

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 19, 2023

**TO:** Mayor Hopkins and Members of the Ruston City Council

**FROM:** Jennifer Robertson, City Attorney

**RE:** Report on City Council Retreat

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The Mayor and City Council held a Retreat on May 16, 2023 for the purposes of discussing the City's 20-year vision and discussing both short-term and long-term goals for the City. This report provides topics of discussion and the consensus points on the City vision and goals.

**1. City Vision.**

While a vision was not crafted by the Council during this retreat due to time limitations, there were several universal themes that were shared by members. These included:

- Strong community
- Long term financial stability
- Succession planning for continued viability of City
- Governmental services that meet the community's needs:
  - Excellent fire/EMS services
  - Excellent police services
  - Strong operations for utilities
- Safe community
- Professional city management
- Maintaining an independent and autonomous city
- Caring and engaged community
- Walkable city
- Self-contained city with amenities for the people who live here (i.e., third places, grocery store, parks) so people don't have to leave town for their daily needs
- More community building events to bring people together
- Creation of places to recreate within City borders, including improving Rust Park
- Well-maintained facilities and infrastructure
- Modern facilities that meet the City's needs
- Maintain what makes Ruston unique and special including the "small town feel"

## **2. Short Term Goals.**

The Council discussed long-term goals which are goals in the one-to-three-year range. Many of these flowed into the long-term goals.

Short-term goals with broad consensus included:

- Create a plan for improving Rust Park – some items discussed on this include:
  - Separate uses from Promotory Park
  - Playground
  - Land swap with BNSF
  - DOE remediation and drainage issues need addressing
  - Turf field
  - Active uses: pickleball, basketball, skateboarding
  - Need to find a funding solution for this improvement plan
- Determine funding needs for improving Rust Park
- Obtain Fire and EMS Services from Tacoma Fire
- Create sustainable police department, including
  - Succession planning
  - Recruitment
  - Retention (of LEOs and Command)
  - Funding
- Creation of a 6-Year Financial Plan
- Find way to fund the administrative and management staff necessary, including
  - City Administrator
  - Additional administrative support, deputy clerk
- Improve city facilities, including school building and creating a plan for public buildings

Other Short-Term Goals that were discussed but did not have broad consensus included:

- Creation of economic development strategy and partnerships
- Continued infrastructure improvements
- Improved signage
  - Welcome to Ruston
  - Wayfinding
- Expand communications from the City, i.e., website, events, newsletters
- Create a sense of community by adding more City events, etc.
- Create a formal City volunteer program
- Change to Council-Manager form of government at a later date

### **3. Long Term Goals.**

The Council discussed long-term goals which are goals in the three-to-five-year range (or longer). Many of these built upon the short-term goals.

Goals with broad consensus included:

- Improve Ruston Park
- Begin planning and implementing for new fire facility in Ruston for use by Tacoma Fire
- Complete power undergrounding city-wide
- Completion of Promotory Park
- Creation of Parks and Recreation Plan (after Promotory Park details are more known)

Other Long-Term Goals that were discussed but did not have broad consensus included:

- Business and Economic Development:
  - Complete development of commercial properties
  - Create or partner for business incubation
  - Facilitate reinvestment in underutilized properties
  - Create or partner with business marketing organization to encourage investment in Ruston
- Tree canopy enhancement and planting initiative
- Create Parks Board
- Improve transit
- Create solar rebate program

### **4. Next Steps.**

If the City Council would like to continue to work on or otherwise take up any of these issues, they may do so by a majority vote of the City Council. In addition, to the extent the goals need funding, adding these to the budget discussion for the next budget year would be timely.

### **5. Conclusion.**

It was my pleasure to facilitate the retreat with you. It is clear that the Council has a lot of commonality in terms of the vision for the city and the steps to create that vision.