

Proposed Meeting Framework
City Council / Planning Commission Study Sessions

On July 11th, the Planning Commission finalized a recommendation to the City Council on a majority of the updates to the City's General Plan, including the Gateway Plan and the Gateway Code. The highlights of these recommendations were shared with the Council on July 18th by the Planning Commission Chair.

During the Planning Commission's deliberations, they honed a discussion framework that proved successful in reviewing the complex information. The framework produced conclusions and recommendations efficiently included: ground rules, a well-defined purpose, the objectives of the meeting, the explicit outcomes the meeting will result in, and an agenda with estimated timeframes for each discussion. Maintaining these elements for the Commission's study session with the City Council could help the sessions stay focused on results and provide a shared understanding of the work.

The following framework is proposed as a starting point for the review and may be amended from time to time to better accomplish the goal set by the Council.

Ground Rules –Ground rules are posted in the room, and members or staff can refer to them as necessary. The draft ground rules include:

- 1) Come prepared to take action
- 2) Review the material and prepare cogent positions on any changes you feel are necessary ahead of the meeting
- 3) Be prepared to state your position concretely and succinctly
- 4) Be willing to accept the majority position and move on
- 5) Share the air; we want equitable contributions among Council and Commissioners

Purpose – Our purpose is to develop a final draft of each of the General Plan Elements, the Gateway Area Plan, and the Form-Based Code by November 17, 2023.

Objective – Our objectives are:

- 1) Hear the individual Council's suggested changes to each Element of the General Plan, including the Gateway Plan and Gateway Code
- 2) to provide concise insights on how suggested changes would further support or work contrary to the Commission's vision for specific policies
- 3) to work to build consensus efficiently
- 4) if consensus cannot be reached to advance to a vote, to work towards a recommendation that the majority of the Council can support

Outcome – The outcome of this work will be the final draft of each Element and Gateway Code that will receive a consensus, or lacking consensus a majority, recommendation.

Agenda – Each meeting will have an Agenda posted in physical form in the room that describes the process and objectives for that meeting. It will reflect the purpose, objective, and outcomes listed above. The Council and Commission will take a moment to confirm agreement to support the agenda and ground rules for the meeting. We'll end the agenda with a brief introspection/retrospective to look for process improvements.

Meeting Method – To ensure the meetings are efficient, we propose the following methods to get through the materials timely.

- 1) Staff will send the City Council relevant meeting materials requiring their comment at least one week in advance of the meeting. Staff will endeavor to send materials more than one week in advance. Any materials sent to the Council will be posted on the City’s website for public review.
- 2) Councilmembers will provide a ranked priority list of the policies they wish to discuss by 12 noon the first business day at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Generally, this will be the Friday before the meeting.
- 3) Staff will collate the responses and send the compiled list, along with the Council’s original submittal to the Council and the Commissioners by 5 p.m. of that same day. When this step takes place, staff will also post the items on the City’s website at the URL identified in the staff report, send eNotification to the Long-range Planning list, and put copies in the lobby binder.
- 4) Main meeting topics are set by the Mayor with consultation from the Planning Commission Chair to develop agendas to move through the material in approximately 3 hour time blocks.
- 5) In the meeting discussion, Topics will be opened with a short recap of the Planning Commission’s recommendation followed by
 - a. policy alternatives provided by a Councilmember in advance with explicit recommendations for changes
 - b. policies alternatives provided by a Councilmember in advance with a succinct description of the type of change desired
 - c. policies brought up at the meeting.
- 6) Items that do not have complete discussion during a meeting will go into the “bike rack”, to hold for later discussion.
- 7) Each item is taken in turn for polling. We strive for consensus and recognize that they votes will ultimately require a mix of majority of the Councilmembers present for the vote and a majority of the whole Council.
 - a. Policies that have no alternate proposal are assumed to be supported by the whole Council.
 - b. Proposals with suggested alternatives
 - i. Policy will be shown on the screen
 - ii. The Councilmember with the suggested alternative will succinctly present the proposal
 - iii. The Mayor conducts a negative vote: Does anyone have concerns about this change?
 - iv. If no, the change is made, if yes, the Mayor will facilitate further discussion.
 - v. At the end of discussion the Mayor will ask for a show of hands vote for each of the various proposals on the table to assist the Council in its decision and a final poll of the Councilmembers, If there is not adequate majority agreement the item can be placed in the bike rack

Visual Aids – Visual aids will help the Council, Commission, staff, and the community track the progress of the discussion. These may include:

- 1) The agenda with meeting timeframes
- 2) Ground rules
- 3) Gradients of Agreement
- 4) The “bike rack”
- 5) Overall timeline with milestones

Polling Options – There are several polling techniques that the Council and Commission can use to efficiently resolve policy changes and/or disagreements. Among the polling options, are simple straw polling, negative polling, and gradients of agreement. The Mayor will help facilitate when each is best used.

Straw polling is a show of hands for or against when the question is called. Straw polling can be used in combination with negative polling to quickly resolve matters in an equitable and efficient way. Negative polling is essentially asking whether there are any in opposition to a proposal.

Negative polling and straw polling result in binary (for or against) decisions. Often, decision makers feel that they land along a continuum. That is, they do not feel completely for or against, or they have mild objections but would not necessarily vote for or against.

Gradients of agreement is a polling technique that allows non-binary consensus building. The range of polling responses in a gradients of agreement are:

- 1) I fully support this and will vote for it
- 2) I have some reservations, but I will vote for it
- 3) I am neither for nor against it, and will go with the consensus
- 4) I have concerns about passing it, but will not block it
- 5) I have serious concerns and will vote against it

Polls are conducted by each participant holding up their hand with the number of fingers showing that corresponds to their position along the gradient.