

# SUMMARY OF COUNCIL GOALS 2023-2025

## **Goal #1: Livability**

**Create a more livable place for all Casper citizens through maintenance and improvement of the environment, infrastructure, public safety, and recreation.**

- **Objective:** Building on existing partnerships, the capital improvement plan and existing resources, create plans for implementing critical public safety projects that focus on remedies for homelessness, police support and facility improvement, and support for the Metro Animal Shelter.
- **Objective:** Work with partners and leverage current resources to improve community amenities and recreational opportunities.
- **Objective:** Using the initial Critical Path Analysis and other plans, develop implementation and funding timelines for capital improvements for public safety capital construction.

### **Livability Tasks:**

1. Focus on remedies for homelessness.
2. Focus on police support and facility improvement.
3. Focus on support for the Metro Animal Shelter.
4. Improve community amenities and recreational opportunities.
5. Develop a plan for Fire Department capital construction projects.

### **Task 1: Focus on remedies for homelessness.**

The City's response to homelessness should seek to understand and to mitigate the suffering of the homeless people in our City, and at the same time, it should seek to minimize the negative impacts that homelessness can have on public spaces, commerce, and the City as a whole.

Our response to homelessness will include the following:

1. Measure the scope of homelessness in Casper, which will include keeping an ongoing count of the homeless population.
2. Develop a system for tracking the services provided to each homeless individual.
3. For negative incidents, track the number and type of incident, by individual.
4. Receive a Continuum of Care certification from HUD. This will require the City to enact improvements to how it provides services to the homeless, and it will also require the City to

partner more effectively with area non-profits. The Continuum of Care certification will serve as a confirmation that the City is following best practices on this issue, and it should also help the City to better access federal financial support.

5. Enact amendments to City ordinances that affect our response to homelessness.
6. Increase our access to Federal funding for programs that address homelessness and associated service gaps. This access will include support received by the City directly, and support received by the government entities that it partners with.

### **Task 2: Focus on Police facility improvement.**

The City is in the midst of a plan to convert the Casper Business Center into a new headquarters for the Police Department. We will achieve this task by completing that conversion.

### **Task 3: Focus on support for the Metro Animal Shelter.**

In order to better address the needs of the local animal population, the Metro Animal Shelter will need to be replaced or extensively renovated. Some funding from One Cent 17 has been set aside for this task, but additional funds will be needed.

The Metro Animal Division will also enact operational changes to promote animal welfare.

### **Task 4: Improve community amenities and recreational opportunities.**

The City will adopt an annual Capital Plan that will be geared toward making Casper more livable. The plan will seek to improve community appearance, improve City infrastructure, and improve the quality of the City's recreational offerings.

### **Task 5: Develop a plan for Fire Department capital construction projects.**

Fire Station #1 is outdated and needs to be replaced. The City will develop a plan to replace Fire Station #1. The plan will include a means to finance the project.

The City will also take steps toward the development of a firefighter training facility. This might involve repurposing the existing Fire Station #1 after it has been replaced.

## **Goal #2: Sustainability**

**Create long-term financial, infrastructure, and resource sustainability for the City to provide high quality services to its citizens.**

- *Objective:* Identify plans and potential resources for implementing solutions to environmental needs, including stormwater pollution, water rates, and recycling.
- *Objective:* Develop implementation and funding timelines for capital improvements for general city facilities.
- *Objective:* Establish revenue strategies that consider a range of possibilities, including: general purpose sales tax, specific purpose sales tax, municipal option sales tax, economic development sales tax, other assessments and fees, utility rates, federal and state investments and earmarks, grants, sponsorships, or donations.
- *Objective:* Facilitate development through reviews of the City’s comprehensive plans and through stronger development of public/private partnerships with local partners.

### **Sustainability Tasks:**

6. Remain engaged with wastewater environmental regulations and develop a plan for possible wastewater capital improvements.
7. Consider a funded stormwater program to support stormwater system maintenance and stormwater capital improvements.
8. Reduce water waste and promote financial equity by instituting tiered water rates.
9. Present options that will encourage additional recycling.
10. Maintain City buildings.
11. Develop sources of revenue that are generated externally through grants, donations, sponsorships, and other sources of federal funding.
12. Develop sustainable sources of revenue that are generated locally through taxes, rates, and fees.
13. Facilitate smart decision making by re-engaging with the City’s primary planning documents and with the primary plans of other nearby entities.
14. Facilitate development through reimagined public/private partnerships.

### **Task 6: Remain engaged with Wastewater environmental regulations, and develop a plan for possible Wastewater capital improvements.**

It is possible that NPDES regulations will eventually require the City to install major new systems at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is unlikely that such regulations will be instituted within the next ten years, but in the meantime, the City must remain engaged with WDEQ and the EPA so that we can

be involved in the regulatory conversation. This will help us to share information, and it will help us to accurately anticipate upcoming changes.

The City will also explore alternative means to treat its wastewater. Projects that reduce the wastewater load at the Wastewater Treatment Plant will reduce the City's current environmental impact, and this might have some influence on whether additional regulations are enacted.

**Task 7: Consider a funded stormwater program to address the needs of the stormwater system.**

The City's stormwater system is in dire need of improvement and maintenance. A 2017 study identified more than forty projects that should be done to repair or upsize various parts of the stormwater system, including undersized storm sewers, inlets, culverts, and retention basins.

Improvements to the stormwater system will reduce the number of flooding events, and regular maintenance of the system will reduce the amount of stormwater contamination. To fund those improvements and to pay for that maintenance, the City could consider a rate-funded stormwater program.

**Task 8: Reduce water waste, and promote financial equity, through tiered water rates.**

The City will enact tiered water rates in order to create more equity among rate payers and to discourage water waste. Tiered water rates charge a lower per-gallon cost for the water that a typical household consumes for in-home use, but the per-gallon cost for additional water is charged at a higher rate. This kind of rate structure tends to make in-home use more affordable, so that low income families that only use water for cooking and washing will tend to have cost savings. Families and businesses that consume larger amounts of water will be charged more per gallon consumed. This creates a financial incentive for them to review (and perhaps reduce) the amount of water that they are using.

**Task 9: Present options to encourage additional recycling.**

The City already has a self-serve, depot-based recycling program, but more could be done to encourage recycling and waste diversion. The City will present options for expanding the waste diversion and recycling system. Those options might include enhancements to the material recovery facility (MRF), the recruitment of private sector consumers that purchase and use recyclables, or the institution of a curbside recycling program.

### **Task 10: Maintain City buildings.**

Many of the City's buildings were constructed in the late 1970's or the early 1980s. Given their age, many buildings have roofs, HVAC systems, and electrical systems that are due for repair or replacement. The City Council has set aside \$5,445,000 of One Cent #17 so that it can begin to address those concerns. This task will involve implementing a construction plan that allocates those funds to where they are most needed, completing those projects before major failures occur, and seeking to find grant opportunities to leverage City funds with additional funding from state and federal sources.

### **Task 11: Develop sources of revenue that are generated externally through grants, donations, sponsorships, federal funding, and other types of funding.**

The City has always received a certain amount of grant revenue, but recent federal laws like the Infrastructure and Jobs Act have radically increased the availability of funds. Some of those funds are being distributed through traditional programs, and some are being allocated through programs that are entirely new. The City will take steps to leverage those opportunities.

Other external funding sources should also be explored. Sponsorship agreements are a common means to fund recreational facilities, especially when they are paired with naming rights. Private donors will often support non-profit agencies, but the City could reach out to those donors for direct support, or alternatively, the City could found a non-profit that might be better able to receive and spend those donations. Last but not least, the City could work with the elected officials at the state and federal level with an eye toward receiving more direct distribution funds from the state and federal governments.

### **Task 12: Develop sustainable sources of revenue that are generated locally through taxes, rates, and fees.**

Though external sources of funding are preferable, the City should also look at funds that could be locally generated. At this time, the City relies heavily on the state to provide it with capital and operational funding. State funding is desirable, but local sources of funding tend to be more reliable. Moreover, the City's arguments for enhanced state level funding will be more persuasive if the City can demonstrate that it is already doing all that it can to generate funds on its own.

The City can generate funds locally by setting recreation and utility rates that are high enough to make those operations financially self-sustaining. The City can also start a dialog with the public regarding special taxes, such as the Optional One Cent, specific purpose taxes, and similar types of special revenue.

### **Task 13: Facilitate smart decision making by re-engaging with the City's primary planning documents and with the primary plans of other nearby entities.**

The City government, ultimately, is an intricate network of interconnected systems – transportation, public safety, utility, recreation, waste control, housing, commerce, finance, land use, and others. Those systems grow and evolve. Planning exercises allow the managers of those systems to think through the current strengths and weaknesses of their systems, and it helps those managers to foresee how their systems will need to adapt to upcoming changes in Casper's operating environment.

Every City department goes through periodic master planning exercises, and in general, those exercises result in thoughtful plans and recommendations for the future. Unfortunately, those plans can be ignored or underutilized. Exigent decision making that doesn't refer back to the plan might work in the short term, but if those decisions ignore the big picture and the long term goals that were spelled out in the plan, then the City might miss opportunities to better position itself for future challenges.

Familiarity with these plans can also promote harmony. Familiarizing ourselves with our own plans is a good place to start, but we can also take steps toward familiarizing ourselves with the plans of other departments, and even other external entities. A more focused approach to learning other's plans, policies, and goals could help all of the local organizations realize new efficiencies. While City employees and officials have tried to attend meetings, serve on boards, and take a general interest in other organizations, these actions have not always succeeded at preventing conflict, miscommunication, and missed opportunities.

Implementing this task will involve establishing a process of cataloging the comprehensive plan of each City department, as well as community organizations such as Advance Casper, Natrona County, the DDA, the MPO, the surrounding towns, certain State and Federal agencies, NGO's, and local charitable organizations. Those plans will have to be reviewed because some may be outdated, and in some cases, that review, all by itself, might help to spark valid conversations about cooperation and a re-evaluation of future goals. If the re-evaluation determines that those plans are fundamentally valid, then a process will need to be put into place so that the plans are consulted regularly so that better decisions are made on a day to day basis.

### **Task 14: Facilitate development through reimagined public-private partnerships.**

The City has ongoing partnerships with area non-profits. Some of those partnerships take the form of leases, whereby the City leases property to a non-profit entity for a nominal fee. Other partnerships are funding relationships, wherein the City provides the non-profit with grant funding, usually through the Community Promotions program or through One Cent non-profit contracting.

For those non-profits that are lessees, we will need to review that leasing arrangement. We will need to evaluate how well the leased property is being used to extend City services. Poorly aligned leases should probably be adjusted or allowed to expire. We also need to evaluate the lease language to ensure that the legal agreement is well crafted, with appropriate terms for rent, duration, cost sharing, and so on.

For those non-profits that receive grant funding, the grantee agreements will need to be evaluated to ensure that the supported activity is truly an extension of City services. As with the leases, poorly aligned funding agreements should be adjusted, or allowed to expire.

## **Goal #3: Citizen Engagement**

**Create opportunities and experiences for citizens to be informed about and involved in Casper as a City and a community.**

- *Objective:* Establish guidelines, formats, and schedules for formal and conversational information distribution that is consistent, dynamic, professional, friendly, and positive.
- *Objective:* Utilize citizen input and feedback loops to provide guidance on citizen priorities.
- *Objective:* Utilize technology to gather information and to communicate with citizens, voters, customers, and service users.

### **Citizen Engagement tasks:**

15. Implement a communications plan that strives for effective information distribution to all citizens, and strives to consolidate and coordinate messaging across all City social media sites and platforms.
16. Develop a plan to gather citizen input and provide feedback loops that provide guidance on citizen priorities.
17. Research and assess technology solutions for customizing communication with citizens, voters, customers, and service users.

### **Task 15: Implement a communications plan that strives for effective information distribution to all citizens, and strives to consolidate and coordinate messaging across all City social media sites and platforms.**

Over the past year, the City has added three full-time positions to the communication and citizen engagement team in the City Manager’s Office. This team has sought to improve the amount and the quality of the communication and experiences that are being produced for the public.

Social media has a unique set of challenges. These tools multiply, and they are ever-evolving. Getting one message out through a manifold of social media platforms requires each media release to be processed and uploaded so that it works with each platform on a technological level. Beyond that, each platform has its own styles, customs, and functionality features, so each media release will need to be repackaged in order to be well received. And beyond that, social media is a two-way street, so getting messages out is only half of the battle: broadcasting across multiple platforms also means listening across multiple platforms, and then (hopefully) having a productive dialog across multiple platforms.

This task will involve expanding the work of the communication and citizen engagement team so that it can further integrate its activities, methods, and standards into all of the City’s outreach efforts. This task will also involve developing tools and methods for getting one message out across multiple social media platforms. The intent will be to make sure that the message, and the response, are heard and understood by all parties, regardless of how they received it.



**Task 16: Develop a plan to gather citizen input and provide feedback loops that provide guidance on citizen priorities.**

The City needs to listen to the public. Unfortunately, truly understanding the public can be difficult. A public dialog can be monopolized by people who are not trying to have a productive conversation.

This task will involve trying to regularly discern the will of the public on a variety of everyday issues. The City will also need to parse that input into useful feedback. Once that has been done, the City will need to start incorporating that input into its decision making. It is likely that multiple methods of public input will need to be developed, including greater use of portals and citizen engagement apps.

**Task 17: Research and assess technology solutions for customizing communication with citizens, voters, customers, and service users.**

Technology can offer solutions for communicating individualized messages to selected people. It is traditional for large organizations to broadcast (to “cast broadly”) the same message to anyone and everyone. Technology now exists that can make our communications more customized. A message that takes an individual’s specific situation into account will make that communication more relevant, interesting, and practical. This technology can be especially useful for utility customers, but it might have other applications as well.

This task will involve researching tools and methods for getting one message out across multiple platforms, but done in a way that will maximize its impact through automatic customization. Once again, the intent will be to make sure that the message, and the response, are heard and understood by all parties, regardless of how they received it.