

**City of Reno, Nevada**  
**City Council Priority Setting Retreat**  
**Held October 30, 2018**

**November 2018**





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## Workshop Report

### **Workshop Overview**

The City of Reno held a City Council retreat on Tuesday, October 30, 2018 at the Reno Innevation Center, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The workshop provided an opportunity for the Mayor and Council, along with top executive staff to discuss recent accomplishments, long-term goals for Reno, priorities for the coming year, and ways to improve efficiency of Council meetings.



*Facilitator.* Jan Perkins, Senior Partner with Management Partners, facilitated the workshop, and Leslie Salmon-Zhu was the graphic recorder. In preparation for the workshop, Jan conducted individual interviews with each member of the City Council and met with the City Manager and management team.

### **Key Results**

The Council reaffirmed its three overarching goals for the City of Reno, and agreed on five Tier 1 and five Tier 2 priorities. The three overarching goals are:

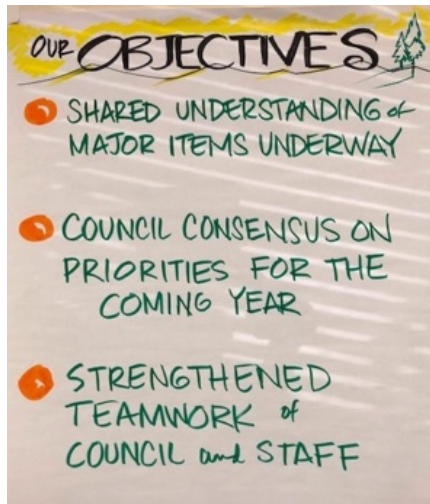
- ⇒ Provide for public safety
- ⇒ Ensure financial sustainability
- ⇒ Reduce debt

The Council also agreed on several procedural changes to City Council meetings intended to improve meeting efficiency. The priorities and agreed upon changes to meetings are all detailed in the report below. The upcoming budget will reflect the Council's overarching goals and priorities.

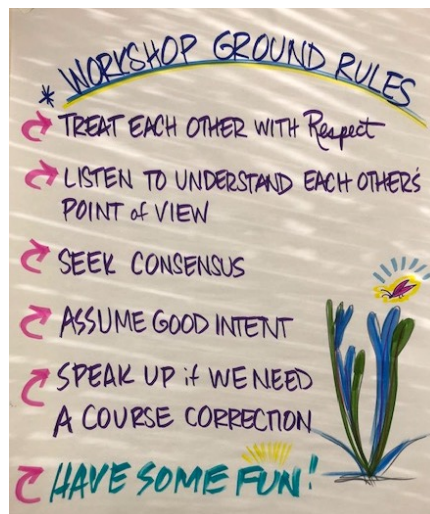
### Workshop Agenda

- Welcome by the Mayor
- Public comments
- Comments from the City Manager
- Icebreaker – learn something about each other
- Highlight recent accomplishments and factors that contributed to them
- Trends and context for priority setting
- Sharing Councilmembers' and staffs' long-term goals for Reno
- Create consensus on priorities
- Discussion of improving efficiency of Council meetings
- Wrap up

### Workshop Objectives



**Workshop Ground Rules.** The facilitator suggested several guidelines to help the Council and staff have successful discussions.



Workshop participants included the full City Council and top executive staff.

*City Council*

**Mayor  
Hillary Schieve**



**Council Member  
David Bobzien**



**Council Member  
Jenny Brekhuis**



**Council Member  
Naomi Duerr**



**Council Member  
Oscar Delgado**



**Council Member  
Paul McKenzie**



**Council Member  
Neoma Jardon**



*Executive Staff*

- City Manager, Sabra Newby
- Chief of Staff, Jennifer Lances
- City Attorney, Karl Hall
- City Clerk, Ashley Turney

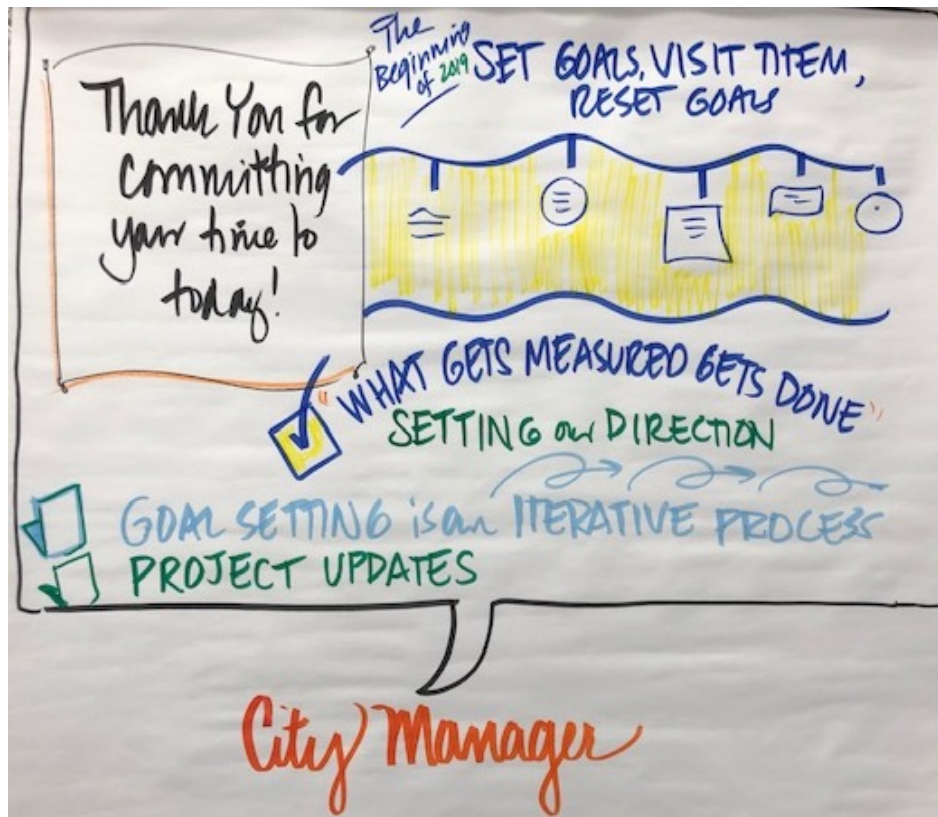
## Welcome and Opening Comments

The workshop opened with a welcome from Mayor Hillary Schieve, who thanked the Council and public for attending.

City Manager Sabra Newby offered opening comments about why the day was important. She expressed appreciation to the Council for committing a day to this discussion.

She said that it was the first opportunity since she had been appointed for the Council to meet in an informal setting to discuss long term goals and key priorities, and that it was important that she had a clear understanding of the Council's top priorities so she could convey those to staff. She noted that staff capacity is limited and that to make progress, clear prioritization is needed. She said that "what gets measured gets done" and today's discussions will assist with that.

Sabra indicated that goal setting is an iterative process and that today was just a beginning. After the first of the calendar year, she will schedule a session with the Council to discuss progress and if there are new members of Council, that will give them an opportunity to provide their input and perspectives.





## Review of Accomplishments

The Council and staff reviewed a slide containing a list of recent accomplishments and then discussed what factors contributed to the accomplishments.

# Accomplishments



- An engaged Council
- Moving forward with plans (sewer, traffic, water)
- Adopted Master Plan – *Reimagine Reno*
- Financial stability
- Reduced debt
- New tech industry
- New City Manager
- Community engagement

- Focus on arts and culture
- More transparent
- Rebranding Reno
- Enhanced tourism
- Progress on traffic
- Initiated Climate Action Plan
- Progress on homelessness
- Enhanced relationship with University

**.....and more!**



Among the factors suggested as contributing to success were the following:

- Doing a good job of consulting with people outside our bubble helps us build our future; community collaboration; initiative; ideas
- Our willingness and motivation to work together even if we don't agree
- The Council turnover gave us "something to prove" regarding ability to make a difference and change
- The hard work of the City staff who want us all to be successful
- We come from a community perspective
- We had an opportunity to address multiple needs, new tech industries, new City Manager
- Our clarity of purpose on the Council – everyone knew how to get it done
- External circumstances

## ***Trends and Context for Priority Setting***

The facilitator reviewed a number of slides to set the context for priority setting. Factors reviewed included:

- Population growth
- Income inequality
- Changing workforce
- Advanced technology
- Climate change
- Financial factors

Council and staff then discussed which of the factors are most relevant for Reno's priority setting. The factors cited were the following.

- *Climate change*: need to face this; global warming – put a stake in the ground; Reno is the fastest warming city in the U.S. – but we don't want this title; Northern Nevada is the hub of innovation around climate change
- *Financial factors*: projected financial shortfall graphic is significant; a recession is coming... need to continue staying ahead of liabilities; when the nation sneezes, we get sick
- *Workforce changes*: Shows the importance of our employees; must attract good employees; need to keep our good employees and be very active in their retention; employees are our most valuable asset
- We are ground zero for both problems and solutions; plant our seeds now; presents reinvestment opportunities and tremendous challenges
- Robust projections of growth
- Reno is unique



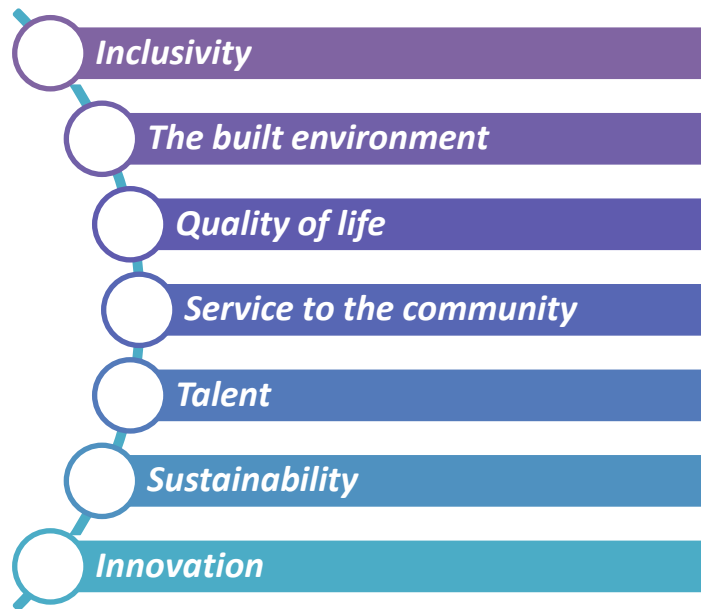
### Long-Term Goals for Reno

The group spent some time sharing their individual perspectives about long-term goals for Reno – both for the community and the City organization.

Each person was asked to write down a phrase to complete the following sentences, then share with their table and the large group:

- “My hope for our Reno **community** is...”
- “My hope for our City **organization** is...”

In discussing everyone’s hopes for Reno, the following seven themes emerged.



Specific hopes that were shared are provided in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Long-Term Goals for Reno

My hope for our Reno <i>community</i> is...	My hope for our City <i>organization</i> is...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be a place our kids will be proud to call home</li> <li>• Continue to grow as smart, innovative community that embraces inclusivity and its citizens’ differences</li> <li>• Be a safe place and financially secure</li> <li>• We stay unique and friendly and don’t become “every city.” A unique identity</li> <li>• A community that has adequate infrastructure</li> <li>• Retain a quality of life for all our residents (all across the socioeconomic spectrum)</li> <li>• We embrace our growth and evolution into the Reno we are becoming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An innovative organization with stability, expertise and longevity</li> <li>• See an organization that holds the entire community’s best interest at heart</li> <li>• Growth as a place for people who embrace public service as a career</li> <li>• Will be able to serve all its residents in an equitable and sustainable manner</li> <li>• Organization that is innovative, nimble, forward thinking place that values and retains talent</li> <li>• Be able to add to the workforce personnel members so that workloads are reduced – huge workloads</li> </ul>



Key Challenges Facing Reno	
Council	Management Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth management               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Roads/traffic/transportation</li> <li>▪ Sewer/wastewater capacity</li> <li>▪ Water supply traffic</li> <li>▪ Public safety</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need for affordable housing, market rate</li> <li>• Uncertainties about HUD funding</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Need for more revenue; property tax structure</li> <li>• Lack of funding for basics (e.g., fire mechanic)</li> <li>• Lack of enough recreational facilities (pools, parks)</li> <li>• Need for greater clarity of Council/staff roles</li> <li>• Staff turnover</li> <li>• Project management – implementing plans once adopted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of resources</li> <li>• Inadequate capital dollars</li> <li>• Lack of replacement programs/funds</li> <li>• Lack of prioritization</li> <li>• Council/staff relationships</li> <li>• Staff turnover and expected retirements; difficulty recruiting</li> <li>• Lack of attention to the fundamentals</li> </ul>

## Priorities

In her interviews with Council in advance of the workshop, the facilitator asked what their priorities were for the City to make progress on during the upcoming year. She then created a consolidated list of the items. The staff provided status information on each of the items.

The City Manager and management team also had comments regarding priorities as the workshop was being planned. Their comments were:

- Focus on the fundamentals (policies and procedures, systems, replacement plans and funds)
- Recognize what is already underway, stay the course on those, and do them well
- Recognize staff capacity

In the workshop, the Council reviewed the list of their priorities and suggested some consolidations of some of the items. Then, the facilitator gave each member of Council 10 dots for voting; five of one color and five of another color. The two colors were to be used for two levels of priority, as follow.

- **Tier 1:** Items that will have the top focus for Council and staff so that significant progress can be made during the year.
- **Tier 2:** Items that will be worked on as time and resources permit.

## Overarching Goals

The Council also affirmed its three overarching long term goals, which are:

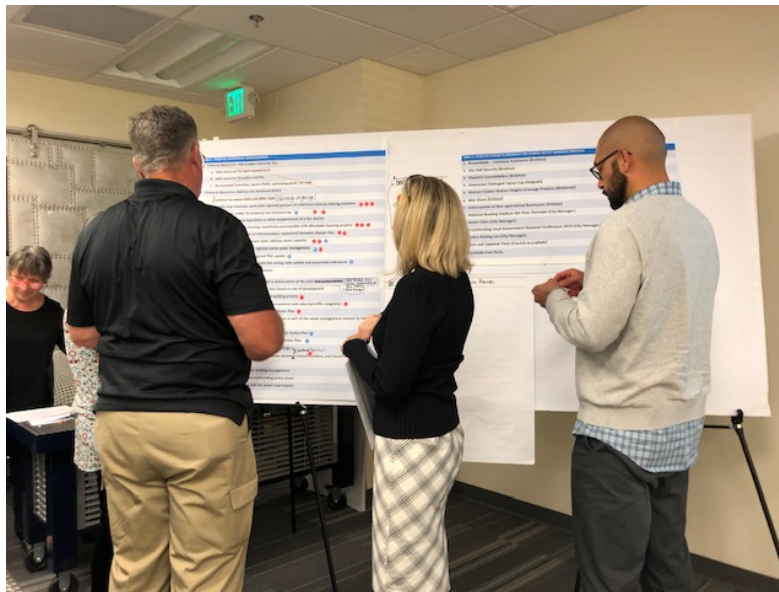
- ⇒ **Provide for public safety**
- ⇒ **Ensure financial sustainability**
- ⇒ **Reduce debt**

Attachment A shows a picture of the actual charts used for the dot voting exercise. The results are listed in Table 2 below.

Each of the items on the list will need further clarification in order to operationalize them.

Table 2. City Council's Overarching Goals, Tier 1 and Tier 2 Priorities

Overarching Council Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for public safety</li> <li>• Ensure financial stability</li> <li>• Reduce debt</li> </ul>
Tier 1 Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify new revenues; work with regional partners on interlocal revenue sharing solutions</li> <li>• Lobby for property tax restructuring</li> <li>• Increase affordable housing; incentivize and expedite infill affordable housing projects</li> <li>• Make progress on homelessness and implement a homeless master plan</li> <li>• Implement the sewer plan and address sewer capacity</li> </ul>
Tier 2 Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to implement the zoning code update and associated ordinances</li> <li>• Streamline the planning and building process</li> <li>• Make progress on the Downtown Action Plan</li> <li>• Improve efficiency of Council meetings, improve communication between Councilmembers and between Council and staff, and clarify roles of Council/staff</li> <li>• Demonstrate commitment to preservation of the river (e.g., One Truckee, further expansion of the park, park rangers)</li> </ul>



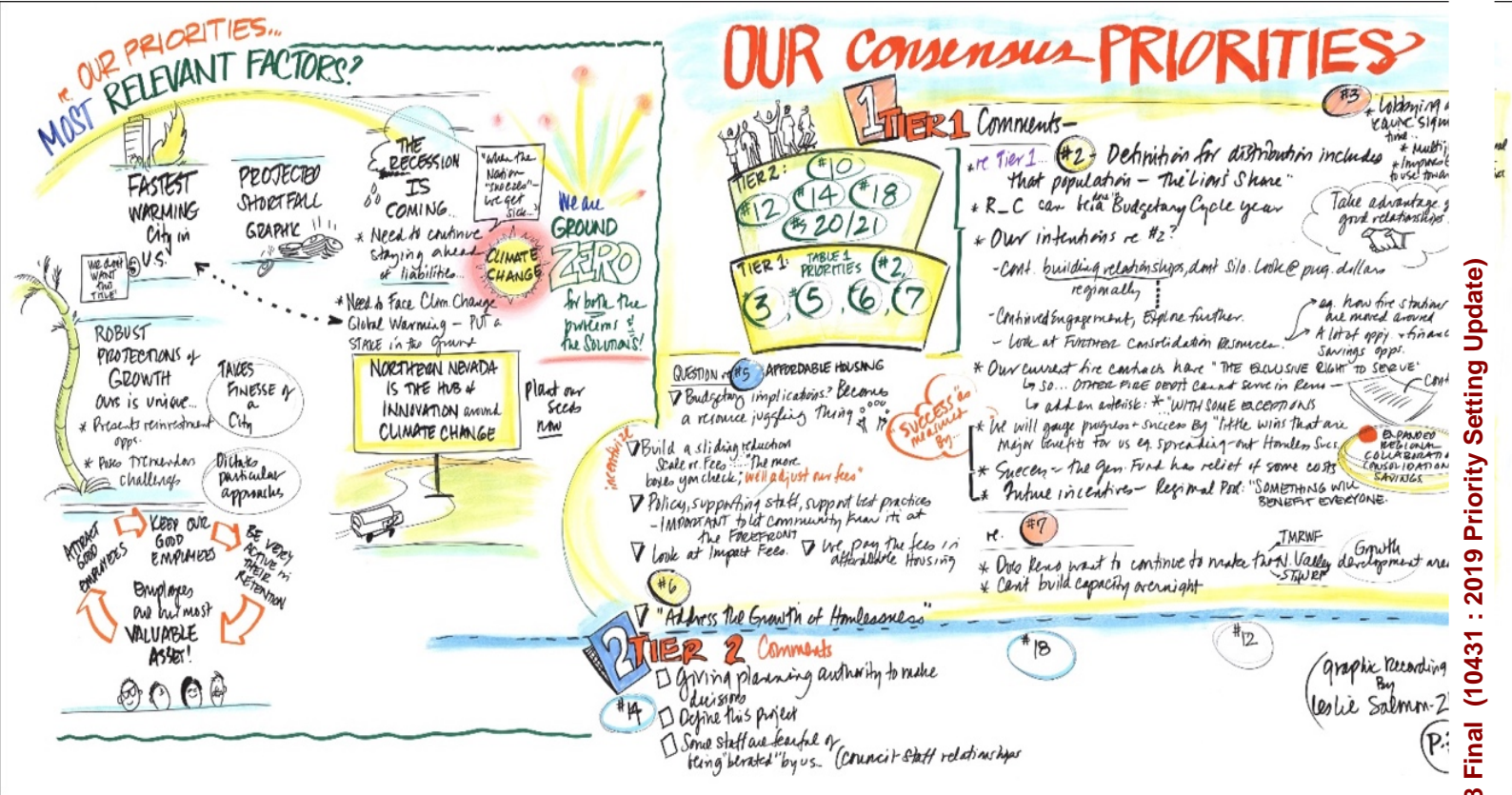
The remaining items on the list will continue on the scheduled paths, they are on, but it is understood they will not be priorities for staff time and resources, so as not to impede progress on the Tier 1 and Tier 2 items.

Those items are:

- Pursue legislation to allow establishment of a fire district
- Make progress on regional storm water management
- Complete the regional plan update
- Continue to implement the zoning code update and associated ordinances
- Create new tree ordinances
- Develop a sliding scale for fees based on size of development
- Make progress on road improvements and reducing traffic congestion
- Begin to implement the Master Plan
- Develop a composting program as part of the waste management contract
- Show support for the Climate Action Plan
- Improve parking management
- Resolve outstanding policy issues

The Council also briefly reviewed a list labeled, "Other Key Projects Underway Per Council or City Manager Direction." There were comments on several items on that and the other list, as noted below. The items on those lists were not prioritized.

- Adding budgetary resources for various items will be considered in the upcoming budget, including park maintenance, police and fire, recreational amenities, other items
- Parks planning and maintenance: interest in keeping moving on plans; understand the City does not have a parks planner; budget issue; lack of sufficient park maintenance staffing
- Smart Cities: need to define what this is beyond 5G, to be cost-neutral; stay on the cutting edge but with sober eyes.
- Transforming Local Government National Conference 2019 is a result of Reno being selected by that organization as the site for their conference
- Virginia Range is a project underway
- Dispatch consolidation issue will be returning to the Council soon for discussion



### Improving Efficiency of Council Meetings

The Council and staff discussed ways to reduce the time of Council meetings and improve efficiency. Through discussion, the following steps were agreed to by the Council, some of which were reinforcements of current practice.

- Councilmembers will ask clarifying questions on agenda items in advance of Council meetings
- The "J" (policy) items will be moved up on the agenda, after the consent items
- Ceremonial and proclamations will be scheduled on one Friday a month at 10 a.m.; will try it three months and evaluate (potential of considering how it may be coordinated with the legislative meetings)
- Councilmembers will request special briefings on upcoming agenda items when they feel it would be useful
- Breaks at Council meetings will continue to be on a rotational basis, with a 30-minute lunch break scheduled at 1:30 p.m.
- The order of when staff makes presentations will be changed to provide information earlier; staff will make a presentation on an



item first, then Council will ask questions, then the public will be invited to speak

The next step for this is for the City Manager, City Clerk and other staff to operationalize these changes.



### Bike Rack

As a time management tool, a flipchart was used to track items that were brought up during the day where there would not be the time to fully discuss them, and would not be handled in another way. The items that were added to the bike rack during the workshop are listed below.

- Enhanced training and coaching for staff who make presentations in front of the City Council so they can become more proficient, including having PowerPoints reviewed by others before being presented.
- Constituent requests that go into the tracking system are not always followed up on in a timely manner; improvements are needed.
- Support the “barnraising” view of government as opposed to the “vending machine” through encouraging and supporting

community members in assisting with problem solving and improving the community; explore training for community.

### ***Wrap Up and Next Steps***

To conclude the workshop, the group discussed the following next steps.

- City Manager will communicate the Council's priorities to the organization.
- The budget process will reflect the Council's overarching goals and its priorities.
- Departmental work plans will reflect the Council's priorities.
- The three-month calendar will show when priorities are going to be on the Council agenda.
- Progress updates will be prepared by staff.
- After the first of the year, the City Manager will schedule a discussion with Council about the goals and priorities.

Closing comments were offered by each person at the workshop, as follows:

- Good to sit together and talk with the City Manager about priorities.
- Good to pause and look at our communication. Let's interact more often. These types of meetings help us develop new relationships and feelings.
- Let's be kinder to one another.
- Good to see our Council priorities are more in line. Thank you!
- Fewer staff here added to our productivity.
- Love everyone here. Appreciated today.
- Appreciate we had this touchstone experience--- it's been a long time.
- Appreciate everyone's candor and honesty.
- Great to reassure staff they have a direction and support from us.
- Great to be in an informal setting, express priorities, set goals, talk with staff.
- Happy to be here. This will help me work with everyone.
- We will work together to relieve staff pressures. We're more aligned now. Really valuable to see details of the flipchart notes.



# Attachment A: Dot Voting on Tier 1 and Tier 2 Priorities

The raw results of the dot voting exercise are shown in the picture below.

TABLE 1: PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY COUNCILMEMBERS	
1. Financial Resources: Add budget resources for:	
a. Add resources for park maintenance	
b. Add resources for police and fire	
c. Recreational amenities (sports fields, swimming pools, ice rink)	
2. Financial Resources: Address the structural deficit	
(Continue to reduce debt and other costs) (already ongoing)	
Identify new revenues; work with regional partners on interlocal revenue sharing solutions	●●●●●●●●●●
3. Financial Resources: Lobby for property tax restructuring	●●●●●●●●
4. Financial Resources: Pursue legislation to allow establishment of a fire district	●●●●●●
5. Housing: Increase affordable housing; Incentivize and expedite infill affordable housing projects	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
6. Homelessness: Making progress on homelessness; implement Homeless Master Plan	●●●●●●●●●●●●
7. Sewer Capacity: Implement the sewer plan; address sewer capacity	●●●●●●●●●●
8. <del>Sewer Capacity</del> Storm Water Mgt: Make progress on regional storm water management	●●●●●●●●
9. Regional Planning: Complete the Regional Plan update	●●●●●●
10. Regional Planning: Continue to implement the zoning code update and associated ordinances	●●●●●●●●
11. Regional Planning: Create new tree ordinances	●●●●●●
12. Regional Planning: Demonstrate commitment to preservation of the river and surrounding habitat	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
13. Regional Planning: Develop a sliding scale for fees based on size of development	●●●●●●●●●●
14. Regional Planning: Streamline the planning and building process	●●●●●●●●●●
15. Road Improvements: Make progress on road improvements and reducing traffic congestion	●●●●●●●●●●
16. Implementation of Plans: Begin to implement the Master Plan	●●●●●●
17. Implementation of Plans: Develop a composting program as part of the waste management contract to reduce waste	●●●●●●
18. Implementation of Plans: Make progress on the Downtown Action Plan	●●●●●●●●●●
19. Implementation of Plans: Show support for the Climate Action Plan	●●●●●●
20. Organization/Relationships: More efficient Council meetings (Combined #20 & #21)	●●●●●●
21. Organization/Relationships: Improved communication between Councilmembers, and Council and staff and role clarification of Council/staff	●●●●●●
22. Organizational/Relationships: Improve parking management	●●●●●●
23. Organizational/Relationships: Resolve outstanding policy issues	●●●●●●
a. Waste management franchise and the small trash haulers	
b. Adult entertainment ordinance	

DOTS on TABLE ONE

ORANGE = TOP HIGHEST PRIORITIES

BLUE = SECONDARY BUT STILL WANT TO SEE PROGRESS

TABLE 2: OTHER KEY PROJECTS UNDERWAY PER COUNCIL OR CITY MANAGER DIRECTION	
1. Brownfields – Technical Assistance (Brekhus)	
2. City Hall Security (Brekhus)	
3. Dispatch Consolidation (Brekhus)	
4. Downtown Packaged Liquor Cap (Delgado)	
5. Warren Estates-Skyline Heights Drainage Projects (McKenzie)	
6. Bike Share (Schieve)	
7. Enforcement of Non-operational Businesses (Schieve)	
8. National Bowling Stadium 4th Floor Remodel (City Manager)	
9. Smart Cities (City Manager)	
10. Transforming Local Government National Conference 2019 (City Manager/Schieve)	
11. Police Parking Lot (City Manager)	
12. New and Updated Parks (Council as a whole) Priority #1	
13. Pesticide Free Parks	

24. Planning for the future of Virginia Range ●●

(p. 2)

# RENO COUNCIL 2019 PRIORITIES

UPDATED 10.30.18

## OVERARCHING COUNCIL GOALS

**\$**  
ENSURE FINANCIAL  
STABILITY

**⚡**  
PROVIDE PUBLIC  
SAFETY

**💰**  
REDUCE DEBT

## TIER 1 PRIORITIES

- A IDENTIFY NEW REVENUES
- B PROPERTY TAX RESTRUCTURING
- C INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- D MAKE PROGRESS ON HOMELESSNESS
- E IMPLEMENT THE SEWER PLAN

## TIER 2 PRIORITIES

- A IMPLEMENT THE ZONING CODE UPDATE
- B STREAMLINE THE PLANNING AND BUILDING PROCESS
- C MAKE PROGRESS ON THE DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN
- D IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF COUNCIL MEETINGS
- E DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO THE RIVER