MINUTES
SPECIAL WORKSESSION\CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
COCOPAH RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTER
15268 S. AVENUE B, SOMERTON, ARIZONA
March 25, 2025
9:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the Special Worksession/Council Retreat to order at 9:25 a.m.

Councilmembers Present:	Martinez, Morris, McClendon, Smith, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent:	Morales
Staffmembers Present:	Acting City Administrator, Jay Simonton
	Deputy City Administrator, Jenn Reichelt
	City Attorney, Richard W. Files
	City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong
	Deputy City Clerk, Janet L. Pierson
	Mayor's Chief of Staff, Kathy Moon

The retreat was facilitated by Nicole Lance, CEO, Lance Strategies

I. COUNCIL DYNAMICS AND STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS

Lance set the pace for the day by giving an overview of day 1 and what she is expecting from day 2 with the interactions between City Council and City staff. All Directors were present with the exception of the Human Resources Director. Other City staff in attendance included the Assistant Director of Facilities Management, Justin Lewis and the Assistant Director of Neighborhood Services, Cynthia Blot.

After an icebreaker activity relating to 'the illusion of certainty', **Mayor Nicholls** and **City Council** provided opening comments with many touching on their takeaways from day 1.

Mayor Nicholls let staff know that although Councilmember Morales could not be in attendance, he was very engaged in day 1 and provided some input for today's session.

II. REVIEW AND UPDATE OF STRATEGIC PLAN

Lance stated that City Council's intent for the Strategic Plan was not to start from scratch but to review and modify the existing plan, if necessary. The following recommendations were made (changes noted in bold):

Safe and Prosperous:Yuma is a **safe and** prosperous city that supports thriving businesses, access to education, and multi-generational opportunities, with **the** safety **of the community** as its cornerstone.

Active and Appealing: [no changes] Yuma plans and leverages its natural resources, public spaces and cultural amenities to support an active and appealing community.

Connected and Engaged: [no changes] Yuma is connected ad engaged through cutting-edge technology, active communication, forward-looking partnerships, and ongoing public involvement

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Unique and Creative: [no changes] Yuma is a unique and creative community, built on our shared history, sense of place, and civic pride.

Respected and Responsible: [no changes] Yuma is a trusted steward of City resources; relied upon to provide regional leadership, premier services, and facilities.

City Council and staff then reviewed the projects under each Strategic Outcome creating two columns consisting of Existing/Ongoing Initiatives and New Initiatives:

Focus Area/Strategic Outcome	Existing/Ongoing Initiatives	New Initiatives
Safe and Prosperous	• Desert Dunes Expansion • Update zoning regulations • Update utility codes • Pursue widening of US 95 to YPG • Develop and implement a city-specific economic development strategy which includes Foreign Trade Zone and Yuma-focused opportunities • Continually identify and address staffing and operational needs for public safety • Seek voter approval for base adjustment to annual expenditure limitation in General Election of 2026 • Install directional signage on 4th Avenue connecting to Downtown • Update regulations and processes to increase housing opportunities for all	• Prioritize and identify funding for elements of the ADA Transition Plan • Continue to enhance state and county relationships for emergency management preparations and response • Enhance collaboration between City and County development departments • Focus on acquiring land for innovation district and industrial development • Implement an Intelligent Transportation System • Develop a plan for and support Downtown and Innovation District development
Active and Appealing	• Build East Mesa Park facility • Care for existing infrastructure – improve road conditions, park revitalization program • Beautify the community's overall curb appeal – landscape City rights-of-way • Develop a partnership for trail connections – establish a trail/bike path connection (irrigation districts) establish equitable maintenance partnerships BOR/ADOT/schools	• Identify and determine priority funding for elements of the Parks Master Plan • Identify and promote opportunities for sports and adventure tourism • Increase Downtown use and visibility
Connected and Engaged	• Establish private-public partnership for Hotel del Sol • Joint K-20 education opportunities – Elevate Southwest • Establish Innovation Hub	• Establish a youth government program

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Unique and Creative	• Develop Innovation Hub	• Develop and make accessible documentation/history of City of Yuma • Develop a plan for City' celebration of America's 250th
Respected and Responsible	• Prioritize public-private partnerships • Keep taxes low and relevant to residents' desire for services • Actively support the protection of the region's Colorado River Water Rights • Expansion of Public Safety Training Facility • Advocate for local control by proposing our own bills – be proactive, not reactive	• None added – retain focus on current initiatives

Operational Follow-Up
Through the course of the retreat, City Council and staff identified several items that were important conversations that had follow-up work associated with them but that did not necessarily rise to the level of a strategic priority. They are captured below:

- Produce map of City-owned properties; clarify City Council's desire/interest
    - As part of Economic Development effort for downtown / innovation district development
- Research relating to Heat Island effect/heat resiliency with the City of Yuma
- Livability Survey/Score
- Working with Yuma County, pursue Winter visitor data to understand current dynamics and ways to engage this population
- Host a local water conference

III. CLOSING COMMENTS

In closing City Council and staff were asked to provide a Win / Takeaway / Commitment:

- Innovation / successful and got a lot done / heat-resiliency and Tribal water issue
- As staff we are on the right track / narrowed down what needs to be accomplished
- Clarity of hearing from City Council / more attuned to what City Council wants to see
- Good dialogue / update strategic plan with new ideas and formats
- Affirmation and commitment of council / seeing the successes and the clean-up / communication with City Council
- How to find the resources and staff for all the projects / bring better options to the table
- Working through the process / good to see the checking off of the boxes of things accomplished and fine-tuning the rest / reemphasize the initiatives that are important
- Interaction with and direction from City Council / good team to work with
- Council priority and commitment / evaluate staffing needs and being good stewards of money while giving the community what they want
- Seeing what has been completed and where we are with the others / communication and participation of the City Councilmembers on day 1 / schedule more time with City Administrator to see where she can be of more service

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- Team building / working with peers to share ideas and things to work on
- Seeing projects move off of the list / continue to look for funding to help fellow departments meet their goals
- Open dialogue with City Council / seeing City Council's wants and vision for the City / going back to more of the history
- City Council communication with each other and interaction with staff / sharing with staff what City Council's vision is
- Interaction staff gets with City Council not in a formal council meeting setting / hearing the priorities of City Council / reaffirmation that what we are working on meets their vision
- Educational and a better understanding of the City Council role
- Collaborative effort / better idea of directive of council to take ideas back to staff
- Parks and Recreation is still relevant with City Council / to keep pushing every day
- Commitment to the community to make Yuma a better place / continue to monitor trends
- Hearing staff say that City Council is not so scary / be a good City Council person and work closer with staff / be more available and proactive with initiatives
- Productive and keep the ball moving forward / Be an innovator

Simonton thanked Lance for facilitating the past two days and expressed his appreciation to staff and Mayor and Council. He is excited about the next 12 months and hopes to check off more boxes next year.

Mayor Nicholls stated he feels an obligation in his role and what he can do for Yuma and gets the same from all the Department Heads. He respects the Director's perspectives and thanks them for their leadership and appreciates the open and back and forth dialogue.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:

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City Clerk: _____

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