



City of Avondale

City Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Mayor and Council

Mike Pineda, Mayor

Curtis Nielson, Vice Mayor

Tina Conde, Councilmember | Jeannette Garcia, Councilmember

Gloria Solorio, Councilmember | Shari Weise, Councilmember

Max White, Councilmember

Administration

Ron Corbin, City Manager

Tracy Stevens, Assistant City Manager | Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager

Dale Nannenga, Deputy City Manager | Nicholle Harris, City Attorney

Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

City Council Chamber

11465 West Civic Center Drive

Avondale, AZ 85323

Watch a City Council Meeting Online

Visit the link below to watch a City Council meeting live online:

<https://www.avondaleaz.new.swagit.com/views/540/>

Please note, the live stream will not be monitored by staff; therefore, anyone wishing to address the City Council shall appear in person to speak.



City Council Meeting Notice & Agenda Tuesday, March 4, 2025

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER | 11465 WEST CIVIC CENTER DRIVE | AVONDALE AZ, 85323

WORK SESSION MEETING

7:30 AM

Physical Access to the Council Chambers will be available 30 minutes prior to the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor, City Staff, and the Strategic Plan Consultant will provide a welcome and instructions. This item is for discussion only.

3. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

City Council will participate in the following panel discussions. This item is for discussion only.

- Economic Development / Housing Panel
- Healthcare Panel
- Human Services / Non-Profit Panel
- Natural Resources Panel

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

City Council will receive a presentation from Staff regarding an economic development update. This item is for discussion only.

5. ECONOMIC UPDATE

City Council will receive an presentation from the Consultant regarding an economic update. This item is for discussion only.

6. CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor, City Staff, and the Strategic Plan Consultant will provide closing remarks. This item is for discussion only.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmembers of the City of Avondale will attend either in person or by telephone or video conference call. Individuals with special accessibility needs, including sight or hearing impaired, large print, or interpreter, should contact the City Clerk at 623-333-1200 or TDD 623-333-0010 at least two business days prior to the Council Meeting.

Los miembros del Concejo de la Ciudad de Avondale participaran ya sea en persona o por medio de llamada telefonica o por video. Personas con necesidades especiales de accesibilidad, incluyendo personas con impedimentos de vista u oido, o con necesidad de impresion grande o interprete, deben comunicarse con la Secretaria de la Ciudad at 623-333-1200 o TDD 623-333-0010 cuando menos dos dias habiles antes de la junta del Concejo.



Avondale 2021 Strategic Plan Report

Creative and Sustainable Community Development

Strategies

1. Plan for development south of the Estrella Mountains
2. Develop diverse housing options, including housing that is affordable to workers and close to their jobs.
3. Invest in the revitalization of Historic Avondale.
4. Increase sustainability initiatives such as renewable clean energy or sustainable design and construction.
5. Maintain and expand quality infrastructure and improve connectivity to City amenities.

Highlights

- General Plan update and new land use designations south of the Estrella Mountains.
- Partnered with Maricopa County and Trellis/community housing development organization to build new homes at Elwood Street and El Mirage Road that were sold to low to moderate-income buyers; completed Maricopa County Housing Authority Norton Circle; established development agreements for the design and construction of 6 affordable single-family homes on Hill Drive.
- Investment in Old Town Avondale's historic core with renovations to Sam Garcia Library; A.B. Sernas Plaza, DeConcini Park; relocation and construction of the Detention Center and new Fire Station 171 on Western Avenue; obtained property on Western Avenue for new development opportunities; secured funding for Western Road improvements; and invested in road, water and sewer improvements.
- Certified over 25 Avondale Businesses through the Avondale Green Business Program; Created a Green Business Summit that brought more than 100 businesses together to learn about resources to reduce costs, grow revenue, and operate sustainably; amended City code to require EV-capable and/or EV charging stations at new developments.
- Launched WeRIDE, an on-demand, shared-ride service in October 2022. Over 121,500 rides were provided to residents between program implementation and December 2024.
- Pavement preservation projects throughout Old Town and Cashion neighborhoods and Avondale Blvd.
- Invested in Old Town Avondale, Cashion, and Las Ligas to reconstruct roads and upgrade water/sewer infrastructure. These upgrades include the installation of sidewalks, ramps, driveways, and replacement asphalt.
- Created an Old Town Dining Guide; collaborated with Microsoft to create a Better Block Installation to activate Western Avenue.
- Sold City-owned land at The BLVD to develop new multi-family units to address the shortage in housing throughout the metro area while creating density at The BLVD.
- Development of the Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus North, which contains a 212-acre data center campus, related employment uses, and a grocery-anchored shopping center at the southwest corner of Avondale Blvd and Lower Buckeye Road.
- Maintained the City of Avondale Infill Incentive Program.

- Reduced development plan review timelines.
- Hosted developers and business owners at the Business Ambassador Luncheon.

Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities

Strategies

1. Increase visitor traffic to Avondale's entertainment, recreation, conference, and hospitality venues.
2. Develop new recreation and entertainment options, as well as signature events and programs.
3. Promote the community's health, wellness, active lifestyle, and social connectivity.

Highlights

- Development at THE BLVD to include: Sand Volleyball Courts, Retail, Restaurant, Medical, American Sports Center refresh, Hospitality, New Penny Café, Tap 2, Phoenix Children's Physical Therapy, and Aveda Salon and Spa School.
- Renovated the Mountain View Community Center; Launched new Summer Recreation Camps.
- Completion of Aquatic Center and partnership with the TUHSD Swim Team.
- Renovated the Crystal Gardens Trails with the installation of metal edging along the walking paths around 21 ponds and lakes.
- Grand opening of Marriott Springhill Suites, adding 128 rooms.
- Secured over 200 bookings for Avondale's new conference center with various contracts.
- Attracted the NASCAR/Phoenix Raceway Championship Race over five years; Partnered with Phoenix Raceway to host diverse events, enhancing the venue's appeal, driving tourism growth, and creating additional economic opportunities for the City.
- Expansion of Phoenix Children's Hospital and the growth of the West Valley Health Quarter, adding Clear Sky Rehabilitation Facility, Apricus Medical Campus, and Bio Life.
- Located destination restaurants, including Trapper Sushi, Barrio Queen, Parry's Pizzeria, First Watch, and Cooper's Hawk.
- Developed a Public Art Masterplan in 2021 and added new public art pieces.
- Launched 'Uniquely Avondale' Magazine.

Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Strategies

1. Work with community partners to expand employment opportunities for residents through job training and placement programs.
2. Strengthen education-based partnerships.
3. Update facilities and spaces with technology, equipment, and public art.
4. Create diverse public awareness and education campaigns focusing on various topics.

Highlights

- Increased partnership with Avondale school districts, including supporting the Agua Fria Academies of the Southwest, Avi Temp Program, and the installation of a monument sign at MC85 and Dysart in partnership with Agua Fria high school students.
- Partnered with Arizona@Work to host Hiring Events and Job Fairs at the Avondale Resource Center and ASU TRIO to host a College Financial Aid youth summit at West Point High School.
- Avondale Public Libraries have offered basic computer classes in English and Spanish to expand non-credit educational opportunities to interested patrons.
- Offered educational field trip opportunities to local elementary and high schools; During the tours, students received an insider's look at City government; Created an educational video explaining how residents can participate in a City Council meeting.
- Quarterly job fairs were hosted at the Avondale Visitor and Conference Center from 2022 to 2024, drawing approximately 200 job seekers and two dozen businesses to each event; Launched a business resource fair.
- In partnership with Estrella Mountain Community College, the City of Avondale launched the Avondale EDGE Scholarships to support students pursuing healthcare and culinary arts careers. Utilizing ARPA funds, over 310 scholarships were awarded, totaling more than \$420,000.

Innovative Program and Service Delivery

Strategies

1. Improve internal and external customer service delivery through streamlined processes and data-based programming.
2. Effectively utilize technology to enhance communication and access to City services.
3. Leverage strategic partnerships to expand community outreach opportunities.
4. Ensure responsible financial planning to support City operations and the capital improvement program.
5. Attract, retain, and develop a diverse and competitive workforce to meet the needs of the residents and business community.

Highlights

- Established a public-facing GIS Development Dashboard map.
- Launched Avondale Connect, a public engagement platform; Implemented a new online business license application process; transitioned the City Council meetings online to allow residents to view meetings virtually.
- Optimized Solid Waste service delivery by implementing new routing software, streamlining the work order process, and service schedule changes.
- Partnered with Arizona Complete Health and First Things First to establish the Arizona Complete Health Resource Center that hosts over 15 human services partners; expanded business and community outreach activities as an active member of the Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce; strengthened relationships with non-profit and community organizations through the Avondale Interfaith Partnership.

- Received AA+ Bond Ratings due to strong fiscal planning practices; continued to operate on a balanced budget; increased the City's reserves; implemented a cap on credit card uses to reduce City costs; and instituted a hiring offer salary review to ensure accountability to our taxpayers. City recognized for excellence in financial reporting with:
 - ACFR award every fiscal year
 - First-time award for PAFR in FY2023
 - Budget award every fiscal year
- Improved hiring outreach efforts by attending career fairs, enhancing marketing efforts, and ensuring minimum qualifications align with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position.
- Established an employee committee to recommend benefit changes that make working for the City more attractive, including implementing paid parental leave in FY2024. This resulted in moving to a 4-tier medical plan option, 6 weeks of paid parental leave, additional personal leave hours to supplement holiday leave, and expanded services and visits under the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Reduced vacancies to less than 50 positions, reduced the turnover rate and launched the City Manager's Excellence Awards.
- Implemented the AVI Lead Program that provides supervisors with the tools and resources to lead strategically.
- Implemented a Public Safety Retention Program focused on retaining sworn police and fire staff through monetary payouts based on years of service with Avondale.
- Introduced the Police Department take-home vehicle program.
- Upgraded and implemented new software to improve efficiency in the Development Plan Review Workflow Process, Traffic Control Plan, and Construction inspections.
- Implemented the TraCS program, which allows traffic accident reports and citations to be completed electronically, improving efficiency and accuracy.
- Joined the Real Time Crime Center in Glendale, giving operators various tools to access cameras to map and integrate data, allowing them to be on-scene before calls are dispatched virtually. This center will enable them to provide first responders with critical information, improve situational awareness, and enhance investigative capabilities.
- Implemented the license plate reader program, which allows officers and detectives investigating a crime to search for vehicles matching suspect vehicles involved in crimes. The license plate readers are strategically placed throughout the City.
- Completed the Southwest Family Advocacy Center accreditation, making it one of 5 accredited Advocacy Centers in Arizona.
- Conducted several hundred business retention and expansion interviews, addressing workforce needs and collaborating with EMCC to align programs more effectively with industry demands.
- Partnered with Local First to host multiple entrepreneurial and business-focused boot camps, including Fuerza Local, We Rise, Restaurant, Green Business, and Retail boot camps. Partnered

with Co-Hoots to build a digital platform for businesses called HUUB, providing technical assistance and business-to-business connections.

- Increased the number of utility customers utilizing paperless billing from 16% in 2021 to 46.3%.
- Established an internal homelessness dashboard highlighting core data, including a City-specific by-name list, time in effort of outreach, exits from homelessness, shelter utilization, and origination.

Connected Community

Strategies

1. Expand community engagement opportunities through volunteerism, civic education, and service learning.
2. Collaborate with the Avondale business community to encourage partnerships and develop program ambassadors.
3. Expand access and communication infrastructure to more City facilities and amenities.
4. Protect the City's physical and virtual infrastructure against increased cyber security threats.

Highlights

- Increased engagement opportunities for residents through the Avondale Citizens Leadership Academy, Citizens Police Academy, Citizens Fire Academy, Citizens Water Academy, Avondale Ambassador Program, Camp HERos, and Fire and Medical School Mentorship Programs.
- Launched the Avondale Ambassador Program.
- Completed season one of Copy 10-10 with 40 guests, the podcast that takes you behind the scenes at the Avondale Police Department.
- Created the Cafecitos program in Avondale's three historic districts.
- In partnership with the West Valley Regional Chamber, Avondale businesses were connected with the ASU Small and Midsize Business Lab to help strengthen overall business.
- Launched the Discover Avondale Visitors Center.
- Sidewalk Gap Improvement Program to provide safe walking paths for pedestrians.
- Launched an internal award-winning cyber security training program.
- Added fiber connections to additional City facilities.
- Conducted a physical and cyber security assessment of all water production facilities and performed improvements to firewalls.

Public Health and Safety

Strategies

1. Work to protect Avondale's most vulnerable commodity.
2. Connect residents with safety resources and engage the community around crime prevention.
3. Enhance enforcement efforts to reduce property crimes within the City.
4. Partner with key stakeholders to implement integrated community health and wellness programs.

5. Continue to deploy comprehensive emergency preparedness strategies and see that the residents are kept informed about those preparedness strategies.

Highlights

- Launched the Avondale SONAR (Street Outreach Navigation and Resources) team; increased overnight shelter use with Lutheran Social Services; started an interdepartmental Community Solutions Team to address issues in the City; improved shopping cart and litter removal programs; continued and expanded community cleanup efforts.
- Collaborated with Maricopa County and local schools to raise awareness about the fentanyl crises and address substance abuse concerns through the Avondale ONE (Opioid & Narcotic Education) Campaign, including hosting a symposium on fentanyl use, increased public access to NARCAN from a variety of City employees resulting in a reduction of deaths from overdoses.
- Increased heat relief hours and access, including creating a program to provide temporary shelter for families who lost air conditioning over the summer months.
- Launched Avondale Alert, the official emergency notification system the City of Avondale uses to communicate with community residents during emergencies.
- Established an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Maricopa County to secure \$1.7M in funding to support the development of Family Bridge Housing; secured additional funding from Maricopa County to provide temporary shelter for families experiencing homelessness.
- Generated over 5,000 pounds of food to support local food banks through the Holiday School Spirit Food Drive; established a partnership agreement with the Arizona Diaper Bank to provide a variety of diapers and personal health products to families and seniors in Avondale.
- Conducted annual monsoon preparedness summit annually.
- Improved fencing, cameras, and gates at the Municipal Operations Center to increase security.
- Launched a new Speed Safety Camera Program, including two portable units to increase safety for residents and road users.
- Held annual Smoke Alarm Walks in historic neighborhoods.
- Launched the Low Acuity Unity and UTV response program to respond to areas without developed roads.
- Created the Narcan Leave Behind to combat the opioid crisis.

Natural Resources and Open Spaces

Strategies

1. Promote and expand Avondale's natural assets such as parks, trails, rivers, and wilderness areas to residents, visitors, and businesses.
2. Preserve and revitalize river areas and natural urban interfaces.
3. Encourage resource conservation and other sustainable practices throughout municipal operations.



Avondale 2021 Strategic Plan Report

Highlights

- Continued to grow the Tres Rios Nature Festival, showcasing our local nature area's plants, animals, sustainability, and ecological relationships.
- Implemented the Community Sustainability Plan and Drought Preparedness Plan.
- Supported community water conservation efforts by sponsoring Project WET and the Maricopa County student stormwater contest, creating the AquaSmart rewards program, and offering Water Wise Workshops to residents.
- Installed filtered water bottle stations at all City facilities; implemented the Tap Trailer Program to promote tap water benefits and encourage reduction in bottled water use.
- Added 32 electric car charging stations available to the public at City facilities; conducted energy use study for the Water Reclamation Facility and performed upgrades; added solar panels at the Aquatic Center; performed water audits of City facilities.
- Expanded parks, trails, and wilderness areas including Donatela Park, Festival Field upgrades (featuring enhancements to the Dog Park and Softball facilities, new pickleball courts), Civic Center Park, and Deconcini Park improvements.
- Promoted Tres Rios and the birding opportunities with the Audubon Society.

MEMO

To: Mayor Pineda and Members of Council
From: Nancy Hetrick, Vice President, Raftelis
Date: February 25, 2025
Re: Strategic Planning Workshop

My colleague Janae Janik and I look forward to being with you on March 4-5, 2025. The purpose of this memo is to share the agenda and logistics and allow some time for you to reflect on conversations we intend to engage in during our time together.

Logistics

When: March 4, 2025
7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

March 5, 2025
7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Avondale City Hall
11465 W Civic Center Dr.
Avondale, AZ 85323

Purpose

Our goal is to understand the City's current and projected operating context, including a review of the stakeholder engagement component of the strategic planning process. We will review and discuss with the intent of updating the City's Strategic Plan.

Norms

- Listen with respect
 - Let others finish before you start talking
 - Be attentive to the speaker
 - Disagree agreeably
- Be:
 - **BOLD**
 - Positive and realistic
 - Candid and honest
 - Patient and self-aware
 - Engaged and fully present

- Strive for consensus
 - Look for opportunities to agree
 - Remember the power of “if” and “and”
- Have fun!

Preparation

In preparation for our time together, please review and reflect on the attached Sense of Stakeholders Summary Report and come prepared to discuss.

In addition, below is the City's current vision statement, outcome areas, and key strategies for review.

Vision

Avondale, Arizona, is a community where people share a deep sense of pride in what has been accomplished and how far we have come. In Avondale, there is a strong belief that the blending of a broad spectrum of cultures comes from a true sense of harmony throughout the community. Here, people and businesses are welcomed with open arms and supported in a way that exemplifies a dynamic, intelligent, and driven city, ready to take on the future.

Does this still resonate? Is there anything you would change?

Strategic Outcome Areas

- Innovative Program and Service Delivery

Avondale will continue to serve as a model of innovative, efficient, and responsive government.

Strategies

1. Improve internal and external customer service delivery through streamlined processes and data-based programming.
2. Effectively utilize technology to enhance communication and access to City services.
3. Leverage strategic partnerships to expand community outreach opportunities.
4. Ensure responsible financial planning to support City operations and the capital improvement program.
5. Attract, retain, and develop a diverse and competitive workforce to meet the needs of the residents and business community.

- Public Health and Safety

Avondale is a city where all people feel safe and secure, relying on trusted public and community-based resources.

Strategies

1. Work to protect Avondale's most vulnerable commodity.
2. Connect residents with safety resources and engage the community around crime prevention.
3. Enhance enforcement efforts to reduce property crimes within the City.
4. Partner with key stakeholders to implement integrated community health and wellness programs.
5. Continue to deploy comprehensive emergency preparedness strategies and see that the residents are kept informed about those preparedness strategies.

- Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities

Avondale provides residents with the ability to connect with amenities, businesses, and their community, enhancing the opportunity to live, work, and enjoy a healthy, active, and affordable lifestyle.

Strategies

1. Increase visitor traffic to Avondale's entertainment, recreation, conference, and hospitality venues.
2. Develop new recreation and entertainment options, as well as signature events and programs.
3. Promote community's health, wellness, active lifestyle, and social connectivity.

- Natural Resources and Open Spaces

Avondale recognizes the value of its natural resources and promotes environmental sustainability and conservation in its operations, activities, and planning.

Strategies

1. Promote and expand Avondale's natural assets such as parks, trails, rivers, and wilderness areas to residents, visitors, and businesses.
2. Preserve and revitalize river areas and natural urban interfaces.
3. Encourage resource conservation and other sustainable practices throughout municipal operations.

- Creative and Sustainable Community Development

Avondale is committed to creating a sense of place, a community of residents and local businesses unified by pride and common values.

Strategies

1. Plan for development south of the Estrella Mountains.
2. Develop diverse housing options, to include housing that is affordable to workers and close to their jobs.
3. Invest in the revitalization of Historic Avondale.
4. Increase sustainability initiatives such as renewable clean energy or sustainable design and construction.
5. Maintain and expand quality infrastructure and improve connectivity to city amenities.

- Connected Community

Avondale will work directly and closely with our communities to develop programs and infrastructure that connect residents to the city's resources, the region, and each other.

Strategies

1. Expand community engagement opportunities through volunteerism, civic education, and service learning.
2. Collaborate with the Avondale business community to encourage partnerships and develop program ambassadors.
3. Expand access and communication infrastructure to more City facilities and amenities.
4. Protect the City's physical and virtual infrastructure against increased cyber security threats.

- Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Continuing to Foster Lifelong Learning Opportunities
Avondale will continue to foster an environment where education is a defining value and learning opportunities abound for residents of all ages.

Strategies

1. Work with community partners to expand employment opportunities for residents through job training and placement program.
2. Strengthen education-based partnerships.
3. Update facilities and spaces with technology, equipment, and public art.
4. Create diverse public awareness and education campaigns, focusing on a variety of topics.

Do these outcome areas still resonate? Is there anything you would change?

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Agenda

Tuesday, March 4 – 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM

A series of presenters on topics of interest, including economic development, healthcare, human services, natural resources, and economics, will share local trends and a projected outlook for the City.

Wednesday, March 5 – 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM

Welcome/Overview

- Welcome and introductions
- Agenda review
- Norms and expectations for the session

Budget Update

City staff will provide an overview of the City's budget.

Strategic Planning Process

The facilitator will provide a brief overview of the strategic planning process and review the City's current Strategic Plan.

Review Stakeholder Input

The facilitator will provide a high-level overview of the input received from the City Council, community members, and the City's leadership team (see Sense of Stakeholders Summary Report).

Vision for Avondale

We will discuss the future of Avondale and revise or affirm the vision statement.

Strategic Outcome Areas

We will work to refine the City's strategic outcome areas for the Strategic Plan. We will also review the list of strategies within each area and revise or affirm as needed.

Closing/Next Steps

We will end the session by sharing next steps in the process and allow an opportunity for participants to share their parting thoughts.

CITY OF

Avondale, AZ

**Strategic Plan Update
Sense of Stakeholders Summary Report**

February 2025

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Introduction

The City of Avondale (City), AZ, is in the process of updating its Citywide strategic plan. A strategic plan helps to answer three specific questions:

- *What do we know to be true today?*
- *What do we hope will be true in the future?*
- *What must go well in order to make it so?*

In this way, a strategic plan creates a roadmap for an organization to achieve long-term success and guides resource allocation and decision-making to move the City toward its intended vision. A strategic plan also creates a mutual understanding of the operating environment, and what is most important for the City and community moving forward.

In December 2024, Raftelis conducted individual interviews with members of the Avondale City Council to discuss their vision for the future of the City and share thoughts on the City's 2021 Strategic Plan. In January 2025, community members and City staff were able to engage in the strategic planning process by also providing feedback on the City's current plan and sharing their thoughts and ideas for the future of Avondale. Two public engagement meetings were facilitated by Raftelis and attended by over 55 members of the Avondale community. The City also solicited online feedback via Avondale Connect and social media channels. To gather internal feedback from City staff, Raftelis met with 27 members of the City's leadership team to reflect on the 2021 Strategic Plan and discuss the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.

This document summarizes the input received from the City Council, staff, and members of the community for the Council's consideration in developing the City's updated strategic framework.

Stakeholder Input

Understanding how the City is perceived by key stakeholders provides important context for the strategic planning process. Receiving input and feedback is essential to ensure that the strategic framework is aligned with the organization's day-to-day reality and how internal and external stakeholders perceive the City.

Input was solicited from the City Council, Department Directors, and community members through virtual interviews, in-person meetings, and opportunities to share thoughts online. The purpose of these engagements was to gather feedback on Avondale's current strategic plan and the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The sections below capture high-level themes discussed by each group.

Strengths and Weaknesses

When considering the strengths of the City, Department Directors acknowledged the level of customer service provided to the community, the strong organizational culture, and the collaboration among staff. They feel the City excels at fiscal management and is very focused on the well-being of the community, as exhibited through the staff's responsiveness, flexibility, and can-do attitude. City Council members highlighted their love for Avondale's strong sense of community with a small-town feel, collaborative and customer-focused City staff, and how growth and development in the area have created new opportunities.

When discussing areas of weakness, participants reiterated the concern for a lack of prioritization or a sense of too many things being a priority. Staff feel a constant need to deal with the present, which limits their ability to adequately think about and prepare for the future. The external reputation and perception of the City were also noted as a weakness, as well as a lack of collaboration with neighboring cities and low engagement and participation from members of the community. The challenge of overspending and an insufficient level of community engagement were challenges also mentioned by Council members.

The City's responsiveness was highlighted as both a strength and a weakness. The City takes pride in serving its residents, but continuously responding to needs has created a position in which expected responses place a burden on constrained resources. As such, there are limited resources to meet growing demands. Additional weaknesses mentioned include safety for pedestrians and vehicles and the integration of IT systems.

The full list of strengths and weaknesses is provided in the following table.

Avondale's Strengths	Avondale's Weaknesses
• Strong sense of community • Partnerships • Small-town feel • Customer service/customer-focused • Quality community amenities • Collaboration • Shared culture • Fiscal management • Compensation/pay • Provides great public resources • Transparency • Can-do attitude and flexibility • Quality facilities/amenities • Clear mission	• Reputation and external perception • Prioritizing everything • Lack of public engagement and participation • Responsiveness (also a strength) • Safety for pedestrians and vehicles • Preparing staff for career advancement • Lack of documented processes • Inexperienced workforce • Limited resources to meet growing demands • Inability to appropriately plan for the future – dealing with the present • Collaboration with neighboring cities • Integration of IT systems

Avondale's Strengths	Avondale's Weaknesses
• Efficient hiring process • Quality staff/recruitment • Cybersecurity • Leader in human services • Focused on the community and respectful of staff • Opportunities to learn about government • Responsiveness (also a weakness)	

Opportunities and Challenges

When asked about opportunities for the City to leverage in the future, staff members noted the desire to leverage assets and natural resources, utilize large parcels for economic development and growth, and simplify processes for the public while understanding and supporting changing demographics in the City. Additional comments included leveraging existing community programs to encourage greater involvement, utilizing transportation opportunities (e.g., light rail or train), and leveraging events at the Phoenix Raceway.

One of the key challenges discussed by Council members and the leadership team was that of growth. There are conflicting desires within the community of wanting various amenities and entertainment options but not wanting the growth that is necessary to draw in and support them. As this growth continues, the City is challenged to maintain the level of service delivery, ensuring services don't degrade in the wake of growth. Environmental challenges around water scarcity, air quality, and regulatory requirements were also discussed, as well as challenges related to state and local funding control.

The full list of opportunities and challenges is provided below.

Avondale's Opportunities	Avondale's Challenges
• Natural resources • Growth and leveraging assets • Simplifying processes for the public • Changing demographics in the City • Leverage existing community programs to encourage involvement • Large parcels for economic development and growth • Transportation opportunities (e.g., light rail, train) • Phoenix raceway events	• Affordability • Infrastructure development and investment (e.g., roads, water resources) • Fiscal health • Safety • Funding and local versus state control • Conflicting desires for amenities without growth • Integration of community members and ensuring a sense of belonging (e.g., apartment living) • Competition with neighboring cities • Workforce to attract the right employers in Avondale • Available jobs for residents • Insufficient behavioral health services • Strain on employees from the opioid crisis • Environmental challenges (e.g., air quality, water scarcity, regulatory requirements) • Ensure City services don't degrade in the wake of the growth – will outpace revenues and physical resources • Varying challenges in the northern and southern regions of the City

Core Purpose and Core Values

CORE PURPOSE

The City's current purpose statement is "**Making Lives Better.**" Staff affirmed that this statement still resonates in the organization, is still used frequently, and does not need to be revised or edited.

CORE VALUES

The City's values are **Helpful, Kind, and Professional**. Department Directors discussed the ways in which these values are reinforced and integrated within the organization. Specific examples identified include presenting awards to staff who exemplify these behaviors, discussing the values and what they mean during employee orientation, and integrating them into performance evaluations. While there are other terms that are often used when assessing awards, staff appreciate the succinctness of these values and the ability to easily remember them.

Avondale's Vision

A vision statement is aspirational, intended to reflect what the City Council hopes to be true about Avondale in the future. Avondale's current vision statement is presented below. Community members and staff were asked to review this statement and provide feedback as to whether it resonates with them as the future they'd like to see for the City.

Avondale, Arizona, is a community where people share a deep sense of pride in what has been accomplished and how far we have come. In Avondale, there is a strong belief that the blending of a broad spectrum of cultures comes from a true sense of harmony throughout the community. Here, people and businesses are welcomed with open arms and supported in a way that exemplifies a dynamic, intelligent, and driven city, ready to take on the future.

Staff expressed general support for the current vision statement, stating that it does capture the welcoming feeling that residents and businesses experience upon moving to Avondale, wherein they feel embraced and supported to be successful. However, some participants felt that it doesn't quite capture the large overarching goal that pulls together all of the outcome areas. Some expressed that the statement is more descriptive than aspirational and it is in need of an update. The City has made progress and advanced since the creation of this statement and would benefit from updating it, removing any tone that could be interpreted as an "underdog" story.

Council members were asked an aspirational question of what they hope the City of Avondale will be known for 10 years from now. They envision the City as a welcoming, family-friendly community where residents feel connected, engaged, and are encouraged to stay and grow. Affordability, safety, and diversity were highlighted, along with the desire for a strong economy and diverse retail and entertainment options.

When asked about their vision for Avondale, community members expressed a desire for the City to be a place where people can have access to everything to work, live, and play without the need for leaving to neighboring communities for these experiences.

Describing Avondale

During the community meetings, participants were asked to share the top three words they would use to describe the City of Avondale, as listed below.

- *Relational*
- *Diverse*
- *Intimate*
- *Innovation*
- *Opportunity*
- *Inclusive*
- *Visionary*
- *Progressive*
- *Pride*
- *Small-town*
- *Generational*
- *Intentional*
- *Community/Family (x2)*
- *Cleanliness*
- *Developing*
- *Engaged*
- *Interactive*
- *Family-oriented*
- *Clean*
- *Community*
- *Friendly*
- *Diverse*
- *Hometown/Heart*
- *Resources*
- *Growing*
- *Friendly*
- *Scenic*
- *Accessibility*
- *Caring*
- *Family-oriented*
- *Up-and-coming*
- *Evolving*

Strategic Outcome Areas

Strategic outcome areas are the “big buckets of things that must go well” in order for the City to achieve the vision. Department Directors and members of the Avondale community were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the seven Strategic Outcome Areas that were part of the City’s 2021 Strategic Plan. The seven outcome areas include:

- *Innovative Program and Service Delivery*
- *Natural Resources and Open Spaces*
- *Connected Community*
- *Public Health and Safety*
- *Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities*
- *Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities*
- *Creative and Sustainable Community Development*

Community Members’ Input

Utilizing a World Café meeting style, participants were presented with the current strategic outcome areas and associated success statements for each. They were asked whether these elements of the current strategic framework align with their thoughts and beliefs about the future of Avondale.

The following sections discuss more detailed themes and responses from community members in terms of strategic outcome areas. Participants were asked the following questions about each strategic outcome area and success statement. The full list of participants’ responses is included in the Appendix.

- *To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?*
- *In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?*

Innovative Program and Service Delivery

Avondale will continue to serve as a model of innovative, efficient, and responsive government.

Community members felt the Innovative Program and Service Delivery success statement could use improvement but did not elaborate on specifics. As previously mentioned, staff noted that the success statement does not seem to align with the title of this outcome area. Participants expressed a desire to complete the current strategies being worked on, increase the ease of use of the City’s website, provide more access for community members, and improve media outreach to teens.

Public Health and Safety

Avondale is a city where all people feel safe and secure, relying on trusted public and community-based resources.

When reviewing the Public Health and Safety outcome area and strategies, members of the Avondale community discussed the “vulnerable commodity” verbiage and questioned what it means in this context. Participants would like to see the City continue its current work while also making efforts to increase outreach and utilize available partnerships. Specific examples included more targeted outreach to the Avondale youth, bringing more stakeholders to the table, and creating neighborhood watch programs coupled with a citizen police academy. Other new strategies community members suggested included new fire trucks, retiring first responders, creating a robust social media strategy, and addressing homelessness and drug addiction through rehabilitation.

Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities

Avondale provides residents with the ability to connect with amenities, businesses, and their community, enhancing the opportunity to live, work, and enjoy a healthy, active, and affordable lifestyle.

Discussion of the Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities outcome area focused on the desire for an increase in social and entertainment options in the community. Participants noted a specific desire for more shopping, restaurants, small bars, etc., in the downtown area. The Old Town area was also mentioned, with participants discussing the addition of stores and parking to further develop it, as well as the need to market its appeal to draw people to this destination and make it more well-known to the community. Participants also discussed opportunities for community members to socialize and attend events such as Concerts in the Park or Food Truck gatherings.

Natural Resources and Open Spaces

Avondale recognizes the value of its natural resources and promotes environmental sustainability and conservation in its operations, activities, and planning.

Community members generally agreed that the Natural Resources and Open Spaces success statement captures how they imagine success in this area. In thinking about maintaining the City’s natural spaces, community members suggested achieving this through “creative clean-up” programs and academies to get people involved. Suggestions included “adopt a block” programs or partnerships with students, community members, and businesses for support.

Ideas for projects within this outcome area focused on connectivity and creating a social component within the City's natural spaces. This includes creating gathering spaces or parks with walkways around Tres Rios, creating a connected trail system for biking, and utilizing parks and natural spaces for community events.

Creative and Sustainable Community Development

Avondale is committed to creating a sense of place, a community of residents and local businesses unified by pride and common values.

The conversation around the Creative and Sustainable Community Development outcome area touched on development south of Estrella Mountain, to which there were mixed opinions among community members. Input on this outcome areas emphasized the importance of preserving and improving infrastructure, expanding electric vehicle charging stations, and ensuring new housing developments prioritize affordability. Some concerns were raised about traffic congestion and accessibility, and suggestions included encouraging light rail development. Additionally, residents expressed interest in promoting historic Western Avenue through better advertising and event support.

Connected Community

Avondale will work directly and closely with our communities to develop programs and infrastructure that connect residents to the city's resources, the region, and each other.

Discussion of the Connected Community outcome area focused heavily on outreach and the sharing of information in order to increase engagement and participation from community members. Participants would like to see greater opportunities for the youth to learn about opportunities and volunteerism in Avondale, an expansion of information availability and marketing of resources, and physical connectivity through a light rail system. Suggestions of ways to engage with community members and increase the visibility of resources included utilizing text messaging, using social media, and connecting with people at places like community centers, grocery stores, the senior center, etc. Participants noted that fostering a connected community should include an increase in walking/biking paths throughout the City and building a bridge to connect Thomas Road.

Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Avondale will continue to foster an environment where education is a defining value and learning opportunities abound for residents of all ages.

Community members felt the Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities success statement could use improvement but did not elaborate on specifics. To advance this area, community members focused on utilizing partnerships with local educational institutions and increasing communication and outreach to generate more awareness of available programs and opportunities. Participants discussed leveraging partnerships and creating academies, including a Youth Academy, business-owner academies, connections with Arizona State University

(ASU) and other educational institutions, an Advanced Citizens Academy, and partnerships with local tribes. Suggestions for diversifying communication on public class offerings included using social media and mailers.

Department Directors' Input

Staff discussed the changes they would make to the City's existing outcome areas. Feedback included the idea that these areas are appropriate for external distribution but there is a missing component that references the City's internal culture and provides an area for staff to connect with. Other comments included an observation that the titles of the outcome areas don't match the success statement descriptions (e.g., Innovative Program and Service Delivery), and there is some overlap between areas that could be consolidated. A specific suggestion included revising the Connected Community description to encompass engagement and collaboration as opposed to transportation and combining the concept of lifelong learning into this area. Department Directors also suggested removing entertainment opportunities from the Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities outcome area and combining it with community development to focus on a holistic economic development approach that includes entertainment and amenities.

Staff were asked to share the top priorities they would like to see the Council focus on during the next iteration of the City's strategic plan. The priorities discussed are captured in the following list.

- *Focus on State Route 30*
- *Develop traffic and comprehensive transportation planning*
- *Enhance multi-modal transportation*
- *Maintain quality services*
- *Preserve the river and open spaces through planning*
- *Expand City branding, communication, and public engagement with younger demographics*
- *Focus on sustainability*
- *Promote healthy living*
- *Expand trails*
- *Develop diverse housing options and prevent homelessness*
- *Plan for economic development through job growth/creation and tourism*
- *Create an economic strategy*
- *Develop new and unique retail*

City Council Input

Council members expressed general consensus on the continued relevance of the strategic outcome areas.

2021 Strategic Plan Review

Department Directors discussed the City's 2021 Strategic Plan, highlighting how the plan was previously used, what worked well, and what could be improved upon as the City develops its next plan. The 2021 Strategic Plan was used as a resource and basis for developing departmental strategic plans and work plans, as well as the development of the budget and allocation of resources that aligned with Council priorities. Staff used the plan as a point of reference in aligning other guiding documents, establishing policies, and generating excitement and representation in recruitment efforts. It was considered a helpful document to get an understanding of what the City Council wanted to focus on at the time.

When discussing what could go better as the City begins to develop and implement an update to the plan, staff expressed a desire for more specificity in what they are trying to accomplish. The outcome areas were viewed as being too broad, and while that made it easy to fit various initiatives under each one, it made it difficult to determine what was a priority. Clarity in priorities would also assist in identifying cross-functional teams to work on outcomes together, as the last plan had overlapping goals across various departments that created competing processes. Staff also highlighted an increased need for clear visibility of outcome metrics to understand whether progress is being made and tracking accomplishments.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY MEETING RESPONSES

Vision Statement

1. What parts of this vision statement do you find inspiring?
 - Sharing a deep sense of pride
 - A driven City, ready to take on the future
 - Blending of a broad spectrum of cultures
2. What do you hope Avondale will be known for in the future?
 - Creating a self-sustaining community where residents can work, live, and play without leaving the community
3. What is true about your community today that you hope would still be true in 10 years?
 - *Keeping our pride in natural areas like the Estrella Mountains and Tres Rios and limiting commercial development in those areas*
 - *Keep diverse cultures*

Innovative Program and Service Delivery

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?
 - Still needs improvement
2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?
 - No
 - User-friendly Avondale website
 - Simple search engine on the website
3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?
 - Complete what is currently being worked on
 - Provide more access for community members
 - Improve media outreach to teens

Public Health and Safety

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?
 - Continuing the current work
 - Include neighbor network (watch)
 - Youth outreach and engagement
 - Life skills and accountability
 - Bring more stakeholders to the table
 - Create neighborhood watch programs coupled with a citizen police academy
 - Install video surveillance in parks
2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?
 - Better outreach with preparedness strategies
 - More explanation of “vulnerable commodity”
 - Verbiage “commodity”

- Carefully consider first responders
- Work with organizations that were under the old county code to ensure integrity to the mission of the organization
- Target the youth re: available programs

3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?

- New fire trucks and building up the firefighters
- Retire first responders (trucks, etc.)
- Youth engagement
- Work with school boards
- Social media strategy
- Address homelessness and drug addiction with rehabilitation

Diverse Recreation and Entertainment Options

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?

- Increased entertainment options for adults (i.e., Chicken N Pickle, “Putt Putt Bar,” restaurants, local shopping)
- Market Old Town to our community
- Reduce traffic on the Boulevard
- Add a parking garage in Old Town to reduce parked cars on Western
- Plan to develop south of Estrella Mountain

2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?

- Eliminate rave concerts that go until 3:00 a.m. at the Phoenix Raceway
- Develop existing locations, such as Old Town

3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?

- More shopping, restaurants, small bars, ice cream shops, etc. in the “Downtown Area”
- Healthy food options, such as cafes and smoothie shops
- Concerts in the parks
- Food truck events
- Utilize Old Town by adding security, stores/shops, and parking
- Increase marketing to make the area more known to the community
- Partner with ASU and community colleges for urban planning and utilize them to develop areas further, bringing innovative ideas
- Develop an amusement park near the raceway, like Six Flags or Busch Gardens
- More grocery stores near Avondale Boulevard and Van Buren
- No more apartments
- No Airbnb properties
- Sober living houses only in commercial areas

Natural Resources and Open Spaces

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?

- Yes
- Take advantage of parks, etc. for community events

2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?

- Increase visibility of nature areas
- Create “creative clean-up” programs with students, community members, and business support
- Adopt a block/space for clean-up

3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?

- Create gathering spaces/parks with walkways around Tres Rios
- Highlight the water/rivers of Avondale
- Create a connected trail system for biking
- Use notifications on water bills or email when water usage spikes
- Create additional or advanced student academies
- Create a Parks and Recreation academy
- Continue creating trails
- Connect with high schools to help the maintenance of local parks

Creative and Sustainable Community Development

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?

- Continuing Old Town (roads, etc.)
- Add electric vehicle charging stations in new developments, apartments, etc.
- More affordable housing opportunities – not just more housing, but more affordable
- Mixed development south of Estrella, including entertainment, parks, and transportation
- Encourage light rail development

2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?

- Accessing locations and reducing traffic congestion

3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?

- No development or utilities behind the mountains
- Take care of what we have now
- Roads in Old Town
- Keep exploring options south of Estrella Mountain
- Continue the City’s program to incentivize water conservation
- Encourage more people to come to “historic” Western Avenue
- Better advertising of historic events

Connected Community

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?
 - *Create something for our youth to find out about opportunities, mentorships, and volunteerism in Avondale through schools, churches, social media, etc.*
 - *Success in our community would be to look no further than our town for schooling, work, and entertainment*
2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?
 - *Continuing the current strategies*
 - *Add what has been written into the existing strategies*
 - *More information about citizen participation*
 - *Fire*
 - *Leadership*
 - *Master's Program*
3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?
 - *Specific texts based on certain groups or interests*
 - *Expand the information and marketing of resources. How do we know who to connect with?*
 - *Community Centers*
 - *Grocery stores*
 - *Mountain View Community Center*
 - *One-page directory*
 - *Social media*
 - *Strategy for community connections*
 - *Light rail to connect to other cities and within events/areas in Avondale*
 - *Use social media more often*
 - *Compare Instagram to Goodyear*
 - *Rave to social media!*
 - *Utilize text messaging to get the word out on City events, developments, road closures, and civic engagement opportunities*
 - *Allow residents to choose which text message topics they would like to receive info on*
 - *Better volunteer advertising*
 - *Communications*
 - *Spanish, senior outreach, and adding information to Meals on Wheels*
 - *Signage with Dysart Senior Center*
 - *In order to foster a connected community, the strategic plan should include increasing the number of walking /bike paths throughout the City. This would serve to connect neighborhoods and provide safer paths for those on foot or bicycles other than busy streets.*
 - *Can you guys connect Thomas Road by building a bridge or continuing the road over the dried-out Agua Fria River? Along with that, connect N. El Mirage Road to that bridge or road on Thomas. It gets annoying when you have to get to Avondale Boulevard or have to go around on Dysart when Dysart is full already. Connecting Thomas Road, where it's split, and connecting El Mirage to that split would make travel more convenient and less loop-arounds.*
 - *I'm just waiting on the Thomas Road bridge, and my life will be complete*

Community-Oriented Lifelong Learning Opportunities

1. To you, does the statement accurately describe what success looks like in this outcome area? What concepts would you add or change to align with how you imagine success?

- More opportunities for student involvement regarding Public Arts
- Increase outreach for Mountain View Rec Park
- Yes, with improvement

2. In reviewing the list of strategies, are there any you would remove or change?

- Increase awareness of Avondale resources and programs
- Diversify communication on public class offerings, including social media, Facebook, and mailers
- Utilize bulletin boards with events at community parks

3. Do you have any suggestions for new strategies the City should consider that would help make progress in this outcome area?

- Creating a Youth Academy to visit Avondale Departments
- Create business owner academies
- Connect with ASU existing and Estrella
- *Create an advanced citizens' academy*
- *Create partnerships with local tribes for businesses and job opportunities*
- *Partner with universities and local colleges to create awareness of available Adult Education Programs*
- *More technology-advanced education*
- *Create incentives for retired educators to re-invest in the youth and adults*
- *Increase career paths for Avondale EDGE Scholarships*
- *Increase awareness of programs*
- *Has the possibility of a vocational high school been considered? I grew up in a city in Massachusetts that had one and the students were qualified for the trade or career they studied upon graduation.*