



**VISALIA CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP
FEBRUARY 4 & 5, 2011**

Visalia Convention Center – 303 E. Acequia, Visalia, CA 93291

AGENDA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2011

The City Council will raise and discuss issues that they believe are important to Visalia now and in the future. These items are expected to include, but may not be limited to those listed below. (It is expected that the Council will give direction on any of these items, but a final decision will occur at a future Council Meeting).

The following agenda items are not time specific. A break for a buffet dinner will be taken at approximately 5:00 p.m.

12:00 p.m. - **Buffet Lunch**

12:30 p.m. - **Opening Comments**

Bob Link, Mayor

Public Comment

Steve Salomon, City Manager

Mike Ramsey, Facilitator

1. GETTING STARTED

An exercise to strengthen communication among council members and staff.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS – Introduction by Facilitator

All council members gave their impressions of several facets of life in Visalia while being interviewed by the facilitator in preparation for the Workshop. The facilitator will share the collective results.

3. NEW RULES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC MELTDOWN

“Typically candidates have run on platforms to make community improvements. Once elected, governing board members have historically enjoyed access to some “slack resources” to respond to ever-increasing community demands. With the economic meltdown, no slack resources exist for new projects. In fact, ongoing budget cutbacks, layoffs and demoralized employees all threaten local government’s ability to deliver services...Based on my work with public agencies, I have crafted 10 new rules for local government leaders grappling with the current adverse economic conditions.” *Frank Benest – Western City Magazine*

We will briefly review the 10 rules presented by Frank Benest in a recent Western City Magazine article.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Budget constraints and staffing reductions made 2010 a challenging year in which to provide city services and pursue the top priorities established at the City Council’s Strategic Planning Workshop of 2010. Accomplishments that council members consider noteworthy will be reviewed.

5. WATER

Water is among the community’s most critical natural resources. The dramatic drawdown in recent years of the aquifers supplying Visalia’s water is evidence of a critical need to better manage this resource. The combined efforts of local and regional programs will be discussed.

6. FINANCIAL

The City Council has made difficult choices the past few years in order to maintain vital services, sustain Visalia’s quality of life and manage the community’s growth. The resulting financial stability has spared the community and the organization many of the dire circumstances facing similar communities around the state. Additional work remains to be done including managing health benefit costs of employees and retirees, funding public safety and funding the employee retirement program.

7. ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN

The City of Visalia adopted a local Economic Stimulus Plan in 2010 that was designed to boost local business activity. The costs and benefits associated with the plan will be reviewed. Changes for greater cost effectiveness will be considered.

7:00 p.m. - Adjourn

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2011

7:30 a.m. – Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m. - Convene Workshop

Welcoming Comments from Mayor Link

Public Comments

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8. LAND USE PLANNING

Planning for the optimum growth and development of the community remains a top priority for the City Council and staff. The General Plan Update is underway, infill development is being encouraged, opportunities for future Regional Retail are being discussed by potential developers, concerns arise about how much growth Visalia can accommodate, etc. City Council and staff will discuss the implications of these and other land use variables.

1. Encouraging infill development: a review of planning regulations and procedures along with administrative flexibility in applying them to projects
2. Significance of the GP Update and discussion of community policy issues including potential retail development along Hwy. 99 and open space setback

corridor and development opportunities along West Highway 198.

9. QUALITY OF LIFE

Many communities around the country are known for a signature event that draws tourists and bolsters the local economy. Pasadena has its Rose Parade, Albuquerque hosts its annual Balloon Festival, St. George, Utah hosts the annual Senior World Games, etc. Visalia enjoys many athletic, arts and entertainment events during the year but none are known as the community's signature event. Creating or adopting such an event may provide Visalia the same economic boost and widespread notoriety as enjoyed by these communities.

10. PRIORITIES FOR 2011

City Council members will list the City projects, programs and services that are of the greatest importance to them in 2011.

2:00 p.m. Adjourn Workshop

Breaks will be taken as needed throughout the Workshop.