

CITY OF PEORIA, ARIZONA COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

Date Prepared: 26 March 2016

Council Meeting Date: 7 June 2016

TO: Council Members

FROM: John Keegan, Chair, Citizen Quality of Life Ad Hoc Committee

SUBJECT: Quality of Life Citizen Review Committee

Purpose:

The Quality of Life Citizen Ad Hoc Review Committee will present their findings and recommendations.

Background/Summary:

On December 1, 2015, the City Council approved the creation of an Ad Hoc Citizens Review Committee to review City services, discuss important trends, and identify opportunities that would enhance the quality of life in Peoria. The ad hoc committee was charged with determining how the City will maintain the quality of life we enjoy today, as we grow the second half of our city.

The ad hoc committee were comprised of twenty residents that represent all sections of the city. The committee members were Former Mayor John Keegan (Chair), Kirk Haines (Vice Chair), Eva Osuna (Secretary), Dave Allsop, John Auckland, Ian Dowdy, Jack Fletcher, Dennis Grenier, Michael Higgins, MJ Johnson, Ken Krieger, Scott Lekan, Ron Lyzniak, Kim Price Olsen, Howard Openlander, Franklin Schiller, Kathy Senseman, Barry Spiegel, Gene Sweeney and Christian Williams. Three residents served as alternates, Clay Allsop, Joe Pfeiff and Robert Hall.

The Committee met regularly from January to May 2016 to discuss quality-of-life issues related to open space preservation, active recreational opportunities, public safety initiatives and overall city beautification. In preparation, the Committee studied various City strategic planning documents such as the Sonoran Preservation Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and Fire Department and Police Department Annual Reports. In addition, presentations were provided from staff subject experts on the topic areas. Important input was offered from dozens of members of the public attending the meetings.

Armed with this information, the Committee explored solutions to address underserved areas of the City, preserve worthwhile open spaces, continued support of public safety, and enhance existing recreational and cultural amenities. From there, the Committee deliberated on possible alternatives to fund these investments.

The result were a series of recommendations for consideration by the City Council. They include:

- Proposals for recreation and community facilities in various locations. Facilities included a community park recreation facility, multi-service community center, library services and aquatic facilities.
- Interest in preserving key open space corridors within the City. Emphasis was placed on safeguarding important cultural assets, improving public accessibility, and maximizing property values.
- Promoting the continued strong fire/medical and police service currently enjoyed by residents throughout the community. Targeted service enhancements would include sworn police officers for important community affairs, a permanent fire station at Lake Pleasant, additional park rangers and an officer specifically focused on senior resident issues.
- Commitments to enhance more established areas in the City, including significant park playground upgrades, improved landscaping on existing streets, and construction of shade structures and transit stops.

Exhibit 1 identifies the individual projects and associated costs that the committee is recommending to the Council. To finance the projects, the Committee recommends a dedicated sales tax, reserved solely for these investments. It was estimated that a six-tenths of a cent sales tax would be required for the City to fully support the improvements long term. The committee recommends a six-tenths of a cent sales tax increase should be brought forward to the Peoria residents for their consideration in a future election.

The Committee strongly encouraged the City to develop key partnerships and coordinate improvements with other stakeholders in the community. This includes exploring solutions with school districts, public-private partnerships, not-for-profit arrangements, and other opportunities.

In addition to the identified investments, the Committee also encouraged the City Council to maintain a focus on other aspects that affect a community's quality of life. They include:

- Address issues of blight and deterioration in older areas of the community.
- Continue efforts to broaden artistic activity throughout the Peoria community.
- Strive to maintain a comparable standard of quality of life throughout the entire city.

Exhibit B includes the Quality-of-Life Committee formal recommendation in its entirety.

Previous Actions:

On December 1, 2016 the City Council approved the creation of an Ad Hoc Citizen Review Committee, also referred to as the Quality of Life Review Ad Hoc Committee.

Options:

Staff Recommendations:

No formal action is necessary at this time. However, staff seeks direction to proceed should the Council wish to move forward with public consideration of a sales tax increase.

Fiscal Analysis:

There are no immediate fiscal impacts to the FY 2017 budget. Further fiscal analysis would be conducted should new projects or initiatives be sought.

Exhibit(s):

Exhibit 1: Quality of Life Committee Project Listing.

Exhibit 2: Quality of Life Committee formal recommendation.