

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
City Council Committee-of-the-Whole**

9:00 AM
July 12, 2025

King County Library System
Service Center
960 Newport Way NW

MINUTES

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Councilmembers:

Barbara de Michele
Zach Hall
Kelly Jiang (*Attended Virtually*)
Russell Joe
Tola Marts
Chris Reh
Lindsey Walsh

Administration/Staff:

Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor (*Attended Virtually*)
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator
Tisha Gieser, City Clerk
Kristin Garcia, Finance Director
Stephanie Johnson, HR Director
Paula Schwan, Chief of Police

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

a) Introductions & Public Comment

Council President Walsh called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

b) Individual Councilmember Check-Ins

Councilmembers shared what is on their mind at this time regarding the city, which included:

Housing & Affordable Housing:

- People who live in Issaquah can't work here and visa versa.
- Want to see development in Central Issaquah as envisioned.
- Need to keep up pace of housing in Issaquah.
- Appreciate Transit Oriented Development (TOD) project is moving forward.
- Need to be able to get housing near light rail.
- Concerned about the pace of adding affordable housing.
- Disappointed about loss of pioneer project.

Other:

- Need a more robust economic development climate.
- Doing well with events and building community.
- Appreciate public safety and public works response as well as work on emergency management and the information technology team.
- Need to focus on people.
- Things seem to be moving slower, partially due to reduced staff.
- Not sufficient resources to meet community capital needs.
- Traffic and speeding are the greatest concerns being heard from residents.
- Concerned about wildfire risk.

c) 2025 Review & 2026 Preview

- Q1 2025 Financial Update
- Potential 0.1% Public Safety Sales Tax
- Labor & Personnel Update

City Administrator Wally Bobkiewicz provided some introductory remarks regarding:

- upcoming projects coming before the City Council in the next few months,

- a brief staffing update
- an overview of the mid-year budget update.
- an overview of the 2026 budget and beyond.

Chief Financial Officer Kristin Garcia provided an update on Q1 2025 Financials.

City Administrator Wally Bobkiewicz and Police Chief Paula Schwan provided a presentation on the potential 0.1% public safety sales tax. There was agreement to bring this proposal forward for consideration by the City Council as part of the 2025-26 mid-biennial budget update.

Human Resources Director Stephanie Johnson provided a labor and personnel update.

The City Council recessed for lunch.

d) ****Lunch****

e) **Community Survey & Performance Data**

Council President Walsh called the meeting back to order at approximately 11:45 AM.

City Administrator Bobkiewicz provided a brief presentation on the Community Survey & Performance Data.

City Councilmembers shared their initial takeaways from the Community Survey data, which are attached as Exhibit 1.

f) **Discussion & Community Survey Activity**

Council President Walsh introduced this item. The City Council discussed the following top three Community Survey importance/satisfaction issues within Major City Services:

- Flow of traffic
- Land use, planning & zoning
- Economic vitality and/or development

The City Council shared what they think the community meant by the survey responses in these three areas. See attached Exhibit 2.

In discussion regarding the dissatisfaction with the Land use, planning & zoning item, there was agreement to bring this item back to the Planning, Development & Environment Committee to explore options for getting additional data on what is driving this dissatisfaction.

The City Council then shared ideas to address these issues highlighted by the Community Survey. The ideas were then prioritized. The results are attached as Exhibit 3. Priority ideas receiving three votes or more were:

Flow of Traffic:

- Right turn pocket on SR-900 into Talus. (5 votes)
 - Next Steps: Will discuss resources needed to explore engineering alternatives at a future meeting.
- Traffic Study on N-S improvement options. (4 votes)
 - Next Steps: Discuss this further at a future Committee of the Whole.
- ITS - Intelligent Traffic System. (3 votes)
 - Next Steps: Bring to Mobility & Infrastructure Committee.

Land Use Planning & Zoning:

- Homebuilder round tables for code barriers. (5 votes)
 - Next Steps: Bring to Planning, Development & Environment Committee in fourth quarter 2025.

Economic Vitality &/or Development:

- Zoning review to support neighborhood-centered businesses. (8 votes)
 - Next Steps: Discuss as part of the Title 18 future policy considerations being brought up at the July 21, 2025 City Council meeting.

g) Wrap-Up & Public Comment

Council President Walsh and Mayor Pauly provided closing comments.

h) Announcements – None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:03 PM.

Lindsey Walsh, Council President

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk

Takeaways from survey:

- ① 96% = good staffwork
- ② Sidewalks/path/trails very important
Good job but keep it up
- ③ PMP and CMP - very visible but fixes not visible
- ④ Cost of living - people ask "what am I getting?" - do
people want big transformative changes
- ⑤ 66% rating on "accuracy of information"
or is this "trust in government?"
- ⑥ People are very happy w/ quality of life
- ⑦ People are fed up w/ traffic congestion
- ⑧ Cost of housing - cost of living - renters
- ⑨ "Land use & planning" - not directive from community
- ⑩ Traffic a big concern
Is there a plan beyond Hwy 18?
Local transportation solutions
Related to school overcrowding
- ⑪ "And-or" on Hwy 18.
- ⑫ "What is it we can do?" Parameters of cost around projects.
- ⑬ Economic vitality is something we can do - LTAC, permitting,
keeping businesses we have, friendly to new business
- ⑭ Need somewhere to walk to - retail, grocery stores,
restaurants, nail salons - residential/business mix

Trends

- ① Cost of housing ↑ in public concern
- ② ~~Permitted~~ Street lighting ↑ in public concern
- ③ Trash recycling services — new contract, personnel, education. Positive changes
- ④ Ease of permitting — no change/did not see an improvement
One bad experience — perception for decades

Alignment w council/resident goals

- ① Homeowner — really important to pay attention to cost of housing

Economic Vitality &/or Development

What does this mean?

- ① Job availability
- ② Access to a variety of goods in this town.
- ③ Walkable shopping/neighborhood shopping
- ④ Looking for a regional solution - job centers
- ⑤ Major businesses - a "new Costco"
- ⑥ Commercial plus employment hubs
- ⑦ Dig deeper on this topic.

Flow of Traffic

- ① Use reader boards to let people know how long it will take to travel a road
(Uncertainty)
- ② North-South traffic / pass-through traffic / rush hours
- ③ All modes are easy but car is the most important vehicle.
- ④ Ability to get around is based on inner-city traffic.

Land Use Planning & Zoning

What does the community mean?

- ① There is no consensus - we are transitioning
- ② What are you doing? Traffic is terrible! Overcrowded schools. New neighbors.
- ③ "Infrastructure should be in place BEFORE more houses."
- ④ Other cities would LOVE to have our problems.
- ⑤ "Desert topic"
- ⑥ Let's dig into this to learn more. What's driving the negative response?
- ⑦ "Are we growing too fast?" Not heard lately.
- ⑧ Tola "Ten Minute Criteria"
- ⑨ Affordable housing in this?

Economic Vitality &/or Development IDEAS

- Implement ED action plan
- Corner Stores
- Zoning review to support neighborhood based/centered biz
- ~~SCOPE EXECUTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH BOARD PLAN~~
~~QUESTIONS COSTCO STORE DEVELOPMENT~~
TO BRING MORE PROF JOBS
- Grow our smaller businesses
 - ↳ more aggressive outreach to potential new businesses
- Encourage mixed-use
 - make it pencil out for developers
- Small office rental space

Flow of Traffic

- Reader boards to assist in time perception.
- Do more to encourage bus ridership.
- Longer Right Turn Pocket on SR-900 into Tahus
- Create viable alternatives to driving, both within the city & for pass-thru traffic. Solving pass thru traffic will require reg. collaboration.
- TRAFFIC STUDY ON N-S IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

~~Research on traffic for Tahus route~~

School traffic → buses

Close Front Street more often

encourage County to make changes to Issy-Hobart and down SR-900

Explore one way traffic on busy streets during limited hours (N. main)

● ITS - Intelligent Traffic System

Land Use Planning & Zoning

Focus on small housing projects - MFTE + streamline permitting

Homebuilder round tables - fix code barriers

Density bonus for faith-based landowners (in general, encouraging faith-based development)

Advertise and promote positive improvement in permit reform

Support for homeowners ~~unable~~ wanting to build ADUs