

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
City Council Committee-of-the-Whole – Special Meeting**

9:00 AM
March 1, 2025

Rainier Room, Issaquah School
District Administration Building,
5150 220th Ave SE, Issaquah,
WA 98029

MINUTES

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Councilmembers:

- Barbara de Michele
- Zach Hall
- Kelly Jiang
- Russell Joe
- Tola Marts
- Chris Reh
- Lindsey Walsh

Administration/Staff:

- Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor (*Arrived at 9:20 AM*)
- Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator
- Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator
- Tisha Gieser, City Clerk
- Autumn Monahan, Administrative Services Director
- Thomas Rush, Communications Manager
- Gillian Straub, Management Analyst

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

Council President Walsh called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

a) Welcome

Council President Walsh acknowledged that it was the first day of Ramadan.

b) Public Comment – None.

c) Getting to Know Each Other

Councilmembers went around their room sharing regional committees they serve on, focus areas of interest and priority issues.

d) Administration Update

Presented by:
Mayor Pauly
City Administrator Bobkiewicz

The City Council took a five minute break.

e) Communications Discussion

This item was introduced by Council President Walsh. The City Council then brainstormed the following questions:

- What are the City’s communications issues?
- What are our successes?

Notes taken from this discussion are included in Exhibit 1.

A presentation on the City's communications initiatives was then provided by Autumn Monahan, Administrative Services Director, and Thomas Rush, Communications Manager.

****Lunch****

f) Strategic Plan Priority Setting

Prioritize Potential Actions

City Councilmembers listed two potential actions for each of the five goal areas in the Strategic Plan as their priority for 2025.

Notes taken from this discussion are included in Exhibit 2.

Prioritize Objectives

City Councilmembers placed five dots to indicate their priorities across the 22 listed objectives in the Strategic Plan.

Notes taken from this discussion are included in Exhibit 3.

City Administrator Bobkiewicz summarized that the top two objectives were:

1. The City is prepared for understood risks inherent in our geographic location and increasingly complex world and ensures the resilience of its residents before, during, and following an emergency.
2. Public safety resources meet our diverse community needs.

Three objectives were tied for third place:

- Establish a vision for Issaquah's future Sound Transit Light Rail Station and surrounding environs that prioritizes community needs and input.
- There is an increase in new and retention of existing businesses that choose to locate and expand in Issaquah, especially those with wage levels that enable workers to also live in the community.
- Housing affordability better meets the needs of individuals and families across the income spectrum to live and work in the community.

g) Public Comment

The following public comment was provided:

Connie Marsh, resident, expressed concern with not having enough time to digest information before being asked to weigh in. She encouraged the Council to engage people differently and go to neighborhoods.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:14 PM.

Lindsey Walsh, Council President

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

Define the Problem:

City news is BORING!!
Lost local newspaper
Lost community engagement post COVID
Asian/Hispanic voice is missing

Hear from very small sliver of population / not hearing from 85%
How do we get people to care when they don't care? Lack of controversy??

Information Overload - "Attention marketplace"
Government info is "too early, too late"
Apathy/mistrust

Encourage/incentivize independent news?
Fake news works! No more fact checkers. Outrage works!

Local news declining across country
Have to have knowledge about how website works
Different generations / different languages / customs
Social media is the main source of news.

Intelligent integrated analysis is no longer available / Economy of news has changed

Not unique!!

Newspapers are not coming back!

Telling vs listening - is the city pivoting?

How do we encourage democratic norms?

How do we encourage connecting?

Talks to some people a lot.

How do we

Exhibit 1. Communications
Discussion

Mistrust / Misinformation

Diversity of Inputs

Attention Economy

Connectedness

Basic Information / Ease of Readability



W
U NAME: internet
P SSWORD: guestaccess

425
395.5835

Impacts/Success

- People know what's happening
- People communicate w/ us.
- Kithful, trusted information
- Have clear understanding of what community cares about
- Information comes to door (legitimacy)
- "This thing explained"
- Root cause analysis
- Council members Going to where people are. - have to be "in the game"
- Impacts the city when we go out for bonds or have emergencies.
- Getting information out builds trust.
- Council decisions are publicized in a timely way
- Archives are important.

earing from BS?
of controversy??

age works!

*Economy of news
has changed

Exhibit 2. Prioritize Strategic Plan Actions

Mobility

ITS - Intelligent Transportation System

Transit Stop enhancement - seating, coverings

Evaluate RAILS SYSTEM...

ENGAGE COMMUNITY RE: LIGHT RAIL STATION

Obj 2, PA 1: Strategic small capital projects

Obj 2, PA 2: Microtransit! → consider options for local connector buses

Address Bus + Bike Conflicts

Stay the course on Sound Transit link light-rail station

Growth & Development

Proactively incorporate diversity of housing into neighborhoods

CELEBRATE COMMUNITY SIDE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN...

Permit streamlining

Complete neighborhoods - e.g. including corner stores & walkable access to shops & services within neighborhoods

Plan for additional infrastructure required for white & middle housing

Prioritize process to advance current IS PLAN

Obj 4, PA 5: Middle housing

Central Issaquah + Plan implementation

Obj 4, PA 4: Permit process

Exhibit 2. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Actions

Infrastructure

Plan for Ops/Maintenance costs with all infrastructure

ORG-WIDE ASSET MGMT PLAN

City facility maintenance plan + 1!!

RESILIENT WATER SUPPLY + 1

Obj 2, PA 1: Eval options for energy resilience... Solar...

Incorporate climate considerations into infrastructure planning (e.g. embodied carbon)

Exhibit 2. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Actions

City Leadership & Services

IPD COMMUNITY LIACONS

Have convo on public safety operation needs (police, fire, court, jail)
and consider potential public safety levy +1 +1 +1

Obj 4, PA 1: Emergency mgmt policies ... +1 +1

Take the lead in creating a cohesive response to
national and regional chaos.

Community Courts

Exhibit 2. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Actions

Social & Economic Vitality

Housing Analysis - 10 barriers to affordable
housing production

COMPETITIVE ADV tools & policies
TO ATTRACT RECEIVE EMPLOYERS +1

Obj 2, PA 6: IHIP Obj 3, PA 5: Reduce loneliness/isolation... +1

Loneliness epidemic - in-person events +1

↓ arts
events! +1

Reduce barriers to
affordable housing construction +1

Exhibit 3. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Objectives

City Leadership & Services

The City of Issaquah is a regional leader in civic engagement across demographic groups, fostering an engaged and welcoming community.

#2

Public Safety resources meet our diverse community needs.



The City provides efficient, effective, and equitable services to the community.

#

The City is prepared for understood risks inherent in our geographic location and increasingly complex world and ensures the resilience of its residents before, during, and following an emergency.



Exhibit 3. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Objectives

Growth & Development

Neighborhoods continue to be known for their unique aesthetic experience, reflected in both the built environment and natural surroundings while responsibly accommodating additional housing and services throughout the city.

City land use plans are updated regularly and implemented effectively with monitoring, community input, and forward-looking adjustments to improve livability and the balance of jobs and housing.

Infrastructure is planned in anticipation of future growth, leveraging development, and incorporating innovative, sustainable, and resilient design. ● 1

Growth is intentional and aligned with mobility, ecosystem health, climate action plans, and continues to foster livability and community connection. ● ● ● 3

Exhibit 3. Prioritize Strategic Plan Objectives

Mobility

Prioritize the movement of people and goods through improvements to the multimodal transportation network, supporting goals of sustainability and livability.

Near-term connections and efficiencies in the mobility system are completed. ● |

The City has adopted a safe systems approach to road design and traffic management, which aims to eliminate traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by creating safer streets for everyone.

#3

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- Establish a vision for Issaquah's future Sound Transit
- Light Rail Station and surrounding environs that prioritizes community needs and input.

4

Exhibit 3. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Objectives

Social & Economic Vitality

#3 ●● There is an increase in new and retention of existing businesses that choose to locate and expand in Issaquah, especially those with wage levels that enable workers to also live in the community. 4

#3 ●● Housing affordability better meets the needs of individuals and families across the income spectrum to live and work in the community. 4

The City facilitates connecting residents to human services organizations to help the community thrive.

●● Issaquah is known for its vibrant arts and public spaces that enhance livability for residents and economic vitality for businesses, connect community members, and attract visitors regionally and nationally. 2

Exhibit 3. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Objectives

Environmental Stewardship

● Issaquah is a regional leader in climate action, taking actions towards meeting and exceeding the local and regional climate targets.

Issaquah has adopted practices for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and projects across city departments with attention to environmental impact and climate impact mitigation, demonstrating its commitment through continuous improvement and data and evidence-informed decision-making. ●

Community members are active partners in the stewardship of Issaquah's environment and in Issaquah's response to climate change.

The City conserves, acquires, and enhances ecosystems including urban forests and salmon habitat, considering community benefit and the potential impacts of climate change. ●

Exhibit 3. Prioritize
Strategic Plan Objectives

Infrastructure

Plans and resources are up-to-date, proactive, and in place to operate, maintain, and replace infrastructure throughout its lifecycle.

- Proactively develop, manage, and improve City-owned infrastructure to avoid long-term disruptions in service, and prepare for climate change-related weather events.