



Special City Council Meeting Minutes
Saturday, September 20, 2025 at 8:00 a.m.
Countryside Banquet Room - 659 School Street, Washington, Illinois

Call to Order Mayor Liliya Stevens called the special meeting of City Council to order at 8:04 a.m. at Countryside Banquet & Catering, with a quorum present.

Roll Call *Present:* Alderpersons Blundy, Ernst, Johnson, Martin, McIntyre, Moss, Sluder, Smith
Absent:

Also Present Interim City Administrator/City Engineer Dennis Carr, Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, Public Works Director Brian Rittenhouse, Police Chief Jeff Stevens, and Deputy City Clerk Lisa Anderson

Audience Comments Steve Brown, member of the Five Points Board, introduced himself.

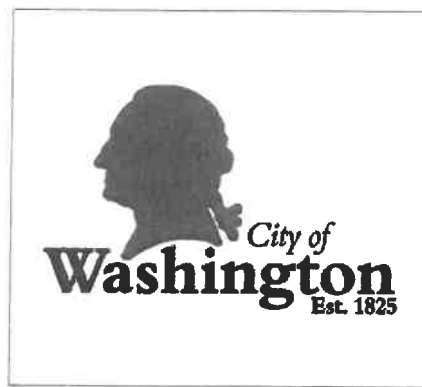
City Council Goal Setting Workshop Elizabeth Hansen, President, Midwest Municipal Consulting, LLC facilitated the goal setting workshop.

Aldersperson Comments None provided.

Adjournment At 1:19 p.m. *Aldersperson Sluder motioned to adjourn; Aldersperson Smith seconded.*
Motion carried by voice vote.



Lisa Anderson, Deputy City Clerk



CITY OF WASHINGTON, IL

CITY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

SOURCEBOOK

Fiscal Years 2026 & 2027

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I **ENHANCING COMMUNICATION BY SHARING BACKGROUNDS, INTERESTS AND PERSPECTIVES**

Purposes of Communication

Personal

1. Name _____
2. Hometown _____
3. Where attended school _____
4. Favorite hobby or outside interests _____
5. When and why, you came to the city/area _____
6. What you like best about the City _____
7. Job/business/profession _____

Serving in public office/working for the city

8. Why sought public office/why began working for the city _____

9. Greatest job satisfaction with serving in public office/working for the city

10. Greatest job frustration with serving in public office/working for the city

11. Greatest challenges facing the city
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

The Work Session

12. Expectations for the Work Session _____

II REVIEW OF FISCAL YEARS 2020-2025

ONGOING PROJECTS AND NEW INITIATIVES WORK PLAN

From this list of On-Going Priorities provided from your 2020-2021

Goal Setting Report, which items have been completed and should be removed?

Which ones need to remain to continue work?

	Initiatives and Programs	Completed/Remain
1.	Form a plan for Freedom Parkway if state funding does not come through	Completed
2.	Review Equipment Replacement Plan - Annually	Completed
3.	Enhance relationships, marketing/branding, communication, and collaboration with our community partners such as the school districts, Park District, Library, Township, Chamber, two fire departments, Rotary, and other civic groups	On-Going
4.	Update the personnel manual - Annually	Completed
5.	Extend the life of the TIF district to allow for funds to help public and private projects	Completed
6.	Review the utility connection fees and determine if any increase or decrease is warranted	Remain
7.	Encourage team building and empower staff through the organization – meet monthly	On-Going
8.	Understanding our revenue sources and always trying to find new sources. For example, exploring a city gas tax. Consider creating a local motor fuel tax to establish additional revenue for road improvement projects.	Completed – Home Rule Sales Tax
9.	Enhance the website to increase transparency, showcase businesses, and add a current and future projects list available non-resident buildings and sites page on the website	Remain
10.	Dispose of surplus city property and equipment	On-going
11.	Consider the feasibility of hiring a complete IT service for city administrative functions	Completed
12.	Review and analysis of the CodeRed system	Completed

From the list of New Projects, Programs, Policies, and Initiatives provided from your Strategic Priorities Plan, these items have been completed, thus will be removed and some will be moved to the On-going Priorities list to continue work.

	Item	Completed/Remain
1.	Complete a new Comprehensive Plan to include economic development to improve chances at attracting private, commercial, and industrial development	Completed
2.	Consider a comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan that includes Route 24, Route 8, the Square, Nofsinger Rd, Freedom Parkway, Lakeshore Drive and the 223 property	Narrowing Scope in New Initiatives
3.	Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the city and fire department with a focus on a 20-year reconstruction plan to include maintenance, repair, timely implementation, and budgeting consideration	Completed – Update Five-year plan annually. Part of the Budget
4	Create a Master Development Plan for the 223 property	Remain - Determine desired outcome of the property
5	Visit the roles and responsibilities of the mayor, council, staff, and citizens and consider a code of conduct/standard operating procedure to include this information, expectations, limitations, voting and how to get items on an agenda. Revise the Committee/Committee of the Whole structure as well as the Council agenda for meetings. Have the city administrator create an administrative policy on proper follow-up and feedback to citizen inquiries.	Remain – Consider creating a Standard Operating Procedure or Rules of Governance
6.	Reduction in spending by 10%. Reduce the city portion of the property tax bill	Remove – unattainable. Needs more context

III REVIEW OF PROGRESS

THE SUCCESSES

Strategic, Reliable, & Sustainable Infrastructure – Projects and Improvements

Finished constructing Freedom Parkway.
Finished realigning Nofsinger/Dallas Road.
Reconstructed sections of Catherine Street.
Finished reconstructing Hilldale Avenue and Lawndale Avenue.
Started construction on our stormwater priority projects.
Finished upgrades to our WTP1 Chlorination Process.
Installed a second watermain from our WTP2 to the high-pressure zone.
Have painted both water towers to protect them as well as provide a facelift for the community.
Addition of bike sharrows throughout city streets.
Moving forward in the IDOT process of repairing candlewood bridge.
Taking steps (i.e., rate and usage study) to outline the needs of upcoming water system improvement.
Maintenance of city infrastructure in general. Reliability of water, sewer, streets.
SCADA Improvements at WTP, Legion and WWTP.
Large Equipment - Plow Trucks, Mini Excavator, Street Sweeper, Jetter, Mowers.
In-House Paving Projects Past Several Years.
CIPP Lining of Sewer/Storm Mains Past Several Years.
Expanding and Improving Yearly Inspection; utilizing GIS by documenting and scheduling initiatives.
Nofsinger Dr and Jackson Street Water Main Loops/Completion.
WWTP Generator Installation.
Wells #11 & 12 Rehab.
Legion Road Facility Concrete Improvements.
WTP #1 Roof Replacement.
WWTP Sludge Storage Tank Maintenance.
WWTP Effluent Culvert and Farm Creek Bank Stabilization.
Distribution Lead Service Line Replacement.
WTP Source Water Protection Plan.
WTP Lead Service Line Inventory and Replacement Plan.

Fiscal Responsible Governance - Finance

Increased HR Sales Tax for both infrastructure and stormwater management.
Planned utilization of accumulated fund balances for one-time capital projects.
Secured grant funding for major capital projects – Nofsinger Realignment; Freedom Parkway; Evidence Building, Safe Routes to Schools and Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program funds.
Water rate study to determine sufficient rate structure considering planned capital projects, IEPA loan submittal.
Utilization of new budgeting software – ClearGov.
Forward planning with funds for equipment replacement and upgrades.
Funding for the PW Facility and Cemetery Building.
Updated procurement policy.
Internal planning of CIPs or smaller Projects.
Reviewing MERF Replacement Schedules.
Reviewing CERF Replacement Schedules.
Planning Projects in-house when possible.
Support long-term financial health and sustainability
City finances are in excellent condition.

Community and Economic Vitality - Community & Economic Development/Housing

Adopted a new comprehensive plan.
The opening of Tangled Roots Craft Beer & Kitchen on the Square.
Implemented a commercial property improvement grant program.
Assisted with taking our GIS system to a high level for a municipality our size.
Created an administrative adjudication process for handling code enforcement violations.
Assisted with numerous residential and non-residential building permits for new construction and renovation projects.
Established short-term rental regulations.
Assisted with securing grant funding for road improvements and pedestrian accommodations.
In connection with Washington Township, we established a demand-response transit system.

Effective, Efficient & Strategic Government – City Operations/Human Resources/Policies

Dedicated position for HR Manager.
Hired a Communications Specialist.
Plans to hire a new Finance Director with a training period with the current.
Push to encourage e-billing of utility bills and direct debit of payments.
Update the handbook.
Using our GIS Specialist position to help provide outward information to the community.
Completed the process to live stream our City Council meetings.
Implemented a fleet replacement program through Enterprise.

Increasing communication between staff and council.
Fresh ideas and new leadership.
The city has been running effectively and efficiently.
Proactive Maintenance Efforts – all aspects of Public Works.
Better Communication with residents.
Opening up marketing manager position, social media.

Safe and Secure - Public Safety

Continued continuity in the department with new leadership in the police department.
Upgrade to property and evidence storage (in-progress).
Added police positions for line and supervision to maintain even coverage.
Maintenance of specialty positions in police.
Responded to public concerns in speeding areas.
Washington has a reputation for being a safe city.

IV CHALLENGES, ISSUES, CONCERNS, TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances, or operations:

Item
Determining the role of artificial intelligence and how to utilize it efficiently, effectively, and professionally. (S)
Automating vendor payments to reduce reliance on issuing checks. (S)
Managing community concerns about rising property taxes—driven by schools—while addressing pressure to reduce the City's portion despite it being a small percentage of the overall tax bill. Pension obligations are expected to further challenge this issue. (S)
Defining the City's desired identity: What kind of community do we want to be?
Should we actively encourage development, and if so, what incentives are appropriate? (S)
Improving public perception by fostering greater unity, collaboration, and professionalism among City Council members and city staff. (S)
Shifting toward a consistent pro-development mindset. (S)
Maintaining trust between Council and staff by balancing the need for information with respect for staff expertise. (S)
Learning from the handling of the amphitheater project on the 223 property, which may have influenced how developers view the City. (S)
Navigating competing priorities between younger and older demographics, which can shape the City's future. (S)
Identifying alternative revenue sources to reduce reliance on property taxes. (S)
Leveraging technology more effectively to improve operations and services. (S)
Establishing a vision for the City's optimal size and growth trajectory. (S)
Ensuring adequate, modern facilities for staff as the population grows and service demands increase. (S)
Recruiting reliable and engaged volunteers to serve on City Boards and Commissions. (S)
Encouraging developers to adopt innovative and creative approaches. (S)
Evaluating the need and potential demand for a fixed bus route system within the next 5–10 years. (S)
Ensuring decision-making is proactive, data driven, and well-informed, rather than driven by social media reactions or perceptions of "governing by Facebook." (S)
Addressing Police Pension Fund challenges. (S)
Define the collective meaning of "transparency" and enforce that meaning consistently, rather than selectively. (S)
Counteracting the perception that the City is anti-commercial development. (S)
Prioritizing the long-delayed replacement of the undersized sanitary trunkline. (S)
Updating aging water infrastructure. (S)
Repairing and replacing aging bridges. (S)
Rising material costs are significantly increasing project expenses. (S)

Addressing gaps in sidewalk coverage, particularly along key routes. (S)
Increase of overall property tax burden and its impact on growth. (E)
Opportunity to establish a city administrator and build consistency around that position. (E)
Strengthening resilience, disaster preparedness, and incident management capabilities. (S)
Preparing EMS and fire services to meet the needs of additional multi-story residential structures in alignment with the comprehensive plan. (S)
Supporting the Business 24 rebuild with an emphasis on complete streets planning. (S)
Addressing challenges related to alternative transportation, including enforcement, regulation, and control measures. (S)
Accelerating the countywide integration of the public safety radio system (S)
Resolving challenges with public safety records integration, particularly with Pekin's decision to pursue a separate system (S)
Improving integration of public safety information systems, reporting, and data storage to enhance operational efficiency. (S)
Expanding and improving the City's website to ensure information is easy to navigate and search. (S)
Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of committees and commissions. (E)
Reducing unsafe driving behaviors in subdivisions, including speeding and texting. (E)
Clarifying roles and responsibilities between Public Works and Public Services.(S)
Addressing inflow and infiltration issues in the sewer system. (E)
Identifying strategies to reduce the tax burden on residents to help retain population (E)
Establishing a policy to withhold TIF fund distribution until projects are completed.(E)
We need to establish a culture where staff, department heads, and council see everyone as being on the same team. (E)
Completing the Park District pool project. (E)
Turf fields, sports complex, all year round. (E)
Addressing the shortage of rental housing and affordable units. (S)
Determining the best fit for a City Administrator role while preparing for potential impacts of the transition. (S)

V MANAGEMENT IN PROGRESS

1.	Job descriptions currently being updated by HR. (S)
2.	Communications Specialist will establish external communication strategy and implementation (S)
3.	Space needs study to determine 5-year+ plan for buildings, including permanent site for Council meetings. (S) (E)
4.	Determination of path forward for sewer trunk line – Phase 2B. (S)
5.	Water rate study for sufficient rate structure for planned capital projects. (S)
6.	Review of development and connection fees. (S)
7.	Review of Senior Citizen discount program for utilities. (S)
8.	Succession planning for the upcoming retirement of the Building & Zoning Coordinator. Seeking for the new hire to have a little background in building, code enforcement, planning, and economic development, which may not be feasible. (S)
9.	Addressing minor revisions to the zoning code. Long-term, this may require the use of a consultant for more significant changes. (S)
10.	Proactively addressing code enforcement. (S)
11.	Identifying other businesses for available downtown Square spaces. (S)
12.	Updating the procedure for documenting complaints against employees. (S)
13.	The ADA Transition Plan is constantly being updated. (S)
14.	Annual Budget, including CIP and Equipment Replacement Plan (S)
15.	Starting search for city administrator candidates. (E)
16.	Re-implement the police policy manual. (S)
17.	Traffic calming or other traffic issue identification system (for residents). (S)
18.	Traffic mapping for speed enforcement. (S)
19.	Automated license plate reader system expansion. (S)
20.	WTP #1 HVAC Replacement. (S)
21.	Public Works Storage Siding and Roof Maintenance (Woodland Trail WWTP #1). (S)
22.	Public Works Storage Fire Damage (Jefferson Street Building). (S)
23.	SCADA Improvements WTP, Lift stations and WWTP. (S)
24.	CIPP Lining of Sewer and Storm Mains. (S)
25.	Cemetery Expansion – New Roads & Building. (S)
26.	Updates on projects as they progress. (E)
27.	Staff may be working on projects, but council members are not regularly updated as to where the projects are currently standing. (E)

VI SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS (SOLUTIONS)

	Item (What is the solution?)	New Initiative (Action Needed) Or On-Going
1.	Sewer rate study once path forward on Phase 2B is determined.	On-Going
2.	Implement recommendations from space needs study.	New
3.	Comprehensive development plan Washington Plaza.	New
4.	Comprehensive development plan Freedom Parkway, etc.	New
5.	Revamp the TIF program to strongly prioritize the use of incentives towards retail projects and those that will have a greater chance of EAV increases.	New
6.	Create an overlay district for the Square that makes redevelopment easier and less cumbersome and to potentially limit the types of allowable land uses.	New
7.	Establish a residential façade repair program to assist with exterior rehab projects on the older east and west sides of the city.	New
8.	Consider adopting a funding mechanism to help facilitate development in the area near Cummings Lane.	New
9.	Consider adopting a funding mechanism to help facilitate development in the area near Lakeshore	New
10.	Make the City website more user-friendly and inviting (in progress).	On-Going
11.	Institute a wayfinding program to direct visitors to primary destinations and to also help brand Washington.	New
12.	Review the utility connection fee structure.	New
13.	Complete streetscape improvements around the Square – Phase 2	New
14.	Provide funding for streetscaping improvements along Business Route 24 in advance of a future reconstruction project.	New
15.	Consider utilizing the Police Department for some additional code enforcement projects to allow for the Building & Zoning Coordinator to assist more with economic development.	New
16.	Prioritize what properties/areas the City may seek to provide development financial assistance.	New
17.	Institute a public art program.	New
18.	Find a permanent site for the Good Neighbor Days festival.	New
19.	Consider a City/State/Federal partnership to construct a business incubator that can be used in conjunction with Peoria NEXT.	New
20.	Establish a parkland dedication requirement for new subdivisions to create small neighborhood-level parks.	New
21.	Assist with the continued emergence of Washington Plaza as a vibrant neighborhood destination.	New
22.	Develop desired outcome and strategy for the 223 property.	On-Going

23.	Channel erosion control assistance program (Reimbursement, Provide Materials, etc.)	New
24.	Inflow and Infiltration flow monitoring.	New
25.	New sidewalk initiative to place sidewalks along all roadways in town. Explore a Safe Street Sidewalk Initiative; prioritize high traffic routes to schools Continue with curb and sidewalk replacements - Pothole issues - Complaint process Slow traffic on square; close the square blocks surrounding Peoria street for square events, make a safe place.	New
26.	Citywide education initiatives for traffic/pedestrian safety.	On-Going
27.	Better working relationship with Five Points/Park District/Schools.	On-Going
28.	Rebrand Washington. Use the Bicentennial to jumpstart a rebranding campaign. The Washington Strong mentality after the tornado has spoiled.	On-Going
29.	Better Social Media Presence. Other Communities are beginning to mock Washington over the public's use of Facebook as a complaint department and elected officials apparent push for that.	On-Going
30.	Enact or enforce policy/ordinance to improve visual appearance of empty/vacant lots and businesses along Peoria street.	On-Going
31.	Engage residents through commissions, boards, and committees to promote open communication between citizens and city council to address and solve issues as they arise in real time.	On-Going
32.	Capitalizing on the momentum of the square.	On-Going
33.	Making progress in closing the gap between the geographic core of Washington and the Sunnyland neighborhood.	On-Going
34.	Engage IDOT and community to demonstrate community support of Plan Washington to coordinate redesign of Business 24 with the Plan. Consider ways the redesign could support the downtown entertainment district or other such districts along the rebuilt Business 24. Provide structure for downtown entertainment district to facilitate private development of entertainment/hospitality business.	New
35.	Nail down long-term sewer and water goals.	On-Going
36.	Provide funding for the water distribution along rebuilt Business 24.	New
37.	Change the name of Alderman or Alderperson to "City Councilor."	New
38.	Not everyone is on social media; a paper – mailed newsletters at least twice a year.	On-Going
39.	Explore a Housing Access and Affordability Plan	New
40.	Add crosswalks and flashing lights to square corner.	New
41.	Set performance expectations and annual review.	New
42.	Make public aware of possible problems ASAP – breaking in of cars, homes, etc.	On-Going

43.	Neighborhood Watch Programs.	New
44.	Additional stall space for the Fire Department to prepare for additional service area potential and increasing EMS load due to institutional and aging population. Consider long-term viability of current location versus moving facility west toward center of projected call base.	New

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS

of VOTES

2	1.	Develop a strategy for Washington 223
5	2.	Prioritize and implement recommendations from the completed space needs study.
3	3.	Comprehensive development plan Freedom Parkway
1	4.	Revamp the TIF program to strongly prioritize the use of incentives towards retail projects and those that will have a greater chance of EAV increases.
1	5.	Create an overlay district for the Square to streamline redevelopment easier and potentially limit certain land uses.
0	6.	Establish a residential façade repair program to assist with exterior rehab projects on the older east and west sides of the city.
0	7.	Consider adopting a funding mechanism to help facilitate development in the area near Cummings Lane.
1	8.	Institute a wayfinding program to direct visitors to primary destinations and to also help brand Washington.
2	9.	Review the utility connection fee structure.
2	10.	Complete streetscape improvements around the Square - Phase 2
3	11.	Provide funding for streetscaping improvements along Business Route 24 in advance of a future reconstruction project.
0	12.	Consider utilizing the Police Department for some additional code enforcement projects to allow for the Building & Zoning Coordinator to assist more with economic development.
2	13.	Prioritize what properties/areas the City may seek to provide development financial assistance.
0	14.	Institute a public art program.
1	15.	Find a permanent site for the Good Neighbor Days festival.
0	16.	Consider a City/State/Federal partnership to construct a business incubator that can be used in conjunction with Peoria NEXT.
0	17.	Establish a parkland dedication requirement for new subdivisions to create small neighborhood-level parks.
1	18.	Assist with the continued emergence of Washington Plaza as a vibrant neighborhood destination.
0	19.	Channel erosion control assistance program (Reimbursement, Provide Materials, etc.)
0	20.	Implement Inflow and Infiltration flow monitoring.
2	21.	Launch a sidewalk expansion initiative to install sidewalks along all roadways.
1	23.	Collaborate with IDOT and the community to align the redesign of Business 24 and Plan Washington. Consider ways the redesign could support the downtown entertainment district or other such districts along the rebuilt Business 24.

		Provide structure for downtown entertainment district to facilitate private development of entertainment/hospitality business.
2	24.	Provide funding for water distribution along rebuilt Business 24.
0	25.	Change the name of Alderman or Alderperson to "City Councilor."
0	26.	Develop a Housing Affordability Plan
1	27.	Expanding Community Amenities and Engagement Spaces
0	28.	Comprehensive development plan Business 24
0	29.	Comprehensive development plan for Lakeshore.
0	30.	Add crosswalks and flashing lights to square corner.
0	31.	Set performance expectations and annual review.
0	32.	Neighborhood Watch Programs.
0	33.	Additional stall space for the Fire Department to prepare for additional service area potential and increasing EMS load due to institutional and aging population. Consider long-term viability of current location versus moving facility west toward center of projected call base.

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

of VOTES

179	1.	Add crosswalks and flashing lights to the corners of the Square.
194	2.	Collaborate with IDOT and the community to align the redesign of Business 24 with Plan Washington.
98	3.	Provide structure for downtown entertainment district to facilitate private development of entertainment/hospitality business.
181	4.	Assist with the continued emergence of Washington Plaza as a vibrant neighborhood destination.
122	5.	Provide funding for streetscaping improvements along Business Route 24 in advance of a future reconstruction project.
168	6.	Create a comprehensive development plan for Business 24.
38	7.	Consider utilizing the Police Department for some additional code enforcement projects to allow for the Building & Zoning Coordinator to assist more with economic development.
146	8.	Establish a residential façade repair program to assist with exterior rehab projects on the older neighborhoods east and west of the city.
54	9.	Create an overlay district for the Square to streamline redevelopment and potentially limit certain land uses.
232	10.	Develop a comprehensive plan for Freedom Parkway.
321	11.	Launch a sidewalk expansion initiative to install sidewalks along all roadways.
149	12.	Develop a Housing Affordability Plan
108	13.	Complete streetscape improvements around the Square - Phase 2
157	14.	Find a permanent site for the Good Neighbor Days festival.
125	15.	Establish a parkland dedication requirement for new subdivisions to create small neighborhood-level parks.
93	16.	Consider adopting a funding mechanism to help facilitate development in the area near Cummings Lane.
83	17.	Expand Community Amenities and Engagement Spaces
84	18.	Prioritize what properties/areas the City may seek to provide development financial assistance.
24	19.	Implement Inflow and Infiltration flow monitoring.
195	20.	Review the utility connection fee structure.
116	21.	Revise the TIF program to focus incentives on retail projects and developments with strong potential for EAV growth.
122	22.	Set performance expectations and annual review.
91	23.	Institute a public art program.
51	24.	Launch a wayfinding program to guide visitors to key destinations and reinforce Washington's brand.
64	25.	Consider a City/State/Federal partnership to construct a business incubator that can be used in conjunction with Peoria NEXT.
14	26.	Change the name of Alderman or Alderperson to "City Councilor."
48	27.	Prioritize and implement recommendations from the completed space needs study.
34	28.	Create a channel erosion control assistance program (reimbursements, materials, etc.).
23	29.	Provide funding for water distribution along rebuilt Business 24.
15	30.	Create a comprehensive development plan for Lakeshore.

VII PROVIDING DIRECTION - OUR GOALS WORKSHEET

The following are issues and opportunities that have been identified by the participants as items that need to be addressed by the City

of
VOTES

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VIII ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CITY COUNCIL (Most Significant)</p>

1. To provide leadership, direction, and long-range planning for the city
2. To determine policy for the city
3. To hire and monitor the performance of the city administrator (Administrator to manage city operations)
4. To adopt an annual budget for the city
5. To represent the collective best interests of the city and the citizens of the city
6. Determine vision, values and set the “tone” for the city

<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL MEMBERS (Most Significant)</p>

1. To represent the citizens and be accessible to them
2. To make a leadership and policy decisions for the greater good of the city
3. To be prepared for, and participate in, council meetings
4. To act professionally and listen respectfully to other council members, staff and citizens
5. To share information and communicate openly with the city administrator and other council members (Administrator to share with staff)
6. Listeners, educators, promoters, supporters

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE MAYOR
(Most Significant)**

1. To conduct orderly and effective city council meetings
2. To represent the city at for public functions
3. To facilitate discussions on agenda items and help resolve conflict among council members
4. To make advisory committee appointments
5. To sign the city's legal documents

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR
(Most Significant)**

1. To prepare and provide information for the council, make policy recommendations based on the information, and implement adopted policies
2. To be a liaison between the council and staff
3. To provide leadership and foster a positive work environment for the city's employees
4. To develop and administer the city's annual budget
5. To recommend the appointment and terminate (when necessary) of city employees
6. Mediates and resolves conflicts, negotiator, timer, educator, evaluator and cutter

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS
(Most Significant)**

1. To provide leadership and goals for their departments
2. To manage the day-to-day operations of their departments
3. Analyses issues, evaluate services, and develop professional recommendations as experts
4. To prepare and administer the department's annual budget
5. To communicate and cooperate with other entities in the city
6. To keep the city administrator/manager and department staff informed
7. To provide training and development opportunities for department employees
8. To recommend new hires to the city administrator
9. Researchers, planners, preparers, cutters, shock absorbers

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF ALL CITY EMPLOYEES
AND CITY OFFICIALS
(Most Significant)**

1. To understand the relationship between the Mayor, Council, Administration and Staff
2. To act in accordance with defined roles
3. To have a positive attitude towards their job and when dealing with the public
4. To be team players
5. To be fiscally responsible
6. To be a positive representatives and ambassador of the city
7. To have a strong work ethic
8. To be receptive to, and participate in, training and development opportunities
9. To be innovative problem solvers

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE CITIZENS
(Most Significant)**

1. To vote in city elections
2. To provide fiscal support for city services and operations; I. E., to pay their taxes
3. To keep informed on issues that affect the city and to communicate their concerns to the city's elected officials and staff
4. To be involved in community affairs
5. To be positive contributors to the community

IX ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

SELF-APPRAISAL GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Directions: Apply a rating of 0 to 3, as defined below, to indicate how well the statement applies to your community.

- (0) Disagree**
- (1) Disagree somewhat**
- (2) Agree somewhat**
- (3) Agree**

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

- _____ 1. My City Council sets and communicates clear goals and priorities for the year ahead.
- _____ 2. My City Council regularly reviews progress toward its goals and makes timely adjustments.
- _____ 3. Council policy decisions are effectively communicated to relevant staff and departments.
- _____ 4. Ethical standards are clearly defined, communicated, and upheld throughout the organization.
- _____ 5. Citizens have convenient access to elected officials and opportunities to provide policy input.
- _____ 6. The City has a standard, transparent process for handling citizen requests and complaints.
- _____ 7. The City Council carefully considers recommendations from both staff and citizen committees.
- _____ 8. Elected officials demonstrate mutual respect and professionalism in their conduct.
- _____ 9. Council and staff maintain a collaborative working relationship based on mutual respect.
- _____ 10. The City Council addresses issues proactively rather than waiting for them to become urgent.
- _____ 11. Council meetings are well-prepared for, with materials reviewed and decisions made thoughtfully.
- _____ 12. My City Council engages in long-term thinking and regularly discusses the city's future direction.
- _____ 13. Council members participate in relevant training and development opportunities.
- _____ 14. My city collaborates with other local governments on shared issues and opportunities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- _____ 15. The city conducts regular citizen surveys to gather feedback on public services and priorities.
- _____ 16. Programs exist to encourage resident participation in civic and public affairs.

- _____ 17. My City actively promotes and supports the diversity of its residents.
- _____ 18. The City communicates key metrics and priorities through accessible public reports and dashboards.
- _____ 19. The City tracks and responds to public complaints with transparency and accountability.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- _____ 20. Employees are involved in setting objectives and performance expectations for their teams.
- _____ 21. Performance evaluations are conducted regularly and used to improve employee performance.
- _____ 22. The city offers training to enhance employee skills and support career development.
- _____ 23. The city has a strong workplace safety program.
- _____ 24. Creativity and innovation are encouraged across all departments.
- _____ 25. Job descriptions and personnel policies are regularly updated and aligned with legal standards.
- _____ 26. The city fosters a culture of accountability, collaboration, and respect.
- _____ 27. Leadership development programs are available to help grow internal talent.
- _____ 28. Staff are encouraged to suggest improvements to workflows and public services.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & BUDGETING

- _____ 29. The city has clear and up-to-date purchasing policies.
- _____ 30. The City Council makes budget decisions based on a solid understanding of financial conditions.
- _____ 31. The city avoids making unbudgeted appropriations.
- _____ 32. A multi-year capital improvements plan guides long-term infrastructure investments.

PERFORMANCE & STRATEGIC PLANNING

- _____ 33. The city maintains a long-range plan that addresses service demands and community growth.
- _____ 34. Economic development is supported by the council in ways that benefit the broader community.
- _____ 35. Departmental performance is measured and tracked using established metrics.
- _____ 36. The city has a plan for equipment and asset replacement that is regularly updated.

DATA-DRIVEN GOVERNANCE & INNOVATION

- _____ 37. The city uses data and analytics to guide decision-making across departments.
- _____ 38. Performance is benchmarked against other cities or recognized standards.
- _____ 39. Policies are reviewed after implementation to evaluate their effectiveness.
- _____ 40. Strategic planning sessions are held regularly and include staff and community input.
- _____ 41. Innovation is actively pursued through structured processes or pilot programs.

TECHNOLOGY & CYBERSECURITY

- _____ 42. The city's website is user-friendly and provides digital access to most public services.
- _____ 43. The city uses modern technology tools (e.g., GIS, digital permitting) to improve service delivery.
- _____ 44. The city's IT infrastructure and cybersecurity practices are regularly reviewed and updated.
- _____ 45. Technology investments are aligned with service improvements and community needs.

SCORING GUIDE

Each question is worth 0–3 points, and with 45 questions, the maximum possible score is 135.

Total Score Ranges:

- **Above 105** – Your city meets the criteria for high effectiveness
- **80 – 105** – Your city meets many of the criteria for effectiveness
- **45 – 79** – Your city meets some of the criteria for effectiveness
- **Below 45** – Your city needs to significantly improve its effectiveness

I. Self-Appraisal

Here is the complete Self-Appraisal Guide for City Governments; rating each statement as it applies to your city. These are the statements that the participant disagreed with (0) or somewhat disagreed (1).

Task/Item	
1.	My City Council regularly reviews progress toward its goals and makes timely adjustments. (9)
2.	Elected officials demonstrate mutual respect and professionalism in their conduct. (2)
3.	The City Council addresses issues proactively rather than waiting for them to become urgent. (4)
4.	The city conducts regular citizen surveys to gather feedback on public services and priorities. (6)
5.	My City actively promotes and supports the diversity of its residents. (4)
6.	Performance evaluations are conducted regularly and used to improve employee performance. (5)
7.	Economic development is supported by the council in ways that benefit the broader community. (2)
8.	Performance is benchmarked against other cities or recognized standards. (5)
9.	Strategic planning sessions are held regularly and include staff and community input. (4)
10.	Innovation is actively pursued through structured processes or pilot programs. (5)
11.	The city's website is user-friendly and provides digital access to most public services. (7)
12.	My City Council sets and communicates clear goals and priorities for the year ahead. (7)
13.	Council members participate in relevant training and development opportunities. (3)
14.	Programs exist to encourage resident participation in civic and public affairs. (2)
15.	The City communicates key metrics and priorities through accessible public reports and dashboards. (4)
16.	Departmental performance is measured and tracked using established metrics. (4)
17.	The city uses data and analytics to guide decision-making across departments. (3)
18.	Policies are reviewed after implementation to evaluate their effectiveness. (5)
19.	Council policy decisions are effectively communicated to relevant staff and departments. (3)
20.	The City Council carefully considers recommendations from both staff and citizen committees.
21.	Council and staff maintain a collaborative working relationship based on mutual respect.
22.	Ethical standards are clearly defined, communicated, and upheld throughout the organization. (2)
23.	The City has a standard, transparent process for handling citizen requests and complaints. (4)
24.	The City Council carefully considers recommendations from both staff and citizen committees.
25.	Programs exist to encourage resident participation in civic and public affairs.
26.	Employees are involved in setting objectives and performance expectation for their teams. (2)
27.	The city fosters a culture of accountability, collaboration, and respect. (2)
28.	The City Council makes decisions based on a solid understanding of financial conditions. (3)
29.	My City Council engages in long-term thinking and regularly discusses the city's future direction. (2)

30.	The City tracks and responds to public complaints with transparency and accountability. (2)
31.	The city has clear and up-to-date purchasing policies. (2)
32.	The city avoids making unbudgeted appropriations. (2)
33.	A multi-year capital improvements plan guides long-term infrastructure investments.
34.	The city's IT infrastructure and cybersecurity practices are regularly reviewed and updated.
35.	Council meetings are well-prepared for, with materials reviewed and decisions made thoughtfully.
36.	Job descriptions and personnel policies are regularly updated and aligned with legal standards. (2)
37.	Leadership development programs are available to help grow internal talent. (2)
38.	My city collaborates with other local governments on shared issues and opportunities.
39.	The city maintains a long-range plan that addresses service demands and community growth.
40.	The city uses modern technology tools (e.g., GIS, digital permitting) to improve service delivery.
41.	Technology investments are aligned with service improvements and community needs.

II. Significant Initiatives, Programs or Policies (Solutions)

After completion of the Self-Appraisal Guide for City Governments, I asked participants to list any initiatives, programs or policies that you think the City should consider in the next two years (for example, strategic planning, adopting a policy, conducting a study, reviewing procedures, etc.)

Item	
1.	Above all else, the Council should establish a clear direction for the City. Once that is complete, staff should be charged with initiating the direction without interference so long as what is being done is in line with that Council direction/vision.
2.	All the elected officials must demonstrate mutual respect and professionalism in their conduct.
3.	Strategic planning should be completed every two years. Progressive review towards achieving those goals should be done consistently.
4.	The City's website must be made more user-friendly. While it holds a lot of content, it is challenging to navigate.
5.	Yearly Goal Setting Sessions. Goals should be reviewed at a minimum twice a year – during the annual Strategic Planning session and again during the budget development process. There has not been a goal setting session since 2019....the goals set and a review of goals set at that time was nonexistent.
6.	Increased community engagement.
7.	Hopefully, the goal setting session will help identify the goals and priorities of the Council and that can be used as a guideline going forward.
8.	Recommendations from staff and other outside experts should be considered when making decisions and Council should understand their role in the process of reviewing and determining final approval but not being as involved in the details. Recommend continued training in this area.
9.	We are currently in the midst of a branding campaign, and I am hopeful the Council will be receptive to ideas from our Communications Specialist, Amanda. We will see what

	happens on Monday, Sept. 9 but I think that could set a great tone of determining values and making sure we are all on the same page. I strongly encourage this initiative, but it will take full support of the Council and there appears to be pushback that they were not involved in the initial planning sessions; however, the Mayor was.
10.	The website update is an initiative that was discussed during budget development and as such funds were included in the budget. This is another important component of implementing the new brand that is determined as well as making many important improvements to be more user-friendly and provide better digital access. Council support will be needed based on staff recommendations, but again the roles need to be clearly defined for staff and Council in this process.
11.	There is not a clear understanding or acknowledgement of what types of issues should be reported to the Mayor/City Council and what are appropriate for staff to handle and report on after the fact. This causes a problem with expectations not being clear and then a perception that they are not being met. The need to know "everything" results in an anxious and stressful environment in the administration of day-to-day city operations and implementation of Council policies.
12.	The City has a 'Citizen Request' section on the City website. The Council has not received any information regarding this process. No summary is provided.
13.	There is no process for Council to address concerns brought forth to individual Council members or persons who have spoken during the Audience Comment portion of City meetings.
14.	Memos provided for Council agenda items should have pro's/con's for whatever topic is being discussed along with the fiscal impact to taxpayers.
15.	It is unknown how Council policy decisions are communicated to relevant staff and departments.
16.	There has been no conversation about ethical standards.
17.	We have gift ban information in our municipal code, but no conversation about how this practically applies to elected and appointed officials and staff. Department head invitations by businesses/non-profits/and when a Council member invites department heads to Golf outings and how many is a reasonable number to attend and who pays and whose business is it to know who is attending and how they are recorded for payroll have been a recent topic that's unresolved.
18.	Use of taxpayer money for staff/City Hall food/social activities/gifts has not been communicated to the Council. The Council does not get notified when flowers/gifts/memorials are sent out from City Hall. We need a policy for when taxpayer money is used and when staff pays for candy, treats etc. for City Hall staff use.
19.	Council is not notified when community members bring treats to City Hall. In other words, the Alderpersons are not aware of the community appreciation efforts.
20.	Currently the 'Council Report' is linked to the City Council meetings. This is the opportunity for different departments to share information. We need to discuss what type of information and to who this information is geared towards. In the past the Council Report was sent via email to Alderpersons to keep them updated with information that would not necessarily be shared at a public meeting. Somewhere along the line the emails stopped and it became a public document.
21.	We need everyone on the council to know how to clearly handle every kind of complaint Whether in person, email, social media. For all different kinds of complaints. As well as streamlining the complaints and concerns so when they reach a certain threshold the council is appropriately informed. Whether that be pushed or just made available.

22.	We need to all be on the same page on social media best practices and rules.
23.	It needs to be clear that questioning staff's integrity publicly is abhorrent behavior to the highest degree. If there really were an issue with our staff's integrity, we should be in executive session to discuss it.
24.	We need to be creative in the way we help and incentivize development to the west side of town.
25.	Discuss best practices for City Councilors to stay connected to the community. Like office hours and or community events.
26.	It would be great for us to focus more on surveys and public input. (some of this can be done with the EDC).
27.	My City Council sets and communicates clear goals and priorities for the year ahead. Goals are set but not clearly communicated to residents. If priorities have been set by the previous council they are unknown to me, or any of the people living in the city that I speak with.
28.	My City Council regularly reviews progress toward its goals and makes timely adjustments. One of the most common statements heard from members who were present at the previous goal setting session, including the mayor, is that the goals were set then not revisited. A common theme of meetings is to push items off to "further discussion" if adjustments are made or considered, they are certainly not timely.
29.	My City Council engages in long-term thinking and regularly discusses the city's future direction. The Idea of the city's future is discussed, but the council is rarely able to get to substantive policy or staff direction that will affect change as ideas and suggestions are often put off for discussion at later date.
30.	The city conducts regular citizen surveys to gather feedback on public services and priorities. I may be ignorant to surveys, but I have not seen one while living in this town as a citizen or city council member. At least in the scope of the mayor and city council, Public opinion, at least in my experience, is limited to what can be found on Facebook, especially Washington strong.
31.	The City communicates key metrics and priorities through accessible public reports and dashboards.
32.	The city's website is user-friendly and provides digital access to most public services. The website has been a problem that has been discussed by the council for more than a year.
33.	The city should use the communication specialist and her expertise to engage citizens in shaping the direction in which the council should move.
34.	Committees, especially the Economic Development Committee, should be able to report ideas openly and freely to the council and staff allowing for a streamlined process to create an environment that is open and welcoming to new business within the city limits. I believe it is important to trust the city staff and members that have been appointed of the committees to do their jobs, allowing the council to make decisions in a timely manner that will keep Washington competitive with surrounding communities in bringing in new business. The Council has not done a good job trusting the people who have

	been chosen or hired to provide expertise and complete due diligence on behalf of the residents of the city. Continuous putting off of staff direction in the name of "fact finding" will only lead to more lost opportunities for the city.
35.	Continue to improve communication between staff and council, progress has been made.
36.	Improved/dedicated planning to meet the future needs of residents. Facilities, infrastructure, commercial development, equipment.
37.	Tangible metrics for employee performance, employee reviews.
38.	Consistency in the city administrators role.
39.	Focus on growth opportunities that grow the tax base without sacrificing the quality of life that residents expect in Washington.
40.	Consider key areas for economic growth tools (Washington Plaza, Freedom Parkway)
41.	A plan for city space needs.
42.	Start taking steps to implement "Plan Washington"
43.	Look at policies around use of taxpayer funds to support businesses
44.	Improve tracking/communication regarding resident concerns, staff, and council
45.	Do elected officials and staff know their roles and responsibilities?
46.	Are operations objectives in line with policy?
47.	Is the city investing in commercial investments and opportunities?
48.	Is the council willing to provide tax incentives to attract new business?
49.	Is the city making efforts to decrease taxes but increasing business development?