS challenges.

## **PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO PUBLIC COMMENTS DURING COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The participants developed the following protocol for responding to public comments during Council meetings:

1. Acknowledge but do not respond to each individual comment during the Council meeting unless it is a simple question of clarification, in which case the appropriate staff person will provide the clarification.
2. At the end of the public comment period:
  - a. The Mayor will explain that business cards for the City Manager and Department Heads are available in the back of the room and encourage citizens to contact the appropriate staff person about their comment or concern.
  - b. On a case-by-case basis as appropriate, if a public comment was inaccurate, the Mayor or a Council Member will explain the inaccuracy and provide an explanation of what is accurate.
3. If contacted by a citizen after the Council meeting about their public comment issue, the staff will promptly respond to the citizen about their comment or concern.

## **STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATIONS AND TEAMWORK**

The Council Members and City Manager focused on:

- Creating awareness of their own and each other's personality styles and preferences, and
- Better understanding, appreciating, and making constructive use of their differences as they work together as a public body.

They also discussed portions of the Council Handbook related to:

1. Putting items on the Council agenda,
2. Council Member expectations, and
3. Expectations related to Council Member participation on regional Commissions and Committees.

They also agreed to develop a new section for the handbook related to the duties and expectations of the Mayor, which should be extremely helpful to all new Mayors.

The City Manager collected the suggested changes from the Council Members and will write them up and bring them back to the Council for review.



## ***BENEFITS OF THE SESSION***

The participants shared what they had gained from the Session as:

1. We came together and all got on the same page; we are very lucky to work together for the good of the City
2. It is extremely valuable to invest in this type of session which will help us move to the next level
3. Really encouraging that we all have a shared passion and commitment for the City
4. We were able to talk to each other directly and openly
5. Frank discussions and acknowledgement of issues
6. We have a lot of challenges and the tools and good people to address these
7. Great forum to talk about issues together and realistically focus on what we can do to address them
8. Reinforced the Council support that is so appreciated by the staff
9. This was a very helpful forum and at a critical point; it is really important to do this work together
10. Very encouraging to see the shared focus and realistic priorities
11. It is so important to share the City's information and perspectives with the citizens
12. Exciting to see the focused, doable goals we've set and now see what we can get done for the City
13. We have such a targeted focus; we created clear direction and are all moving forward together
14. We are so cohesive, and that is so gratifying
15. Enjoyed and benefited from better understanding our personality types and how we can best work together
16. It is so useful to interact with each other and have honest, open conversations
17. Today was very informative and helpful
18. We committed to follow-through, which will be critical
19. Appreciated the conversations and mutual respect
20. Feel encouraged and empowered that this will be a good year