



C I T Y O F
RENO
Memorandum

DATE: May 1, 2025
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Jackie Bryant, City Manager
DEPT: City Manager's Office
SUBJECT: Economic Conditions and Staffing Limitations Necessitate Review of Community Engagement Practices



Background

As the City continues to respond to the fiscal challenges resulting from inadequate projected revenues to cover projected expenses in the General Fund, it is imperative that we realign our operations to reflect current staffing levels and service delivery priorities.

The projected FY26 budget reflects a \$26 million gap between anticipated revenues and planned expenditures that meet those revenue projections. To close this gap, the proposed budget relies on a combination of one-time funds and permanent expenditure reductions, including a 5 percent cut to services and supplies citywide and the defunding of 20 vacant General Fund positions. These decisions are guided by the Council's strategic priorities and a careful assessment of which services can be sustained under current financial conditions. With uncertain economic conditions anticipated to last for several years, it is imperative that our programs are run at maximum efficiency to meet the broad needs of the community. One significant area of potential impact is how staff engage with and seek feedback from the community.

Community engagement remains an important and valued aspect of our City processes. As such, the City must ensure our strategies meet the needs and preferences of the community and staff resources are used to meet these needs in the most efficient way possible. As City Manager, I have directed a comprehensive review of our community engagement practices. This includes and aligns with Council direction in November 2024 to examine the structure and function of the City's boards and commissions (B&C) and provide a comprehensive overview and recommendations for updates.

90-Day Staffing Hiatus on Non-Mandated Boards and Commissions

In order to develop this review process, I am instituting a 90-day staffing hiatus effective today on all boards and commissions that are not required by statute. This hiatus means that staff time will be focused on developing the comprehensive review process, rather than organizing and hosting certain B&C meetings. Prioritization of time is necessary to allow staff to complete initial analysis of our current structure and develop strategic recommendations to better align civic engagement with available resources.

While I understand there may be concerns, I want to be clear what this prioritization of resources is not:

- This is not stopping our efforts to share information with and engage with the community. On May 7, staff will present all of the ways in which the community can continue to engage with Councilmembers and City staff during this review period and share initial thoughts on what this review will entail.
- This is not an elimination of boards and commissions. Limitations on staff resources necessitates prioritizing staff time. It is a necessary step to review our approach to B&C operations, maintain compliance with Nevada Open Meeting Law, and identify the most accessible and effective ways for residents to engage with their local government. On June 4, the City Clerk will present an initial overview of our current B&C structure and identify the next steps in that review process, in alignment with the November 2024 direction.

The boards and commissions included in this staffing hiatus are:

- Access Advisory Committee
- Arts and Culture Commission
- Community Development Block Grant Subcommittee
- Historical Resources Commission (unless considering a project involving historic buildings)
- Human Rights Commission
- Neighborhood Advisory Boards (Wards 1–6)
- Public Art Committee of the Reno Arts and Culture Commission
- Recreation and Parks Commission
- Reno Urban Forestry Commission
- Senior Citizen Advisory Committee
- Special Events Sponsorship Committee
- Youth City Council

In light of this staffing hiatus and the anticipated budgetary impacts due to the economy, new appointments to non-mandated B&C at this time will not be agendized.

While the initial hiatus is for 90 days, many of the listed boards and commissions may remain on hold for a longer period of time. The staffing hiatus will be reviewed after staff presents plans on May 7 and June 4. This potential extension will reflect both the depth of our current budget

constraints and our commitment to thoughtful, transparent, and efficient community engagement efforts.

Communication with Board Members and Commissioners

Members currently appointed to non-mandated boards and commissions will be contacted directly. We recognize this is a shift and deeply value their service and ongoing commitment. As we evaluate and improve our engagement structures, we will reach out for input, insights, and expertise.

Next Steps and Staff Work During the Hiatus

During the staffing hiatus of these B&C, staff will continue to maintain clear and proactive communication with the public, emphasizing the many ways residents can remain engaged in City decision-making. We remain deeply committed to fostering inclusive and accessible civic engagement and view this temporary hiatus as a strategic opportunity to align our engagement structures with available resources and evolving community needs.

As part of this effort, staff will conduct Council briefings in May focused on best practices for hosting community forums and complying with Nevada Open Meeting Law. As mentioned, several key items will also be presented to Council in the coming months:

- May 7: Presentation on the City's current community engagement strategies and overview of process for comprehensive review
- June 4: Presentation about structure and operations of current B&C and next steps in review process

These milestones will help lay the foundation for a modernized, sustainable framework that supports meaningful public involvement while reflecting our reduced organizational capacity.