

**CITY OF SPARKS  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
OCTOBER 12, 2015  
8:30 a.m. / City Hall Basement Training Room**

**ITEM 2: Presentation, discussion and possible acceptance of the SWOT, Environmental Scan and the 2015 Annual Report (For Possible Action)**

**Background:**

The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats (SWOT) document covers a citywide look at internal and external pressures. This was accomplished by all the department heads planning for the future while evaluating what is going on in the entire valley.

The Environmental Scan is a principle presentation of the city departments. Finance covers General Fund budget. Police covers certain crime statistics. Fire covers response and construction inspections. The Community Services section shows road keep up statistics and building permit activity. And, the Parks and Recreations department shows how our parks are doing.

The 2015 Annual Report is a more in-depth analysis of how each department in the city functioned through out the year. Included this year is an organizational chart of the city.

**Recommendation:**

Recommend that the City Council Accept the SOWOT [Analysis], the Environmental Scan, and the 2015 Annual Report as presented by staff.

**Attachments:**

- City of Sparks SWOT 08/31/2015 [Internal and External Assessment (SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)]
- 2015 Environmental Scan [draft]
- 2015 Annual Report [draft]

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**Define the Process Undertaken by the City Staff**

**Process:**

- City Manager engaged the Department heads to develop a list of the city's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats they see in the individual working environments and regionally. The list was paired down to reflect the stated policies of the Council through the **Strategic Plan and operational policies** from the dais and the operational constraints of the city. This process took more than two months to complete and **eliminates the Cascading Fives** from previous years.

**City Staff Involved:**

- City Manager, Department Heads, and Key staff
- Consultant/Facilitator – Erica Olsen, OnStrategy

## Internal and External Assessment (SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

### **INTERNAL**

#### **Strengths:**

- **Public Safety: timely professional response**
  - Strategic Goal 4: Public Safety: Promote the safety of our residents, businesses, and visitors.
    - 4.1 Evaluate future city needs to maintain service and **response** standards.
    - 4.2 Improve safety through **prevention** activities.
    - 4.3 Enhance city resources **supporting** response and prevention functions.
  - *Environmental Scan – pages 6 – 10.*
- **Well Planned land use**
  - Council’s approval of the re-write of **Title 20**.
  - Strategic Goal 3: Infrastructure and technology: Manage resources to keep pace with technology infrastructure, and sustainability needs.
    - 3.1 Complete an update of the city’s Comprehensive Plan by FY17.
      - Council’s approval of funding (\$100,000.00) for the city’s community engagement component via consulting contract (RAD).
  - *Environmental Scan – page 16.*
- **The roadway and bicycle lane networks are appropriately sized for today and planned for the future**
  - The **complete street** rework of Victorian from Pyramid to the Marina is a successful design [RTC Partnership for design and build will be slow due to other regional transportation projects and city’s infrastructure monies for street resign is very limited]
  - *Environmental Scan – pages 11-13.*
- **Parks and Recreation’s brand is recognized in the region**
  - High utilization rate of park facilities by non-residents and residents alike.
  - *Environmental Scan – page 18.*
- **A people statement: after internal survey**
- **Council’s engagement in Policy decisions**
  - City Council is addressing future-minded policy decisions:
    - Funding the **Accela™** Permitting and Licensing software project and installation
    - **Title 20** re-write
    - New collective bargaining agreement contracts (**7-CBAs and 6-Pay Resolutions**)
    - New hospital and medical system (**Renown and Home Town Health**)
    - Business-based decisions on personnel litigation settlements.
  - *Environmental Scan – page 4.*

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## Strengths -- continued:

- **Approaching fiscal stability**
  - Strategic Goal 1: Maintain fiscal policies to ensure a prosperous, sustainable city.
    - 1.1 Maintain **positive cash balances**, in accordance with the city's fiscal policies.
    - 1.2 Achieve **balanced spending** within the General Fund, in accordance with the city's fiscal policies.
    - 1.3 Establish a strategy to reduce the city's Other Post-Retirement Benefits (OPEB) and **Heart/Lung/Cancer** liabilities being implemented after FY16.
    - 1.4 Formulate a comprehensive fee policy and pricing structure, moving forward toward a cost-recovery model.
  - *Environmental Scan – pages 2-5.*
- **The city's ability to react quickly and decisively**
- **Special Events brand is recognized in the region**
  - Sparks' participation in regional events:
    - Farmer's Market replacement event produced by 39 North.
    - **Hot August Nights** show-and-shines, cruises, and drag races.
    - Four new cookers at the **Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-Off**.
    - Expansion of **Pumpkinpalooza**.
    - New event produced by a traditionally Reno-based events promoter (**Oktoberfest**).
- **Golden Eagle Regional Park is nationally recognized**
  - Full utilization of the playing fields for adult and youth sports
    - **Adult Softball – year round play** and numerous out-of-town driven tournaments and regional and national tournaments including **live television coverage**.
    - **Economic Impact of softball** tournaments is greater than all other special events – **combined!**
    - More pressure for “flat fields” as the area is seeing interest in new sports (e.g., Lacrosse, Rugby, competition soccer, alternative youth sport leagues in soccer and football).
- **The reorganization of the Strategic Plan allow departments to work together accomplishing City-wide objectives**
  - Shared responsibility in all six Strategic Goals with a heavy emphasis on teamwork in developing sustainable solutions to the city's operating needs for current and future Council initiatives.

## **INTERNAL -- continued**

### **Weaknesses:**

- **Pending retirements will strain seamless transitions and results in loss of institutional knowledge**
- **Our permitting function can not meet a high rate of demand**
  - Addition of staff members in the permitting function.
  - Addition of inspection staff in the building permits function (still need to add to fire plan checking and inspection capabilities for new building permits).
  - *Environmental Scan – pages 14-16.*
- **Older technology is not efficient or adequately funded**
  - Lack of on-line business transactions or payments capability today (**Accela™** project to address some of these needs).
- **Staffing levels don't meet service delivery requirements**
  - Addition of staff members at the Customer Service counter but did the city a chance to add bi-lingual services.
  - Need for additional planner review time; plan checking-building and fire;
- **Employees are forced to be operationally oriented**
  - Lack of resources since the Great Recession has the current staff continuing to being focused on "What's Next".
  - *Environmental Scan – pages 7, 9, 11, and 19.*
- **Entitlement mentality of employee organizations**
  - CBA negotiations found bargaining units asking for pay and benefit increases AND increases in staffing without regard to the city's fiscal sustainability – lack of trust/understanding of the numbers.
- **Aging city facilities and infrastructure**
  - Need to conduct a **space plan** for City Hall with the increase in building and business licensing activities – a need to keep customer-centered processes at City Hall and find space for other support personnel.
    - Out-of-the-box solutions (e.g., mobile data processing, flex-hours, telecommuting, temporary office space, alternative city locations, etc.)
- **Ingrained bureaucracy threatens operational efficiencies**

## **EXTERNAL**

### **Opportunities:**

- **Recognition and a willingness to streamline our approval processes will make us competitive in a growing market**
  - **Accela™** project completion.
  - **EMS Oversight Committee** for the improvement of local emergency medical services and service delivery related to quality-of-life concerns.
  - Public Safety Training Center Oversight Committee and partnership with TMCC.
- **Uniform Planning and Zoning positions us for future growth**
  - Re-write of **Title 20**.
  - Update of the city's **Comprehensive Plan – community engagement process**.
- **Publicizing our successes will lead citizens to acknowledge Sparks as the “City of Choice ...”**
  - **National business articles** on growth in Sparks related to Tesla and the TRI Center.
- **Creation of work teams to cross-pollinate knowledge, education, and responsibility will develop personnel to assume leadership roles within the city**
- **Hiring of new workforce will bring innovative ideas**
  - New personnel in Police (Police Officers), Fire (Firefighters), and Community Services (Planners, Plan Checkers, Civil Engineers, and Permit Technician).
- **Available undeveloped land and building vacancy will entice new development and corporate office headquarters in Sparks**
  - Re-write of **Title 20**.
  - Update of the city's **Comprehensive Plan**.
- **Collaborations with other local governments to adopt technological innovations (**Accela™**) will reduce the cost of processing land use entitlement, business licenses, and build permit applications**
- **Full implementation of all features of a shared computer aided dispatch system will result in quicker emergency services to our citizens**
  - **Tiburon** (possible inclusion of **EMD** (emergency medical dispatch) and **AVL** (automatic vehicle locators)).
- **Drones: emerging technology could place the city as the leader in applications for use**
- **Regional economic development activities through the Governor’s Office of Economic Development [GOED] and the Smarter Regions efforts to mobilize the various stakeholders enticing business growth**
  - Active participation **GOED** on issues related to the **TRI Center** including **Tesla** and **Switch**.
  - Council and staff participation with EDAWN:
    - Council on EDAWN Executive Committee and Regular Board of Directors
    - City Manager recently taking on EDAWN Executive Committee duties
    - City’s participation in EDAWN’s **EPIC Study** aligning the various economic development, demographic, planning, education, and governmental operations components together (20+ agencies) to establish a plan to handle the growth of the Truckee Meadows for increased business interest above and beyond and including Tesla.

## **EXTERNAL -- continued**

### **Threats:**

- **Being drawn into consolidation battles**
  - Council's approval at the September Concurrent Meeting to direct the Managers to come back to the table to identify and discuss fire services, fire **service delivery levels**, and then have a conversation on service delivery governance vs. the assumption that "**consolidation**" is the best answer for future regional governmental services.
- **Decreasing and/or changing special event resources**
  - Active conversations with major event producers related to the new **housing and business development in Victorian Square**:
    - Hot August Nights
    - Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-Off
- **Rising health care and work compensation costs**
  - Action by the city to reduce the rising cost of health care by moving hospital care, medical system providers, and third-party health care cost administration to Renown (\$200,00.00 per year estimated savings on current plan design).
  - Future action by the Group Health Plan Committee to reduce the annual cost of the current plan (estimated \$57,000.00 net savings) with a few new medical services being provided to the participants in the city's plan.
- **Lack of recognition as a full-service city**
- **Residential growth does not pay for itself, long-term**
  - Need to **entice corporate office and business growth** inside the corporate boundaries of the city (e.g., Kiley Ranch business park, Renown medical services, development on Victorian Square).
- **Regional perception that we have a regulatory mindset**
  - Re-write of **Title 20**.
  - Update of the city's **Comprehensive Plan**.
  - **Accela™** project completion.
- **Current revenue structure will not meet the needs of the city**
  - A need to find developers who want to build **commercial instead of residential** units.
  - *Environmental Scan – pages 3, and 14 – 16.*