



AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL - SPECIAL MEETING (WORKSHOP)

CITY OF BANNING, CALIFORNIA

December 9, 2025
3:30 p.m.
In Chambers

Council Chambers
99 E. Ramsey Street
Banning, CA 92220

The following information comprises the agenda for the special meeting of the Banning City Council, a joint meeting of the City Council and Banning Utility Authority, and the Banning City Council sitting in its capacity as the Banning Successor Agency Board.

This meeting is being held via Zoom so that members of the public may observe and participate in this meeting electronically. If you participate in this meeting via Zoom, you are agreeing to abide by the City's Zoom Community Standards for Public Meetings (provided in full on the last page of the agenda). Esta reunión se lleva a cabo en la Cámara y a través de Video/Teleconferencia en Zoom para que los miembros del público puedan observar y participar en esta reunión de manera electrónica. Si elige participar en esta reunión a través de Zoom, acepta cumplir con los Estándares comunitarios de Zoom para reuniones públicas de la ciudad (que se proporcionan en su totalidad en la última página de la agenda).

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Dial in: +1 669 900 9128

Meeting ID: 820 1264 4588
Password: 92220

Per the City of Banning Manual of Procedural Guidelines, matters taken up by the Council before 10 p.m. may be concluded, but no new matters shall be taken up except upon a majority vote of the council members present and voting. Such an extension shall only be valid for one hour and each hour thereafter shall require a renewed action for the meeting to continue.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. WORKSHOP

- 2.1 [Parks and Recreation Commission Interview to fill the vacancy in Position 4, with a term ending January 31, 2027, on the Banning Parks and Recreation Commission.](#)

Recommendation: Conduct an interview with the applicant to fill a vacancy on the Banning Parks and Recreation Commission, Position 4, term ending January 31, 2027.

- 2.2 [Continuance of the City of Banning Strategic Plan "Banning 2030 - Designing the Future TODAY"](#)

Recommendation: Continue Discussion and Finalize Direction Regarding the City of

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS - Agenda Items Only

4. ADJOURNMENT

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- Su micrófono debe permanecer en silencio, y solo puede reactivar su micrófono cuando / si es reconocido por el alcalde.
- Su cámara debe estar apagada a menos que sea reconocido por el alcalde.
- Para indicar el deseo de hacer un Comentario Público, debe utilizar la función Levantar la mano. El alcalde no reconocerá a quienes no hayan utilizado la función Levantar la mano.
- Los comentarios públicos de lo que atienden por Zoom seguirán inmediatamente los comentarios en persona de los miembros del público en las Cámaras del Consejo.
- Si no cumple con estas pautas de la comunidad, es posible que lo destituyan por interrumpir la reunión que tiene lugar en las Cámaras del Consejo. Puede volver a unirse a la reunión, pero es posible que lo eliminen por cada violación de estos estándares de la comunidad.
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Vickie Sellers, Elected City Clerk
Secretaria Municipal Electa

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Public Comment

Agenda Items

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CONTACT • CONTACTO

City Clerk's Office | 951-922-3102 | CityClerks@banningca.gov
99 East Ramsey Street, Banning, California 92220



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Arturo Vela, Interim City Manager

PREPARED BY: Sandra Calderon, Acting Deputy City Clerk

MEETING DATE: December 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation Commission Interview to fill the vacancy in Position 4, with a term ending January 31, 2027, on the Banning Parks and Recreation Commission.

RECOMMENDATION:

Conduct an interview with the applicant to fill a vacancy on the Banning Parks and Recreation Commission, Position 4, term ending January 31, 2027.

BACKGROUND:

The Parks and Recreation Commission's rules and responsibilities are governed by Chapter 2.40 of the Municipal Code. The Commission's main function is to serve as an advisory board to the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Director for the purpose of the formulation of rules, regulations and policies for all parks and recreation programs, activities, and fees.

The Banning Municipal Code Section 2.40.030 requires applications be made available and vacancies announced at least two months prior to the vacancy. The vacancy was advertised on the City's website and across social media platforms for more than the minimum two months required. The application period closed on Monday, November 17, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. and the City received one application.

JUSTIFICATION:

One application was received for the Parks and Recreation Commission vacancy. The submitted application is included in the report for the Council's review and consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Interview qualified candidate for appointment to the Parks and Recreation Commission and appoint member to the Commission.
2. Do not make appointment to Parks and Recreation Commission and provide alternate direction to staff.

BUDGETED?:

No

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT:

No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [P & R Commissioner Job Description.pdf](#)
2. [2025 11 14_Application_Rita Chapparosa.pdf](#)
3. [Banning__CA_Code_of_Ordinances_2.40.pdf](#)
4. [Interview Questions - Parks and Recreation Commissioner Applicants.pdf](#)



CITY OF BANNING

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSIONER VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Purpose of the Commission:

The Parks and Recreation Commission serves as an advisory agency to the City Council, the Planning Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Director for the purpose of the review and formulation of rules, regulations, and policies for all parks and recreation programs and services. They are empowered to take initiative in planning for the present and future park and recreation needs of the residents of the City of Banning.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Park and Recreation Commission:

In their capacity, the Parks and Recreation Commission duties shall be:

- (1) Review current parks and recreation programs and facilities in the city to determine additional needs, and submit recommendations pertaining to parks and recreation guidelines, policies, facilities, or user fees, if any, to the City Council;
- (2) Provide a forum for the City's residents to express their views related to public parks and facilities, recreation programs and services, and other related issues. Promote interest, cooperation, and support among private, public and nonprofit organizations.
- (3) Make recommendations, in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department, to the City Council on operating and capital budget needs, service levels, and charges for services, and monitor the recreation and parks budget throughout the year; and
- (4) Periodically review and, if necessary, participate in the revision and update, of the City of Banning Parks and Recreation Master Plan;
- (5) Serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council and/or Planning Commission for the location, construction, maintenance and funding of parks and recreation facilities;
- (6) Participate in the development of individual parks and facility master plan concepts and documents;
- (7) Promote maximum utilization of parks, recreation facilities and programs;
- (8) Enhance the quality of life for all city residents through parks and recreation programs and services;
- (9) Periodically review and evaluate the City's service levels for parks, facilities, and recreation programs and services. Work in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Director to

determine an acceptable standard and how to best maintain the City's parks and recreation services at that level;

(10) Provide city residents as wide as a variety of recreational opportunities as possible; and

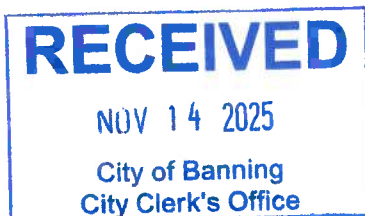
(11) Review all parks and recreation-related matters submitted to the Commission by the City Council

General information pertaining to the Commission:

The Commission has five voting members, all of whom are appointed by the City Council. The terms of the members are four (4) years. The Commission meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm at Banning City Hall located at 99 E. Ramsey Street, Banning CA 92220.

Eligibility for appointment:

Appointees to the Commission must be City of Banning residents. Park and Recreation Commission applicants are expected to have an interest in constructively supporting City parks and recreational facilities and services, working with other City boards, the general public, and the Community Development Department to plan for future improvements in parks, recreational facilities, and a wide variety of related projects for the enjoyment of all residents of the City. Formal education in the field is not a requirement.



APPLICATION TO SERVE ON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

This application is to fill **one immediate vacancy** on the Parks and Recreation Commission. The term of office for both positions will begin immediately and will expire on January 31, 2027. The Parks and Recreation Commission meets monthly on the **Third Wednesday** of each month, except July and August, beginning at 6:00 p.m. **Applications are due to the Office of the City Clerk no later than Monday, November 17, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

Name Rita Chapparosa

Phone (951) 295-4668

Email Address rchapparosa@gmail.com

Address 274 Sunrise Avenue, Banning, CA, 92220

Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Position Retired Company _____

Length of Residency in Banning 68 years

Are you a registered voter? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Are you able to commit to attend commission meetings on the regular meeting date? ☒ Yes ☐ No

*Information requested below will be used by the City Council as a screening process to determine which applicants will be interviewed for the Parks & Recreation Commission. **Please do not submit supplemental materials.***

1. Tell us about your background, including education, work, and volunteer experience, civic involvement, and other experience relevant to this appointment.

I have been a citizen of Banning all my life. I love my city and it would be a privilege to serve on the Parks & Recreation Commission. Retired from the City of Banning after over 37 years as the Human Resource Manager and Deputy Human Resources Director/Risk Management. I obtained my Bachelors degree and Masters degree in Business & Human Resources. I was a member in the following groups: Mexican American Scholarship Association, United Way of the Inland Valleys-Pass Area Campaign Committee Member, United Way Campaign Coordinator for the City of Banning Employees, Mentor-Banning Unified School District, Morongo Indian Headstart- Parent Advisory, Title IV Indian Education Program Parent Committee for the Banning Unified School District, Junior All American Pass Football/Cheer Coach and currently on the Financial Commission at St. Kateri Tekakwitha of Banning & Beaumont.

2. What unique skills and traits would you bring to the commission?

I feel that I would a great value to the Commission based on my background/experience with other organizations. I understand that the Parks & Recreation Commission are limited to responsibilities based on the rules & regulations on this commission. Due to budget constraints, I understand that the city is limited in funds for the Parks & Recreation events. We need to work on ways to get the community involved and find out what they would like from the City for our youth and adults.

3. Why are you interested in serving on the Parks & Recreation Commission? What do you hope to achieve during your term of service?

My life has revolved around the Community in volunteerism with various groups. When I retired I planned to get involved more with my community.

I want to make recommendations to the City Council regarding much needed community recreation needs. Review and make suggestions/recommendations on the operation, supervision and maintenance of playgrounds, athletic fields, swimming pools, indoor recreation centers, facilities designated for recreational use. Work with our Community Services Department to seek the needs of the City for recreational needs.

In accordance with Banning's City Council Resolution 2012-67, if selected you will be required to submit to a criminal background investigation, including LiveScan fingerprinting prior to your formal appointment.

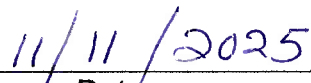
Please return to: City of Banning
City Clerk's Office
99 E. Ramsey Street
PO Box 998
Banning, CA 92220

**Return by: Monday, November 17, 2025
5:00 p.m.**

Or email to: cityclerks@banningca.gov

Remember to sign your application.


Signature


Date

Chapter 2.40 - PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

2.40.010 - Established—Purpose.

There is hereby established a parks and recreation commission of the city for the purpose of facilitating the integration of the parks and recreation activities for the city.

(Code 1965, § 15-1; Ord. No. 1438, § 1.A., 6-14-11)

2.40.020 - Advisory agency designated—Powers and duties.

The city parks and recreation commission shall serve as an advisory agency to the city council and the director of community services for the purpose of the formulation of rules, regulations and policies for all parks and recreation programs, activities, and fees. Parks and recreation commission members shall be registered voters of the City of Banning.

(Code 1965, § 15-2; Ord. No. 1438, § 1.A., 6-14-11)

2.40.030 - Appointment of members.

- A. The parks and recreation commission shall consist of five members.
- B. The parks and recreation commission shall serve four-year terms, which shall be staggered every two years concurrent with the city elections. Appointments shall be made by the city council. Applications shall be made available and the closing date announced at least two months prior to the expiration of the commissioner's term to be filled.
- C. Members shall serve at the pleasure of the council and may be removed at any time by a majority vote of the entire council.
- D. Any member who is absent from two regular meetings of the Commission within a twelve-month period whether the absence is excused or not, will be deemed to have resigned their office and the City Council may appoint a new member to serve in the resigned commissioner's place for the remainder of the existing term.

(Code 1965, § 15-3; Ord. No. 1438, § 1.A., B., 6-14-11; Ord. No. 1579, § 2, 11-9-21)

2.40.040 - Conduct of meetings.

- A. The commission shall meet at 6:00 P.M. on the third Wednesday of the following months: January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October and November.
- B. Additional meeting may occur if deemed necessary by the city council or commission chairperson.
- C. A majority of the voting members of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

(Code 1965, § 15-4; Ord. No. 1438, § 1.A., 6-14-11)

Parks & Recreation Commission Interview Questions

1. Tell us briefly about yourself (qualities/experience/expertise) and why you are interested on being on the City's Parks & Recreation Commission.
2. Explain your knowledge of the Parks & Recreation Commission's roles and responsibilities to City services and how they contribute to creating a quality of life for the residents and people who visit our community.
3. What is your understanding of the relationship of the Parks & Recreation Commission to the staff and City Council?
4. A staff report is provided to the Parks & Recreation Commission in advance of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. If you have major concerns about the report, what would you do?
5. The Parks & Recreation Commission regularly meets on the third Wednesday of the month. Additionally, special meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission may be called as important items come to the agenda. Are you able to commit to attending the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings?
6. We have concluded the interview. Do you have any questions for us?



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Arturo Vela, Interim City Manager

PREPARED BY: Art Vela, Interim City Manager

MEETING DATE: December 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Continuance of the City of Banning Strategic Plan "Banning 2030 - Designing the Future TODAY"

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue Discussion and Finalize Direction Regarding the City of Banning Strategic Plan "Banning 2030 - Designing the Future TODAY".

BACKGROUND:

On November 25, 2025, the City Council held a comprehensive 7.5-hour Strategic Planning Workshop to review, in detail and in collaboration with staff, the key issues and challenges facing the organization. The workshop concluded with an initial prioritization exercise, during which Council identified and ranked a broad range of potential goals.

The purpose of this agenda item is to continue that dialogue by reviewing the results of the initial ranking and refining them into a final set of Strategic Goals. Following Council direction, staff will prepare the complete Strategic Plan and return it for formal adoption.

JUSTIFICATION:

Given the breadth of challenges inherited by the current Council, it is essential that staff clearly understand the City's overarching direction and priorities. It is equally important that Banning residents are informed of both the significant opportunities and the challenges ahead, as well as the actions the Council intends to pursue to address them.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Not directly applicable to this item, although it is highly likely that there will be some financial impact related to the completion of the goals identified in the Strategic Plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

Not applicable.

BUDGETED?:

No

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT:

No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [12.9.25 B.Deis Staff Report.pdf](#)

2. [12.9.25 Exhibit A to the B.Deis Staff Report.pdf](#)
3. [B.Deis Transmittal Memo for the 11.25.25 Strategic Plan Workshop.pdf](#)
4. [Banning 2030 - Designing the Future TODAY \(Attach 1 to B.Deis 11.25.25 Memo\).pdf](#)



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

Attachment 1

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Bob Deis, Senior Consultant, SSYW, LLP

MEETING DATE: December 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Follow Up on Council's Strategic Plan Workshop

RECOMMENDATION:

Review your voting results from the Council's November 25th Strategic Plan Workshop—designating Banning's Draft Strategic Plan Priorities, discuss and provide further direction to staff.

BACKGROUND:

As you know, you recently concluded a day-long workshop which included a thorough briefing from staff on suggested Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTs) for their respective departments. They also proposed future initiatives or "Possible Priority Goals" to address these SWOTs. Your Council discussed this information and proposed additional goals.

Towards the conclusion of the Workshop, each Council member picked their top 8 priorities. And since the Mayor had to excuse herself, the Council voted to continue this discussion to when all five Council members can be present.

Attached you will find: 1) a simple tabulation of your voting and 2) a suggested categorization of these votes to ultimately provide direction to staff.

EXHIBIT A Explained

Left Side of EXHIBIT A

The left side of this Exhibit is a copy of the flip charts that you used to vote for your preferred priorities. Your staff authored a list of possible Strategic Plan Proposed Goals given the myriad challenges that we discussed on November 25th. The one slight difference from the flipcharts is the insertion of your voting tally next to the respective X for each Goal.

Again, the two columns titled "Policy Goal" and "Administrative Goal" was an attempt to differentiate the goals. Policy Goals are clearly within the Council purview and represent

direction to City staff. The rule of thumb for this category is, the Council determines when a Policy Goal is met and very generally how it gets accomplished. The Administrative Goals are the purview of the City Manager who determines generally how the Goals are addressed in their annual workplan. However, life is not that simple. Some of the proposed Administrative Goals end up having policy implications upon their final completion. And in some instances, issues are allowed to fester and stack up to the point they become problems for the Council. This is why some of the Strategic Goals have Xs in both columns.

Right Side of EXHIBIT A

The right side of this Exhibit used the November 25th voting tallies to break out the Strategic Plan Goals into priorities or “Tiers” (1-3). With some exceptions, those that received 2-3 votes are in Tier 1. Those that received 1 vote are in Tier 2. And those that didn’t receive a vote are in Tier 3. The City should endeavor to satisfy or begin addressing all these goals over the next five years. However, the Tiers help guide in what order are these Goals should be addressed and/or started by staff.

The exceptions to the above rule are highlighted with **. The highlighted Tier 1 Priorities reflect goals that are inextricably tied to each other and will be addressed concurrently, even if they didn’t get the same votes.

The highlighted Tier 2 Priorities were those that moved from Tier 1 to 2 because Tier 1 was simply getting too big and unrealistic.

Finally, you will note the Strategic Goals—ADMINISTRATION prioritization follows the three Tier categories but are titled as Recommendations. In other words, your Council’s input (and votes) is duly noted to staff. However, the City Manager needs some room for discretion in this area given its inextricably tied to various organizational nuances such as: capacity to address them, competing goals, staffing capacity, relative need and impact to the organization, risk to the City, etc.

Goals of December 9th Strategic Plan Discussion

It is requested that your Council review and discuss the various Priorities or Tiers of your Strategic Plan and provide us your final direction for this very important document, **Banning 2030—Designing the Future TODAY!** This will represent a huge step forward in coalescing the Council and the City staff in a shared direction forward. It also represents a new level of transparency to the Banning community on City-wide priorities and why they are so.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. EXHIBIT A.

9-Dec-25	Policy	Administrative
Banning Strategic Plan Goals	Goal	Goal
Council Voting Results 11/25/25 Workshop		
City Manager's Office		
Strategic Plan Implementation	X-1	X
Develop and Implement Banning's Financial Workout Plan--to Sustaina	X	X
Develop New Banning Organizational Culture--See HR		X
Develop New Economic Development (ED) Plan	X-2	X-1
Homelessness	X-2	
Animal Control and Shelter	X-3	
Create Banning's Emergency Operation Plan	X-3	
City Attorney's Office		
		X-1
Collaborate with HRD on Outreach to our Insurance JPAs		
Create a New HR Program Around Performance Mgmt.		X-2
		X-1
		X-3
Develop a Written Claims and Litigation Mgmt. Strategy		
Human Resources & Risk Management (RM)		
Fiscal Plan to Eliminate Massive RM Fund Deficits	X	X
Assessment of the RM Program	X	X-1
Creat a New HR Program Around Performance Mgmt.--see CAO		X
Develop New City Organizational Culture--see CMO	1	X
Develop Employee Transition Plan--For Impending Turnover		X-2
Purchase and Install New HRMS		X
Finance--Accounting		
Aggressively Recruit and Staff Finance--Accounting With Permanent Staff		X-2
Develop System for Monitoring and Managing Cash Flow		X-2
Finish Cleaning Up the Financial Books	X-3	X-1
Review and Update Fiscal Mgmt. Policies	X	X
Engage Special Tax Consultant to Create CFD Program for Services	X-1	X
Produce a Transparent Spending Plan i.e. Improved Budget	X-2	X

EXHIBIT A
Banning Strategic Plan Goals--POLICY GOALS
Tier 1 Policy Priorities
1a. CM--Animal Control and Shelter
1b. CM--Create Banning's Emergency Operation Plan
1c. CM--Develop New Economic Development (ED) Plan
1d. CM--Homelessness
1e. Finance--Finish Cleaning Up the Financial Books
1f. Finance--Produce a Transparent Spending Plan i.e. Improved Budget
1g. Finance/CM--Review and Update Fiscal Mgmt Policies**
1h. CM--Develop and Implement Banning's Financial Workout Plan--to Sustainability**
1i. HR--Fiscal Plan to Eliminate Massive Risk Mgmt. Deficits **
1j. Finance/CM--Engage Special Tax Consultant to Create CFD Program for Svcs. **
1k. Finance--Do In-Depth Evaluation of the City's UB Function and Tools
1l. Police--In Conjunction with the City Manager and HR, Develop and Implement a Proactive Outreach and Hiring Program
1m. Police--Provide One-Time Resources to Independently Evaluate the Police Dept.**
1n. PW--Complete Wastewater Treatment Plan & Recycled Water Upgrades
1o. PW--Develop Formal Preventative Maintenance Plan (For Streets)
1p. CD/ED--Inventory and Then Activate Underutilized Land in Downtown
Tier 2 Policy Priorities
2a. CM--Strategic Plan Implementation
2b. HR/CM--Develop New Banning Organizational Culture
2c. HR/CM--Assessment of Risk Management Program**
2d. Finance--independent Review of Purchasing Process **
2e. Finance--Develop More Accessible Purchasing Process for Small/Local Vendors
2f. Finance--Develop/Implement Banning's IT Strategic Plan
2g. PW--Achieve BEU Fiscal Solvency and Sustainability

9-Dec-25	Policy	Administrative
Banning Strategic Plan Goals	Goal	Goal
Finance--Information Technology		
Develop and Implement Banning's IT Strategic Plan	X-1	X-3
Make Cybersecurity a Core Priority of the Organization	X	X
Data Cleansing & Migration Strategy		X
Consider Changes to the IT Manager Reporting Relationship		X
Finance--Purchasing		
Work With City Attorney and Restructure Vendor Onboarding		X-1
Convene an Interdepartmental Team and Develop a More Responsive Purchasing Process for Emergencies		X
Convene an Interdepartmental Team and Develop a Purchasing and Contracting Process That is More Accessible to Smaller Local Vendors or Just Smaller Projects	X-1	X
Independent Review of Purchasing Process	X-2	X-1
Finance--Utility Billing		
Address the Software Issues (and IT Support) That Is Behind the Current Billing Crisis		X-4
Do In-Depth Evaluation of the City's UB Function and Tools	X-2	X
Elevate the UB Function Within Finance		X
Police		
In Conjunction with the City Manager and HR, Develop and Implement a Proactive Outreach and Hiring Program	X-2	X-2
Provide One-Time Resources and Independently Evaluate the Police D	X-1	X-1
Develop a Community Outreach Program		X
Public Works--Electrical Utility		

EXHIBIT A
Banning Strategic Plan Goals--POLICY GOALS
2h. PW--Update Integrated Master Plan (IMP) & Evaluate W/WW Fin. Rate Structure
2i. PW--Develop a Pavement Mgmt. Plan and Policies (Streets)
2j. CD/ED--Streamline Permitting, Business Licensing and Customer Svce. Systems
2k. CD/ED--Develop Plan to Enhance Staffing Capacity, Stability and Institutional Knowledge Retention
Tier 3 Policy Priorities
3a. Finance--Make Cyber Security a Core Priority of the Organization
3b. PW--Update Engineering Standards and Specifications for Development
3c. PW--Seek Additional Funding for Streets Pavement Mgmt Plan
3d. PR--Fund the Updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan
3e. PR--Enhance School Partnerships
Banning Strategic Plan Goals--ADMINISTRATION
NOTE: These are recommended priorities <u>not</u> addressed in the Policy Goals mentioned above
Tier 1 Recommended Priorities--Administration
1a. CAO--Develop a Written Claims and Litigation Mgmt. Strategy
1b. CAO--In Conjunction with HRD, Create a Program Around Performance Mgmt.
1c. PR--Complete Updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan
1d. HR--Develop Employee Transition Plan--For Impending Turnover
1e. Finance--Elevate the Utility Billing Function in Finance
1f. Finance--Address the Software Issues (and IT Support) That Is Behind the Current Billing Crisis
1g. Finance--Aggressively Recruit and Staff Finance--Accounting With Perm. Staff
1h. Finance--Develop System for Monitoring and Managing Cash Flow
1i. Fin./PW--After Completing UB Review (see Priority #1 above) Roll Out New Utility Billing System

9-Dec-25	Policy	Administrative
Banning Strategic Plan Goals	Goal	Goal
Achieve BEU Fiscal Solvency and Sustainability	X-1	X-1
Complete Edison's Wholesale Distribution Access Tariff Agreement		X
In Conjunction with Finance, Purchase and Roll Out a New Utility Billing System		X-2
As the Utility Becomes Solvent, Ramp Up Capital Needs		X
Public Works--Water and Wastewater Utility		
Complete Wastewater Treatment Plan & Recycled Water Upgrades	X-2	X-1
Hexavalent Chromium Compliance Plan Implementation		X-1
Develop and Implement Water Conservation Program		X
Update Integrated Master Plan (IMP) and Evaluation Water/WW Financial Rate Structure	X-1	X-1
Replacement of Small Diameter Pipelines and New Potable Wells		X
Public Works--Building Maintenance		
Complete a Facility Condition Assessment		X
Address Deferred Maintenance issues		X
Evaluate Adding More Capacity For Road Maintenance		X
Public Works--Engineering		
Update Engineering Standards and Specifications	X	X
Seek Greater GIS Integration with Asset Management Software (AMS)		x
Help in Implementing Newer Stormwater Requirements		X
Public Works--Street Maintenance		
Develop Formal Preventative Maintenance Plan	X-2	X-2
Develop a Pavement Management Plan and Policies	X-1	X-1
Seek Additional Funding	X	
Move Landscape Services to Contractors		X
Parks and Recreation		
Complete An Updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan		X-2
Fund the Master Plan	X	

EXHIBIT A
Banning Strategic Plan Goals--POLICY GOALS
Tier 2 Recommended Priorities--Administration
2a. CAO--Collaborate with HRD on Outreach to our Insurance JPAs
2b.CAO--In Coordination with HRD, Develop and Implement Leave Mgmt. Program
2c.Finance--With CAO, Restructure Vendor Onboarding to Speed the Process
2d. PW--Hexavalent Chromium Compliance Plan Implementation
Tier 3 Recommended Priorities--Administration
3a.Finance--Data Cleansing and Migration Strategy
3b.Finance--Consider Changes to the IT Manager Reporting Relationship
3c.Finance--Convene an Interdepartmental Team & Develop a More Responsive Purchasing Process for Emergencies
3d. Police--Develop a Community Outreach Program
3e.PW--Complete Edison's Wholesale Distribution Access Tariff Agreement
3f. PW--As BEU Becomes Solvent, Ramp Up Capital Needs
3g. PW--Develop and Implement Water Conservation Program
3h. PW--Replacement of Small Diameter Pipelines and New Potable Wells
3i. PW--Complete a Facility Condition Assessment
3j. PW--Address Deferred Maintenance issues
3k. PW--Evaluate Adding More Capacity For Road Maintenance
3l. PW--Seek Greater GIS Integration with Asset Management Software (AMS)
3m. PW--Help in Implementing Newer Stormwater Requirements
3n. PW--Move Landscape Services to Contractors
3o. PR--Development of Career Paths
3p. CD--Explore and Implement Surge Capacity

9-Dec-25	Policy	Administrative
Banning Strategic Plan Goals	Goal	Goal
Development of Career Paths		X
Enhance School Partnerships	X	X
Community and Economic Development		
Streamline Permitting, Business Licensing and Customer Service System	X-1	X-2
Enhance Staffing Capacity, Stability and Institutional Knowledge Retention	1	X-1
Explore and Implement Surge Capacity		X
Inventory and Then Activate Underutilized Land in Downtown	X-2	X
Council 11/25 Votes--Control Totals	38	42

EXHIBIT A
Banning Strategic Plan Goals--POLICY GOALS



CITY OF BANNING TRANSMITTAL MEMO

ATTACHMENT 1

TO: Banning City Council

FROM: Bob Deis, Senior Consultant, SSYW, LLP

MEETING DATE: November 25, 2025

SUBJECT: Preparation Materials for City Council Workshop—Development of Banning’s Strategic Plan “Banning 2030—Designing our Future TODAY”

RECOMMENDATION:

Participate in an all-day City Council Workshop to develop Banning’s 5-Year Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

What Are We Doing and Why?

As you may recall, I was originally hired by the Council to “conduct and complete an organizational assessment of the City’s culture, management processes and overall capacity in meeting City Council goals”. The Council was also told that I would provide “a report with observations and recommendations that will improve the performance in the above areas all with the purpose of furthering the Council’s vision for the City”. The attached report and planned workshop follow through on that commitment.

For quite a while, there was a request in the City Council Agendas “Section 10—Items for Future Agendas” calling for a Long-Range Strategic Plan. Coincidentally, I informally proposed to the City Council to do just that, develop a Strategic Plan. Your Council informally concurred. This is the best approach for the City moving forward given the myriad issues that were becoming apparent, and to satisfy the spirit and intent of my engagement.

Attached are the necessary components of Banning’s Strategic Plan. It requires the City Council to be thoroughly involved in examining this material; discuss its relevance; share your ideas; and then, adopt a road map (Strategic Goals) for Banning’s next 5 years. I’m proposing you call it Banning 2030—Designing our Future TODAY!

Given the breadth of information, the sheer number of issues waiting for some action and the various decisions to be made; I'm asking for an all-day Workshop to include the Council and City executives. Obviously, this would also be an open meeting subject to attendance by the public.

My Observations Upon My Arrival

Upon interviewing departments heads and City Council members, some themes became evident upon my arrival at the City.

Department Heads: given there were three new Council members, and after watching Council meetings, many wondered where the City was heading. The Council pulled various consent items and had a lot of questions about staff work in your formal Council meetings twice a month. This suggested change was afoot, but what kind of change?

City Council: some members felt there were questionable and possible inappropriate things going on in the organization. Some saw great potential in their City, and they also saw things they didn't like. This is very common. Sometimes it comes from being new, observing things that were disconcerting, a lack of a robust onboarding program and probably feeling a little like being on "the outside looking in".

My Observations: most of my thoughts have been shared with the City Council. As a relatively new team, the Council is working its way through the typical "5 Stages of Group Development". You were operating between the "Forming" and "Storming" phases, the typical beginning phases of group dynamics with diverse viewpoints. However, this has been gradually changing.

The goal of any fledgling group is to develop and effectuate a plan that gets it to the higher phases of teamwork like, "Norming"—a higher degree of group cohesion and "Performing"—where it is most productive with genuine problem solving by the group. Interpersonal relationships become more interdependent at this later stage.

I believe the Council is now working its way into the higher "Norming" phase. The discussion, development and execution of this Strategic Plan will steer the Council and the Banning executive team to the "Performing" level.

Again, I also noticed there was little onboarding provided to new Council members. This would typically come from the City Manager. You had reasons for pursuing a spot on the City Council. New Council members typically want to achieve certain things, but I saw no discussion or avenues provided to you as a segue or map to pursue your interests. The Strategic Plan does just that.

Up to now, the primary opportunity for Council influence is the formal Council Meetings. However, these are largely transactional or "downstream" in nature. The inevitable result is a new Council spends more time pulling and discussing items that staff might think is

routine in nature. However, staff sometimes doesn't recognize there is a certain context missing in some Council Agenda Items, i.e., decisions made before this Council sat as a governing body. Thus, it is only natural that decision makers want to get the back story of items brought to them and they want to share their take on things. That is what decision-makers do!

It is important to realize, the City Council has not been provided an in-depth and organized look of the entire City organization with an annual budget that exceeds \$100 million. Yet, you were elected to be the Board of Directors of this same \$100 million corporation. Again, this Plan and related Workshop should provide that in-depth look.

As a result of the above observations, I recommended that City department heads, the City Manager and Council jointly work together towards a new Banning Strategic Plan. The Council informally supported this idea. Coincidentally, this initiative was specifically requested by Council member Miller months ago.

This is a powerful government "lever" that should be available to a high-performing Council. And it will provide the road map away from the past onto a new Banning "brand". And if the City sticks to it, the improvements will feed on each other until one will not recognize from whence, we came. Success does indeed breed more success. Things become easier. High-performing City executives stick around. Everyone will seem to be on the same team (both the Council and staff).

A Strategic Plan is a good communication device. It clarifies where the City is heading and why. It communicates so much to employees, management, residents, and other public agencies. And the Council gets a more in-depth look at your City organization which can be a tool in pursuing the very things that motivated you to run for Council.

What I Learned After Completing This Phase of Work—Key Takeaways

The sheer number of substantial issues that this Plan suggests you deal with now, didn't happen overnight or under this Council's watch. They gradually stacked up like the approaching planes at LAX. Many of these took years to develop without the appropriate management controls. We cannot undo the past, but the primary control this Council and staff have is deciding what we do going forward.

There are four departments or program areas that are severely distressed or need immediate attention and rise to the top for immediate action. This includes the Finance (Accounting and Utility Billing), Human Resources/Risk Management, Police, and Information Technology areas.

Finance suffered through a mass exodus of staff that resulted in very little accounting work being completed for the entire FY 24-25. And there was almost no one left to catch up on this substantial data gap. Furthermore, the Utility Billing (UB) program received very limited support by management staff in Finance. This is part of the reason for the

current UB tardiness, the very program responsible for billing and collecting over half of the City's total revenues. Luckily, the Interim City Manager stepped in to help in the UB crisis, but it requires more work.

Human Resources/Risk Management HR/RM has been under-resourced for some time. As a result, it is not providing the type of strategic resource to advise and guide City management in various areas, such as employee performance management. This is indirectly related to the substantial staff turnover, employees on leave and rather large claims. Furthermore, the RM program and Fund is the second (after the Electrical Utility) most fiscally impaired program in the City. The annual program costs have doubled (now \$7 million) over five years and the RM Fund has the second lowest Fund Balance (estimated to range from negative \$10 to \$14 million). There has been little investment in acquiring the skills to manage such a program.

The Police Department has been the source for substantial employment claims, various employees on leave and a huge vacancy rate (at this writing it was hovering around 30 percent). This puts tremendous stress on its workforce and can be the source for discontent in the department. By the Chief's own admission, there needs to be work done to improve that department's culture.

Finally, the Information Technology (IT) program within Finance is modestly resourced with a focus on maintaining the (IT) infrastructure and some software troubleshooting aid for departments. However, it is not resourced for guiding departmental software purchases and rollout of those new systems. This is decentralized and subject to strengths and weaknesses of departmental staff. And failure in this area can be detrimental to the City as evidenced by the Utility Billing crises.

A best IT management practice is to centralize the purchasing and roll out of new IT systems. This is a full-time job that requires a specialized skill set. We cannot repeat the Utility Billing scenario again. And you will note numerous references in the Plan for the need to eventually replace IT systems throughout the City.

As you know, the City has responded on various fronts to address these fragile situations. The City has hired two Retiree Annuitants that are experts with the City's finances and systems. The Council agreed to contract with LSL as a strike team to get the accounting current. The City Manager is in the process of hiring an HR Director and some permanent management staff for Finance. However, much more work is required to fix the challenges in these areas.

Strategic Plan—What is it?

Simply said, a Strategic Plan is a list of Banning Strategic Goals that are prioritized and expected to be completed or substantially started over the next five years. The Plan also provides the reason for these Goals. The Goals are an outcome from discussing the City organization's Strengths and Weaknesses and the emerging Opportunities and Threats

(SWOTs). The first two variables (Strengths and Weaknesses) are internally focused, while the latter two (Opportunities and Threats) are primarily external (outside the department or City organization).

Most public agencies will say they have a Strategic Plan, or they do basic goal setting. However, most of these agencies don't follow through on their plans. All too often, the plans gather dust in a file cabinet. One missing link for these agencies is a phase 2 of their Strategic Plan and that's the Implementation Phase (IP). They likely skipped this. The IP takes the Council Strategic Goals and develops a more detailed actionable plan with more clarity on what the Goals mean and how they'll be accomplished by staff.

What Are Strategic Goals?

Strategic Plans are not a list of dreams that never get accomplished. Instead, they are grounded with the current capacity of the organization to achieve goals and then there is an environmental scan of factors that might help or hinder the City in pursuing the City's goals. This Plan is a clear-eyed view where the City is going, why and how to get there.

Some of these Strategic Goals are policy related while others are more administrative in nature. The Council decides which policy goals they wish to pursue (through your City Manager) over the next 5 years. And the City Manager works through the department heads to pursue administrative goals within the organization. The former goals will be part of the City Manager's performance management plans, and the later, administrative goals will be part of the department head performance plans.

Besides being an effective tool in getting better and avoiding crises in the future, the Plan provides capacity to take advantage of opportunities. It makes things better in the community. It also communicates to Banning residents what the Council has inherited and what you are doing about it.

City Council Strategic Planning Workshop

I propose that the City Council conduct an all-day Workshop that will lead to Banning's Strategic Plan, a five-year plan that sets the overall direction of the City. The Workshop should go as follows:

1. Public Comment (since it's a public meeting)
2. Introduction to the Strategic Planning Process
3. Council Develops/Updates the Banning Vision and Mission
4. Presentations and Discussion of Departmental SWOTs
5. Council Discusses and Decides on Strategic Goals
6. Workshop Wrap-up

A final version of Banning's Strategic Plan will be reviewed and approved at a formal Council Meeting.

The Implementation Phase

Again, this is the step that is not followed by most cities. The City Manager will be directed to develop a SP—Implementation Phase. The City Manager will propose more detailed Project Charters (1-2 pages) for each Strategic Policy Goal that includes: steps and milestones leading to completion of each Goal; what outcomes will determine goal completion; timelines; who is assigned the project lead role; necessary resources for goal attainment, etc.

This overall Implementation Phase will be discussed and approved at a formal Council Meeting. The City Manager will then report out every two months for the first six-months. After that, the City Manager will report every six-months at a formal Council meeting on progress and expected next steps.

Keeping the Strategic Plan Relevant and Successful

Once the ink begins to dry on the new Strategic Plan there will be various interests that will be asking the Council to pursue some new initiative which will compete for scarce resources. The Council should assess the new initiative through the prism of your Strategic Plan. In other words, does the new idea reach a priority that is higher than what is in the Plan now? What gets dropped off from the Plan to accommodate this new initiative?

The City should do a Strategic Plan Review at roughly the half-way point (2-2.5 years) to check in and see if priorities should be changed or new things added. This Plan check-in is like the City's Mid-Cycle Budget Review. After the first year of your 2-year budget, you reflect what occurred the first year, and then make budget adjustments to create a more accurate second year budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment 1—Banning 2030--Designing the Future TODAY!



Banning 2030

Designing the Future TODAY!

Strategic Plan Workshop
November 25, 2025



FOREWORD

The City of Banning is at an inflection point. With the addition of three new council members last winter, the City Council is essentially a “new” governing body. With that newness comes a new set of opinions and experiences and a certain zeal to make things better.

This is the perfect time to set the direction and priorities for the entire City. This Council is fast approaching its one-year anniversary as a team. Thus, the newer members have a year’s worth of interacting with the City organization and their community. They have more informed opinions about the City organization and how everyone might move forward in unison to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

A Strategic Plan is a powerful tool to do just that! It is structured to be first, self-reflective, where departments discuss their current Strengths and Weaknesses. And next, they look externally and list the future Opportunities and Threats. Taken together, the strengths and opportunities are variables that can make things better for serving their mission. The other two variables are barriers to mission success, and they may threaten the entire organization or impact the greater community. We are calling these four important variables, the SWOTs.

The next step is: what is it that we do with this information? The Council will discuss and decide what priority (policy) issues they wish to tackle. These are articulated in terms of Goals. To assist the Council to weigh through this huge volume of information, the departments offered up possible goals, in priority order. However, these are suggestions, and the Council ultimately picks policy priorities.

There are many goals to address weaknesses or threats that do not reach the level of “policy”. However, they are extremely important to the City’s future. These variables will be addressed as performance goals between the City Manager and department heads.

After the Council approves the Strategic Plan and “Policy” Goals of the City, the City Manager will provide an Implementation Phase. This Phase includes more detailed information on how and when the CM might effectuate those policy goals.

Taken together, the Strategic Goals and Implementation Phase will be Banning’s Strategic Plan—**Banning 2030, Designing our Future TODAY!**



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CITY OF BANNING'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOTs)

This section reflects departmental views on their own Strengths and Weaknesses. They were also asked: what do they see as (primarily external) emerging Opportunities and Threats?

Strengths and Weaknesses

Healthy organizations should be confident enough to practice some self-reflection. There is no sense in tackling strategic goals without recognizing the strengths and limitations in achieving them. To skip this looking inward step has the effect of converting goals and expected outcomes to just dreams, that may or may-not occur. We need to better position ourselves to adequately meet the future and do it now. Skipping this step also means to give up control and lessen expectations.

Opportunities and Threats

The delineation of (future) opportunities and threats is equivalent to turning on the “high beams” in your car as you head down a windy road at night. This allows time to better plan your moves before coming onto the threat. It helps avoid the need to drop everything and handle a crisis that is in your lap. However, since we just turned on the “high beams” for the first time, we find many Threats are here and need addressing now.

What sets Banning apart from many cities is the sheer volume of substantial problems or crises that are in your lap at the same time.

The myriad crises that you'll be reading about are attributable to a few key factors. One is the obvious, there is no clear and robust strategic planning going on currently. To do this requires some self-awareness and looking into the future. The City has completed so called strategic plans in the past but there was limited follow through (i.e., missing an Implementation Phase). Also, it appears there was limited self-reflection on the overall capacity of the City organization, and its capacity to tackle strategic goals. Finally, it was readily apparent that there was inadequate awareness and management controls emanating from the City Manager's Office to guide the organization in a coordinated way.



The underlying themes of this Plan include addressing the observations mentioned above. Unfortunately, the choices for everyone (Council and City Management) now, are more difficult and numerous than other cities.

Given the overall tenure of this City Council, it did not cause the challenges mentioned in this report, rather they inherited them. However, they should be proud in sponsoring this effort and articulating plans to make the organization better. With this effort, the overall Banning community will be improving as well.

This is not just about fixing today's problems. It is also about putting things in place for generations.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

At the end of each City office, department, or division, you will note Possible Goals in suggested priority order. And once you read the entire document you will note the sheer number of goals. This reflects the large number of issues that need to be addressed. And to not address them, your list of weaknesses and threats will only get longer or more acute.

These Goals can be broken into two categories, Goals that are matters of policy and Goals that are administrative in nature. In other words, the Policy Goals are within the typical purview of the City Council. The other Goals are within the City Management purview.

One could try to break these matters out into two reports, Council vs Management. However, the interplay between these two categories is so apparent, we decided to provide one report or plan. This provides the most comprehensive picture of the City organization and the emerging issues in the Banning community that ultimately must be addressed by the same organization.

To assist the reader, we attempted to highlight which Strategic Plan goals are “policy” related and the rest, administrative related.



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE (CMO)

SWOTs

Given this Office manages and supports the entire City, some of these CMO SWOTs cover City-wide issues that are not listed in the departmental discussions even though they may be implementors. However, it's the City Manager (CM) that is responsible for the “heavy lifting” and personally addressing them for the City Council. Some initiatives require the gravitas of the CM position to be successful. However, some of these SWOTs do indeed singularly reside in the City Manager's Office.

Strengths

Familiarity with Banning—The recently appointed Interim City Manager comes after many years within the City organization managing the largest City department with a diverse array of programs. This appointment provides stability in the position while the City completes the recruitment for the permanent City Manager

Apparent Support by the Council—The employment agreement for the incumbent was approved 5-0 suggesting a certain level of unanimity, a degree of stability and support during a large transition in staff and Council members. Council made a commitment to the Interim City Manager to regularly meet with him on a one-on-one basis to communicate ongoing issues and to be kept up to speed on priority projects. Council continues to meet this commitment.

The City Council is Functioning As a Team— As of late, the Council is working well together to recruit for and select a permanent CM. By designating the term “permanent” to the CM position, it will continue providing the stability initiated by the Interim CM, which is a necessary component for success of this Strategic Plan. The Council's sustained level of teamwork provides the foundation for the City Manager to address the numerous challenges discussed in this plan.

Weaknesses

Staff Turnover and Vacancies—There has been substantial turnover in the executive and mid-management ranks in the City with almost no transition plans; thus, losing institutional memory. This creates substantial risk and problems in continuing services and programs. One example is in the Finance and accounting area.

Inherited Corporate Culture Could Improve—It is apparent upon reading the departmental SWOTs the City lacked a certain level of management controls and oversight to ensure the diverse departments are moving in the same, predictable, and mutually



supportive direction. There was a certain level of independence, that without a proper balance of controls from this office, created avoidable problems. And because of this implied independence, there is a limited sense of urgency within some parts of the organization.

A Plethora of Crises That Require Immediate Action—Very few public agencies are addressing at the same time, the number of crises that can seriously harm the City’s very foundation to provide sustainable services and legitimacy in the eyes of the residents. Some examples include: the Utility Billing tardiness, the Electrical utility fund balance deficit, the General Fund, and Internal Service Funds (ISF) overall distressed fiscal positions, the lack of fiscal management data, the lack of interest in coming to City employment because of these challenges, the high reliance on temporary or outside help for mission critical roles, the loss of mid-management capability to step in to help during trying times, etc.

Expenditures Require Revenues—In parts of the City budget (e.g., the General Fund, Electrical Utility, ISFs, etc.) there simply are not enough revenues to cover ongoing expenses. And due to poor past fiscal management practices, this was not brought to the fore with the City Council and others in years past. This has and will require hard choices to correct (e.g., large electrical rate increases over time, possible budget reductions, requesting more resources from residents, etc.). This adds stress to an organization that is currently trying to adopt to new healthy practices.

City Manager’s Office Limited Capacity—Given all the issues and Strategic Plan initiatives that the Council will want to pursue, and the plethora of administrative goals; the City Manager will have difficulty staying focused on these priorities. And when you add the need for changing the culture of the City and to properly manage the day-to-day affairs of the City, it is clear the CM needs more help. The CM will need to evaluate various options to assist him, whether it be a Management Analyst or Assistant City Manager. This high workload will be there for at least the next five years. And with the recommended new reporting relationships for Human Resources and Information Technology (to the CMO); this suggests the need for a higher skill set to be added to the office.

Opportunities

An Experienced Team—The Council has formed an experienced team that has substantially restructured finances and repaired organizations in the past. The fiscal information needs to catch up so the Council, City management and its experienced team can develop a fiscal path forward.

Council Is Focused on the Future—The Council has demonstrated a willingness to take on the inherited challenges “head on” and develop this Strategic Plan as a guide to move in a coordinated way forward. This embodies the pivoting away from the transactional and the past, to the strategic long-term future of the City.



Economic Development is Knocking on the Door—There has been documented and serious interest by developers that can add jobs (to a City with a higher jobless rate) and revenues to help “right” the City fiscal ship.

Threats

Financial Vulnerabilities of the City—Given the poor past practices of management, the City’s financial position is distressed for the Electrical Utility, the General Fund, and the Internal Service Funds (ISFs). There is a clear plan to address the Electrical Utility impaired fiscal position that has been reviewed and approved by the Council. Once the Finance Department produces updated and current fiscal information, the path forward will provide for many difficult decisions. We have no choice but to balance future budgets. This may require difficult cuts or equally difficult resource measures that may require voter approval.

Management Instability—While the City is recruiting for new management capabilities, it is important to nurture a stable environment starting from staff, through this office up to the Council. If we fail, we will lose more key managers in the future.

Residential Does Not Pay for City Services—While Banning residents will disagree with this assertion given everyone is paying too many taxes; but the resources to fund the services that residents want simply does not come from those same residents. It requires a healthy business sector (industrial, commercial, and retail). There is a large segment of Banning that prefers more residential over some of the business alternatives; thus, there is a disconnect. This has to be reconciled or the City will be suffering to provide adequate services and balance their budgets.

The Economic Development Door May Close—If Banning repeatedly turns down the Economic Development opportunities that present themselves; the door may eventually close, and opportunities will become scarce for the foreseeable future. This will make your task of financing a robust and sustainability City for now and the next generation, very difficult, if not impossible. This will then cause more turnover in the management of your City. It could create a difficult distress loop (fiscal and operational) that will be very difficult to exit.

Homelessness—Homelessness presents a significant challenge to the City as it impacts public safety, community well-being, and economic vitality. The growing number of unhoused individuals places increased demand on public resources, including law enforcement and public works crews responsible for encampment cleanups and infrastructure maintenance. Visible homelessness can also deter private investment, affect property values, and generate community concern over health, sanitation, and the use of public spaces.



Grants Manager--Without the focused oversight of a dedicated Grants Manager there is a risk of grant noncompliance, missed reporting deadlines, and potential loss or repayment of awarded funds. Equally concerning is the lack of proactive pursuit of new grant opportunities—particularly given the City’s status as a Disadvantaged Community, which often strengthens eligibility and competitiveness for state and federal funding. You will note the many comments in various departmental SWOTs about needing to pursue grant opportunities.

No Animal Control and Shelter— The lack of dedicated animal control services in coordination with an operational shelter presents a significant threat to public health, safety, and community confidence. Without these resources, the City faces increased risks of uncontrolled stray animal populations, potential spread of disease, and heightened incidents of aggressive or dangerous animal behavior in public areas.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Strategic Plan Implementation—Upon review and approval of Banning’s Strategic Plan, the City Manager will take the top priority goals and develop more detailed plans (e.g., including steps, timelines, resources, etc.), that effectuates the goals. The Council will review and adopt this Implementation Phase. The City Manager will report out semi-annually.

The City Manager will also be responsible for high-priority administrative-related Goals, largely through the department heads.

Given the plethora of Goals within this Plan, the CM should assess and recommend to Council the necessary support needed to be successful (i.e., Administrative Analyst vs. Assistant City Manager).

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

In Conjunction with Finance, Develop and Implement Banning’s Workout Plan to Fiscal Sustainability (see Finance Goal 2)—This includes identifying and executing all the components necessary to bring the City’s financing into more of a sustainable state. This will likely require approaching the voters for more resources.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Develop a New Banning Organizational Culture—In collaboration with staff, the City Manager will lead an effort to define the “new” Banning organizational culture along with values, desired behaviors, a sense of a coordinated team, effective management controls, etc. The CM will then work with Human Resources to reinforce these norms via



performance management discussions, promotions, employee recognitions, new hires, training, etc.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

A New Economic Development (ED) Plan—After it becomes clear what is needed to fund a sustainable Banning, develop an Economic Development Plan that supports the General Fund Workout Plan—see Finance’s and CM Priority Goals 2. This will be a critical part in determining and financing Banning’s future. The two (ED and Banning’s fiscal future) are inextricably connected at the hip. This should also include an inventory of City-owned lands and consider how they might be better utilized to effectuate ED Plan goals.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 5 GOAL (policy)

Homelessness—After surveying how other cities have been successful on managing this challenge, develop Banning’s Homeless Program that includes important partners, such as Riverside County (social services and jail), churches and non-profits. The approach should include both local enforcement in coordination with committed regional resources.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 6 GOAL (policy)

Animal Control and Shelter— The City should take steps to reopen its existing animal shelter facility. At the same time, the City should collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to explore a long-term regional partnership. A regional approach would maximize resources, reduce costs, and provide consistent, high-quality animal control services for the community.



CITY ATTORNEY (SBEMP PERSPECTIVE)

SWOTs

Strengths

Seasoned Public-Agency Counsel With a Deep Bench of Skill Sets—SBEMP brings to the city one of the region’s largest and most effective labor & employment teams, insurance coverage, environmental, real estate business, and land use expertise. There is also extensive experience advising and litigating under Propositions 218 and 26 for agencies with water, sewer, and electric utilities, mirroring Banning’s portfolio.

Proven Track Record of Stabilizing Agencies Under Pressure—The firm has helped jurisdictions experiencing some of the exact challenges facing Banning to “reset” toward sustainable paths. It has the expertise and experience the city needs now and in the future for navigating complex, high-stakes challenges.

Land Use & Development—A Public Agency Perspective—the team regularly handles public-sector land use and development matters. Senior lawyers bring significant, practical know-how that the City can tap as initiatives arise.

Strategic Fit—SBEMP’s bandwidth aligns closely with Banning’s needs, which is a strength for the City as it embarks on this Strategic Plan’s initiatives.

Weaknesses

New Working Relationships are Still Forming—Recent personnel changes at the City, and SBEMP’s relative newness to Banning mean that team integration and institutional knowledge are still maturing.

Fragmented Litigation Defense—This is driven by the JPAs that handle City claims (workers’ compensation, general liability, and employment practices). Claims tendered to the two JPAs (PERMA and ERMA) are often assigned to defense firms not selected or vetted by the City Attorney’s office, producing a rotating cast of defenders and avoidable inefficiencies (lost time learning players/process). Furthermore, the philosophies and styles of these firms may not always be in the best interests of the City.

Opportunities

Lessons Learned—Convene a retrospective meeting with appropriate staff after the claim has run its course and report to the City Manager.



Reform (Insurance) Defense Counsel Selection—Counsel should be picked for quality, efficiency, and firms that are more in line with Banning’s needs, both short and long term. The City should work with the JPAs to pursue options in routing claims to firms that reflect City priorities.

Strengthen Public Understanding—As legal matters become public, we should communicate the City’s legal posture to stakeholders. This includes educating the Council, staff and community on risk management, use of revenue tools, and litigation philosophy.

Apply Specialized Experience as Initiatives Surface—As Banning advances capital, utilities, and land-use priorities, the firm’s expertise can streamline entitlement, revenue compliance, and defensibility.

Threats

History of Heavy Litigation and Costly Settlements Around Employment Claims—Banning’s past volume of cases and expensive outcomes increases exposure and sends the wrong message to other staff. Without a reset, this trend can persist as potential plaintiffs pursue more of the same.

Banning’s Employment Claim History Negatively Impacts Our Insurance—Our partnerships via JPAs greatly reduce our insurance costs; however, it requires fiscal partnerships with other public agencies (JPA members). If JPA members perceive they are continually subsidizing our inordinately high claims trends, they may opt to remove us from the JPA or reduce our insurance coverage. This would greatly increase financial exposure to us at the time that we least can handle it.

Fiscal pressure—Broader financial challenges heighten the stakes of every claim and settlement decision.

Adverse Signaling—Without a robust litigation strategy, plaintiffs and firms may calibrate expectations accordingly.

The Large Number of Employees Out on Leave—Besides a relatively high vacancy factor for City positions, there is a large list of employees out on leaves (i.e. Workers’ Compensation, Administrative and other disability leaves). This impairs our ability to provide services. It also increases our costs by backfilling their jobs with other employees (overtime). This should be closely managed with Human Resources, the City Attorney’s office and the City Manager consistent with Federal and State law. Some of this will require more engagement with the insurance JPAs.



Evolving State Mandates—Rapidly changing California housing, land use, and environmental mandates may strain cities and require continual legal adaptation, increasing workload unpredictability.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Collaborate with Human Resources Department on Outreach to our Insurance JPAs—We should engage our two insurance JPAs (PERMA and ERMA) and communicate to our partners what Banning will do differently to change the negative claims trends. This should also include addressing the selection of defense counsel.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL

Create a New Human Resources Program Around Performance Management—In conjunction with the City Attorney, Human Resources and Department Heads, develop a clearly understood program when Human Resources' input is requested for “upstream” departmental management decisions related to performance management. Also, the program should clarify when the City Attorney's Office input is required before making more “downstream” disciplinary decisions.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Implement a Coordinated Leave Management Program—In conjunction with Human Resources, City management and this office, create a formal reporting mechanism to track progress on leaves. Employees should be assisted in acquiring the medical assistance due them while on leave, but we need to ensure employees return to work when medically cleared. We should refine our Return-to-Work Policy to encourage employees to return to the workforce, when appropriate.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

Develop a Written Claims and Litigation Management Strategy—This Goal overlaps with the Priority 1 Goal mentioned above. This requires collaboration with Human Resources/Risk Management, the City Manager's Office, affected departments and the insurance JPAs. It communicates expectations, early case coordination, settlement discussions, trial preparation, review of Risk Management case reserves and lessons learned. An after-action report should be part of this to ensure our strategies are effective or we learn how we can improve for better outcomes.



HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) & RISK MANAGEMENT (RM)

SWOTs

Strengths

Flexibility & Helpfulness—We try to quickly and effectively adapt to changes that occur daily. We make sure we are available to employees when they have requests.

Strong Internal Relationships—We make sure to connect with staff whenever possible so they feel comfortable to ask questions and know we will assist when we can.

Ownership & Pride—We are a very driven team and take pride in our work. We take accountability for work and will make sure can provide a solution.

Weaknesses

Limited Capacity—There is a very high workload in the HR & RM programs. Employees can have very high expectations for addressing their immediate needs and disappointed when we simply cannot be as responsive. We currently struggle to meet certain deadlines and complete tasks.

Limited Strategic Influence—HR/RM is viewed by some as an administrative “pushing paper” function rather than a support or advisory resource. It is much easier to properly and jointly plan for performance, discipline, or staffing issues, rather than clean up the mistakes afterwards.

Technology Constraints—HR has a very dated Human Resource Information System (HRIS) system, so we must complete everything by paper. And RM keeps track of claims by an excel worksheet.

Who is Managing a Growing Risk Management Program—The City has historically outsourced major pieces of a robust Risk Management program to two JPAs (PERMA and ERMA); thus, the expertise in the City is limited in this area. The Risk Management program now is a \$6-\$7-million-dollar annual program that warrants an investment in better managing this program and these City resources. This will help in engaging the two JPAs and assessing their performance.

Opportunities

HR Technology—HR needs an employee platform, the ability to complete the onboarding process online and an online performance management system. RM needs a platform to



prevent and manage claims, employee leaves, manage safety programs and any other legal matters.

Culture Building—HR, in conjunction with employees and the City Manager first need to articulate what kind of culture they wish to have in their organization. Second, they need to develop a plan to achieve and reinforce it. Tools for culture building include, among others: an agreed list of employee values or behaviors that guide how they work together, hiring and promotion decisions, performance evaluations, training opportunities, etc. It can include restarting employee recognition receptions and the city newsletter. We need to also look at other employee engagement opportunities, focus on wellness and areas we can reward staff. RM needs to restart all city safety trainings and assist departments with specializes training sessions.

Policy Development—We need to finalize and finish our outdated Employee handbook and Administrative policies; then continue to revise policies as changes are needed.

Threats

Compliance Risks—We are behind on current legal requirements which requires updating certain policies.

Dependence on Key Individuals—When we are down a person in our small team, the work does not stop, and other team members are left to take over that workload.

Talent Retention Challenges—Since the department has a high-workload we are unable to focus on other positive areas, (i.e., employee retention, career development, and employee satisfaction).

Risk Management Costs Have Doubled—In five years, our Risk Management operating expenses have increased from \$3.6 million to \$7.2 million. The source for some of this trend relates to employee actions or inactions. It also reflects the “hardening” of the insurance market. We need to develop a higher level of Human Resources and Risk Management skills and involvement in “upstream” personnel decisions and actions in departments to better prevent claims; improve the City culture and hold the Risk Management JPA accountable once a claim is tendered.

The Self-Insurance Fund fiscal position is greatly impaired—The Self-Insurance Fund is in the red by at least \$8 million (Unaudited FY 24 ACFR) and is budgeted to go further in the red by another 50% in FY 25 and FY 26 each respectively. Right now, there is no cash to fund this program. The overall fiscal management of the RM Fund has been retained in Finance while the budget management is in this department. Absent a structural change in how this program is managed and financed, the deficit will increase even more.



Substantial Employment Related Claims and Payouts—The City has made substantial payouts that sends the wrong message and is a difficult trend to break, notwithstanding the huge cost impacts.

Corporate Memory Goes Out the Door—There has been high turnover in the City and there is little transitional planning when this happens. This is more acute given Banning's relatively small size with limited redundancy. As a result, corporate memory around key processes, system or projects leave with them. At best, this creates inefficiencies and at worst, the City is at risk of dropping the ball and making substantial errors.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Fiscal Plan to Eliminate Massive RM Fund Deficits—In conjunction with Finance's work on cleaning up the books (Goal 2), develop a fiscal plan to turn the Risk Management program into a self-sustaining one and develop the capacity in this department to manage both the budget and the fiscal position of the Self-Insurance Fund.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL

Assessment of the Risk Management Program—Solicit proposals for a comprehensive assessment of the Risk Management program and implement its recommendations to better manage this \$7 million dollar/yr. program.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Create a New Human Resources Program Around Performance Management—In conjunction with the City Attorney, Human Resources and Department Heads, develop a clearly understood program for guiding departmental performance management decisions. Also, the program should clarify when Human Resources assistance is requested and when City Attorney's Office input is required before making more "downstream" disciplinary decisions.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL

Develop New City Organizational Culture—In conjunction with the new permanent City Manager, develop a comprehensive new organizational culture that furthers Council and City Manager priorities around good service, transparency, sustainability with the City, etc. This new city-wide culture needs to involve Human Resources (and possibly City Attorney) in difficult personnel decisions within departments.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 5 GOAL

Develop Employee Transition Plan—Develop a checklist or plan of duties to complete when an employee announces they are leaving. The check list should identify all key processes, projects or systems the employee was responsible for and provide for transference of adequate information and training to minimize the risk of mistakes and knowledge loss.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 6 GOAL

Purchase and Install New HRMS—In conjunction with IT plans for Finance, purchase a new HRMS system to reduce the need for manual processes and furthering other priorities e.g., timely and well-done performance reviews, etc.



FINANCE DEPARTMENT—ACCOUNTING

SWOTs

This section covers the general accounting, payroll, accounts payable and the overall fiscal management of the City.

Strengths

Experienced Temporary Help—The department currently has two highly experienced former Finance managers that are familiar with Banning and its Finance systems.

The Department Has Recently Engaged A Strike Team—Befitting of this emergency, the LSL LLP CPA firm has been engaged to provide an experienced team to bring the books current and assist in fixing the impaired Internal Service Funds (ISFs).

Weaknesses

It should be noted that this section of the department is in extreme distress with numerous vacancies, a general staff exodus, and a huge backlog in accounting for City operations.

Lack of Fiscal Information—It appears many basic accounting functions had been suspended for approximately a year. Thus, there is limited reliable data on the current financial position of the City. The current temporary staff are conducting basic monitoring of finances such as cash flow management and working diligently to catch up with this fiscal information void.

Poor Fiscal Management Practices—It appears the City has apparently had a difficult time in balancing the General Fund (GF) and Internal Service Fund (ISF) budgets in previous years. Thus, previous Councils approved budgets reflected operating deficits in the GF and ISFs. We do not see the typical staff warning and (Council) discussions about these deficits along with their long-term implications. And it appears this practice violated Council Budget Policy. This had the effect of eroding GF fund balances over time. These practices have also caused massive deficits in the ISFs that was not commonly understood in the City. Finally, it appears the City regularly had to make substantial budget adjustments during the 2-year budget cycle. This suggests more work is needed in developing the original budget.

Extreme Staffing Instability—Since the exodus of core staff, the department is being managed by very dedicated Retiree Annuitants that are subject to CalPERS limitations. Temporary staff have been used to fill some of the accounting function. The program is currently using a CPA firm to assist in the catching up of accounting duties. The City is



currently recruiting for permanent staff. However, the labor market in this area is very restricted for qualified applicants.

Gradual Bifurcation of Accounting Systems—The overall accounting system picture reflects a gradual bifurcation of systems around various program activities that are not integrated. Thus, monthly updates on City’s overall fiscal activities are labor intensive and takes too much time to produce meaningful information. It also makes the City vulnerable to one person thoroughly understanding the labyrinth of various subsidiary systems and how they affect the City’s books. And if that person leaves, the accounting support for the City comes to a screeching halt. This is exactly what happened at the City.

Cost Accounting Knowledge is Weak—Most cities have a commonly understood Indirect Cost Allocation Plan that is used to assist departments in understanding their direct and indirect (overhead) costs for providing services. This mathematical model is used to price City services and facilitate policy discussions on what customers are charged (e.g. user fees, etc.). Very few staff understand the Indirect Cost Allocation Plan and it appears various errors occurred in its latest versions.

Internal Service Funds (ISF) Are Not Being Professionally Managed—The ISFs have built up large Fund Balance deficits over time. This trend began in 2019 and has steadily worsened over time. The ISF program managers were not assigned the responsibilities of managing their overall ISF fiscal position. They were responsible for only controlling their annual expenditure budgets, but they were not asked nor given the tools to manage the revenues of their fund. This was kept in Finance and poorly managed. This will require a painful Workout Plan to get back into a positive position over time. This will greatly impact the General Fund.

Decentralized Management Practices—It appears the City has lacked basic management controls including Finance management without the requisite central controls via a strong and enabled Finance Director and an engaged City Manager. This is the primary reason (among others) for the Electrical Utility’s distressed fiscal position.

No Budget Document—The City does not have a readily accessible budget document that explains the City’s spending plans and assumptions to staff, Council, residents and outside interested parties. The City is also behind in completing an audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). This last fact sends warning signs to grantors, lenders and the bond markets.

Not Using All Financing Tools—The City is not actively using all the financing tools for services that other area cities are using in the area. One of the most substantial ones is the use of Community Facilities Districts (CFDs), which can be used to fund services and capital needs. There are a few CFDs required with some new development, but it is not widely used to fund, say public safety services.



Opportunities

Upgrade the Finance ERP System—Once the City’s staffing and fiscal processes have stabilized with permanent Finance management staff; the City should consider acquiring a newer version of the Finance ERP system that is integrated and has the appropriate modules to support other important responsibilities (e.g. Utility Billing, etc.). However, it is highly important that the City acquire skill sets to guide the purchasing decision and implementation phase—see discussion in the Information Technology section of this department.

City Has Convened a Team That Has Addressed Similar Challenges—There is a very high functioning team that has been convened by the City Council that, upon getting data on the City’s financial position, it can work with the Council to execute a plan to bring the City back into a sound and sustainable fiscal position.

Economic Development Interest—There have been developers showing a clear interest in investing in Banning’s future. This will be a very important piece of the “puzzle” to improve the City’s capacity to fund quality services that residents want and deserve.

Threats

Reliance on Temporary Staff—The City cannot continue to rely on retiree annuitants who are limited to 960 hours per fiscal year to conduct core financial management responsibilities. If the City does not catch up soon on its accounting duties; the City will have to carefully manage the transition of key management positions to yet other temporary staff. This affects the timely “true up” of the City’s books, the understanding of its fiscal position and it creates risk to the City’s overall management.

Cash Flow Needs Careful Management—Until the Electrical Utility moves into a positive financial position (rate increases are implemented), the Utility Billing is current, and the Financial Workout Plan for the General Fund and Internal Service Funds is developed and being implemented; the City’s overall cash position will be suboptimum. This becomes very acute when considering cash flow needs for Banning’s Capital Improvement Program. This will require careful management with regular reports to the City Manager and City Council.

Upcoming Budget Will Be Very Difficult—If the City doesn’t get a handle on its finances by this fall, the City management and Council will be entering a very difficult new budget cycle where they will not have the necessary fiscal information to compile, review and adopt a defensible budget (a new spending plan).

Difficult Labor Market—The one common observation between various executive recruitment firms is the lack of qualified public agency fiscal staff. The City will have to



repeat its recruitments until it gets a list of qualified candidates to choose from. This takes time.

The City Has a Robust Group of Municipal Utilities—With the rarest one being the Electrical Utility. Most cities do not have this utility. This is a potential strength and weakness, depending upon management capacity. The City will inevitably have to go to the bond market to seek financing of capital improvements for each respective utility. This process requires an enhanced level of transparency and review by outside agencies and firms. The City needs to demonstrate solid financial positions and good overall management practices over time before it enters this environment; otherwise it will be locked out and limited to other more expensive financing options.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (possibly policy)

Aggressively Recruit and Staff the Finance Department With Permanent Staff--This may require revisiting compensation to better compete in this impaired labor market. It may also require evaluating current recruitment methods to ensure we are reaching the best candidate pool. Extensive training on the Finance ERP is important, as part of the onboarding of new staff,

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL

Develop System For Monitoring and Managing Cash Flow—This should include estimating cash flow needs for operations and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in twelve-month increments. And due to the size of some capital projects, the long lead times, and reimbursement nature of outside funding; cash flow plans should be agreed upon for substantial projects (between Finance, Public Works and the City Manager).

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Finish Cleaning Up the Books By This Fall/Winter--Once the fiscal condition of the City is known, develop a 10-year fiscal forecast model (includes GF and ISFs) to fully understand the fiscal trends and where they are heading for Banning. The Council should then go through a structured discussion on difficult options to improve the long-term viability of Banning as a robust City providing the excellent services deserved by its residents. The prioritized Strategic Plan Goals (and related costs) should also be included in this forecast modeling.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

Review and Update the Fiscal Management Policies--The City needs clear guidelines on when and how the FY 26-27 and FY 27-28 budget will be developed and communicated to the Council and community. There needs to be clarity to the Council and the public exactly



what is the City's financial position; how it has changed and why; and how it might change with the future budget. There should always be a reconciliation between what the budget assumed vs. what actually happened via the presentation of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The budget process should begin around January/February to provide adequate time for everyone to provide input and fully understand what is in it. The operating budget should be well-coordinated with the Capital Budget. Additionally, the City Manager in conjunction with the Finance Director should clarify administrative policy that affirms responsibilities for fiscal management for the overall City via-a-vis the departments and funds. This should specifically cover the roles of the City Manager, Finance Director, and department heads.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 5 GOAL (policy)

Engage a Special Tax Consultant To Create CFD Program For Services--To develop a complete CFD program that would be used to create more resources to fund new service demands that come with new development.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 6 GOAL (policy)

Produce a Transparent and Understandable Spending Plan—This results in a commonly understood and accessible City Adopted Budget. This should be easily available to anyone that wishes to read it. The City Manager and Finance Director should jointly and explicitly affirm (in-writing annually) that the plan conforms with the policies completed as part of Goal 4.



FINANCE—INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

SWOTs

Strengths

Stable and Committed Staff—This small work unit has not suffered the turnover of others; thus, they retain institutional knowledge of the City’s IT systems, workflows, and operational nuances. They can translate how the technology serves the mission.

An Established IT Infrastructure—The City has built and maintained reliable (mainly) hardware systems that underpin critical services ensuring continuity, stability, and responsiveness to daily operations.

Commitment to Cybersecurity—This includes implementing layered defense, such as firewalls, endpoint protection, regular audits, and 24/7 monitoring.

Use of Cloud-Based Platforms—For email, document management, and remote access to operate more efficiently, securely, and flexibly. This forms a backbone that follows a modern, resilient computing environment.

Responsiveness to Service Requests—Quickly and effectively the IT team reacts to user reported problems. IT usually handles and/or responds to user issues within minutes.

Weaknesses

Aging Legacy (Finance) Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and (Utility Billing) Customer Information System (CIS) Software Applications In Use Across Multiple Departments—Older Legacy Systems are outdated software platforms or infrastructure that continue to support essential city operations, often because replacing them is costly, complex, or risky. In areas like Permitting, Finance, and Utility Billing, these systems may have been in place for over a decade and are deeply embedded in daily workflows. However, their age and limitations pose significant challenges.

- Legacy systems often lack modern features like mobile access, cloud integration, or real-time analytics
- They struggle to scale with growing population demands or evolving regulatory requirements.
- Customization is difficult, and adding new capabilities may require expensive workarounds.



Limited Budget for Modernization and Emerging Technologies—A constrained budget restricts an organization’s ability to upgrade aging infrastructure, adopt innovative tools, and satisfy user and resident expectations . In city governments, where funding must be balanced across essential services, IT often receives a small budget allocation, making strategic growth and transformation difficult. Some of this is due to the lack of understanding of the IT role in supporting mission critical functions. Some of this is due to the IT “voice” not being clear and strategic in the organizational discussions.

- Outdated hardware and software remain in use (e.g., Finance, Utility Billing, etc.), far beyond their intended lifecycle.
- Citizens experience slower response times, outdated interfaces, and limited online services (e.g., permitting and utility billing).
- Manual processes persist where automation could improve efficiency and transparency (e.g., Finance).
- Public trust may erode if technology fails to meet expectations.

Lack of City-wide IT Coordinated Effort—the City IT division operates with lean teams focused on technical operations—network maintenance, help desk support, and system administration. However, without a dedicated multi-year plan covering all IT-related needs, purchases and system implementations, even well-intentioned implementation efforts suffer due to poor coordination, missed deadlines, unclear accountability and unintended consequences. We have the “poster child” for this concern with the Utility Billing crisis. The unintended consequence was the harm it caused to the City’s overall cash flow position given it’s the source of funding for slightly more than half of the City’s budget. As to lack of accountability, very few understood who was ultimately responsible for this new system roll out.

This lack of coordinated efforts produces the following Weaknesses:

- Manual processes are used in some departments, reducing efficiency. Despite advances in digital tools and automation, many city departments continue to rely on manual workflows—such as paper forms, handwritten approvals, spreadsheet tracking, and physical filing systems. These outdated practices slow down operations, increase the risk of errors, and limit the ability to deliver timely, transparent services to residents. The recent Finance Director challenge of attempting simple bank reconciliations is partly due to this phenomenon.

Inconsistent Digital Literacy—Due largely to IT being a decentralized program, there is inconsistent digital literacy across departments. This slows adoption of new tools and modernization efforts. New system rollouts become fragmented and reduces the return on investments from technology.



- The purchasing of software becomes decentralized where independent decisions about which software to buy, often without centralized oversight from the IT division. While this can, on the surface, offer flexibility and responsiveness to department needs, it introduces several vulnerabilities and inefficiencies. New system implementation can be complex and create unintended problems without specialized skill sets (e.g. Utility Billing). Different teams may purchase similar software tools that perform overlapping functions. This leads to a fragmented IT environment with multiple platforms doing the same job (e.g., five different GIS management software across departments). There is increased complexity in integration, support, and training. Software may be acquired without proper vetting for security compliance, data protection standards, or vulnerability assessments. Shadow IT (unauthorized software use) becomes prevalent, exposing the organization to data breaches and compliance violations.

Opportunities

Federal and State Government Grant Programs—These are actively investing in digital transformation through grant programs that support smart city technologies (e.g., traffic sensors, public Wi-Fi, smart lighting); broadband expansion in underserved communities; and infrastructure upgrades for digital equity and resilience.

Improving and Implementing Public-Facing Services—These are the digital touchpoints where residents interact with the City (e.g. online bill pay, permitting applications and service requests). When these services are outdated, manual, or fragmented, they frustrate users and burden staff. Modernizing them with intuitive, secure, and integrated platforms transforms the citizen’s experience and streamlines internal operations.

- **Implementing Service Request Platforms**—More and more cities have implemented tools for residents to report issues (e.g., potholes, graffiti, broken streetlights) via web or mobile apps. This would be an enhanced version of what we have on the City’s webpage. They often use geolocation and photo uploads to improve accuracy. This can be integrated with work order systems for faster resolution and updates. However, any initiative like this needs to be properly resourced with response capability in Public Works, Police, and other affected departments.

Enhance GIS and Data Dashboards—To support planning, utilities, and emergency response by enabling the city to map, analyze, and visualize spatial data for everything from zoning and infrastructure to population density and environmental hazards. When paired with interactive dashboards, this data becomes a powerful decision-making tool across all departments.



Partnering With Local Schools or Colleges—For internships and workforce development that helps build a local and sustainable workforce. These partnerships create a mutually beneficial ecosystem where students gain hands-on experience, and cities benefit from fresh perspectives, expanded capacity, and long-term recruitment advantages.

Threats

Cybersecurity Risks Including Phishing, Ransomware, and Data Breaches—These threats are no longer hypothetical; they’re persistent, sophisticated, and increasingly targeted. Municipal governments, utilities, and public institutions are prime targets due to the sensitive data they hold and often have limited security budgets. The three most prevalent and damaging threats are:

Phishing Attacks—which involve deceptive emails, texts, or websites designed to trick users into revealing sensitive information.

Ransomware—is a type of malware that encrypts files or systems, rendering them unusable until a ransom is paid—often in cryptocurrency.

Data Breaches—are when unauthorized individuals gain access to confidential information either through hacking, insider threats, or system vulnerabilities.

Regulatory Compliance Pressures (e.g., California Consumer Privacy Act, public records laws)—These laws have myriad requirements including:

- Strict handling of personal data, including transparency about data collection and the right for individuals to opt out.
- Ensure that any personal data we collect, such as utility billing, permit applications, or emergency contact info—is securely stored and properly disclosed.
- Possibly new rules that may require annual cybersecurity audits and risk assessments for entities processing sensitive personal data.
- Mandates that digital communications and records be preserved and made accessible upon request.
- Websites and digital services must comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards, ensuring that all residents—including those with disabilities—can access city services online.

Natural disasters (e.g., wildfires, earthquakes)—Which can disrupt IT infrastructure, especially in our City which sits in a high-risk zone for both wildfires and earthquakes.



Public Expectations for Fast, Mobile-friendly Digital Services—This may simply outpace our capacity to address given the various weaknesses previously mentioned. Some of the reasons for this threat are: 1) our previously mentioned reliance on old Legacy Systems; 2) our limited IT staffing to develop, test and maintain mobile-friendly applications; 3) reliance on contracting for these skills may be cost prohibitive; 4) cyber security risks may enhance commensurate with expanding digital services; and 5) the digital divide may become more acute without proper support.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Develop and Implement a Banning IT Strategic Plan—With full participation by City departments, this plan should independently assess and address the following:

- The development of an IT Governance Structure that involves all City departments (e.g., Executive Steering and Working Committees).
- Topics to evaluate in the Plan include the previous mentioned SWOTS (e.g., centralized vs decentralized project management and purchases, etc.).
- A clear recommendation for a 5-year path to move forward.
- A 5-year prioritized and recommended spending plan like a Citywide CIP.
- A recommended IT staffing model that supports the Strategic Plan's recommendations.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Make Cybersecurity a Core Priority of the Organization—Cybersecurity isn't just an IT concern anymore; it's a public safety, financial, and reputational imperative for the organization. With rising threats targeting small municipalities, continuing to prioritize cybersecurity is essential.

- Regularly update systems and patch vulnerabilities.
- Conduct annual penetration tests and tabletop exercises simulating ransomware or data breach scenarios.
- Train Every Employee
- Offer mandatory cybersecurity training for all staff, including phishing simulations and password hygiene.
- Make cybersecurity part of onboarding and annual performance reviews.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Data Cleansing & Migration Strategy—Our systems contain outdated or duplicate records that should be cleaned or purged. We need to “clean data” before migrating to avoid compounding issues in the new system.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL

In Coordination with Goal 1, Consider Changes to the IT Manager Reporting Relationship—Upon reviewing the various IT needs of every City department in this Plan and the mission-critical nature of it; the current IT reporting relationship should be evaluated and possibly changed for the future. The most likely landing spot would be the City Manager’s Office. This could have the added benefit of freeing up the Finance Director to focus on the core mission of the department, the overall financial management of the City.



FINANCE—PURCHASING

SWOTs

Strengths

Cost Control Expertise—Skilled in negotiating pricing and securing bulk or long-term discounts.

Supplier Relationships—Strong, long-term relationships with reliable suppliers.

Process Efficiency—Established procurement processes and technology (e.g., e-procurement tools).

Market Intelligence—Good understanding of market trends, pricing, and availability.

Compliance Awareness—Familiar with regulatory requirements, contracts, and procurement policies.

Transparent Vendor Access—Vendors register and receive bidding notifications centrally via OpenGov. This encourages broader competition and accessibility in the bidding process.

Weaknesses

Limited Flexibility—Rigid procurement processes can delay urgent purchases. Parts of the purchasing/contracting process is roughly the same no matter the urgency, size, and risk of the transaction. Emergency purchases are skeptically viewed by Purchasing and delays can create major risks to the City.

Training & Capacity Building—Limited departmental understanding of procurement practices affecting the overall purchasing performance and timing with substantial risk. Ironically, there is limited procurement depth within the Purchasing staff itself. When the Purchasing Manager is gone, key points of the process come to a halt until her return. This may be a function of the excess process complexity or lack of staff training and development.

Overdependence on Key Suppliers—Some risk if one or two suppliers dominate the supply chain.

Data Silos—Lack of real-time data or poor analytics leading to suboptimal purchasing decisions. This unknowingly increases organizational weaknesses (decentralized IT system



acquisitions) discussed in the Finance—Information Technology section of this department.

Vendor Onboarding is Cumbersome and Delaying Starting of Services—Once the decision has been made to utilize a particular vendor, it takes too long for contract execution commencement of services and/or approval for paying vendors.

Opportunities

Digital Transformation—Potential increased automation, continued use of AI tools, and data analytics can improve decision-making and efficiency.

Sustainable Sourcing—Growing focus on ethical and environmentally friendly procurement practices.

Supplier Development—Partnering with suppliers to innovate or improve supply chain resilience.

Strategic Procurement—Moving from tactical buying to value-driven, strategic procurement (e.g., e-bonding of vendors, vendor outreach to Chamber of Commerce, hosting workshops with underrepresented businesses, etc.)

Regional Sourcing—Cooperative agency outreach (e.g., buying coops).

Threats

Supply Chain Disruptions—Geopolitical issues, pandemics, tariffs or natural disasters affecting supply.

Price Volatility—Fluctuations in raw material or commodity prices.

Regulatory Changes—New laws or tariffs/trade policies increasing compliance costs.

Cybersecurity Risks—Potential for data breaches in procurement software or supplier networks.

Political Interference—Localized purchasing may be more vulnerable to political pressure or bias in vendor selection.

Public Scrutiny—Perception of inefficiency, waste, or favoritism must be managed and can damage public trust.

Rigidity of the Procurement Process—The City may be losing viable vendors that don't or can't participate in an extensive, confusing, and rigid process.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL

Work with the City Attorney and Restructure Vendor Onboarding—Once the purchasing decision has been made, continue improving the timeliness of the process that produces an executed contract and appropriate other approvals (e.g., insurance) that support timely onboarding and payment of vendor invoices.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL

Convene an Interdepartmental Team and Develop a More Responsive Purchasing Process for Emergencies—Expand the section of the Purchasing Rules regarding Emergency Purchases—more clearly articulating a process that is more responsive to the risks inherent in not addressing said emergency (e.g., employee safety, risk for more damage to City assets, enhanced liability to the City, etc.).

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Convene an Interdepartmental Team and Develop a Purchasing and Contracting Process That is More Accessible to Smaller Local Vendors or Just Smaller Projects—The rather long and extensive City (mandated) contract along with the Purchasing processes should be revisited for smaller and low risk projects and vendors (including some local vendors). This may produce a short-form contract under certain circumstances.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL

Independent Review of Purchasing Processes—This review would seek ways to strike a better balance between centralized control over every aspect of purchasing vs. the speed and flexibility of purchasing goods and services. This is one of the most repeated comments by departments. The review should consider City Manager expenditure authority, bidding thresholds, etc.



FINANCE—UTILITY BILLING (UB)

SWOTs

It should be noted that the Utility Billing program is one of the most impactful programs in and to the City of Banning. However, it has not received the attention commensurate with this fact. This has become abundantly clear during the failed purchase and execution of a new UB system. It is this program that is solely responsible for collecting over half of the City's revenues. Due to this crisis, the City's overall cash flow has been dramatically affected as well.

Strengths

Customer Focused—Customer service representatives are very focused on customer satisfaction and providing accurate and timely billing.

Dedicated Employees—During the ongoing billing crisis, staff has worked weekends and holidays to get caught up on billing. This dedication has been admirable and has kept the billing function afloat.

Ownership & Pride—Staff is very proud of the work they do in billing and take mistakes personally. They also keep the customers best interest at heart and strive to provide the highest bill accuracy as possible.

Ability to Work in Stressful Conditions—Able to continue working at a high level while still having to deal with angry customers and the stress of getting caught up on delayed billing.

Weakness

Limited Managerial Capacity—With losses of Finance managerial staff, FD, Deputy FD, and Billing Supervisor – the City is working with limited managerial capacity on the utility billing side. While recent line-staff hiring and (re-assigned) long-term existing staff are working to get bills out, there is limited managerial leadership in addressing the bigger and underlying systems issues. In this vacuum, the focus is entirely on day-to-day operations rather than also developing a systems strategy to accelerate and refine the billing process.

There is Limited Onsite Managerial Authority—To work with utility managers, on equal stature, to pursue unique approaches to an equally unique crisis. While the Utility Billing Manager has done a commendable job in this area, there needs to be the Deputy FD presence to seek ways to balance the sometimes-competing needs of overall City fiscal



management with the operating needs of the utilities. The Billing Specialists should have a relevant voice in this program.

Lack of Interface Between Meter Reading Software and Billing Software—The shift from NaviLine billing software to another software program and back to NaviLine has resulted in problematic interfaces between the meter reading and billing software. While this was a known systems issue at the beginning of the 2025 calendar year, these issues are only now being addressed. This lack of interface has caused significant additional work for the billing department and has exacerbated the current billing issues.

No Billing Software Experts on City Staff—Utility billing staff members are well versed in the day-to-day uses on the NaviLine software; however, there is no current staff who deeply understands the software capabilities.

Lack of IT expertise on Billing Software—Typically with a major software system there is an IT staff member who develops software expertise to address the administrative and technical issues that arise with any major software program. Additionally, there is typically an IT staffer (a best practice) that guides purchasing and implementation of new important software applications. There is no dedicated IT support to fulfill this role, which is a major reason for the utility billing debacle when rolling out a new software application. The current version of the utility billing software is several generations behind and will soon no longer be supported by the manufacturer, which will further create issues in managing the software.

Opportunities

Move to Cloud-Based Software Platform—NaviLine offers a cloud-based billing system that allows the City to keep current on software updates and does not require upgrades to City hardware as updates occur. More staff training on system capabilities would be helpful.

Onboard Full Finance Staff—The City is actively attempting to fill current Finance staff vacancies. Once fully staffed, the Finance department should be able to better support the utility billing function and proactively address potential billing issues before they become critical. However, the Finance Director needs to elevate this expectation when onboarding new management staff.

Fix Meter Reading Software Issues—An outside vendor is needed to develop an application programming interface (API) between the metering reading software and the billing software. This alone will address many of the issues that have been plaguing the billing department.

Policy Development—Billing, collection, and shutoff policies could be updated and more clear. Clear policies and procedures for utility billing should be documented and updated



on a regular basis. Such policies will allow for better succession planning as well as clear articulation of the billing processes, late notices, cut-off rules for non-payment, and resources for low-income customers. This should lead to consistent actions and messages to the community and help repair the current lack of faith by customers.

Threats

Loss of Credibility with Customers—The billing issues have created significant and ongoing issues with customers on the City’s inability to produce and bill an accurate utility bill. Based on calls and emails to the City, phone complaints, and social media posts the City has suffered a significant loss of confidence from City utility bill payers. This could have lasting effects on the City’s relationship with its residents. This is important as the City needs to pursue options for improving the City’s long term fiscal picture.

Continued View of Utility Billing as Ancillary Activity—The City has not put the staffing or resources in place to ensure high service levels in utility billing. The billing department is responsible for bringing in approximately \$58 million of revenue (FY22-23 budget) out of a total City-wide revenue budget of \$104 million. The lack of investment in the utility billing process and staffing has created a significant financial challenge for the City. The cost of the billing department is funded by the utility customers and, therefore, should not be a low priority for the City.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Address The Software Issues (and IT Staff Support) That Led to the Current Billing Crisis—The recent billing crisis is a function of attempts at software changes without a best practice such as having an IT led comprehensive and integrated approach. Currently the utility billing function is using an old version of the NaviLine Customer Information System (CIS) and is not fully connected to the Electric meter reading software. Additionally, there are no staff members that are expert on the CIS software or integration issues with the meter-reading software. The City should upgrade to the latest CIS version and create APIs between the meter-reading and CIS programs, when the City is ready with the proper resources. This would include training of staff.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL

Do In-Depth Evaluation of the City’s Utility Billing Function and Tools—The utility billing function is responsible for billing and collecting over half of the City’s budget each year. When not working properly the lack of utility collections threatens the entire City’s financial health. The current utility billing system, tools, and policies and procedures should be independently evaluated and updated to ensure continuous billing and revenue collection on behalf of the utilities.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Elevate the Utility Billing Function Within Finance—The utility billing function needs to be elevated within the Finance department. This elevation should include a management-level staff member overseeing the billing function to elevate billing issues up to the Finance Director and beyond when issues occur. Furthermore, the billing function should include all aspects of the billing process, including meter-reading and software integration.



POLICE DEPARTMENT

SWOTs

Strengths

A Dedicated Team—The Police Department has a core of dedicated and hardworking staff that display teamwork/collaboration, the ability to adapt under resource constraints, commitment to community relationships, and positive interpersonal relationships in many areas of the department.

Timely Response to Calls For Service—The Department classifies calls for service into (5) primary categories: Priority 1 is for imminent and severe threat to life; Priority 2 is for urgent calls, the severe threat to life has passed but suspects may be still around; Priorities 3-5 is for lower priority calls but impact resident's sense of community service. Given our staffing challenges, these response times are relatively good but could improve with more filled positions.

- The data say that our response to these calls are as follows: Priority 1 calls— 07:14, Priority 2 calls are 12:04 minutes and Priority 3-5 calls are 17:50 minutes.

Response times can be affected by our level of vacant positions, speed of employee recruitments, and our ability to retain staff. By focusing on department weaknesses listed below, we can greatly improve response times and overall service provided to the community.

Weaknesses

Need For An Improved Departmental Culture—While the core of the department is positive, due to the turnover of management and other visible past personnel decisions, some perceive we can improve in the following areas: accountability, fairness, communication, equity in treatment, consistent and strong leadership, and clear departmental direction. This backdrop makes it more difficult for recruitment, retention, and promotional processes.

Turnover, Vacancies and Morale Issues—Vacancies, recruitment challenges and morale create a difficult “stew” to overcome in providing proactive Community Policing to address crime in general and reinforce Banning residents sense of safety.

Crime Rates—According to the FBI's 2019 Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data, the national average violent crime rate was 366.7 per 100,000 inhabitants, and the property crime rate was 2,109.9 per 100,000 inhabitants. In comparison, California's average violent



crime rate was 499.5 per 100,000 inhabitants, and the property crime rate was 2,138.9 per 100,000 inhabitants. For the City of Banning, the violent crime rate is 5.0 per 1,000 residents and the property crime rate is 17.0 per 1,000 residents. To properly compare these data, we have created the following conversion table:

	<i>National</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Banning</i>
Violent Crime	3.7/1,000	5.0/1,000	5.0/1,000
Property Crime	21.1/1,000	21.4/1,000	17.0/1,000

Comparing Banning's reported incidents to these rates, Banning appears in line with the California average, but higher (as is the state) than the National average by 35%. It is difficult to compare Property Crime rates given Banning's reporting requirements are dissimilar to California and the nation. One can argue whether Banning's crime rates are a Strength or Weakness.

Opportunities

Community Outreach—Some of the department staff is motivated to engage the community in an expanded and more meaningful way through a stronger social media presence. This would involve enhancing information sharing and two-way staff/public engagement. Other efforts like open houses, “Coffee with the Chief” events, can be implemented to further community engagement. This is all part of lessening the real or perceived barrier between the residents and their Police staff.

Threats

Homelessness and Gangs—Both of these issues impact quality of life and eventually crime levels in Banning. Our largest category of Calls-for-Service is related to the homelessness issue. This activity, which is more acute than other cities, takes our staff away from other Community Policing activities in Banning. With respect to gangs, while it hasn't been a substantial problem, if not managed, it can metastasize into a crime problem.

Extremely Large Insurance Payouts for Employment Claims—The department has been the source for very large payouts related to employment claims. This sends the wrong message to the City workforce and especially Police staff. This is a trend that is hard to stop, and it threatens the overall finances of the City.

Employee Turnover—The department has been wrestling with a high vacancy factor due to turnover—newer employees leaving for other Police departments shortly after arriving in Banning. And the other cause may be attributable to the negative departmental culture mentioned above. At this writing, the department had 7 vacancies plus 5 staff out on leave (e.g. medical leave). This equates to a roughly 30% vacancy factor, an extreme situation. It



should be noted the department is close to filling many of these vacancies. This has the secondary impact of causing stress on the current employees coming to work (overtime) and having to backfill for the vacancies. It also pushes the department into taking risks by taking on transfers from other Police departments to fill positions.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

In Conjunction With the City Manager and Human Resources, Develop and Implement a Proactive Outreach and Hiring Program--To eliminate vacancies and stay at full strength. Consider hiring bonuses and other strategies to compete in a very competitive labor market and retain the new hires. While the department is in process of more hiring, it'll be just a matter of time where past trends play out and newer hires will leave for other departments. The City needs to address this systemic threat with new "out of the box" ideas.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Provide One-Time Resources For A Departmental Assessment--To independently evaluate the Police Department's culture, and develop and implement strategies (for the Chief) to provide consistent expectations on performance and norms from the Chief and down throughout the department. In conjunction with Human Resources and the City Attorney's Office, this assessment should also review past and current claims to see if there are lessons learned for the department and City management.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Provide One-Time Resources to Develop a Community Outreach Program--Using best practices in social media, open houses, "Coffee with the Chief" etc.



PUBLIC WORKS—ELECTRICAL UTILITY

SWOTs

Strengths

Stable Workforce and Responsiveness to Customers—The Banning Electric Utility (BEU) workforce has many long-term City employees with the necessary experience in understanding the complexities of a city-owned electric system. Many of the staff are City residents and take pride in their service to the community with quick response to outages (e.g., 5-10 min.) response during normal business hours and maximum of 45 min. after hours.

Rare Local Control for Electricity—Local control and governance of the utility by the Banning City Council allows for the electric utility to have enhanced regulatory oversight locally instead of with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

Near-term Capacity for Growth—Banning’s electric capacity can accommodate the City’s future development and growth in the short-term (up to the next 4-5 years), given known development patterns to date. This speeds any planned development projects in the City avoiding potential stalling or delays from a more arms-length utility.

Growing Climate Friendly Power—BEU continues to exceed the State’s renewable energy requirements with 62% of its resource portfolio recognized as renewable energy and another 2% recognized as greenhouse gas free energy. BEU will continue to conduct its electric operations while trying not to add harm to the environment.

High Reliability During Fires—BEU does not implement any Public Safety Power Shutoff to our residents and businesses during high wind scenarios, thus maintaining a better System Reliability index (SAIFI and SAIDI) rating than others.

Competitive Rates—Even with a pending electric rate increases, BEU rates will still be below Southern California Edison (SCE).

Weaknesses

Utility Billing Impacts—The City’s Utility Billing crisis affects everyone at electric operations because to the residents and businesses, they are not able to distinguish which department is responsible for City utility billing functions. This has hurt BEU’s reputation.

Internal Business Processes Need Balance—Sometimes the City’s internal business processes compete with efficiency needs of the utility. BEU understands the need to find the balance between the higher accountability standards of government with the efficiency



needs of service delivery. However, in emergency cases the balance needs to swing towards efficiency and risk management. For example, a recent emergency purchase that was needed immediately for safety/risk management purposes was delayed by Purchasing for 2 weeks.

Negative Impacts from Poor BEU Fiscal Management—Due to poor fiscal management in BEU, the near-term financial stability of utility and fiscal sustainability has required the Council to increase its rates in a more aggressive manner than has been conducted in the past. This too impacts BEU’s reputation.

BEU’s Poor Credit Rating—BEU’s credit bond rating of B+ has led to consecutive downgrades by bond rating agencies leading to “junk” bond status. This may cause additional risks for the utility and its power supply counterparties willing to conduct business with BEU or higher interest rates for future purchases.

Outdated Tools—BEU equipment, vehicles, technology and software systems are becoming dated and less efficient.

BEU Staff’s Poor Fiscal Management—The lack of knowledge and clarity on the financial aspects of the utility, including the sharing of responsibility of and partnership with our Finance Department is improving but more work is needed.

Need to Improve the BEU Culture—Communication and teamwork both internally and externally beyond the department has room for improvement. The BEU management and staff have acknowledged this, recognizing more work needs to be done to improve the departmental culture.

Opportunities

Investment in Software and People Who Use it—Software technology advancement (both Enterprise and Utility Customer Information Systems) could lead to significant modern improvements in day-to-day operations, improve internal process and customer service to both internal staff and external residents and businesses.

Cannabis—Embracing cannabis cultivation in the City’s industrial areas could provide significant revenue opportunities for BEU/City. An example of a legally operating cultivation business could provide upwards of \$250,000 of electric revenue annually.

Interstate 10 As an Asset—Given the City’s proximity to Interstate 10 and the potential for electrical semi-truck development; Banning is well positioned for a truck-stop electrification site. This could be a substantial revenue source for the BEU.



Threats

Not Losing Site of Capital Needs—As a result of BEU’s near term financial instability, deferred capital expenditures of operations and maintenance of existing infrastructure could lead to reliability and wildfire mitigation improvement delays. This must be properly monitored.

The Inefficient Utility Billing System—The City’s Utility Billing function has greatly reduced customer confidence in their work product (i.e., monthly bills in the eyes of our customers due to the unsuccessful roll out of a new system). To mitigate the damage and resolve the problem, the City fell back to the old system, which is manually intensive, extremely inefficient and late. This is affecting our image with customers.

Limited Consensus of Direction—Due to management staff turnover at all levels citywide and BEU, there needs to be more consensus for next steps and direction for the City and the utility.

Long-Term Planning for Electricity—While Banning’s electric capacity can accommodate the City’s expected 4–5-year growth, future expansion capacity beyond that will be reliant on BEU’s Edison Transmission Interconnection and its Wholesale Distribution Access Tariff. This important agreement will provide for the additional capacity needed for development projects beyond the 5-year increment.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Achieve BEU Fiscal Solvency And Sustainability—The Council has seen the plan to achieve this goal which requires adherence to rate increases over the next five years. However, this also requires collaboration with the City Manager, BEU management and Finance to monitor expenditures, revenues, the Utility Billing function, and fiscal strategies to fund capital needs. There should be an annual review comparing actual results to the original financial model, and adjustment should be made accordingly. After a few years, BEU may consider seeking a bond rating upgrade and entering the bond market to fund capital needs and related bond rating upgrade.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Complete Edison’s Wholesale Distribution Access Tariff agreement—This should take (1-2 years) which increases BEU’s capacity for long-term growth and its related load.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

In Conjunction with IT, Purchase and Roll Out a New Utility Billing system—This requires the identification and purchase of a new Finance Enterprise Resource Planning



(ERP) system for the entire City including a Utility Billing module (see the Finance—IT discussion on this).

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

As The Utility Becomes Solvent, Ramp Up Capital Needs—Upon reaching utility solvency, ramp up deferred Electric capital needs, striking the balance between use of cash and borrowing.



PW—WATER UTILITY

SWOTs

The Water and Wastewater utilities are managed by one division within Public Works. Thus, proposed goals are addressed after the discussion of the two utilities' SWOTs.

Strengths

Locally Controlled High-Quality Groundwater Supply—This reduces reliance on imported water and provides stability for long-term planning. We have a large amount of stored water available for contingencies (the Beaumont Basin).

Skilled Operators—We have a strong team operating and maintaining approximately 165 miles of water pipelines, 21 wells, 8 reservoirs, and strong regulatory compliance history.

Ability to Move Water—It's an important role moving water from one pressure zone to another via gravity in fire flow and operational emergencies and electrical outages.

Our Own Strategic Plan—We are following our 2018 Integrated Master Plan (IMP) covering Water, Wastewater and Recycled Water systems which provides a strategic road map for City's utilities infrastructure planning and upgrades through year 2040.

Good Working Regional Relationships—With regional partners (e.g., San Geronio Pass Water Agency (SGPWA), a State Water Contractor), leading to imported water storage; and the neighboring Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District (BCVWD) leading to robust delivery system via interagency water "interconnects".

Robust Fire Hydrant Flushing Program—This involves exercising and flushing over 2,000 fire hydrants annually for water quality and fire protection purposes.

Weaknesses

Aging Infrastructure—Resulting in approximately 5-6 leaks per month requiring water service lateral and/or water-main repairs, service disruption, higher maintenance costs, and the need for small diameter pipeline replacements to increase fire flow for public safety. Approximately 21 miles (roughly 13 percent of the system) of small diameter pipelines exists ranging between 2 and 4-inches.

Increasing Reliance on Imported Water—As City nears buildout, there will be an increasing exposure to supply uncertainties, drought restrictions, and cost volatility.



City's Limited Ability to Raise Rates—Given our disadvantaged community with a limited capacity to handle high water rates and the myriad infrastructure and operational needs, there is a funding ceiling challenge for the utility.

Outdated Supervisory Controls and Data Acquisition (SCADA)—This is a computerized industrial control system that monitors and controls processes across the entire water system with a lack of asset management technology in system monitoring.

Limited Technical and Administrative Staff—This includes engineers, analysts, conservation specialist and distribution/production staff members. It reduces the division's ability to manage projects, implement conservation programs, and plan and implement future regulatory or operational demands. This is due to budget constraints and inability to attract and keep qualified staff.

Upcoming Regulatory Requirements—Such as Hexavalent Chromium treatment will require advanced operator training and licensing (which currently cannot be obtained by current staff unless the City implements a “pilot-plant” project), exposing a gap in staff readiness that needs to be addressed.

Opportunities

Grants Are Available—To pursue for offsetting capital project costs to the City and accelerate necessary infrastructure upgrades without overburdening rate payers. The City's Disadvantage Community status often provides an advantage for receiving grant funds.

Implement Leak Detection Technology—Avoiding leaks improves water conservation, minimizes unscheduled service disruptions, and reduces non-revenue water losses.

Promote Water Conservation—Through public education to potentially reduce long-term water demand trends and build stronger community support for the division's programs.

Threats

Newer and Stricter Regulatory Mandates—Such as lowering maximum contaminant levels (e.g., Chromium-6) will require costly treatment upgrades, placing financial and operational burden on the utility.

Future Reliance on Imported Water—Due to the City growing, it may expose the City to potential water shortages, state-wide drought restrictions, and higher costs.

Drought Conditions and Mandated Conservation—May limit water availability, which in turn could reduce consumption and impact revenue stability.



Deferred CIP Implementation—This tends to increase long-term costs and service disruptions, as infrastructure deficiencies worsen, and repairs become more frequent.



PW—WASTEWATER UTILITY

SWOTs

Strengths

Effective Compliance With the Current Wastewater Discharge Permit Requirements—

This is occurring through our planning and implementing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) upgrades to address future regulatory requirements. This includes impending regional water quality control board's (RWQCB) discharge limits of Nitrogen. We also need to generate Title 22 compliant tertiary treated recycled water for landscape and irrigation purposes to offset demand from the potable water system and diversify City's water resources portfolio. These are to be addressed with the planned completion of a new WWTP.

Strong In-House Ability—To inspect, clean and maintain sewer lift stations and sewer-mains; reduce the risk of sanitary sewer overflows; rapid response to issues; and we can do it cheaper than outsourcing.

Good Working Relationships with Regional Partners—Enhances the City's ability to address wastewater challenges, leverage resources.

Weaknesses

Approaching Wastewater Treatment Capacity Limits—This is due to the increased rate of development and the existing treatment plant's inability to remove higher amounts of nitrogen; hence the need for WWTP upgrades.

Lack of Peak Wet-Weather Wastewater Storage—Due to inflow and infiltration from stormwater into sewer collection system; hence the need for an equalization basin (storage basin).

Aging Infrastructure—And the need for replacements and/or rehabilitation of manholes, pipelines and pumps which if left unaddressed, will lead to increased maintenance costs and risk of infrastructure failure.

Bottlenecks and Hydraulic Capacity Deficiencies—Within sewer-mains resulting in sanitary sewer overflows etc.

Opportunities

Grant Funding—Reflects opportunities to carry out recycled water and wastewater system improvements that enhance its reliability.



Prioritize and Implement Targeted Improvements—Within the wastewater system as identified in the Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP).

Explore the Possibility of Producing/Reusing Biogas—Which is often produced by the wastewater treatment processes to reduce operational costs and improve sustainability.

Use Recycled Water—Convert Sun Lakes Country Club’s golf course and additional parks to utilize recycled water soon (upon completion of the WWTP upgrades). This improves our conservation rates for potable water.

WWTP Has Capacity to Add Solar Power—There is land available to add solar power to assist in meeting the needs of the facility operations.

Threats

Ever Increasing Environmental Regulations—Affecting wastewater treatment and discharge requirements which could require costly plant upgrades (like the current planned WWTP upgrades in progress for Nitrogen removal) and place additional financial strain on the ratepayers.

Risk of Sewer Overflows—And associated liabilities due to aging system and bottlenecks, which can be reduced by implementing capital improvements and best practices.

High Cost of Treatment Facility Upgrades—Requiring careful planning and potential rate adjustments.

WATER & WASTEWATER

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Complete Wastewater Treatment Plant Recycled Water Upgrades—Complete design and construction of the new WWTP to meet nitrogen discharge limits and produce tertiary recycled water for irrigation, reducing potable demand and diversifying water supplies.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Hexavalent Chromium Compliance Plan Implementation—Implement a Hexavalent Chromium (Cr6) Compliance Plan to meet the new 10 ppb MCL, using treatment and non-treatment measures, with full compliance anticipated by 2032.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Develop and Implement Water Conservation Program— Develop and implement a State-mandated Water Conservation Program to ensure reliable supplies, comply with mandates, and promote efficiency through outreach, incentives, and usage monitoring.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

Update Integrated Master Plan (IMP) and Evaluate Water/Wastewater Financial Rate Structure—Update the 2018 Infrastructure Master Plan (IMP) for Water, Wastewater, and Recycled Water systems to guide future utility upgrades, and review the current rate structure to ensure it supports the IMP's capital needs. Any discussion of rates should clearly include capital and operating needs over multiple years, the possible use of debt financing vs. use of cash, expected annual fund liquidity, etc. There should be an annual review that compares yearly actuals vs. the underlying finance model assumptions.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 5 GOAL

Replacement of Small Diameter Pipelines and New Potable Wells—Replace aging, small-diameter, leak-prone watermain to reduce water loss, minimize costly repairs, and improve fire flow capacity, and develop new potable wells to enhance system reliability and accommodate future development.



PW—BUILDING MAINTENANCE

SWOTs

Strengths

Familiarity With Assets—The team has strong familiarity with city-owned assets and experience in providing services them. They are aware of the problem areas within facilities and the services or vendors necessary to complete repairs.

Responsiveness—The team is responsive to City facility needs and requests from city staff when issues are brought up and can effectively triage requests.

Cooperating Ethos—There is strong interdepartmental and internal staff cooperation if additional resources are needed to complete specific tasks.

Weaknesses

Small Team—With only 2 staff members, the team is limited in completing: medium to large scale projects (i.e., roofing maintenance, facia board replacement; facility painting and flooring upgrades, etc.); clearing backlogs of internal requests; and necessary recurring maintenance items.

Deferred Upgrades and Maintenance—Staffing and funding constraints have led to deferred upgrades to HVAC, roofing, and ADA compliance.

Robust Preventative Maintenance Plans Don't Exist—Facility Condition Assessments and preventative maintenance plans have not been established for all recurring tasks completed by the department. This would assist in advance scheduling of resources and conducting necessary work to extend the lifespan of City assets.

Rigid Insurance Requirements—Local hiring of vendors is challenging due to our large insurance requirements. When vendors are necessary, they are often further from the City and at higher costs.

Opportunities

Energy Retrofits Can Save Costs—Energy efficiency retrofits throughout the City with LED replacements, HVAC maintenance, or window tinting, replacement, or upgrades can reduce our energy costs.

Using Technology Can Help—Being able to fully integrate a Facility Condition Assessment into an asset management software to centralize requests, track useful life,



plan for capital projects, and evaluate if repair or replacement would be more cost effective.

Scaling Up with Contractors—The team can leverage contractor support for medium to large capital projects where inhouse staff is unable to complete due to lack of staff, required skill sets, or where specialized equipment is required.

Threats

Rising Costs for Materials and Services—The rising cost of construction materials and vendor labor costs are limiting factors to our ability to complete routine maintenance projects.

Age of Some Facilities—Due to the age of some facilities (i.e., Fleet Building, PW Building) and equipment, unexpected facility failures can disrupt essential city operations as there is limited space to accommodate displaced staff in other locations.

Increased Regulations—Increasing regulatory and safety compliance requirements take staff time away from maintenance tasks to comply with mandatory trainings, certifications, and reporting.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL

Complete a Facility Condition Assessment—Integrate the data into the asset management software and develop Preventative Maintenance Plans to guide future budgeting decisions and prolong useful lives of our facilities.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Address Deferred Maintenance Issues—Focus projects to clear deferred maintenance of key facility systems (e.g. HVAC, roofing, electrical).

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Evaluate Adding More Capacity For Routine Maintenance—Evaluate hiring a 3rd Maintenance Worker vs. adding contracting capacity to address more routine maintenance inhouse and maintain a low backlog of work.



PW—ENGINEERING

SWOTs

The Engineering program provides land development, stormwater and NPDES programs, traffic management, capital project development and implementation, regulatory compliance, and inspection services on City and private projects.

Strengths

Strong Multi-Disciplinary Team—The engineering staff has a broad base of knowledge and are flexible, multi-disciplined, and accountable staff that provides the required services for capital projects, stormwater programs, land development processing and review, inspections, and contract management. The department has received positive remarks from the public, developers, and other city staff for providing a high level of customer service and responsiveness.

The Capital Project Team Delivers—Projects for the community, including the Highway Safety Improvement Program roadway improvement project, water line upgrades, annual pavement maintenance programs, and the Sun Lakes Boulevard extension project.

Software Application Support—Engineering staff leads the effort in software implementation and training (internal and external) for: the SmartGov permitting system that benefits the Community Development Department; also, Cartegraph (roadway) Asset Management, and assistance with ERSI ArcGIS (geographic information system) implementation. This can be expanded to Parks and other programs.

Success in Acquiring Outside Funding—The public works team has been very successful in receiving grant awards and delivering projects. These efforts include the Downtown Revitalization Plan grant, Active Transportation Plan grant, over \$30 million in grants for Sun Lakes Boulevard, \$7 million in grants for the Hargrave Grade Separation Design project, HSIP safety improvement projects, and nearly \$1 million in quick build grants to implement portions of the active transportation plan.

Weaknesses

Challenges in Obtaining Full Staffing Levels—Besides filling vacancies, we also need more authorized engineers and project management staff. These challenges lead to a lack of redundancy and our ability to perpetuate standard operating procedures in an absence or vacancy that arises in the department.



The Regulatory Environment is Always Changing—Staying current on the changing regulations is a challenging goal. The regulatory environments across all services (stormwater, air quality, pavement standards, etc.) with limited staff takes away time to perform other essential community services.

Purchasing and Vendor Management—With limited in-house staff, the division relies on vendors for minor projects like traffic calming, traffic signal timing, curb/ramp improvements, ADA compliance matter, and required reporting. Purchasing challenges and management of vendors reduces the benefit of contracting to complement limited staffing capacity.

Opportunities

Leveraging Other Resources—Continuing efforts to find grant and regional partnership opportunities to implement ‘Smart City’ features like centrally connected and managed traffic signals.

Coordinating With Partners—Greater coordination with adjacent jurisdictions (e.g., Morongo Tribe, Beaumont, etc.) and regional partners (e.g., WRCOG, County and State), to bring regional projects and initiatives that will benefit Banning.

More Outreach—Expanding our communication to the public on various projects and our day-to-day services will improve support and understanding of our efforts.

Enhanced GIS Usage—The integration of spatial data with asset management systems provides more data driven capital programming and decisions. This helps in infrastructure planning, project reviews and developing financing options for growth.

Threats

Changing Regulations—The changing regulatory environment makes it challenging to articulate our priorities for State and Federal funding. Current state priorities for funding are not for roadway expansions. Previous federal guidance was aligned with this, which has recently changed with the new administration. When planning multi-year projects, the uncertainty presents challenges to ultimate constructability and viability of individual projects.

Long-term Population Growth Requires Proper Planning—If all potential residential development projects come to fruition, the City’s population will double, thus, new demands will be put on the department to deliver traffic safety, capital enhancements, and roadway improvements projects.



Mandated Stormwater Requirements—The state’s requirements will require greater staff and financial resources over time that are currently unfunded by the Federal, State or County governments.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Update Engineering Standards and Specifications For Development—Create an engineering manual to provide guidance to developers, plan checkers, and City staff. This will provide expectations and surety for planning purposes. It will also mitigate the potential for issues due to possible staff turnover.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL

Seek Greater GIS integration with Asset Management Software (AMS)—Seek vendor assistance with integrating our GIS data with our AMS tools. This enhances our decision making.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Help in Implementing Newer Stormwater Requirements—The pending update for the regional stormwater program will require additional staff, vendors, and funding to ensure compliance. Minimal funding will be provided through the County Assessment District, requiring local money to backfill the remaining need.



PW—STREET MAINTENANCE

SWOTs

Strengths

Small but Mighty—While very small (3 laborers, 1 supervisor and 1 work release crew supervisor), the maintenance team is experienced, cohesive, and knowledgeable about City assets and infrastructure.

Experienced With Multiple Tasks—The team can perform cold-patch pothole repairs, replace and install signage, implement roadway striping, curb painting, and minor concrete curb and sidewalk repair.

Will to Pitch In—The team is willing to take on other tasks as assigned, such as homeless camp cleanup, assist landscape maintenance vendors, graffiti removal, assist with the Building Maintenance team, trash cleanup, bulky item day assistance, and more.

Weaknesses

Aging Equipment—The department utilizes aging equipment and vehicles that will require replacement to remain effective. They also lack specialized equipment to expand on services, such as hot-mix asphalt repair, larger concrete replacement jobs, and larger roadway striping tasks.

Limited Resources—The program is funded exclusively from Gas Tax receipts without General Fund support, leading to a deferred maintenance backlog due to limited funding and lack of staffing. This leads to staff reacting to issues, rather than addressing preventative needs.

Lack of Preventative Maintenance (PM) Plans—PM plans have not been established for all recurring tasks completed by the department. This would assist in advance scheduling of resources and/or acquiring contracted help on occasion. This lack of guidance results in staff being pulled from scheduled tasks to the hot item of the moment. This is inefficient and creates more of a backlog for preventative maintenance.

Opportunities

Seek Regional, State and Federal monies—Outside funding should be acquired for roadway improvements to lengthen the life of pavements and enhance striping through the implementation of a pavement management system.



Work with Regional Transportation Partners (WRCOG, RCTC, etc.)—To integrate smart city technology (e.g., traffic sensors, signal coordination) to improve performance of our road system.

Acquire New Equipment and Training—To expand service ability to apply striping and implement traffic calming and active transportation signage and striping.

Move Landscape Services—To contractors thus allowing more time to maintain the right of way assets.

Threats

Rising Cost of Asphalt and Construction Materials—Is a limiting factor on the ability to complete routine maintenance projects.

Extreme Heat and Other Events like Hurricane Hillary—Leads to felled trees, damaged storm channels, and rapid occurrences of potholes and pavement damage.

Increased Traffic—From new and increasing development adds more stress to right of way assets and makes maintenance more difficult and inconvenient to the public.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL

Develop Formal Preventative Maintenance Plans—Complete preventative maintenance plans for all City owned street related assets and provide options to policy makers for funding. Adhere to the plans via regular scheduling of staff.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Develop a Pavement Management Plan and Policies—Complete a comprehensive inventory of roads along with their relative condition and expected life cycle e.g., Pavement Condition Indices. This would be communicated to Council along with options to fund differing performance levels or indices.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL (policy)

Seek Additional Funding—After completing the previous two goals, seek additional funding for improved performance and condition of City infrastructure, with improved cost-effectiveness of maintenance efforts. This may include more staffing, contracts, and reduced backlog for repairs.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

Move all Landscape Services to Contractors—This would improve the focus and effectiveness of our street maintenance crews.



PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

SWOTs

Strengths

Well Respected—The Banning Parks and Recreation Department is a well-respected part of the City that receives positive overall community support. From events, family recreation, youth sports, and our Senior Center, our programming offerings are well-run and well-received by the community.

Affordable Services—Banning is a disadvantaged community, and the department currently offers much of their programming at a very low price point, when compared to others.

Has a Far Reach to Many—The department offers both small and large events throughout the year at no cost. In FY 2025, over 14,000 total people were attendees at fourteen community events. Additionally, the City significantly supports the Annual Stagecoach Days event each year which has over 7,500 attendees.

Has Two Popular and Unique Amenities—The department has two unique facilities that enable amazing experiences for Banning, our Repplier Aquatic Center and Playhouse Bowl Amphitheater.

- The Aquatic Center has both a small and large water slides, not found in most public pools, as well as zero entry kids play area. The Aquatic Center had nearly 23,000 people through the door in FY 2025, including private rentals, swim lessons, classes, and open recreational swim.
- The Playhouse Bowl Amphitheater offers an outdoor amphitheater with nearly 2,000 available seats. The facility hosts the annual Playhouse Bowl Association concert series with between 6,000 and 8,000 annual attendees. The facility is also the site for movies in the park and numerous public and private events throughout each year.

Builds and Maintains Partnerships—The Department has developed and continues to have strong partnerships throughout the community. Some of these partnerships are with other agencies, non-profits, and community associations that enable the department to provide much-needed resources to our seniors. Some of our other partnerships include the Banning Unified School District, churches, and various city departments.

Senior Center—One of the great strengths of the Parks and Recreation Department is a Senior Center that operates Monday through Friday to provide connection for our seniors,



to one another and to the many available and needed resources both in the local and regional community. The Senior Center provided over 9,000 daily meals in FY 2025. The Senior Center offers daily and weekly classes and monthly and seasonal events throughout the year and has well over 10,000 seniors through the door each year.

Leveraging a Small Staff—The Parks and Recreation Department’s greatest strength may be a small group of dedicated, knowledgeable, passionate, and skilled staff who are flexible and able to adapt as necessary to execute in all settings.

Weaknesses

A High Reliance on Part-Time Staff—Creates very limited opportunity for growth with our large part-time staff and such a small contingent of full-time staff. This creates insufficient opportunities for staff advancement and growth. This results in instability and turnover with the part-time staff.

Some Under-served Youth—Although the department offers a significant number of programs and events for youth, families, and seniors, it has struggled to reach the teen and under-five demographic areas with minimal success in programming and event offerings.

Departmental Facilities Are Aging—The department has some of the standard parks and recreation amenities in its parks and facilities, but many of those facilities are aging and not designed ideally for best operational practices.

Inventory of Departmental Facilities is Inadequate—The city has a substantial shortage of available parks, facilities, and programming space for its current population when compared to the National Recreation and Park’s annual Parks metrics benchmark survey. The city currently has five baseball fields and only four lit fields. The current Little League program is at capacity without additional fields. The city does not have a soccer field and uses available turf space in several parks for its youth soccer league and youth association practices. We can use the School District facilities when available, but their space is limited, and their programs take priority on these fields.

Safety Concerns in Our Parks—With drug use, alcohol, and homelessness issues affecting normal user experiences; there are ongoing concerns with graffiti and vandalism and a perception of a lack of safety throughout our park system.

Opportunities

Update our 2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan—The current Master Plan is outdated and does not provide a usable plan for development for either the current or future needs of the City. The number of ballfields, community centers, and gymnasiums are significantly below the benchmark numbers for similarly sized communities. The city is without some amenities altogether, such as pickleball courts, soccer or multi-use fields,



and technology norms such as WIFI in public spaces and audio-visual accompaniments in our rentable facilities. There is a facility shortage today and it will increase as the City grows in population.

As Development Occurs Seek Facilities and Funding—Overall funding for the department’s operations and development is a significant concern for the future. With significant development coming to Banning in the future, the updating of our Park Development Impact Fee (DIF) associated with developments provides a potential enhanced revenue source.

Fundraising Non-Profit—A fundraising non-profit for parks, (e.g., “Friends of Banning Parks”) could be created to assist in raising money for Parks and Recreation amenities or programs.

Use of Reclaimed Water—Besides lessening the need for potable water, Parks can use reclaimed water for possible cost savings to the department.

Partnering With the School District and Police Department—we can always enhance our partnerships with the school district to provide intramural sports programming and classes directly on the school sites. We can partner with the Police Department to develop a joint program offering sports and outreach to youth and teens in the community. These programs will provide positive after school activities at a time when youth and teens are the most vulnerable to negative activities.

Mobile Recreation Program—there are opportunities to provide significant increase in our offerings by developing a mobile recreation program that we could bring to parks, neighborhoods, outside partners, and senior communities like several 55+ mobile home parks that lack recreation services and programming.

Threats

Keeping Up With Expected Population Growth—Given the current deficiencies in facilities and the expected demands due to population growth that can double over the next, say 10-15 years, the resident’s experience of our department will be greatly harmed in the future.

Increasing Cost Pressures—One example of these increasing costs is in department’s utility costs. These costs were \$68,000 in FY 2023 and \$320,000 in FY 2025. As the General Fund gets distressed, there is a concern that these popular departmental experiences will lose out due to competing priorities in the City.



POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL (policy)

Complete An updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan—Develop a Master Plan of facilities and services to anticipate growth and fold its results into the City’s Capital Improvement Plan

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Funding the Master Plan—Including the Plan into the City CIP, development of additional funding sources for Parks and Recreation (e.g., Friends of Banning Parks, Sponsorship and partnerships, private and public grants, updating the Parks DIF, etc.).

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Development of Career Paths—Create opportunities in the department for entry level staff to advance, grow and be productive in the community; thus, providing stability in the staffing of the department.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL

Enhancing School Partnerships—Seek additional leveraging of school sites for the delivery of recreational services.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SWOTs

Strengths

Committed Staff and “One-stop Shop”—The City of Banning’s Economic and Community Development Departments are supported by a knowledgeable, collaborative staff committed to facilitating sustainable growth and long-term community revitalization.

Strong Interdepartmental Coordination—Coupled with in-house electric and water/wastewater utility resources, enables streamlined entitlement and permitting processes, making the city more responsive to developers, business owners, and housing partners as a one-stop shop for projects.

Strong Relationships—City staff also maintain strong working relationships with regional agencies and educational institutions, further enhancing Banning’s ability to align with broader economic and workforce development strategies.

Modern Goals/Policies—The City is currently updating its General Plan and zoning ordinances to ensure goals, policies and City growth aligns with community values and provides a foundation for downtown revitalization, commercial corridor improvements, and new housing projects.

Strong Outputs—The department reviews and processes a large volume of work as exemplified below:

Permits Issued			
Quarter 3, 2024	276	Quarter 2, 2025	428
Quarter 4, 2024	301	Quarter 3, 2025	389
Quarter 1, 2025	312	QTD@10/17/25	97

Weaknesses

Staffing and Turnover Challenges—The Economic Development program is a team of one. The Community Development Department has a staff of 16 that is made up of City and contract staff. Only three of the 16 CDD staff have been employed with the City for longer than two years, while most of the others have been with the City for about a year or less. The turnover and limited staffing has led to gaps in institutional knowledge on processes that are required to provide an efficient operation. This staffing challenge has caused some delays in application processing and responsive customer service; and



reduced capacity for proactive community outreach/awareness and staffing of the newly appointed Historic Preservation Commission.

Impaired Systems—The City faces internal limitations that often slow down momentum, such as an impaired or failed implementation of permitting and licensing systems. In both economic and community development, there is a need for modernized tools to track metrics, assess development readiness, and identify gaps in housing, infrastructure, and commercial activity. There is limited capability for GIS mapping services. Inconsistent or outdated zoning and development standards in certain areas also complicate project feasibility. Additionally, the City must balance growth with preservation of community character, which requires more robust community engagement tools and clearer policies to guide infill and redevelopment without displacing existing residents or small businesses.

Opportunities

Undeveloped/Underutilized Land—The City’s abundance of underutilized land, proximity to regional job centers, and growing interest from industrial and retail developers create an ideal environment for attracting new businesses, expanding the housing supply, and activating commercial corridors.

Established Downtown—Banning, with its established theater, retail buildings, and proximity to City Hall, presents a unique opportunity to build and expand a walkable, mixed-use hub. It can include the arts, dining, and local services for both residents and tourism, especially through the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization and Complete Streets plans. City-owned land downtown also provides a significant opportunity to drive economic and community revitalization through targeted investment and public-private partnerships.

Regional Access—Banning’s strategic location along the I-10 corridor between major Southern California markets makes it highly attractive for logistics, commercial, mixed-use, and residential development.

Higher Education—A significant internal asset is the presence of Mt. San Jacinto Community College’s Banning campus, which offers career training and educational programs that align with regional workforce needs and creates strong potential for talent development partnerships. The College offers an opportunity to serve as a partner on workforce development, career pipelines, and entrepreneurship support.

Threats

Regional Competition—For jobs, investment, and housing is a challenge without local stability and staff continuity. Additionally, nearby cities may offer more aggressive incentive programs or more fully developed commercial environments to attract growth.



Infrastructure—Potential limitations such as traffic congestion, long-term water supply, and utility capacity may require substantial investment to accommodate future long-term growth.

Outside Agency ROW/Land—Coordination with Caltrans and UPRR on necessary improvements for growth has proven to delay development and public projects.

Housing Affordability and Homelessness—Housing affordability, while currently a strength, may become a concern as demand increases, raising risks of additional strain on resources and impacts the City’s ability to attract growth and retain businesses.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 1 GOAL

Streamline Permitting, Business Licensing, and Customer Service Systems—Modernize and integrate permitting, licensing, and tracking systems to reduce processing times, improve responsiveness, and enhance transparency. This requires a thorough assessment of current systems and identify gaps or outdated features. It will facilitate establishing performance benchmarks, customer service standards and better data to make decisions.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 2 GOAL (policy)

Enhance Staffing Capacity, Stability, and Institutional Knowledge Retention—We need to break the turnover trend by developing retention strategies with the help of HR. And when inevitable turnover occurs, we need a transition plan to manage the potential loss of corporate memory.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 3 GOAL

Explore and Implement Surge Capacity—We need to assess the potential for temporary and part-time staff or contracts with firms to support peak periods and reduce potential for burnout and turnover.

POSSIBLE PRIORITY 4 GOAL (policy)

Inventory and Then Sell or Activate Underutilized Land in Downtown—In conjunction with a new Economic Development Plan (see City Manager’s Office Goal 4), inventory and seek ways to encourage development in the downtown core. This may include targeted incentives and collaboration with regional partners and developers. This will also require an active outreach program to City residents.



APPENDIX

BANNING STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

	Policy Goal	Administrative Goal
City Manager's Office		
Strategic Plan Implementation	X	X
Develop and Implement Banning's Financial Workout Plan—to Sustainability	X	X
Develop New Banning Organizational Culture—See HR		X
Develop New Economic Development (ED) Plan	X	X
Homelessness	X	
Animal Control and Shelter	X	
City Attorney's Office		
Collaborate with HRD on Outreach to our Insurance JPAs		X
Create a New HR Program Around Performance Mgmt		X
Implement a Coordinated Leave Management Program (with HR)		X
Develop a Written Claims and Litigation Mgmt. Strategy		X
Human Resources & Risk Management (RM)		
Fiscal Plan to Eliminate Massive RM Fund Deficits	X	X
Assessment of the RM Program	X	X
Creat a New HR Program Around Performance Mgmt. — see CAO		X
Develop New City Organizational Culture—see CMO		X
Develop Employee Transition Plan		X
Purchase and Install New HRMS		X



	Policy Goal	Administrative Goal
Finance—Accounting		
Aggressively Recruit and Staff Finance—Accounting With Permanent Staff		X
Develop System for Monitoring and Managing Cash Flow		
Finish Cleaning Up the Financial Books	X	X
Review and Update Fiscal Mgmt. Policies	X	X
Engage Special Tax Consultant to Create CFD Program for Services	X	X
Produce a Transparent Spending Plan	X	X
Finance—Information Technology		
Develop and Implement Banning's IT Strategic Plan	X	X
Make Cybersecurity a Core Priority of the Organization	X	X
Data Cleansing & Migration Strategy		X
Consider Changes to the IT Manager Reporting Relationship		
Finance—Purchasing		
Work With City Attorney and Restructure Vendor Onboarding		X
Convene an Interdepartmental Team and Develop a More Responsive Purchasing Process for Emergencies		X
Convene an Interdepartmental Team and Develop a Purchasing and Contracting Process That is More Accessible to Smaller Local Vendors or Just Smaller Projects	X	X
independent Review of Purchasing Process	X	X
Finance—Utility Billing		
Address the Software Issues (and IT Support) That Is Behind the Current Billing Crisis		X
Do In-Depth Evaluation of the City's UB Function and Tools	X	X
Elevate the UB Function Within Finance		X



	Policy Goal	Administrative Goal
Police		
In Conjunction with the City Manager and HR, Develop and Implement a Proactive Outreach and Hiring Program	X	X
Provide One-Time Resources and Independently Evaluate the Police Dept.	X	X
Develop a Community Outreach Program		X
Public Works—Electrical Utility		
Achieve BEU Fiscal Solvency and Sustainability	X	X
Complete Edison's Wholesale Distribution Access Tariff Agreement		X
In Conjunction with Finance, Purchase and Roll Out a New Utility Billing System		X
As the Utility Becomes Solvent, Ramp Up Capital Needs		X
Public Works—Water and Wastewater Utility		
Complete Wastewater Treatment Plan & Recycled Water Upgrades	X	X
Hexavalent Chromium Compliance Plan Implementation		X
Develop and Implement Water Conservation Program		X
Update Integrated Master Plan (IMP) and Evaluation Water/WW Financial Rate Structure	X	X
Replacement of Small Diameter Pipelines and New Potable Wells		X
Public Works—Building Maintenance		
Complete a Facility Condition Assessment		X
Address Deferred Maintenance issues		X
Evaluate Adding More Capacity For Road Maintenance		X
Public Works—Engineering		
Update Engineering Standards and Specifications	X	X
Seek Greater GIS Integration with Asset Management Software (AMS)		x
Help in Implementing Newer Stormwater Requirements		X



	Policy Goal	Administrative Goal
Public Works—Street Maintenance		
Develop Formal Preventative Maintenance Plan	X	X
Develop a Pavement Management Plan and Policies	X	X
Seek Additional Funding		
Move Landscape Services to Contractors		
Parks and Recreation		
Complete An Updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan		X
Fund the Master Plan	X	
Development of Career Paths		X
Enhance School Partnerships	X	X
Community and Economic Development		
Streamline Permitting, Business Licensing and Customer Service Systems	X	X
Enhance Staffing Capacity, Stability and Institutional Knowledge Retention		X
Explore and Implement Surge Capacity		X
Inventory and Then Activate Underutilized Land in Downtown	X	X