

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION**  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL  
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA  
**November 19, 2024**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Mayor Nicholls** called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 5:34 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Morales, Smith, McClendon, Morris, Shoop, Shelton, and Mayor Nicholls  
Councilmembers Absent: None  
Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton  
Director of Public Works, Joel Olea  
Director of Engineering, David Wostenberg  
Various department heads or their representatives  
City Attorney, Richard W. Files  
City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong

**I. SPACEPORT UPDATE**

**Simonton** presented an update on the status of the spaceport project as follows:

- Spaceport Project History
  - It Started With a Simple Vision
    - March 2016 – Councilmember Shelton discussed the concept/goal of Yuma developing a spaceport at the Council Retreat
    - 2017/18 – The region received interest from commercial rocket companies regarding the possibility of developing a commercial spaceport
    - 2019 – Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation (GYEDC) received a grant to complete a feasibility study
    - 2022 – City in partnership with GYEDC hired Launch on Demand to complete the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Site License Application Process
- Why Yuma?
  - It is all about location
  - Close to large bodies of water (Sea of Cortez/Pacific Ocean)
    - Rockets are usually two or more stages, and the first stage would break off over the Pacific Ocean
  - Ideal longitude and latitude to launch communication satellites toward a southerly polar orbit
  - Very low population densities
    - The launched rockets would travel over sparsely populated areas, reducing safety concerns
  - Very few viable commercial spaceports in the world
    - Fewer than 30 operational spaceports
    - Many spaceports are controlled by the federal government, making it difficult for smaller operators to launch their equipment into space

- Progress to Date
  - Need to obtain FAA Part 420 Site Operator License
  - Hired consultant Launch on Demand in 2022 to complete the Site License Application Process
  - Submitted Pre-Application to FAA in February of 2024
  - Working with an environmental consultant to complete the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents
  - Anticipate environmental review process to be completed in the fall of 2025
  - FAA will have 180 days to review the application
    - If everything goes as planned, the goal is to have the site operator license approved in early 2026
- Challenges and Hurdles to Overcome
  - Land swap/acquisition with Arizona State Lands Department and Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS)
    - The City owns parcels of land that were acquired for a potential landfill, but their location is not optimal
  - FAA approval of inland spaceport
  - Size of launch vehicles
    - The tables used by the FAA to determine the safety of launching a rocket were for much larger rockets carrying significantly larger payloads than would be handled at Yuma's spaceport
    - The City's consultants had to submit a lot of extra documentation to prove that launching small rockets from the proposed location would be safe
  - Private investment in site infrastructure
    - The City does not have the funds to build the spaceport, and will need to find a private partner
  - Coordination with Mexico
- Project is Generating Interest
  - National Science Foundation (NSF) Engine Grant
    - Partnership with the City, GYEDC, Arizona Western College (AWC) and Elevate Southwest
    - Potential \$160 million grant over the next 10 years
  - Companies and Educational Interests
    - InterOrbital Systems (signed a Memorandum of Understanding)
      - Uses turpentine and nitric acid as fuel sources, which are much less dangerous to the environment and unlike traditional rocket fuel does not require a special storage system
      - They want to be the first to launch a rocket from the Yuma spaceport
    - Space-Tech Inc.
    - University of Arizona
    - Arizona State University
    - Raytheon
    - Jet Propulsion Laboratories




## Discussion

- The long game is not so much about launching rockets, but about creating an industry base in Yuma; having a spaceport in Yuma would attract companies that develop and construct rockets, satellites, and peripheral information resources, which would bring hundreds of well-paying jobs to the area (**Mayor Nicholls**)
- The former President of Mexico supported this project, but their administration changed after the most recent election; it is expected that Mexico will see the spaceport as a benefit to them due to fabrication and other ancillary activities that could take place in San Luis (**Smith/Simonton**)
- Initial indications from Dr. Remy Martínez, Executive Director of 4FrontED, is that the spaceport will be viewed favorably by Mexico as a regional asset, not just an American asset (**Mayor Nicholls**)
- Some infrastructure development would be required for the spaceport, including a water source for fire suppression and high-speed internet (**Smith/Simonton**)
- The number of added jobs has not been estimated at this point as the current focus is on getting the site license and working with private industry to develop the required infrastructure; the number of jobs that could be created as a result of the spaceport could be enormous and would include many types of industries (**Shoop/Simonton**)
- The City has plenty of hotel rooms to accommodate contractors and people coming into town for launches or research activities; people who move to Yuma long-term as a result of the spaceport and ancillary facilities will add to the demand for housing and services (**Shoop/Simonton**)
- A feasibility study was conducted and can be provided to City Council; while the spaceport would be limited to the launch of small satellites due to location and other factors, this is a market with very high demand and a lack of facilities (**Mayor Nicholls/Morales/Simonton**)
- The \$160 million grant would not be just for the infrastructure of the spaceport, but for job development, career development, research, and other related activities; the City partnered with Elevate Southwest to apply for the grant because the City was not eligible to apply on its own (**Morales/Simonton**)
- While the City is very much involved in the planning and development of the spaceport, once it is up and running a private operator will likely be responsible for most of the day-to-day operations (**Morales/Simonton**)

## **II. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT UPDATE**

**Olea** presented the following Public Works department update:

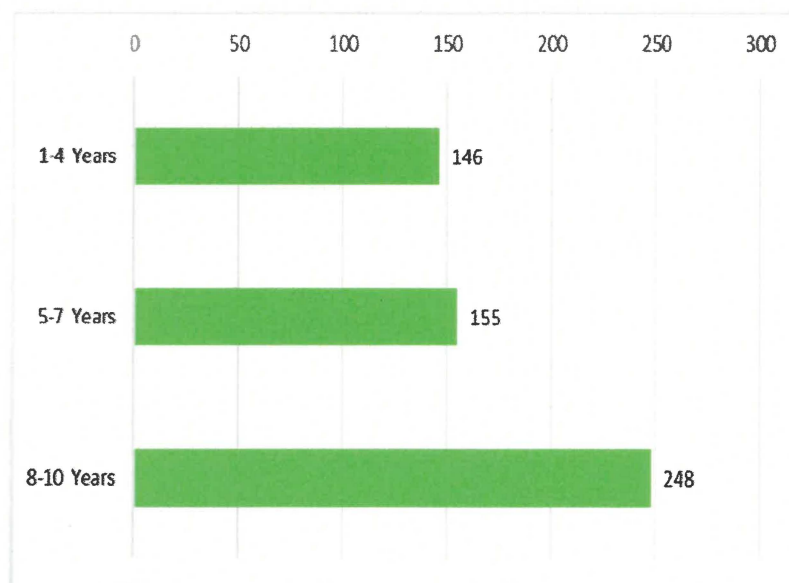
- Vehicle Inventory: 549

Class 1 - 2	Class 3 - 5	Class 6+
		
<b>Sedans</b>	<b>SUV &amp; Trucks</b>	<b>Heavy Equipment</b>
<b>87</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>16%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>14%</b>

- The fleet is organized using Federal Highway Administration class codes determined by the number of axles, the weight of the vehicle, and the towing capacity
- Quarterly Performance Review: Q1
  - 877 work orders
    - 88 roadside assistance
    - 789 preventative repairs
  - 1.5 day turn around time
- Fuel Management
  - Fuel is the largest expense outside of the original purchase of a vehicle
  - Fuel use increased by 4% in Fiscal Year 2024



- Equipment Replacement
  - Over 50% of the City's fleet is seven years or younger
    - One to four years – 34%
    - Five to seven years – 28%
    - Eight to 10 years – 48%



- In the past there have been challenges in replacing vehicles in a timely manner because of various factors, such as the chip shortage several years ago, but now for the most part any delays are due to vehicle availability
- Currently there are 36 outstanding vehicle purchase orders; once those vehicles are received the percentage of vehicles eight to ten years old will decrease from 48% to 38%
- Safety Improvements
  - Global Positioning System (GPS)
    - Public Works has been using GPS for the last five years in solid waste trucks and street sweepers
    - Location of vehicle can be tracked at all times, and allows for pre-establishment of routes to avoid unnecessary driving
    - Supervisor is able to communicate with vehicle operator to inform of additional field requests for services
  - Camera systems
    - Testing 360 degree cameras mounted on larger equipment
    - The camera systems help eliminate blind spots and include a monitor screen in the vehicle's cab
  - Vehicle telematics
    - Provides a daily report of fuel efficiency, breaking events, and on-board diagnostics that send any mechanical codes directly to the shop
- Future of Four Wheels
  - Electric Vehicles (EVs)
    - If EVs are ever introduced into the City's fleet, Class One and Class Two vehicles would be the first to be replaced
    - Larger EVs, such as solid waste trucks, are currently being tested by manufacturers, but are not feasible at this time
      - Challenges include:
        - Balancing out the weight of a vehicle with its battery
        - Figuring out how to power vehicles so they can run the entirety of a work shift
        - Vehicle cost, which is about double that of a similar gas powered vehicle
    - Arizona Public Service (APS) is conducting an assessment of the City's fleet and will provide a recommendation on replacement options and potential cost savings

### Discussion

- Vehicle lifespan varies depending on class, and the replacement matrix factors in mileage, age, and mechanical work that has been performed on the vehicle; Class One and Class Two vehicles have a lifespan of up to 10 years or 100,000 miles, and for Class Five through Class Seven the lifespan is up to eight years or 100,000 miles (**Morris/Olea**)
- The majority of Yuma Police Department's vehicles fall under Class Three and Class Four (**Mayor Nicholls/Olea**)



### III. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 20, 2024

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.1 – Bid Award: Avenue 5E Sanitary Sewer Main Extension and Turn Lane Improvements (construction services contract in the amount of \$3,454,137.38 with Gutierrez Canales Engineering) (RFB-25-102) (Eng)

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.2 – Bid Award: Ocean to Ocean Bridge Lighting Upgrades (construction services contract in the amount of \$224,900.50 with Westmoor Electric, Inc.) (RFB-25-058) (Eng)

**Mayor Nicholls** declared a conflict of interest on Motion Consent Agenda Items C.1 and C.2 as his firm is involved in those contracts.

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Resolution R2024-065 – Grant Agreement: U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration – Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant (to develop a City of Yuma Comprehensive Safety Action Plan) (Eng)

#### Discussion

- The City will put out a Request for Qualifications for a consultant to complete the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (Plan); the Plan will make the City eligible for future grants for infrastructure improvements (**Morris/Wostenberg**)
- The City will be utilizing a consultant to complete the study because it requires the expertise of traffic and safety engineers with experience developing safety action plans, which the City does not have on staff; there are excellent local engineering firms, but the sub-consultants are for the most part located in the Phoenix and Tucson areas (**Morris/Wostenberg**)
- In the future, the City may be able to utilize some of the grant funds by billing for staff time or to hire additional staff if needed (**Morris/Wostenberg**)
- The City does have a traffic engineer on staff who will be playing a key role in the project, but the Engineering Department does not have the capacity to complete the Plan itself at this time (**Morales/Wostenberg**)
- The Plan is developed every five years, and normally the City would be participating in a regional effort; the City had already applied for and received the grant and was unable to add the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO) or any other entities, but will be collaborating with YMPO on the project (**Morales/Wostenberg**)
- The Plan is anticipated to be completed in about a year (**Smith/Wostenberg**)

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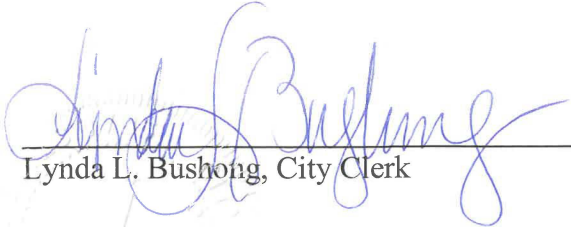
Ordinance O2024-039 – Gift Acceptance: Utility Easement Property (approximately 8.35 acres of property located between Avenue 7 ½ E and 7 ¾ E along the United States Bureau of Reclamation “A” Canal) (Eng)

#### Discussion

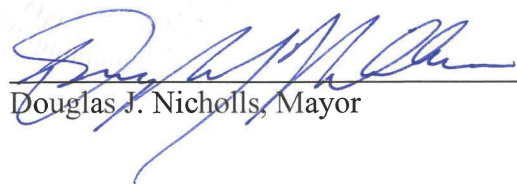
- The property would not be able to be fenced off and utilized by Elliot Homes because the Western Area Power Authority needs access to the power lines at all times; it could potentially be used as a bike path or linear park with soccer fields, or for adjacent Capital Improvement Program projects (**Morris/Wostenberg**)

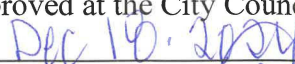
**EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** (Smith/Morales): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

  
Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

  
Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of: 
City Clerk: 