



# CITY OF BILLINGS

## OFFICE OF CITY ADMINISTRATOR

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## Council Memorandum

**REPORT TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Chris Kukulski, City Administrator

**SUBJECT:** City Council priority work session and futures discussion

**MEETING DATE:** January 26, 2019

**AGENDA ITEM TYPE:** Work session discussion

**RECOMMENDATION:** Begin a dialogue with the City's entire leadership team (City Council, administrators and directors) about the future of Billings. Commit to continuing to build a strong working relationship with your colleagues to set a clear direction to advance Billings to become one of America's great mid-size cities. Provide clear direction on the priorities you, as a policy body, are identifying for 2019.

No motions will be made during the work session, however it is anticipated that the identified priorities list will be brought back to the city council for a formal vote of adoption.

**BACKGROUND:** Enclosed in your council packet for the January 26 priority session was the 2018 Work Plan, Council Initiatives list and the City Council's Consolidated List of Potential Goals – 2019. Enclosed are my thoughts for your consideration as we discuss Billings' future and set priorities for 2019.

After the introductory comments from the Mayor, myself and facilitator Tooley, each of us will be asked to briefly answer two questions to break the ice. (20 – 30 seconds each)

1. In addition to your name, business or employer and position, tell us something most people do not know about you.
2. Tell us one thought that guides you in your life.

The first half of the morning will be focused on the future of Billings. How will our decisions affect the community 25, 50 even 100 years from now? Most of us are comfortable discussing the opportunities and challenges that are immediately before us however, as leaders, we are entrusted to make Billings a great City well after most will even recognize our names.

Does our organization strive towards a clear vision? Is the organization built on core values that our 963 employees and elected leaders are focused on? What opportunities and challenges do we see



with our changing economy, demographics and sense of community? What aspirations do we have for our children, grandchildren, future generations and ourselves? What challenges do we see retaining and recruiting future citizens who choose Billings, over other cities, to receive their education, start a business, work and raise families? We won't have time to answer each of these questions but I hope they stimulate your thoughts as you prepare for the following questions facilitator Tooley will be asking.

1. Aspirations. Imagine Billings 25 years in the future. What do you hope it will be like?
2. Change. What trends do you see (international, national, local) that could affect Billings in a positive way? Which trends might affect us in a negative way?
3. Challenges. What challenges is the City facing right now that must be addressed or they will get worse in the future?

Most thriving communities today, and into the foreseeable future, provide a quality of life that people deliberately choose to be a part of. Most jobs now follow where people want to be rather than the other way around. All of us want a safe, clean, vibrant community to call home no matter what our educational attainment or socioeconomic standing. My hope is that this is the first of several discussions focused on setting a bright future for our City in the upcoming years.

The second half of the morning will focus on setting priorities for 2019. One of the items we hope to accomplish during the priority session is an agreement among the Council that we no longer retain a separate Work Plan/priority list and Council Initiatives list. The two lists require resource allocation and prioritization and should become one.

All of the directors, Kevin and I will be present during the work session to engage in the discussion and share our thoughts. The following are my thoughts after working with the team over my first ten weeks. In addition to these items, each department has extremely important work they are focused on. If that work is not in conflict with the City Council's priorities, we should not feel the necessity to list every important item the organization is working on. However, your time as the policy making body is limited and your priorities should reflect your focus. Therefore, I suggest the following priorities for your discussion.

1. Improve the capabilities and effectiveness of law enforcement. Some of the top issues include:
  - a. Lack of jail space
  - b. Illegal drugs
  - c. Violent crime (includes human trafficking)
  - d. Property crime
  - e. Transient issues
  - f. Traffic
  - g. Funding

2. Improve the “built” environment
  - a. One Big Sky District
  - b. Project recode
  - c. Code enforcement
  - d. Airport expansion
  - e. Complete streets (minimal lane widths, bike lanes on bike routes, parking, boulevard trees, detached sidewalks/multiuse paths)
  
3. Improve existing and expand parks, trails, open spaces and the urban forest
  - a. Project completions
  - b. Project development
  - c. Funding
  
4. Develop and enhance leadership teams - City Council; Director Team; High Performance Organization Team (HPO); Departments
  - a. 2019 - The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni, Good to Great by Jim Collins
  - b. Core Values confirmation/identification
  - c. Lean Six Sigma

**UNRESOLVED ISSUES:** Not applicable to this discussion.

**ALTERNATIVES:** The Council could wait to formalize priorities until later in 2019 when the Council and administration has had more time to understand the opportunities and challenges facing Billings. Several elected officials have less than 13 months on the council and the City’s top two administrators have less than eight months of experience in their current positions.

**FISCAL EFFECTS:** I do not have an estimate of costs; however, failing to set a clear direction and prioritize issues facing the community has a tremendous cost. Whether wasted dollars or lost opportunity costs, both have real implications. The City is entrusted to manage over \$300 million in annual revenue and owns and maintains billions of dollars of assets.

**Attachments:** 2018 Work Plan; Council Initiatives list; and the City Council’s Consolidated List of Potential Goals – 2019.

**Report compiled on:** January 24, 2019